

All The Year

by

Matthew S. Hinton

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

*RICH, the father of the family**CAROL, the mother of the family**MARLA, the daughter of the family**DRAKE, the son of the family*

SETTING

A living room. An obscene number of picture frames of various sizes hang on an upstage wall, family and individual portraits broken up by artwork and the like. A rather comfortable looking couch flanked by a pair of end tables is center, and the usual trappings of a room where the family does their “living”. Nothing in the house seems new or fresh or sleek, or even dusty or worn; rather, everything appears simply well-loved and timeless. A heavy looking door to one side leads to the rest of the universe, opposite an exit to the rest of the house.

All the Year was first produced by Gaslight Theatre Company (Wilkes-Barre, PA). It was included in the eighth and final installment of the PLAYROOM series.

At rise, a clearly fake Christmas tree takes up a lonely corner upstage, it is covered with all manner of decorations: lights; an ornament or two; a gourd; maize; an American flag; small pictures or figurines of Martin Luther King Jr., George Washington, Abraham Lincoln; a felt shamrock; and on and on.

RICH supervises the scene with an oversized leather-bound book – it is the size and likeness of an antiquated family bible, or the condensed Oxford English Dictionary, and he quotes from it occasionally throughout the play. CAROL carefully, almost reverently adorns the tree with Easter eggs that are connected along one long strand. MARLA is there, holding a wrapped chocolate bunny, but is clearly uninterested in the ceremony. DRAKE watches somewhat wide-eyed, but is finishing eating his own bunny with ravenous glee.

MARLA: Is it time yet?

DRAKE: (*mouth full*) Yeah is it time yet?

CAROL: Ooh, yes, is it time yet?

RICH: Time?

MARLA: Daaad.

CAROL: Oh Richard, you know what they mean.

RICH: I know what they mean, and I know what they want. I know what you want. And yes. It IS time!

MARLA/DRAKE/CAROL: Yay!

RICH: Time for SATURNALIA!

MARLA/DRAKE/CAROL: (*collectively slumping*) Noooo!

RICH: (*really into it*) Saturnalia is ancient, the celebration of the earth itself, with its wheat (*he produces wheat*) and its wine (*he produces four glasses of wine*) and its whatnot (*he somehow produces whatnot*), as well as the gifts of the art to society – (*reading now*) for the arts make society, and a great nation deserves great art, and all the world's a stage, and without the world we would have no stage on which to perform out our lives. Upon Saturnalia next, we give thanks for our food, and so we eat of it, and we drink deep in appreciation of *Theatre*.

MARLA: Theater?

RICH: No. *Theatre*. With the “r” and the “e” reversed.

DRAKE: Ooh – so we get to go to the movies again like when we celebrated Thanksgiving this morning?

MARLA: Awesome. I'll get my coat.

(All except RICH begin to leave, motivated by the excitement of going to the movies.)

DRAKE: (*saying the title of whatever movie is big at the box office at the time*) Can we see _____ again?

CAROL: Oh, no dear, you're too young for that.

DRAKE: I'm in my thirties!

CAROL: Your father and I are going to see that romantic comedy: _____

RICH: NO! WE'RE NOT GOING TO THE MOVIES AGAIN. EVERYBODY GET BACK INTO THE LIVINGROOM RIGHT NOW BEFORE I BURN THIS FUCKING HOUSE TO THE GROUND!

CAROL: Jesus Christ, Rich. You said that we should celebrate Saturnalia with Theater.

RICH: (*As if he didn't just threaten to burn every possession they all own*) That was a Theater spelled "E-R". This is *THEATRE*. With the "r" and the "e" reversed.

MARLA: So what? We're, like, going to see a play to celebrate Saturnalia?

RICH: No no no no no no no no. Nothing like that. Theatre is a waste of time.

CAROL: And money!

(Everyone on stage takes a good, uncomfortably long look at the audience.)

MARLA: (*snapping them all out of it*) Okay, I give up. How do we celebrate Saturnalia if we don't go to the *THEATRE*-with-the-"r"-and-the-"e"-reversed?

RICH: It says here that we could perform soliloquies.

(RICH looks up with a smile at the idea, but no one else is excited by this)

... oh, and drink the wine.

(They now smile along with RICH, and CAROL pours the wine)

MARLA: Why do we celebrate Saturnalia again?

DRAKE: Because Satan says so. (*Raising his glass*) HAIL SATAN!

RICH: -Saturn. Saturn says so.

DRAKE: Hail Saturn!

ALL: Hail Saturn!

(*They drink*)

MARLA: Okay, so it is time yet?

DRAKE: Yeah Dad, is it time yet?

CAROL: Yeah Dad, is it time yet?

MARLA: Ew.

RICH: No, not time yet. We haven't performed any soliloquies.

(They drink again, this time longer.)

RICH: Carol, you first.

CAROL: Richard.

RICH: Carol.

CAROL: Richard.

RICH: Carol, no. You do this every year.

CAROL: It's just –

RICH: Every. Year.

CAROL: Exactly. Why?

RICH: Don't.

CAROL: Why do we do this every year?

(The children are particularly interested in this debate, as it seems to have been going on for some time [time] now.)

RICH: Do *what*?

CAROL: FUCKING-THIS! Every holiday in ONE day?!

RICH: Because it's more efficient.

MARLA: More *efficient*?!

RICH: Yes. It allows us time to be more productive, you guys, we've gone over this.

MARLA: You make me go to school on December 25th, Dad.

RICH: And?

CAROL: And the school is fucking CLOSED on December 25th, Richard! All of them are!

RICH: Carol, please stop cursing on this high holy holiday of all high holy holidays!

CAROL: Oh, shove it up your high holy, DICK.

DRAKE: Holy shit.

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