

THE TWELVE DAZE OF CHRISTMAS

A CHRISTMAS COMEDY IN ONE ACT

By **Jeff Lovett**

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THE TWELVE DAZE OF CHRISTMAS

By Jeff Lovett

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(10 MEN, 11 WOMEN, 6 EITHER, 40 EXTRAS)

ALICE (f)..... A young girl. *(143 lines)*
PARTRIDGE (m/f)..... A bird. *(37 lines)*

TWO TURTLEDOVES

TURTLE (m) A male attorney. *(24 lines)*
DOVE (f) A female attorney. *(16 lines)*

THREE FRENCH HENS

FRANCOIS (m) A male singer. *(5 lines)*
MICHELLE (f) A female singer. *(9 lines)*
MONIQUE (f)..... A female singer. *(8 lines)*

FOUR CALLING BIRDS

TELEBOBBIE (m/f) A calling bird. *(8 lines)*
TELEBILLIE (m/f) A calling bird. *(14 lines)*
TELEBITZIE (m/f) A calling bird. *(10 lines)*
TELEBETTY (m/f)..... A calling bird. *(13 lines)*

SMILIN' BOB (m)..... A jewelry salesman *(15 lines)*

SIX GEESE A-LAYING

MOTHER GOOSE (f) A goose. *(16 lines)*
MYRTLE (f) Another goose. *(1 line)*
SISTER GOOSE (f)..... *(2 lines)*
OTHER GEESE (m/f)..... Three other geese. *(1 line)*

SEVEN SWANS A-SWIMMING

GERALD (m)..... A swan. *(17 lines)*
SWANSON (m) A swan. *(6 lines)*
SWINSON (m)..... A swan. *(9 lines)*
SVEN (m) A swan. *(5 lines)*
SIGVARD (m) A swan. *(6 lines)*
STELLA (f)..... A swan. *(6 lines)*

STEFAN (m)..... A swan. (5 lines)

EIGHT MAIDS A-MILKING

MAGGIE (f)..... A milkmaid. (14 lines)

OTHER MILKMAIDS (f) Seven other milkmaids.
(5 lines)

NINE LADIES DANCING

MISS CLEO (f)..... A dance teacher. (14 lines)

EMMA (f) A solo ballet dancer. (6 lines)

OTHER BALLET DANCERS (m/f) Eight other dancers.

TEN LORDS A-LEAPING

LORD ALBERT (m) A lord with ten titles. (17 lines)

OLLIE (m) Lord Albert's assistant. (6 lines)

ELEVEN PIPERS PIPING

PIPE FOREMAN (m/f)..... Head pipe-fitter. (14 lines)

OTHER PIPERS (m/f)..... Ten pipe-fitters. (No lines)

TWELVE DRUMMERS DRUMMING

DRUMMERS (m/f)..... (No lines)

AUTHOR'S NOTES

Many of the roles in *The Twelve Days of Christmas* are written to be gender neutral and character names can be adjusted to suit your available cast. For example, the roles of Partridge, the Ten's, Three Geese, The Swans, Ballet Dancers and Drummers can be either male or female. In addition, many roles may be doubled during the production.

My suggestions would be to double the roles of Michelle and Monique as milkmaids, three of the geese could be dancers and two of the swans could double as pipers. During the final scene of the play, all of the characters come on stage quickly, so having an exact count of each "day" will not be noticeable by the audience.

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This play is also designed to be performed with as extensive or sparse costuming as you wish. Each character can be dressed in full costumes, if time and budget allows, or may be represented in a minimalist approach simply as feathers in their hair, hard hats or plain leotards.

PROPS

Opening:

- Microphone
- Microphone stand

Day One:

- Small potted plant
- Single sheet of paper

Day Two:

- Legal satchel
- Multi-page contract
- Pens
- Large eraser

Day Four:

- 4 Telephone receivers with long cables, their ends tied together
- Legal Satchel
- Multi-page contract

Day Five:

- Letter
- Jewelry case
- Gift card

Day Six:

- Stretcher
- Bulb horn
- Sheets
- Privacy curtain
- Large plastic egg
- Blanket

Day Seven:

- Swim mask
- Snorkel
- Swim fins
- “Swimmies”
- Plastic wading pool
- Olympic medal on necklace

Day Eight:

- Protest Signs (4-6)
- Bullhorn

Day Nine:

- Cane

Day Ten:

- Large sandwich
- Athletic bag
- Knee pads
- Elbow pads
- Bicycle helmet
- Kazoo

Day Eleven:

- Hard hats (4)
- Various size and lengths of pipe and pipe joints

Day Twelve:

- 12 fake drums
- 12 pairs of drums sticks

ACT ONE

AT RISE:

Curtain opens to a stage decorated with Christmas lights, garland, a small Christmas tree and a few brightly wrapped presents. A single microphone is placed DOWN RIGHT.

ANNOUNCER: *(Unseen offstage.)* And now, the next contestant in the Christmas Talent Show is Alice Smith.

ALICE enters and approaches the microphone. She is very timid and can barely be heard as she speaks.

ALICE: Hi, I'm Alice. Merry Christmas! *(Giggles)* Okay, I want to sing one of my favorite Christmas songs, the Twelve Days of Christmas. Here goes. *(She clears her throat and begins to sing the song in a clear, high voice)*

She clears her throat and begins to sing.

ALICE: ON THE FIRST DAY OF CHRISTMAS, MY TRUE LOVE SENT TO ME . . .

ALICE'S song is cut off as a person dressed in a bird suit and holding a small potted plant enters.

PARTRIDGE: Merry Christmas! Are you Alice?

ALICE: Yes. Who are you?

PARTRIDGE: *(Pulling out a single sheet of paper and reading.)* I'm a special delivery from your true love. His name's Matt, right?

ALICE: Yes.

PARTRIDGE: Okay. Well, he sent me. So, ah . . . Merry Christmas.

ALICE: What are you?

PARTRIDGE: I'm an Alectoris Rufa, otherwise known as a Red-Legged Partridge. And this noble plant is a pear tree. It's a beauty, isn't it?

ALICE: It's kind of small.

PARTRIDGE: Yes, well, Matt's budget was a little lean this year. So, ah . . . Merry Christmas. See ya . . . *(PARTRIDGE turns to leave.)*

ALICE: Wait. Matt sent you to me? My boyfriend, Matt?

PARTRIDGE: That's what it says on the card. (Reading.) First day.
Partridge in a pear tree. That's me. So, Merry Christmas!

PARTRIDGE hands ALICE the pear tree and turns to leave again.

ALICE: Wait! So you're mine, huh?

PARTRIDGE: Yeah, I guess so.

ALICE: (*Jumps with joy and claps her hands.*) So I can tell you what to do?

PARTRIDGE: Wait a minute there, Skippy! I ain't nobody's pet. I'm not going to learn to say "Polly wants a cracker" or curse in Spanish. I'm a free bird. I was born to be wild!

ALICE: But you're mine, right? Matt bought you for me.

PARTRIDGE: Well, yeah, I guess you could say that. Why are you looking at me like that?

ALICE: Okay, okay . . . stand on one leg.

PARTRIDGE: Wait a minute . . .

ALICE: Do it!

PARTRIDGE hesitates, then lifts his left leg.

PARTRIDGE: Okay. Happy now?

ALICE: Clap your hands. I mean, wings, and sing like a bird.

PARTRIDGE: I am a bird.

ALICE: Do it!

PARTRIDGE lowers his leg, then claps his wings and lets out a warbled edition of "Silent Night."

PARTRIDGE: Okay, okay. You've had your fun. I'm your slave.
Happy now?

ALICE: Yes, yes . . .

PARTRIDGE: The guy at the pet store didn't say anything about standing on one leg or singing. It says right here: Arrive at 10 o'clock. Take a pear tree. That's it. No singing or dancing. No clapping. Just show up. So I've shown up. Here's your pear tree. Happy Christmas, Merry Hanukkah and all that. I'm out of here . . .

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PARTRIDGE begins to leave. ALICE runs to stop him.

ALICE: I'm sorry. I promise, no more tricks. But I'm new to this whole "Twelve Days of Christmas" thing. Will you stay and help me? Please?

PARTRIDGE: No more standing on one leg?

ALICE: No!

PARTRIDGE: No more singing?

ALICE: No more singing, I promise.

PARTRIDGE: Okay, I'll stay. Just for a little while. But I want my tree back.

ALICE hands him the pear tree. They stare at each other for a moment.

ALICE: Now what?

PARTRIDGE: I don't know. I guess you keep singing.

ALICE approaches mic, and after some encouragement from PARTRIDGE, begins once again to sing.

ALICE:

ON THE SECOND DAY OF CHRISTMAS, MY TRUE LOVE SENT TO ME: TWO TURTLEDOVES . . .

Suddenly, two people dressed in business suits, one carrying a satchel, enter. The first, TURTLE, quickly shakes ALICE'S hand.

TURTLE: Turtle and Dove at your service, Madam. Please allow me to introduce myself, Theodore J. Turtle, III, Attorney at Law. And this is my partner.

DOVE steps forward to shake ALICE'S hand.

DOVE: Veronica Dove. But you can call me Ronnie.

TURTLE takes DOVE aside and speaks in an exaggerated whisper.

TURTLE: How many times have I told you? No more of this “Ronnie” stuff. If we’re going to be taken serious as high-priced litigators, we have to stay businesslike, aloof, professional. And what did I tell you about using a middle initial when you introduce yourself? I’ve said it a thousand times. If we’re going to get the big clients, we’ve got to use our middle initials.

DOVE: But I don’t have a middle initial, Theodore.

TURTLE: Then make one up.

DOVE re-approaches ALICE, shakes her hand with authority and proclaims, loudly.

DOVE: Veronica (*Thinks a second.*) K. Dove, Attorney at Law. Pleased to meet you. I just love those shoes. I’ve got a pair just like them in green . . . they’re so comfortable. And with me on my feet all day, whew, I need a comfortable pair of shoes . . .

TURTLE: (*Interrupting and clearing his throat.*) Ahem, yes, well. We will be pleased to handle your case. (*Gestures to DOVE, who pulls a lengthy contract out of her satchel.*) Now, if you’ll just sign here, we’ll start filing the papers in court.

ALICE: What papers?

TURTLE: For the lawsuit.

ALICE: Lawsuit? Who am I supposed to be suing?

TURTLE: Why, Santa Claus, of course.

DOVE: (*Pulls eraser from her satchel and begins to erase part of contract.*) Oh, I thought we were suing a guy named Kris Kringle. This won’t take but just a second.

TURTLE: (*Snatching away contract.*) It’s the same guy, you idiot. I am so sorry, Miss Alice. My partner is a little excited about suing such a high profile citizen. (*Extending contract and pen.*) Now, if you’ll just sign here and here and here . . .

ALICE: I don’t want to sue Santa! Why would I want to sue Santa?

TURTLE: Why, for invasion of privacy.

DOVE: Wire-tapping. Listening in on your phone conversations. Photographing you while you sleep!

TURTLE: What!/? (*They both look at DOVE; Pause.*) Listen, Alice. This here is an open and shut case. Santa Claus has been watching you for years. You know that whole, “He sees you when you’re sleeping, he knows when you’re awake” thing?

ALICE: Yes . . .

TURTLE: Clear case of invasion of privacy.

DOVE: We don't care what the Patriot Act says. Watching someone while they're sleeping is just plain creepy. You ought to see Theodore when he sleeps. He sucks his thumb.

TURTLE: Veronica! Professional. Businesslike. Remember? (*Turning to ALICE.*) Trust me, Alice. Santa is easy pickings. Just think of his assets. A huge mansion at the North Pole. A magical sleigh and eight tiny reindeer.

DOVE: I'm thinking jerky!

TURTLE: Not to mention, his ownership of an entire workforce of, how shall we say it, height-challenged craftsmen. We could break them up. Sell part of them to the Chinese. Some to Wal-Mart. Just think of the huge profit potential.

DOVE: And our fee. Only 60%!

TURTLE: You'll be rich beyond your wildest dreams. (*Extending contract.*) Just sign here . . . and here . . . and here . . .

ALICE: But Santa's my friend.

TURTLE: Yeah, that's what they used to say about the Tooth Fairy, until we dragged her into court last year.

DOVE: Theodore was fabulous. You should have seen him. (*Strutting around and pretending to talk to the jury.*) Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, what we have here is a clear case of theft. Not to mention breaking and entering. On the day in question, the Tooth Fairy did willfully and purposely enter the bedroom of one Timmy LePugh and steal his left upper incisor. A tooth that little Timmy had struggled with for weeks, wiggling and pulling on it until it broke free from the bonds of his swollen gums and landed on the floor of the boy's locker room.

TURTLE: (*Picking up the pace.*) The tooth in question was not the property of the Tooth Fairy. It was poor little Timmy's tooth. One that he had nurtured, cared for and brushed twice a week since birth. But the Tooth Fairy just had to have it. So what did she do? She illegally entered Timmy's bedroom late one night and threatened poor Timmy with a concealed weapon . . .

DOVE: Well, not so concealed, but that wand of hers is downright scary!

TURTLE: . . . and stole that tooth right out from under poor little Timmy's pillow. Ladies and gentlemen, you must not let this

happen again. It rests upon your shoulders and it is your sworn duty to prevent this....this monster from brandishing her staff and terrifying small children ever again.

DOVE applauds loudly.

DOVE: We won \$14 million dollars in that case. I bought a new BMW.

TURTLE: And the Tooth Fairy hung up her wings. Now she has to buy her teeth off eBay, just like everybody else.

ALICE: But Mr. Turtle and Mrs. Dove . . .

DOVE: That's Miss, honey . . . Theo here is too cheap to buy me an engagement ring.

ALICE: I appreciate your concern for me, but I just don't want to sue Santa Claus . . . it's Christmas. Just think of all the little boys and girls who would wake up on Christmas morning and find nothing under the tree just because we were greedy.

TURTLE: Greed? *(Launching into Gordon Gekko's speech from "Wall Street")* Why greed is good. Greed is right. Greed works! Greed, in all forms – greed for life, for money, for love, knowledge - has marked the upward surge of mankind. Greed . . .

ALICE: Whoa. I'm just not interested. I appreciate my boyfriend giving me the services of such stellar attorneys as yourselves and all, but I just can't sue Santa!

TURTLE: You sure? We could negotiate it where you'd be immune from being placed on the Naughty List ever again.

ALICE: I'm sure.

TURTLE: Okay, if you change your mind, we'll just be right over there reviewing our wrongful death suit against Jack. You know, that "beanstalk" fellow? The Giant's family wants blood! Come on, Ronnie.

DOVE: *(With an "air" about her.)* That's Veronica K. *(They exit.)*

ALICE: *(Looking over at PARTRIDGE.)* Well, what now?

PARTRIDGE: Keep singing.

ALICE goes back to mic and starts to sing.

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ALICE:

ON THE THIRD DAY OF CHRISTMAS, MY TRUE LOVE SENT TO ME . . . THREE FRENCH HENS.

Three characters with rubber chicken masks enter. The male chicken is dressed meticulously, while the two female chickens are a little “ghetto.”

FRANCOIS: Joyeux Noel, mon cherie!

MICHELLE: English, English, Francois.

MONIQUE: He is always trying to sound so sophisticated. That’s your problem, Frank. You think you’re something special. Well, you’re not. Your Daddy was fried Extra Crispy down at the KFC and your Momma is laying eggs for Piggly Wiggly. *(Or use the name of your local grocery).*

MICHELLE: The only reason we let you join our group is because Sophia got run over trying to cross the road!

MONIQUE: That girl was so crazy . . . always saying, “I can cross the road. Watch me. I can do it!” Then here comes a Chevy and BLAM . . . we need us another lead vocalist. *(Turning to ALICE.)* Oh, sorry, girl. We were just a-talking about our problems and ignoring you. Let me introduce everyone. I’m Monique. This is Michelle. And that fancy dude over there is Francois. And we’re the French Hens! *(They all strike a pose and sing “Ta-Da.”)*

FRANCOIS: *(Bends over and kisses ALICE’s hand.)* Ah, mademoiselle. Vous êtes si beaux.

ALICE: What does that mean?

MICHELLE: It means that he thinks you’re beautiful. Cut the flapdoodle, Frank. You know you ain’t French. Our manager just called us the Three French Hens because it sounded a lot more sophisticated than “Those Three Funky Chickens from Down Compton Way.”

MONIQUE: We’re a singing group, if you haven’t guessed it, and Frank here . . . I’m sorry, *Francois*, is our new lead vocalist.

MICHELLE: We got this email from our manager saying to show up for a gig singing for this little girl named Alice. And I guess that’d be you, huh?

ALICE: Yes. My boyfriend, Matt, must have booked you. He’s so thoughtful.

MONIQUE: Well, he better be more than just thoughtful. His check better clear.

FRANCOIS: (*Kissing her hand again.*) Alice, mon cherie . . . Je suis amoureux de vous!

ALICE: What'd he say?

MICHELLE: He said that he's in love with you. (*Turning to Francios.*) You ain't in love with her Frank. You just met her! And anyway, she's a girl, and you're a chicken. A scrawny, ugly chicken, at that. (*Mockingly*) Je suis amoureux, my tail feathers.

MONIQUE: Hey, you two, break it up. Our boy, Matt didn't pay us to come down here and argue in French, he paid us to sing. Hit it, Frank.

FRANCOIS steps UP CENTER and opens his mouth to sing. Instead of sound coming from his mouth, the song "Only You" by The Platters plays and FRANCOIS, MICHELLE and MONIQUE lip sync the song's first line.

MONIQUE: Hold it . . . hold it. This is supposed to be a Christmas song. (*She reaches in her purse and brings out a set of sleigh bells.*) Alright, Frank, hit it!

FRANCOIS opens his mouth and lip-syncs the same song. Only this time MONIQUE plays the sleigh bells along with the track.

MONIQUE: Just goes to show you that you can make any song a Christmas song . . .

MICHELLE: By adding sleigh bells! (*They high-five each other and laugh.*)

Suddenly, FRANCOIS gets down on one knee, takes ALICE's hand and begins to speak furiously in French.

FRANCOIS: S'il vous plaît enfui avec moi, mon amour . . . nous serons amoureux pour toujours . . .

MONIQUE and MICHELLE rush over and wrestle FRANCOIS to his feet.

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MICHELLE: Frank, what are you doing?

MONIQUE: I thought our manager made it clear to you there was to be no falling in love with our clients. *(To ALICE.)* I'm so sorry. We think he has an over-active thyroid. He does this all the time. *(She drags him away.)*

MICHELLE: If only Sophia hadn't tried to get to the other side of the road, things wouldn't be like this. *(Exiting.)* But no-oo-ooo. She just had to see what was over there . . . never could be happy with what she had . . . and now look. We got some love-crazed singer who's always slurping on our clients . . . I'm moving back to Compton . . .

PARTRIDGE steps up beside ALICE.

PARTRIDGE: Looks like Matt's getting his money's worth, huh?

ALICE: That was weird.

PARTRIDGE: Oh, I got a feeling we're just getting started. Go on. Sing!

ALICE steps up to microphone and sings.

ALICE:

ON THE FOURTH DAY OF CHRISTMAS, MY TRUE LOVE SENT TO ME . . . *(Looks nervously at PARTRIDGE, who encourages her on.)* FOUR CALLING BIRDS . . .

Four characters enter, talking on telephones to each other. Their handsets are connected by four long telephone cords which they are constantly getting tangled around each other. The characters are country rednecks and talk accordingly.

TELEBOBBIE: I told you to put her on hold. I'm busy right now trying to route that call to Santa's workshop. Some fool is trying to sue him. Can you believe that?

TELEBILLIE: Listen. I'm a little busy right now. There's a call for TeleBetty from her Mom. Something about her brother in jail again.

TELEBETTY: What? He just got out for Christmas. We was going to all load up in my Granny's pickup and visit Grandpa on Christmas morning.

TELEBITZIE: Oh, how sweet. Is he still doing 25 to life at Folsom?

TELEBETTY: Yeah. But we've got a little surprise for him this Christmas. Granny has learned how to wrap a file in duct tape, bake it in a pie and get it passed the metal detectors.

TELEBOBBIE: So he might be home for New Years?

TELEBETTY: If his arthritis don't act up.

TELEBILLIE: We are being so rude, ladies. This here is Alice. You know, the one Matt called us about.

They all rush over to shake ALICE's hand which causes them to become hopelessly tangled.

TELEBOBBIE: Oh, we're so sorry, Miss Alice. This happens all the time. Won't take but just a second to fix. *(They struggle for a moment until they untangle the cords.)*

TELEBILLIE: Now, where were we . . . ? Oh yeah . . . introductions. We're called the Four Calling Birds . . .

TELEBETTY: Know why we're called that? Go ahead . . . guess . . .

ALICE: Well, I don't . . .

TELEBITZIE: 'Cause we're always on the phone . . .

They all laugh at her joke.

TELEBOBBIE: We've gotten so good at using the phone that all the major telephone companies now use us exclusively to do all their call routing. Every day we route millions and millions of calls all over the U.S.

TELEBETTY: *(Stepping forward and getting the phone cord tangled around TELEBOBBIE.)* And Canada. Oh, sorry . . .

TELEBILLIE: I'm TeleBillie . . .

TELEBOBBIE: TeleBobbie . . .

TELEBETTY: I'm TeleBetty . . . and this here's my cousin . . .

TELEBITZIE: *(Getting tangled.)* TeleBitzie. Pleased to meet you.

ALICE: Why do each one of your names begin with "Tele"?

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TELEBILLIE: Well our phones ring so much, we got tired of saying, "Hey, Betty, the telephone's for you!" So now we just say "TeleBetty!"

TELEBETTY: And I know it's for me. *(Phone ringing sound.)* Hold on . . . TeleBetty here. Yes, yes, hold on . . . TeleBillie? *(They exchange phones, getting them tangled around each other.)*

TELEBILLIE: Hello . . . Oh hi, Earl. Yeah, I know we're out of wrapping paper. Well, just use toilet paper. I bought the two-ply kind, so it'll work just fine. Well, if you don't like it all white, dunk the presents down in the toilet. It'll make them that pretty blue color. But flush it first! Sorry . . . that's my husband, Earl. He's a little slow.

TELEBOBBIE: That's for sure! Honey, your boyfriend, Matt, sent us and told us to let you call anybody for FREE! So, who's it gonna' be?

ALICE: I don't know?

TELEBITZIE: How about your parole officer? They like it when you check in with them. *(The group mumbles agreement.)*

TELEBILLIE: How about a prank call? Remember that time we called the KFC and asked them if they could fry a possum we run over in the road . . . ?

TELEBITZIE and TELEBILLIE imitate the call.

TELEBITZIE: Good evening. Thank you for calling Kentucky Fried Chicken. How can I help you?

TELEBILLIE: Yeah, I was wondering. Me and Earl just ran over a big, juicy possum on Route 32 and we was wondering if we brought it down there if you guys could fry it up for us?

TELEBITZIE: Ma'am, I don't believe we can . . .

TELEBILLIE: Earl really likes your Original Recipe Chicken and says those eleven herbs and spices would make for some really good possum.

TELEBITZIE: Ma'am, our store policy says we can't cook any kind of unclean animals.

TELEBILLIE: Oh, it's clean! Earl just got through washing it off in the ditch. I tell you what. You fry it up with that magical Original Recipe and we'll let you keep the skin . . .

They all laugh, slapping each other on the backs and getting their phones hopelessly tangled in the process.

TELEBILLIE: Yep. That was a good one. So who you want to call?

TELEBETTY: Hey, I know . . . how about a secret lover? Someone that you've been pining over for years but never had the nerve to call . . . like Claude. (*Swooning*).

TELEBOBBIE: Oh, would you get over it? That was third grade and Claude didn't even know you was alive.

TELEBETTY: That's not true! He looked at me one time in the lunchroom. I could tell by the way he was gazing at me while eating his creamed spinach that he was madly in love with me. But I never did nothing about it. Claude could be out there somewhere, roaming the Earth searching for me . . .

TELEBITZIE: He ain't roaming the Earth! He's been married three times and has got seven kids. Claude works down at the Auto Shack. If you want to see him so bad, why don't you just go down there?

TELEBETTY: Who would answer my phone? Tell me that? I can't leave my station. What if an important call comes through?

TELEBOBBIE: Like the one Alice is about to make? Okay, sister . . . who's it gonna be?

ALICE: I don't know . . . maybe I could call . . .

TELEBILLIE: Call your mom. I love talking to my mom. (*To TELEBETTY.*) She ain't in prison.

TELEBETTY: Well, at least my momma can read.

TELEBILLIE: You know my momma is scared of the alphabet. There's evil in them books!

TELEBETTY: Oh, Lord . . .

TELEBITZIE: Just pick somebody. Anybody.

ALICE: I know. (*TELEBITZIE hands her the phone and ALICE dials.*) Hello, Mr. Turtle? Yeah, I have four people over here who want to sue AT&T! Yeah, I'm not kidding . . .

TURTLE and DOVE run on stage and confront the FOUR CALLING BIRDS.

TURTLE: Turtle & Dove, Attorneys at Law at your service . . . we'll nail those AT&T corporate scum to the wall . . . breach of contract,

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unfair labor practices, corporate mismanagement . . .

DOVE: Embezzlement . . . stock manipulation. *(Pause and then with great joy).* Ah, I have it! Asbestos in your telephones causing cancer and brain tumors leading to severe forms of dementia... and even Alzheimer's!

The CALLING BIRDS look confused as TURTLE and DOVE congratulate each other and begin to lead them off stage.

TURTLE: We'll file first thing in the morning. They won't know what hit them.

DOVE: *(Pulling out a contract.)* Just sign here . . . and here . . . and here . . .

PARTRIDGE approaches ALICE.

PARTRIDGE: That was pretty sneaky.

ALICE: It's what they want. To sue somebody. I'm just giving Turtle and Dove their Christmas wish.

PARTRIDGE: Well, you know what's next. The five rings.

ALICE: I know. I'm so excited. A gold ring for each finger. Matt is so thoughtful.

PARTRIDGE: Then what are you waiting for? Sing it, girl!

ALICE:

ON THE FIFTH DAY OF CHRISTMAS,
MY TRUE LOVE SENT TO ME,
FIVE GOLDEN RINGS.

A man dressed in a very loud suit enters.

BOB: Well, hey there, pretty young lady. You must be Alice.

ALICE: Yes, I am. Who are you?

BOB: *(Handing her his card.)* The name's Bob from Smilin' Bob's Discount Jewelry & Pawn. Remember, "Don't Get Robbed - Shop at Bob's!" Yep, little lady, today is your lucky day. Your boyfriend came to see me, and he was feeling mighty generous. You might even say magnanimous.

ALICE: I know. The five golden rings.

BOB: Bob's "Golden Quintet." One of our most popular items. Beautiful 7-carat gold leaf, electroplated and warranted for 90 days or 10,000 miles, whichever comes first. *(Reaches into his pocket and takes out jewelry case.)* I got them right here . . .

ALICE: Can I see them?

BOB: Not so fast, young lady. There is the matter of the final payment.

ALICE: Final payment?

BOB: Yep. Your young beau took advantage of Smilin' Bob's special "Christmas Layaway Plan," and before I can release your "Golden Quintet," I'll have to ask you for the last payment.

ALICE: Last payment! He hasn't finished paying for them yet?

BOB: Sorry, according to my records, payment number five has yet to be received.

ALICE: Payment five?

BOB: *(Speaking as if he's reading an ad.)* Yep, our Christmas Layaway Plan makes getting jewelry for your loved ones simple and affordable. You just come into our store, located on Route 14 next to Larry's House of Lard, pick out the jewelry you want and leave the rest up to us. You pay 50% down and then five easy payments of 20% of the original balance, and it's yours. Well, in your boyfriend's case, it ain't yours, 'cause he never made the last payment. Said something about it being a rip-off, if I recall correctly.

ALICE: Fifty percent down and then five payments of 20%. That's 150% of the price!

BOB: Yep, that's a deal, ain't it? *(Pulls our paperwork.)* Now, if you'll just sign here and write me a check, these glorious five rings will be yours. Make sure you initial the box that says you understand that Smilin' Bob's is not responsible for discoloration of your ring fingers, lost circulation or nail fungus.

ALICE: This is outrageous! I'm not signing this.

BOB: Then I'm sorry, I cannot give you the rings. *(Puts away the jewelry case.)* I am a man of integrity. A man of good moral character. A man with a spotless record.

ALICE: I think you're a thief. And at Christmas time, too.

BOB: Now, watch your tongue, young lady. Them's fighting words.

ALICE: I thought you said you had good moral character?

BOB: Yeah, well . . . You want the rings or not?

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ALICE: No. What I want is a refund.

BOB: Sorry. No refunds or exchanges. It says so right there on the contract, right under the section about accidental dismemberment.

ALICE: You mean I don't get my rings or Matt's money back?

BOB: Sorry, Miss. That's our policy. But wait a minute, there is a note. *(Pulls a card from his coat pocket.)* "Dear Alice. Merry Christmas. Hope you like the rings. By the way, Smilin' Bob is a lying thief. Love, Matt" That was sweet. You can keep the note. *(Hands it to her and exits.)*

ALICE starts to cry. PARTRIDGE comes over to comfort her.

PARTRIDGE: It's okay, Alice. It's the thought that counts, right?

ALICE: Well . . .

PARTRIDGE: You didn't want those cheap rings anyway. Why don't you keep singing? I'm sure there's something better to come . . .

ALICE: Okay . . .

ALICE:

ON THE SIXTH DAY OF CHRISTMAS, MY TRUE LOVE SENT TO ME . . . SIX GEESE A-LAYING . . .

Six "GEESE" rush in - one is on a stretcher.

MOTHER GOOSE: Quick! Boil some water. Get some rags. She's in labor.

ALICE: In labor. She's going to have a baby? Here? Right now?

MOTHER GOOSE: That's right. You wanted a laying goose. Well, that's what you're about to get. So don't just stand there. Get me those rags!

ALICE runs off as the goose in labor is placed CENTER STAGE. The other geese hover around her, trying to calm her. ALICE runs back on and hands sheets to MOTHER GOOSE.

ALICE: This isn't exactly what I expected when I sang about six geese a-laying.

MOTHER GOOSE: Well, six geese ain't a-laying. Only one of them is. Maybe you should stop and think before you just start singing. This here's real life. No squatting down and popping out a little egg. Myrtle here is about to give birth to a 7-pound bouncing baby goose egg. And it hurts.

MYRTLE honks loudly. The sound is made with a concealed, old-fashioned bulb horn.

MOTHER GOOSE: But don't you worry. Mother Goose has brought many a young gosling into this world. Nothing to it!

ALICE: You mean you're going to do it right here . . . in front of everyone?

MOTHER GOOSE: No, child. I ain't that insensitive. (*Turns to the group of geese and yells.*) Grab the privacy curtain!

Two of the geese run off stage and bring back on a pole from which a large sheet is hung. They immediately hold it up in front of the goose in labor. More "honking" is heard throughout.

SISTER GOOSE: Okay, Momma . . . she's ready.

MOTHER GOOSE: Alright. Keep your feathers on. (*Turning to ALICE.*) Yes, I've been present at the birth of hundreds of babies. Fourteen of them my own. Three of them are still with me today.

Three of the geese wave at ALICE.

ALICE: What happened to the others?

MOTHER GOOSE: Six of them got eaten by a fox. Three were carried away by a hawk. One of the eggs fell out of the nest and busted. And, oh yeah, and one of them moved off to Chicago and became a lawyer. We don't talk about him much.

MYRTLE squawks loudly.

MOTHER GOOSE: Well, that little one is announcing her time. Step back. (*Stepping behind screen.*) Alright, ladies. Mother Goose is here. Let's do this!

THE TWELVE DAZE OF CHRISTMAS

There's the sound of various instruments clanking together, interwoven with honks.

MOTHER GOOSE: Plunger. Oven mitts. Jumper cables. Tube socks. Alright, here it comes. I can see the shell. Stand back!

There are cries of joy and clapping from behind curtain, more loud honking and then MOTHER GOOSE steps out holding a large egg draped in a blanket.

MOTHER GOOSE: Here you go. Your very own goose egg. Now, you'll need to sit on this for 28-30 days. And once he's hatched, you're going to have to teach him to swim, if he's going to get along with the other geese. Make sure you point him towards South, so he'll know what direction to fly in next winter. Okay, that's about it. Let's pack it up, ladies. *(They begin to leave.)*

ALICE: Wait. I don't know anything about taking care of baby geese.

MOTHER GOOSE: That's goslings, honey. Not baby geese. Goslings. And anyway, you'll be fine. Just don't get a fox for a pet and watch out for hawks flying overhead.

ALICE: But. But. I don't want him!

All the geese suddenly stop in horror as this statement.

MOTHER GOOSE: You don't want him? You don't want him?

ALL GESE: *(Overlapping.)* She doesn't want him. What do we do? Poor baby.

ALICE: I didn't mean that I don't want him. It's just, I don't have a clue what to do with an egg. Couldn't you keep him for me?

MOTHER GOOSE: Myrtle? You want your boy *(Or girl)* back?

MYRTLE approaches ALICE slowly, pokes at the egg, looks at ALICE again and then snatches up the egg and runs off stage.

MOTHER GOOSE: I reckon she does. Well, our work here is done.

Merry Christmas, Alice, and remember what my Momma always said, "If you can't raise them right, you shouldn't have them."

(Mumbles to herself as she exits.) Wish she had reminded me about that before I had the lawyer. What a bad egg!

ALICE watches them leave and then slowly walks back to the microphone. She looks over at PARTRIDGE, who waves her on and then begins to sing.

ALICE:

ON THE SEVENTH DAY OF CHRISTMAS, MY TRUE LOVE SENT
TO ME . . . SEVEN SWANS A-SWIMMING.

Seven "SWANS" enter. One is wearing swim goggles, snorkel, fins and "swimmies." Two of the swans are carrying a small wading pool, which they set down UPSTAGE.

GERALD: I can't do it. I just can't. (To ALICE.) Don't let them do it!

ALICE: Do what?

GERALD: Throw me back in the water. (He starts crying.)

SWANSON: He's afraid of the water.

SWINSON: Doesn't know how to swim.

SVEN: Disgraceful!

GERALD: Stop it, you guys. You know I've tried. God knows how many times I've let go of the edge, swam out a few feet . . . and sank like a rock. I just can't swim. It's not my fault! (He continues to cry as he walks away.)

SWINSON: (To ALICE.) Can you believe this? A swan that can't swim.

SIGVARD: The most majestic creatures in the water.

STELLA: Elegant . . .

STEFAN: Lovely . . .

ALL SWANS: Can't swim . . . (They all mumble to each other.)

ALICE: Well, maybe there's something I can do?

SWANSON: Like what? We took him to the YMCA.

SWINSON: Made him take lessons.

ALICE: And what happened?

SVEN: They had to call an ambulance. He had to have mouth-to-beak.

GERALD: I tried. I really did. I held my breath. I kicked my little webbed feet. I did everything the instructor told me to do, and I still couldn't swim. I'm a failure. (More crying.)

SIGVARD: Well, you just didn't try hard enough, Gerald. You could swim if you really wanted to.

THE TWELVE DAZE OF CHRISTMAS

STELLA: Yeah! You know how much you're breaking your mother's heart. We all come from a proud family of swans. All great swimmers. Stefan here even went to the Olympics. (*STEFAN shows ALICE the Olympic medal hanging around his neck.*) But not Gerald. He sinks like the Titanic!

ALICE: Guys, guys. Take it easy on him. Maybe all he needs is some understanding. (*Walks over to him.*) Gerald, my name is Alice. I'm your friend.

GERALD: You're going to try to make me get back in the water, aren't you?

ALICE: Not if you don't want to.

GERALD: Promise?

ALICE: Promise.

SIGVARD: But your boyfriend ordered seven swans a-swimming. Not six swimmers and one who is so afraid of the water he won't even eat soup.

GERALD breaks out in more sobs.

SWINSON: You're ruining her Christmas, Gerald. (*The other swans join him and boo.*)

ALICE: You're not ruining my Christmas, Gerald.

GERALD: I'm not?

ALICE: No . . . it's been a wonderful Christmas for me! I mean, what other person has gotten the kind of presents I've gotten today? A partridge, their own lawyers, three French hens, five golden rings. Well, almost five golden rings . . .

SWINSON: From that guy, Smilin' Bob? (*ALICE nods.*) Yeah, he tried to sell us some cheapo rings back stage. Said something about a Christmas layaway plan.

STELLA: What a rip-off!

ALICE: Well, Gerald, even if I don't get another present, this will have been the best Christmas of my life. And you're a part of that.

GERALD: I am?

ALICE: Yes, you are. You're very special. Gerald. One of a kind.

GERALD: You think so?

ALICE: Yes, I do. You know what? I bet if you felt really like you were special, all this stuff about not being able to swim would just go away.

GERALD: Really?

ALICE: Sure. Don't you agree, guys?

ALL SWANS: (*Overlapping.*) We guess so. Sure. Why not?

ALICE: So instead of criticizing Gerald, why don't we encourage him, guys? Come on . . .

SWANSON: You can do it, Gerald.

SWINSON: Yeah, buddy. You're a great swimmer.

STEFAN: Who knows? Maybe one day, you'll go to the Olympics, just like me. (*Shows off the Olympic medal hanging around his neck.*)

GERALD: You really think so, guys?

ALL SWANS: Sure we do. Yeah. Come on.

GERALD: Maybe you're right. Maybe all I need is just a little confidence boost. I'm a mighty, majestic swan. I can do this. I can do this.

ALICE: I knew it. Are you ready to give it a try?

GERALD: You mean right now? Right here?

ALICE: There's no time like the present.

GERALD: Okay, I'm ready. (*The other SWANS bring the wading pool forward.*) Here I go.

The group cheers him on as GERALD puts one foot into the wading pool. He pulls it out and tries again. Eventually, he puts both feet into the pool and slowly sits.

GERALD: I'm doing it. I'm swimming. It's going to be a great Christmas. I can swim! I can swim! Oh, thank you, Alice. This is going to be a Christmas I'll never forget.

ALICE: (*Helping GERALD from pool and taking off his goggles and "swimmies."*) You won't need these anymore. You're a regal swan now and swans don't wear swimmies.

The other SWANS say their goodbyes and carry the wading pool offstage.

GERALD: Merry Christmas, Alice. I'm going swimming . . . (*Runs off.*)

ALICE: Merry Christmas, Gerald.

THE TWELVE DAZE OF CHRISTMAS

PARTRIDGE approaches and pats ALICE on the back.

PARTRIDGE: Way to go, Alice. That's what Christmas is all about. Showing kindness and goodwill towards others.

ALICE: Can you believe that? A swan who couldn't swim. Well, I guess there's more to come . . .

PARTRIDGE: The mic's all yours . . .

ALICE steps up to the microphone and once again sings . . .

ALICE:

ON THE EIGHTH DAY OF CHRISTMAS, MY TRUE LOVE SENT TO ME . . . EIGHT MAIDS A-MILKING . . .

A large group of "MILKMAIDS" enter, carrying protest signs and shouting slogans indicating that they are on strike. They march around in a circle while their leader carries a bullhorn.

MAGGIE: We won't milk. We won't milk. (*MAGGIE notices ALICE and walks over to her. Still yelling through bullhorn, she shouts.*)
Down with corporate greed. Down with corporate greed.

ALICE: Hey, that's a little loud.

MAGGIE: Sorry.

ALICE: What's going on?

MAGGIE: We are members of NAFOM, Chapter 322. And we're on strike.

ALICE: On strike. For what?

MAGGIE: Unfair labor practices. Poor working conditions. Right ladies?

ALL MILKMAIDS: We won't milk! We won't milk!

ALICE: Well, if you won't milk, how am I supposed to get my eight maids a-milking?

MAGGIE: That's just what we're protesting against. Greed! Greed. Everybody wants milk. Milk for ice cream. Milk for cereal. And this time of the year, it gets even worse with this whole "leaving milk and cookies for Santa" thing. But the ladies of NAFOM are tired of being taken advantage of.

ALICE: NAFOM?

MAGGIE: North American Federation of Milkmaids. We've had it up to here with consumer demands. While you're all sitting in your cozy little kitchens enjoying a cup of hot chocolate or a box of Milkduds, we're down on our hands and knees under a cow's rear-end, milking our fingers to the bone. All we want is some respect. Right, ladies?

The MILKMAIDS chant louder and wave their signs furiously.

ALL MILKMAIDS: We won't milk! We won't milk! *(They step forward and encourage the audience to join in the chant.)* We won't milk! We won't milk!

ALICE: *(Attempting to calm the crowd.)* Okay, okay. I understand. What you want is a little respect.

MAGGIE: That's right. Us milkmaids do all the dirty work. While the corporate bigwigs fly around in their jets all day, sipping lattes made with OUR MILK *(MILKMAIDS boo loudly.)*, we have to get up at 4 a.m. and milk those stinking cows. Everybody else gets to stay snuggled in their beds with visions of sugarplums and all that. But not us. We're up every morning, milking away so people can enjoy our delicious milk. Well, we've had it!

ALICE: So, what is it exactly that NAFOM wants?

MAGGIE: What do we want, ladies?

ALL MILKMAIDS: Respect! *(They start up a new chant.)* We want respect! We want respect!

Alternatively, have the Milkmaids jump into a rendition of Aretha Franklin's song, "RESPECT."

THE TWELVE DAZE OF CHRISTMAS

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