

Christmas at the TNT Truck Stop

An Original radio drama by

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CHARACTERS:

CHUB: Gruff talking, middle-aged man from mid-Missouri. Co-owner of the T.N.T. Truck Stop with his wife Joanie. He cooks; she waits tables.

JOANIE: Pleasant voiced, middle-aged woman from Missouri. Co-owner of the T.N.T. Truck Stop with her husband Chub. She waits tables, and hires the help.

JACK: Young male truck driver, preferably African-American

ELLIS: Old time truck driver with years on the road, and little education. Probably from Arkansas or Kentucky.

LARRY: Middle-aged truck driver, East Coast accent

MAGGIE: Older woman from mid-Missouri

SANTA: Deep-voiced man of any age, preferably with no discernible accent

NOTE:

A cast of four men and two women are required. Chub and Santa are played by the same man.

A sound effects person is also required.

1. SFX: Plate hitting counter, ding of bell being tapped

2. CHUB: Order up.

3. SFX: Grill being scraped

4. JOANIE: (o/m) Chub?

5. CHUB: C'mon back, Joanie. Maggie here yet?

6. SFX: Woman's footsteps

7. JOANIE: No. Any other night // she'd be out there ...

8. CHUB: Seems like she'd wanna get here early on Christmas Eve.

9. JOANIE: Ain't like we're givin' out bonuses.

10. CHUB: You hired her.

11. JOANIE: She's a good cook.

12. CHUB: Coughin' all the danged time ...

13. JOANIE: I know, I know ...

14. CHUB: She's old as the hills and the hollers both put together ...
15. JOANIE: I said I know.
16. CHUB: And she's costin' us money too. Why, the size of those doughnuts alone ...
17. JOANIE: Chub, we can't just let her go. Drivers stop by here from all over the country just to see Maggie, just to get some of those giant doughnuts you're complainin' about ...
18. CHUB: But what if she's got TB? All that coughin' ...
19. JOANIE: She's a heavy smoker, you know that ...
20. CHUB: That cough is gettin' worse, and you know it. What if it's somethin' even worse than TB? Worse for her, I mean. Like lung cancer?
21. JOANIE: Well, we could ask her to see the doctor.
22. CHUB: I say we retire her now.
23. JOANIE: At Christmas? Why can't it wait until we get back after the New Year?
24. CHUB: That's just it, Joanie. We close up tomorrow until after New Year's, and it's year end. This'd be the time to retire her, give her a severance check or something ...
25. JOANIE: I don't know, Chub, it seems so heartless ...
26. CHUB: You need to let her go, Joanie.
27. JACK: (o/m) Joanie? Can I get some more coffee out here?
28. JOANIE: Coming right up. (Whisper) Well you're the one that writes the paychecks, Chub. We can talk about this later. Right now I gotta get back to my customers.
29. *SFX: Woman's footsteps. Coffee pouring*
30. JOANIE: There you go, Jack. How 'bout you, Larry? Doing okay?
31. LARRY: You can top me up.
32. *SFX: Pouring*
33. ELLIS: When's Maggie coming, Joanie? Or has she got the holiday off? I know people deserve to have Christmas off, but if truck drivers have to be out on Christmas Eve, why I'm glad that Maggie has to come in to the T.N.T. and cook. Man, I got a taste for some of her biscuits and gravy tonight.
34. JACK: I'm gonna stay long enough to get me some doughnuts to take home to my family.
35. LARRY: That sounds good, but I got to hit the road pretty soon myself. When'd you say she's comin' Joanie?
36. JOANIE: She'll be along. Listen you guys, Chub made cinnamon rolls today and we got some left. Let me get you some. On the house.
37. ELLIS: No, that's okay, I can wait ...
38. LARRY: I'll take one off your hands ...
39. *SFX: Door opening, highway sounds, Maggie coughing*
40. ELLIS: Here she comes! Hey, Maggie! Hang that coat up and come on over here and give us a hug.
41. *SFX: Coat rustling, then woman's footsteps.*
42. ELLIS: I like that red apron. What's that in your uniform pocket?
43. MAGGIE: Oh, this old thing? That's my Santy hanky. I wear him every Christmas, 'cause he matches my apron. (coughs violently)

44. JOANIE: (INTERNAL MONOLOGUE) Here she comes, stupid cigarette hanging outa her mouth like always. And I can smell that cheap perfume from here. She must take a bath in it. And where'd she get that purple lipstick? She's too old for such foolishness. But look at her flirt with the drivers, sashayin' around in that matchin' apron and hanky. Nobody wears that crap any more. Chub's right. I have to do it.

45. ELLIS: Watch those ashes, Maggie. Woops! Too late.

46. MAGGIE: Aw, a few ashes never hurt nothing. How you like my new perfume?

47. JACK: I wondered what that smell was.

48. MAGGIE: It's a new one by Avon. Shirley sold me fifty dollars worth of stuff, and I got a free lipstick too.

49. LARRY: That's just dandy, Mag.

50. MAGGIE: Well, I better get in there and relieve Chub. Him and Joanie'll probably want to get home and get ready for Christmas morning.

51. ELLIS: Why sure, you get on back to that kitchen and start cooking. I have to hit the road directly, but not before your biscuits is done.

52. *SFX: Woman's footsteps*

53. MAGGIE: Hey, Chub, Merry Christmas. (Coughs).

54. CHUB: Cover your mouth, and dang it, Maggie, put that cigarette out!

55. MAGGIE: Sure, Chub, whatever you say. (Coldly) You're the boss.

56. CHUB: Aw, Mag, don't be hateful.

57. MAGGIE: Not hateful. Just statin' a fact.

58. CHUB: Well, I am the boss, but you don't have to say it like I'm bein' all mean just 'cause I ask you to put your cigarette out.

59. MAGGIE: Yep.

60. CHUB: I'm tired, that's all.

61. MAGGIE: Go on home then. Have a good night.

62. CHUB: All right, I will. See ya.

63. *SFX: Man's footsteps*

64. JOANIE: Chub, wait! Where you going?

65. CHUB: I'm heading out. You come on later. After.

66. JOANIE: You're not even gonna stay and ?

67. CHUB: No. I set her off. I'm no good at this sort of thing. I'll see you at home.

68. JOANIE: What do you mean you set her off? Chub? Get back here...

69. CHUB: (o/m) Merry Christmas everybody! See you next year!

70. *SFX: Door opening, highway sounds. Door closing. Man's footsteps*

71. JOANIE: Mag, you need any help in here in the kitchen?

72. MAGGIE: No, I'm just gonna get the biscuits stirred up and in the oven, then mix up the doughnuts so they can rise, and when the biscuits is almost done, I'll make the gravy. Like always. (Suspiciously) Why? When did I ever need help in the kitchen?

73. JOANIE: I don't know. Just. Look out! Those ashes are gonna drop ...

74. MAGGIE: Oh oh.

75. JOANIE: Now you'll have to start over with a new batch.

76. MAGGIE: What? No, a few ashes never hurt nothin'. Besides, the way I look at it, cigarette ashes is good for you.
77. JOANIE: Are you crazy?
78. MAGGIE: No. I figure it's like potash. [pronounced pot-ash] You know wood ash is good for your plants, you spread them around the bottom of your plants, and it makes them grow real good. And tobacco is a plant, so when you burn tobacco, it's just ashes from green stuff, like vegetables almost. So, that can't be bad for you. Especially when it gets all baked up in your biscuits and then smothered in gravy.
79. JOANIE: Oh law. I guess I just oughta be glad the health inspector isn't here, and count my blessings that way.
80. MAGGIE: I explained it all to him the last time he came. By the time I was done talkin', he agreed with me. Besides, he ate some of my biscuits and gravy and said he never had any better.
81. JOANIE: I'm getting a headache.
82. MAGGIE: I got some asperns in my purse.
83. JOANIE: No, I got some of my own; I have to go look for 'em.
84. *SFX:* Woman's footsteps. Unzipping of handbag, rattling of pill bottle, water pouring in glass. Cap replaced on bottle. Woman's footsteps
85. JOANIE: Who needs more coffee? Ellis?
86. ELLIS: Sure, you bet. Say, Chub sure beat it outa here tonight.
87. JOANIE: Yeah, he's tired. Plus he's still got to finish wrapping some presents.
88. LARRY: He's a lucky guy. You both are. To have each other, I mean.
89. JOANIE: What about you, Larry? You got anybody waiting at home this year?
90. LARRY: Nah. Just the deadline. I just drive and make up time on the holidays.
91. JACK: My kids'll be waitin' for some of Maggie's doughnuts for breakfast when I roll in tomorrow morning. I been bringing those doughnuts home every Christmas now for, what? How many years has Maggie been here anyway?
92. JOANIE: Twelve, I guess. No, thirteen.
93. JACK: That sounds right. Because the first time I brought them home, my wife was pregnant with our first daughter. Man, she fell on them doughnuts like they were manna from heaven.
94. ELLIS: I'm tellin' ya.
95. LARRY: How old is Maggie anyway? Shouldn't she be retired?
96. MAGGIE: (o/m) Somebody talkin' about me?
97. ELLIS: Just wonderin' how old you're gettin' to be, Mag.
98. MAGGIE: (o/m) Be seventy-nine next month. Why? Who's askin'?
99. LARRY: I's just curious, Maggie. No offense.
100. JOANIE: I think they were wondering why you haven't retired, Maggie.

101. MAGGIE: I don't see no sense in it, that's why. I like to work. All's I do is work, then go home and make my dolls, or quilts, or just sit around watchin' TV. If I didn't work, I wouldn't never see nobody 'cept Helen. And she works at the factory all day. She don't want to do nothin' when she gets home. She sure don't want to sit around talkin' to her mother all evenin'. If she talks to anybody it's on the phone with my granddaughter up in Wichita. Nope. Work is fun for me. I'd go plumb crazy if I wasn't workin'. Shoot. Joanie, gimme a cup o' coffee would ya?

102. JOANIE: What about the kitchen?

103. MAGGIE: What about it? I ain't heard no orders come up. The first batch of biscuits is bakin'. The doughnuts is risin'. I reckon I got time to drink a cup o' coffee. But you're the boss.

104. JOANIE: Oh now, don't be like that. Of course you can have a cup of coffee.

105. MAGGIE: Well.

106. JOANIE: Something on your mind?

107. MAGGIE: No. Something sure was on Chub's though.

108. JOANIE: Don't pay no attention to him.

109. MAGGIE: Whatever you say.

110. JACK: Say, Maggie, could you give me some advice.

111. MAGGIE: Advice?

112. JACK: Yeah. I wanted to bring something extra to my wife this Christmas, would you walk over here to the gift area with me?

113. MAGGIE: Sure thing.

114. SFX: Footsteps of man and woman

115. JACK: Looks like there's a lot of nice stuff here.

116. MAGGIE: The usual. A bunch of local gals make stuff to sell out here. Quilts, doilies, slippers, dolls, and of course black walnut fudge and gooseberry jelly. Stuff like that. This here is one of the Santy dolls I made this year. I couldn't get the regular man hands though, so it's got girl doll hands. The mittens cover 'em up, but if your girls took 'em off, they might wonder about ol' Santy.

117. JACK: Well, like I said, I'm really lookin' for something for my wife Shamala.  
[pronounced Shah-mah-lah]

118. MAGGIE: Shamala? What kind of name is that?

119. JACK: It's the name her parents gave her. Beautiful isn't it? Shamala. Beautiful, like her.

120. MAGGIE: Real nice. How about some perfume? One of the gals makes her own scents out of rose oil.

121. JACK: No, I already got her favorite kind.

122. MAGGIE: Does she like candy?

123. JACK: Is there something I can give her that, I don't know. Something that will make her remember how much she used to love me in the beginning.

124. MAGGIE: She don't love you no more?

125. JACK: She's so busy.

126. MAGGIE: Too busy for her husband?

127. JACK: It seems like it sometimes.

128. MAGGIE:        You too busy for her?  
129. JACK:    No!  
130. MAGGIE:        You help out around the house?  
131. JACK:    It's not like that.  
132. MAGGIE:        I don't mean to meddle.  
133. JACK:    Sorry. I did ask your advice.  
134. MAGGIE:        Yeah. How come you to ask me anyway?  
135. JACK:    Well, you were married weren't you?  
136. MAGGIE:        Four times. But that don't make me no expert.