

Madeline, Harsha

30

MADELINE'S CHRISTMAS

Side
B

~~I AM CHILLY, CHILLY, CHILLY, OR PERHAPS
JUST GETTING OLD.~~

~~And Christmas Eve no less! Now I have nothing to keep
me warm!~~

~~MY APPENDAGES ARE GOING NUMB, I THINK
I'M TURNING BLUE.~~

~~I CANNOT WALK MUCH FURTHER AND I DON'T
KNOW WHAT TO DO.~~

~~And yet something told me to go there—the light was
bright at the house. I must have done the right thing.
(HARSHA turns around and begins to walk slower and
slower.) I must make it back to Miss Clavel's house.
Must get warm. Too cold out here. I hoped to make it
home tonight... (HARSHA sings the following very
slowly as he walks slower and slower to MISS
CLAVEL's front door.)~~

~~BUT I'M CHILLY, CHILLY, CHILLY AND
THERE'S NO RELIEF IN SIGHT!
TO...~~

START
→

*(HARSHA knocks on the door three times and then
freezes in place.)*

MADELINE. Now who could *that* be? (*MADELINE opens
the door and sees HARSHA.*) Monsieur Harsha! Can you
speak? Are you all right? You're *frozen!* Wait there, I'll
get some warm water! (*MADELINE runs to get some
water. HARSHA doesn't move.*) Here you go! (*She care-
fully pours water on his feet. He slowly begins to move
them. The hand that he used to knock is still frozen in
place.*)

HARSHA (*hard for him to speak*). Cold! Freezing! Inside!

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(B) MADELINE. Come in, come in! Have a seat! I'll get you a blanket! (*MADELINE puts him in a chair, covers him in a blanket, and puts his feet in a bucket.*) Here's some soup to warm you up. (*MADELINE puts a spoon into his frozen hand and guides it toward the soup bowl.*)

HARSHA. Thank you, thank you so much...uh...what is your name, child?

MADELINE. Madeline.

HARSHA. Madeline! I've heard about you. What a lovely name! I'll always remember Madeline who saved me from freezing on Christmas Eve. Miss Clavel must be very proud of you.

MADELINE. Well, I think that she's proud of me...most of the time. (*Pause.*) Of course, I *can* be a handful.

HARSHA. So I've heard.

MADELINE (*beat*). You have? What have you heard?

HARSHA. Let's see. I've heard that you aren't afraid of wild animals.

MADELINE. That's true.

HARSHA. And I've heard that you were very brave when you had your appendix taken out.

MADELINE. Oui! I have a scar and everything!

HARSHA. Aren't you a lucky girl! Let's see, where was I? Ah yes, you seem to enjoy walking on stone bridges. Wasn't there a rather frightening experience when you fell into the river?

MADELINE. The bridge was very slippery that day. I won't be doing that again.

HARSHA. I see. And you helped the son of the Spanish ambassador, Pepito I believe, to be a kinder boy. You joined the circus for a while, and didn't you and Pepito have quite a horseback ride in London? (*MADELINE*

looks stunned.) And look at you now. Taking care of thirteen people.

MADELINE. Thirteen?

HARSHA. Yes, thirteen. Including me. Fourteen including yourself.

MADELINE. How do you know so much about me?

HARSHA. I read. *(He rises and stretches, testing his thawed-out limbs.)* Now, what can I do for you?

MADELINE. If you wouldn't mind, you could help me with these dishes. I'm going to see if I can find some Christmas decorations. That should cheer up Miss Clavel and the girls! *(MADELINE exits. HARSHA smiles knowingly. Lights dim.)*

HARSHA. I would be delighted.

(HARSHA looks at his magic ring. Magical lighting and sound effects. The dirty dishes are "cleaned" and put on the shelf by themselves [see productions notes]. MADELINE enters with some decorations. She sees that the dishes are done.)

MADELINE. The dishes! They are clean! How...how did you do that?

HARSHA. Magic, my dear Madeline. It's something that I'm quite good at.

MADELINE. Magic?

HARSHA. Magic!

MADELINE. Oh, I wish that we had some magic right now!

HARSHA. What do you mean?

(B)

MADELINE. The girls and Miss Clavel are sick. We are all terribly disappointed that we won't be able to visit our families for Christmas.

HARSHA. You are the only healthy one? How did that happen?

MADELINE. I wore my scarf.

HARSHA. I see. (*He doesn't.*) Hmm... Maybe there is something that I can do.

MADELINE. Like what?

HARSHA. Have you ever heard of a magic-carpet ride?

MADELINE. A magic-carpet ride?

HARSHA. Yes! Doesn't that sound marvelous? You aren't afraid of heights are you?

MADELINE. Me? Afraid? Pooh, pooh! I'm not afraid of anything! It's just that, well, I can't leave the girls and Miss Clavel.

HARSHA. What if I told you that they could come along?

MADELINE. How could we all fit on *one* rug?

HARSHA (*laughs*). Not *one* rug, Madeline! Remember, you bought twelve!

MADELINE. Where will we go?

HARSHA. To visit your families, of course!

MADELINE. Oh, that would make us all so happy! But the girls are sick. They have to stay in bed. But...it wouldn't hurt to ask Miss Clavel permission! I hope that she says yes!

HARSHA. Madeline, sometimes the most wonderful things can happen. Especially at Christmastime. Miracles. Wonderful miracles. Sick girls can become healthy again.