Christmas Shoes Blues

By

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EXT. SHOE STORE, ESTABLISHING - NIGHT

Snowflakes fall gently on a small, quaint shop.

In front of the store, carolers walk by singing songs of the Savior’s birth.

A sign which reads, "1 More Day Until X-Mas" hangs above a nativity scene displayed in the storefront window.

INT. SHOE STORE - NIGHT

A long line of customers fill the disheveled store. Empty boxes and uncoupled shoes are thrown haphazardly about. The store is a mess.

At the front of the line, a ragged looking kid stands with a box of red pumps. He is dirty from head to toe, his clothes plagued with holes and patches. This is NATHAN (9).

Nathan steps up to the register and puts his box on the counter. The old man behind the register is MARTY (70’s). He has a warm smile and kind eyes.

NATHAN
Sir, I want to buy these shoes for my mama, please.

MARTY
Of course young man.

Nathan steps up to the register and puts his box on the counter. The old man behind the register is MARTY (70’s). He has a warm smile and kind eyes.

NATHAN
Could you hurry, sir, Daddy says there’s not much time.

MARTY
Time? What do you mean son?

NATHAN
You see, she’s been sick for quite a while and I know these shoes would make her smile.

MARTY
Well I’m sure they’ll make her feel much better.
CONTINUED: 2.

NATHAN
I want her to look beautiful if mama meets Jesus tonight.

The line of customers behind Nathan AWW’s.

MARTY
Your total comes to seven hundred and sixteen dollars and twenty eight cents.

Nathan pulls out a soiled sock from his pocket filled with coins. He dumps the sock on the counter and hundreds of pennies spill out.

The line of customers behind Nathan GROANS.

Marty stares at Nathan wide eyed in disbelief.

INT. SHOE STORE - LATER

Several stacks of coins stand tall on the counter as Marty counts the last few remaining pennies.

MARTY
Seven hundred and eighty one, seven hundred and eighty two, seven hundred and eighty three total.

NATHAN
Seven hundred and eighty three dollars?

MARTY
Pennies.

NATHAN
Is that enough?

MARTY
These are Sergio Rossi pumps son.

Nathan looks at him confused.

MARTY
The answer is no.

NATHAN
But, but, but Daddy says there’s not much time and I want my mama to look-

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

MARTY
Beautiful if she meets Jesus tonight. I know young man, you already told me. I hate to break it to you, but I can’t just give you these shoes for free. Money’s tight these days. I’m strapped for cash too. Just look at me. I’m seventy years old and I’m working at a shoe store. I can’t pay my bills, my gay son is too cheap to put me in a nursing home, and I have to take orders from some broad who’s young enough to be my granddaughter. Now get out before you get me fired.

Heart-broken, Nathan takes the box and turns around. He runs into ROBERT (40’s) who is next in line and resembles Rob Lowe. Nathan looks up at Robert with tears in his eyes.

NATHAN
Mama made Christmas good at our house, though most years she did without. Tell me sir, what am I going to do? Somehow I’ve got to buy these Christmas shoes.

Robert takes out his wallet.

ROBERT
Sorry kid, I’m Jewish. I’m only here for the sales.

Robert side steps Nathan and walks up to the register.

Nathan walks away.

MARTY
(sighs)
Hey son...

Nathan gasps as his eyes light up with hope.

Marty holds up a dirty sock.

MARTY
My counter isn’t going to clean itself.
EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Nathan walks out of the store with a sock full of change and a heavy heart. He sniffs.

JOE
Hey! Kid!

Nathan looks up and sees a ragged hobo. This is JOE (50’s).

JOE
I saw what happened in there. Just terrible. Absolutely terrible. And right before Christmas!

NATHAN
Tell me sir, what am I going to do?

JOE
I know just the thing that will cheer you up.

NATHAN
You do?

JOE
Yep. It’s an old Christmas game my father used to play with me when I was your age.

Joe leads Nathan down a dark back alley.

NATHAN
My Daddy says there’s not much time.

JOE
Nonsense! It’ll only take a minute or two.

NATHAN
Somehow I’ve got to buy her those Christmas shoes.

JOE
I’ll give you seven hundred dollars.

NATHAN
What kind of game is it?

(CONTINUED)
JOE
It’s called find little Jesus.

Joe reaches into his jacket pocket and pulls out a miniature baby Jesus figurine. He shows it to Nathan.

JOE
See this baby Jesus?

NATHAN
Yes.

JOE
Good. Now close your eyes so I can hide him.

Nathan closes his eyes. Joe throws the figurine down the alley.

JOE
Okay you can open them now.

NATHAN
Where’s baby Jesus?

JOE
You have to find him! Here’s a hint, he’s in one of my pockets.

Nathan reaches for Joe’s pocket.

JOE
You may have to dig deep.

A bright white light engulfs Nathan and Joe.

OFFICER MCDAVIS
Freeze!

OFFICER MCDAVIS (40’s) stands behind an open car door with his gun drawn. He’s a porker of a man with a thick red beard and a bald head.

Joe throws his hands in the air.

OFFICER MCDAVIS
What did I say about soliciting sex from a minor hobo Joe?

JOE
But this one isn’t in a stroller!
OFFICER MCDAVIS
Doesn’t matter Joe. I have to take you down to the station for this one.

JOE
You son of a bitch!

Joe snatches the sock full of coins from Nathan’s clutch. He jumps to his feet and charges towards Officer McDavis. He swings the sock high above his head like a lasso.

JOE
Merry fucking Christmas cock sucker!

OFFICER MCDAVIS
Run kid! Run!

Nathan flees the scene. GUNSHOTS are heard in the background.

EXT. NATHAN’S TRAILER HOME, ESTABLISHING - NIGHT

A dingy trailer sits in a crowded trailer park. Empty beer cans and bottles of Old Crow speckle the overgrown lawn in front of the trailer.

Nathan darts towards the trailer, opens the front door, and enters the-

INT. NATHAN’S TRAILER HOME - CONTINUOUS

Nathan bursts through the door. He stops dead in his tracks.

A scrawny hillbilly, JACK (40’s), humps MAGGIE (40’s) from behind. He chugs a bottle of Listerine as his hips rock back and forth.

Maggie lies facedown and motionless on a stained mattress.

Startled, Jack sprays a mouth full of blue all over the room. He exits Maggie, snatches a pillow, and covers himself.

NATHAN
What are you doing to Mommy?

JACK
I thought I told you to go out and get some goddamn shoes!
Jack’s red nose accentuates his scruffy face and tattered hair. He’s obviously drunk.

NATHAN
I tried, but the man at the store wouldn’t sell them to me.

JACK
Well go back and try again! Me and my yule log need some more time with your mother...to grieve.

NATHAN
Is she dead Daddy?

JACK
What did I say about using the "D" word?

NATHAN
Dead?

JACK
No, Daddy. I’m not your father. I’m your mother’s boyfriend. Well, used to be anyways. She died while you were out.

Nathan’s eyes well up.

JACK
Get the hell out of here Nathan. You’re killing my holiday cheer.

Nathan sobs.

JACK
God damn it kid. My jingle bells are turning blue. Cut that shit out!

Nathan wails even louder.

JACK
I said get!

Jack picks up an open jar of tainted petroleum jelly and throws it at Nathan.

The jar of jelly misses Nathan and explodes on the wall behind him. Nathan runs out the door and into the-
EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

Nathan darts out of the trailer and into the street, when suddenly-

BAM! A police car comes out of nowhere and slams right into Nathan. Nathan’s body soars through the air.

The car doesn’t even stop.

INT. COP CAR - CONTINUOUS

Joe drives the cop car like a mad man. He jerks the wheel back and forth with a huge grin. His face is covered in blood.

JOE
Merry fucking Christmas bitches!

INT. HEAVEN - TIMELESS

Hundreds of people stand in line outside the pearly gates. One by one they greet SAINT PETER (70’s) to hear their final judgment.

Maggie stands in the middle of the line. She looks like the ideal Mom. Pretty, gentle, kind.

Behind her stands Officer McDavis.

OFFICER MCDAVIS
And I said, put down that innocent child! But that damn dirty Santa impostor held a knife to that poor boy’s throat. I drew my pistol, took a deep breath, and bam! I shot him square in the forehead.

MAGGIE
Oh my god. Was the boy okay?

OFFICER MCDAVIS
He was just fine. As I sat in the ambulance bleeding to death, I could see the child as he was reunited with his mother and father. That last mental picture was so vivid, it’s as though the boy were standing right in front of me at this very moment.

POOF! Nathan appears out of nowhere next to Maggie.

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NATHAN
Mommy!

MAGGIE
Nathan!

The two embrace. McDavis fidgets.

MAGGIE
How did you get here?

NATHAN
(pointing to McDavis)
Santa ran me over with that man’s car!

MCDAVIS
Shoot! I just remembered that I’m supposed to meet a friend here. I think he’s at the back of the line. I should probably go meet him.

McDavis slowly backs away and then darts.

MAGGIE
It doesn’t matter how you got here. We’re finally together, forever.

LATER

Maggie and Nathan reach the front of the line. Saint Peter mashes buttons on a Gameboy, ignoring his surroundings.

SAINT PETER
Jesus butt fucking Christ, if I get one more goddamn Zubat in this godforsaken cave, I’m going to shove a Bible up my rectum and blow my holy water on an alter boy.

Maggie coughs. Saint Peter doesn’t even look up.

SAINT PETER
Name?

MAGGIE
Maggie and Nathan Gladwell.

Saint Peter doesn’t even glance at the Book of Life which is open before him. He plays his game instead.

(CONTINUED)
SAINT PETER
Here it is. Open the gates.

The pearly gates open. A blinding ray of light bursts through the doors. Trumpets play. JESUS (30’s) steps out wearing a glittery gold robe and a headset.

JESUS
Welcome to heaven my dear children.

Jesus looks Maggie up and down. His face changes from welcoming to agitated. The trumpets stop and the lights dim.

JESUS
(with a lisp)
Dad almighty Saint Peter.
Seriously?

Scared shitless, Saint Peter hides his Gameboy in his robe.

SAINT PETER
What is it my Savior?

JESUS
Come on sweetie Petie. Do I really have to spell it out for you bitch?

SAINT PETER
I told you not to call me that.

MAGGIE
I don’t understand. What’s wrong?

JESUS
What’s wrong? Oh honey, you see we have a small yet simple policy here in heaven.

Jesus points to a sign hanging on the pearly gates which reads: NO SHOES NO SERVICE. Maggie is barefoot.

MAGGIE
I don’t understand. This is heaven. You’re Jesus. You love people no matter what they look like.

JESUS
Why do people always say that?
Where in the Bible do I tell people to look like vagrants? I’m sorry dear, but this is heaven. The most (MORE)
JESUS (cont’d)
fabulous club of them all. If we let just anyone in, then no one will want to come in.

MAGGIE
You’re rejecting me because I’m not wearing the right shoes?

JESUS
Not the right shoes sweetie. No shoes.

Jesus speaks into his headset.

JESUS
JC here requesting backup. We have a code black outside the pearly gates. I repeat, code black outside the pearly gates.

MAGGIE
Code black? What does that mean?

JESUS
Have you ever seen a pair of sneakers hanging from the telephone lines in a white neighborhood?

MAGGIE
You’re racist?

JESUS
Racist? Holy me on a cross, I let like three black people into heaven this month.

MAGGIE
Three?

JESUS
Well yeah. We only have like two bottles of dad damn Hennessy.

Two angels, MICHAEL and GABRIEL (30’s) arrive. They are shirtless and look like male models.

JESUS
Take her away boys!

MAGGIE
No! Please don’t send me and my son to hell!

(Continued)
JESUS
Your son ain’t going anywhere honey.

Jesus claps his hands twice.

JESUS
Let’s move it people!

Michael and Gabriel grab a hold of Maggie and escort her away. Maggie tries to break free of their grasp.

MAGGIE
Nathan!

Nathan reaches for Maggie but Jesus holds him back.

NATHAN
Mommy!

POOF! Maggie, Michael, and Gabriel all disappear in a cloud of smoke. Nathan begins to cry.

JESUS
Don’t cry little boy. I know just the thing that will cheer you up.

Jesus walks Nathan through the gates of heaven.

NATHAN
You do?

JESUS
Yep. It’s an old game called find little Jesus.

CUT TO BLACK.