



# TWAS

*a play in one act*

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STUART ROBERTS

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# ORIGINAL PERFORMANCE

*Twas* was performed at the Courtyard Studio,  
on June 12th 2009. The cast was as follows:

**FATHER**

Arran Mckenna

**MOTHER**

Steph Brewster

*Director*

Fiona Atkin

*Designer*

Dan Jobson

*Lighting*

David Clapham

*Music*

David Clapham



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# TWAS

*Christmas time in the 1950s. There are decorations, a little tree, stockings up. There's a large box on the table. A MOTHER is emptying of a batch of scones, a FATHER, with cardigan and pipe pokes his head in from the outside.*

**FATHER:** Is he asleep?

**MOTHER:** Shh.

**FATHER:** Is he?

**MOTHER:** Finally.

*He walks on wearing massive black boots which are incongruous with the rest of his attire. He drags snow and sludge from outside over the floor.*

**FATHER:** Thought he'd never drop off.

**MOTHER:** You remember what you were like at Christmas.

**FATHER:** Never going to bed.

**MOTHER:** Wanting to see Santa.

**FATHER:** Driving the parents crazy.

**MOTHER:** Your parents were already crazy.

**FATHER:** Hey, sauce. Sauce. Did he remember put out the fire under the chimney?

**MOTHER:** Still blazing merrily away.

**FATHER:** That's our boy. Head in the clouds.

**MOTHER:** Would you have it any other way?

*FATHER shakes his head and starts taking off his boots, for the first time the woman notices the sludge.*

**MOTHER:** You're traipsing snow throughout my lovely house.

**FATHER:** Well, we have to have big boot prints out there. It's authentic.

**MOTHER:** Any more acts of authenticity? White hairs, sled marks, reindeer droppings.

**FATHER:** Where am I going to find reindeer droppings?

**MOTHER:** Would you like the short answer or the long answer.

The parents begin taking typical Santa accessories from the box- the hat, the hair etc.. and inexplicably picking them apart or cutting them. It doesn't

seem that bizarre, merely odd.

**FATHER:** I dread to think what the short answer is.

**MOTHER:** Norway.

**FATHER:** ...There are no reindeer in Norway.

**MOTHER:** There are.

**FATHER:** They're all in Lappland.

**MOTHER:** Where's Lappland?

**FATHER:** It's there. They're not in Norway.

**MOTHER:** They holiday in Norway. They go for the fjords.

**FATHER:** .. No more christmas crackers for you.

**MOTHER:** You know he refused to take off his little crown.

**FATHER:** He's the king of Christmas. The Christmas king.

**MOTHER:** A child's imagination is a wonderful thing isn't it.

**FATHER:** It's a wonderful, wonderful thing.

**MOTHER:** He thought he saw Santa twice before I put him to bed.

**FATHER:** Well that will help the illusion.

**MOTHER:** Said he wanted to stay up and make sure Santa gave him the proper present.

**FATHER:** Huh. You see that's what I don't like.

**MOTHER:** Have you-

**FATHER:** This whole gimme gimme gimme

**MOTHER:** Have you seen the gift list yet. *[She hands him a massive pile of paper]*.

**FATHER:** Oh he'll take the cash equivalent, that's obliging.

**MOTHER:** And entrepreneurial.

**FATHER:** When did it become about the presents. Did I tell you about the Christmas I got my bike.

**MOTHER:** No, no you haven't, not once *[he doesn't look fooled]*... ever.

**FATHER:** Would you like to hear it again.

**MOTHER:** It'll be like the first time.

**FATHER:** I was about 8 or 9

**MOTHER:** 10.

**FATHER:** I was about 10. and I desperately wanted a bike. Truly. I had

bought, with my milk money, I had bought a little bike bell, and I would pretend to be riding around on it- Scissors? ta- and I would ride around for miles on my invisible bike. I would ride it to school, I would ride it back. And I kept writing and writing to Santa, please, please, please, can I have a real bike.

**MOTHER:** You didn't prefer an invisible one?

**FATHER:** And of course my parents were reading the letters, I found them a few years later going through in their underwear drawer.

**MOTHER:** That's so touching and disturbing.

**FATHER:** And it just so happens, my dad had gotten laid off from the factory a few days earlier. I didn't know. But he decided that his boy was going to have the bike that he wanted so much. And so he took up two jobs, and shovelled snow on the weekends, because his boy was going to have that bike. And on Christmas day, when I ran down to find a shiny new red bike, I looked up, and there were my folks, in the dressing gown, my dad looked so tired, so exhausted but still he attached the bell, and he took me down the driveway, and he taught me how to ride. And I swore, when I grew up, *[hardens, loses his sentimental edge]* that that was never going to happen to me. Right. Are you sure he's asleep.

**MOTHER:** Like a little angel.

**FATHER:** Good *[hands over boots]* Throw those in the fire. Make sure they're-

**MOTHER:** Smouldering by the morning, but not unrecognisable. I throw the belt buckle in as well?

**FATHER:** Don't forget the wrapping paper and the bow, put them on the edge. Don't burn them too much.

**MOTHER:** Gosh Johnny, if you had just remembered to put out the fire, you could have had this present.

**FATHER:** You know and the great thing is this'll also teach him responsibility around the house.

**MOTHER:** How about teeth *[pulls out a box from below the table. Something rattles within]*

**FATHER:** Where did you?

**MOTHER:** There was a bum down the street.

**FATHER:** You didn't.

**MOTHER:** No silly, he died of the cold.

**FATHER:** Well, not that one it's got a plier mark on it.

**MOTHER:** But the rest?

**FATHER:** It'll all help the illusion.

**MOTHER:** Just one thing, what happens when he realises other people are still getting presents from Santa.

**FATHER:** He'll assume its just the folks trying to cover for his crime.

**MOTHER:** What a suspicious mind our baby has. What if he talks to someone.

**FATHER:** What, and imply that after all this time he was the one that killed Santa.

**MOTHER:** It's a wonderful thing childhood imagination.

**FATHER:** It's a wonderful, wonderful thing.

**END.**