

Christmas Shoes Blues

By

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FADE IN:

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.

Marty takes the box and proceeds to ring out Nathan.

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)

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)

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 sniffles.

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!

(CONTINUED)

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.

(CONTINUED)

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 god forsaken 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
Gladwell, Gladwell, Gladwell. Yep.
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)

(CONTINUED)

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!

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.