



**Sample Pages from
Christmas in July**

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CHRISTMAS IN JULY

Two Holiday One Act Plays by
Mrs. Evelyn Merritt



Christmas in July

Characters

Herald A	Chancellor Two	Autumn
Herald B	Chancellor Three	Summer
Herald C	Santa	Spring
New Year	Elf	Winter
Last Year	Pilgrim	Father Time
Farrel	Cupid	Frances
Chancellor One	Bunny	

All the characters can be played by either gender. Even Father Time can be changed to Mother Time.

Whenever the CROWD is referred to, it is made up of the holiday characters above. Use as many extra characters in the crowd scenes as needed.

Set

A castle-inspired backdrop is in place for all three scenes.

Scene One: An open ballroom, no set required.

Scene Two: New Year's office. His desk is on a platform, above stage level.

Scene Three: Father Time's office. A small desk and chair SR.

Scene Four: New Year's office.

Costumes

The "holiday characters" are dressed to reflect their day in the calendar.

Father Time wears a long cloak with a sash that reads 'Father Time.'

New Year is dressed all in white. He wears a sash with the current year on it.

Last Year is dressed in Navy. She adds a Hawaiian shirt for Scene 2.

The Chancellors are dressed in winter colours: silver, navy and white. They wear long pants, long-sleeved shirts and long vests.

The Heralds are also dressed in winter colours. They wear tights and tunics.

Props

The Calendar. This should be an accordion file stuffed with papers so that when New and Farrel fight over it, the papers can fly out. It should be decorative and festive.

Suitcase for Last Year.

New Year's Contract. This should be a huge book. Something quite oversized. It could say "CONTRACT" on the front.

Sound Effects

A Trumpet Sound to announce the approach of the Heralds. If you have someone who can play the trumpet they could do this live.

A Warning Bell Sound whenever the New Year lets go of the calendar.

Scene One – A Ballroom in Calendar Castle.

It is the court of FATHER TIME. The stage is filled with people, all talking in small groups celebrating the New Year. A trio of HERALDS move CS.

HERALD A: The old year is over,

HERALD B: It went by so fast.

HERALD C: 365 days in the past.

HERALD A: The old year is over,

HERALD B: A new one's begun.

HERALD C: 365 days to be done.

ALL THREE: Tonight we are here,
To celebrate a brand new year,
Let's give him a great big cheer!

CROWD: Hip, hip, hooray! Hip, hip, hooray!

HERALDS: Ladies and Gentleman. We are pleased to introduce to you:
THE NEW YEAR.

*The CROWD applauds and parts down the center.
The NEW YEAR moves CS.*

NEW: Thank you. Thank you one and all. I especially want to thank Last Year; can we give her a round of applause? (*Everyone applauds. LAST YEAR waves from the CROWD.*) I promise I will do whatever it takes to make my year a happy, peaceful, fantastic year from beginning to end!

There is more applause and more cheering from the CROWD.

HERALDS: And now, the ceremonial Passing of Time.

A trumpet sounds. The CROWD is hushed. LAST YEAR steps forward, holding a calendar.

LAST: I hold in my hands, The Calendar.

There are ooohhs and awwws from the CROWD.

LAST: Every year this calendar is passed from last year to next year.
And now I pass it to you.

She passes the Calendar to NEW. The CROWD applauds. The HERALDS step forward.

HERALDS: We bow to you, the New Year.
 May you look after these weeks and days.
 We know your year will be bountiful,
 And our song will ring with praise.

CHANCELLOR ONE: Let the count down commence. (*holds up a big watch*) 10, 9, 8 (*everyone starts to count with him*) 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1.
 HAPPY NEW YEAR!!

CROWD: HAPPY NEW YEAR!!!

The CROWD all talks at once, hugging each other, congratulating NEW YEAR. The CROWD exits SL. NEW YEAR is left alone.

NEW: (*pacing back and forth*) Wow. I can't believe I'm going to be in charge of a whole year! A week was hard. A month was rough. But a whole year? I don't think I can do it. What if I make mistakes? Last Year was so good. I'll never be able to live up to her. Steady now. Father Time must have chosen me for a reason. I just wish I knew what it was.

FARREL, NEW YEAR's best friend, enters from SL.

FARREL: Hey Newbie, you're missing all the fun.

NEW: I'll be there in a minute.

FARREL: What's up? You look like you lost your best friend. And I know you didn't, seeing as I'm your best friend. (*bops NEW YEAR on the shoulder*)

NEW: I'm thinking about the job.

NEW crosses away from FARREL looking at the Calendar.

FARREL: (*following behind NEW*) Yeah! The New Year. Heavy stuff. I couldn't do it.

NEW: (*turning to face FARREL*) How come?

FARREL: I had to supervise March 1st last year. March 1st, you'd think it would be a nice quiet day. (*throws arms up*) Well, we had the biggest snowstorm of the century! Planes cancelled everywhere. Highways closed down. It was a mess! The backlog went on for months, all because of one lousy day. Who knows what could happen in a year?

NEW: (*holding the calendar tight*) Don't remind me.

FARREL: Hey... is that The Calendar?

NEW: Yep.

FARREL: (*taking a step closer to NEW*) THE Calendar?

NEW: The very same.

FARREL: I've never seen THE Calendar before. Not up close. (*leaning in*) Is it heavy?

NEW: Not too bad.

FARREL: I can't imagine carrying it around all year. It's so shiny. (*holding a finger out*) Can I touch it?

NEW: (*turning away*) I don't think so.

FARREL: (*runs around to face NEW*) Come on. One little touch.

NEW: It's not a good idea.

FARREL: I'm not going to hurt it.

NEW: I can't.

FARREL: (*turns back on NEW*) I thought we were friends.

NEW: All right, all right. One touch.

FARREL turns back and NEW YEAR holds out the Calendar. FARREL touches it with one finger.

FARREL: Wow! That's so cool. (*holding her hands out*) Can I hold it?

NEW: (*turning away*) No way.

FARREL: (*running around to face NEW*) Come on.

NEW: (*turning away again*) No.

FARREL: (*running around to face NEW*) Please.

NEW: No!

FARREL: Huh. (*folds her arms*) Guy gets a job and all of a sudden he's better than his friends.

NEW: No, I'm not.

FARREL: (*turning her back on NEW*) Looks like someone thinks he's hot stuff.

NEW: No, I don't.

FARREL: (*exiting SL*) See you around.

NEW: Farrel!

FARREL: I wouldn't want to get in your way.

NEW: Wait! Wait! (*holding out the calendar*) You can hold it.

FARREL: (*running back in*) Groovy.

NEW: But just for a second.

NEW hands over the calendar to FARREL, who holds it up.

FARREL: It's not heavy at all.

NEW: Ok. (*holding out his hands*) Give it back.

FARREL: In a second. (*holding it above head*) Introducing the NEW YEAR!!

NEW: Keep your voice down!

FARREL: Look at me!

NEW: Give me that!

FARREL: In a sec.

NEW: (*grabbing calendar*) Give it now!

FARREL: (*still holding on to one end of the calendar*) I'm not done with it!

NEW: Yes you are!

The two struggle with the calendar for a few moments. Then they both let go; the calendar breaks and the pages fly out all over the place.

NEW: Oh no!

FARREL: I can't believe you broke it.

NEW: I didn't, you did.

FARREL: Well, if you hadn't tugged so hard...

A warning bell sounds. NEW YEAR dives to the ground and starts picking up the pages of the calendar.

FARREL: What's that?

NEW: Quick! We have to get the calendar back together.

FARREL: (*picking up a page and reading*) August 24...

NEW: Don't worry about the dates, just cram the pages in any which way. Hurry!!

FARREL: But they're not going into the right spots!

NEW: I'm sure it doesn't matter.

The CROWD rushes in from SL. NEW YEAR holds the mish mashed calendar behind his back.

CROWD: What's the matter! What's the matter! What's wrong!

NEW: Everything is fine. Don't worry. Everything is fine.

CHANCELLOR ONE: We heard the warning bell.

NEW: Nothing to worry about. Just working out the kinks in the calendar.

CHANCELLOR TWO: You're eager to get to work. That's what we like to see.

CHANCELLOR THREE: Come and join the party. There'll be lots of time tomorrow to start the year rolling.

NEW: (*to himself*) That's what I'm afraid of.

The CHANCELLORS lead NEW off SL. The CROWD leaves SL. The three HERALDS come forward.

HERALDS: The very next day,
Was when disaster struck.
The New Year started,
On a string of bad luck.

When he dropped the calendar,
All the dates went out of whack.
No matter how he pushed and pulled,
He could not put them back.

Now the holidays are complaining,
Their days have gone awry
The New Year has some explaining,
To do: who, what, where, and why?

The HERALDS leave SR.

Scene Two – New Year’s Office

NEW YEAR sits at a desk upstage, which is higher than the CROWD. The CROWD surround the desk and yell for answers. The CHANCELLORS are trying to back the CROWD away from NEW YEAR. SANTA waves his arms and speaks. When he starts to speak, the others quiet down.

SANTA: (*pacing back and forth*) Mr. New Year! Mr. New Year! I ask you. Christmas has been December 25 for years, as long as I can remember. What am I supposed to think when I open up this year’s calendar and see that Christmas is July 14? July 14? (*the CROWD mutters at this*) There isn’t any snow in July. How am I supposed to use my sleigh? (*the CROWD mutters again*) And I have a production schedule to think about.

An ELF steps forward.

ELF: There’s no way we’ll be ready for July. Not even if we work day and night. It’s not possible!

SANTA: Whose bright idea was it to move Christmas anyway?

PILGRIM: And Thanksgiving too!

CUPID: Valentine’s Day won’t be the same in October.

BUNNY: It’ll probably be easier to hide Easter eggs in February. But who will want to hunt for them? It’ll be too cold!

FOUR SEASONS: We like the way the seasons used to be!

AUTUMN: Fall is supposed to start in September, not in March!

SUMMER: And Summer won’t be half as much fun in November!

SANTA: We want some answers and we want them now!

The CROWD starts talking at once, shaking their fists at NEW YEAR. The CHANCELLORS try to quiet them. NEW YEAR stands.

NEW: Ladies and gentlemen, Ladies and Gentlemen! (*the CROWD is quiet*) I want to thank you all for coming today. I agree this is a serious matter. It has my complete attention and is my top priority. What I’d like you to do now is follow my chancellors into the next room and fill out our complaint forms.

CHANCELLORS: In triplicate.

NEW: And I'll get to the bottom of this. Right away. Thank you for coming.

The CROWD exits SL, ushered out by the CHANCELLORS, muttering all the way. NEW YEAR is alone on stage. He groans and sits at his desk putting his head in his hands.

NEW: What a mess. I'll never be able to fix this.

LAST YEAR enters from SR with a suitcase.

NEW: (*jumping up*) Last year! (*running DS to meet her*) Last, am I glad to see you!

LAST: (*putting down her suitcase*) Hey New, how's your first day on the job?

NEW: Haven't you heard?

LAST: Nope. I've been too busy packing for my vacation. I'm going to the tropics. (*looks at her watch*) Ooops! If I don't shake a leg, I'll miss my plane. (*picks up her suitcase and starts walking*) Catch you later, and good luck!

NEW: Wait! I need your help!

LAST: Gotta fly! (*she exits SL*)

NEW: I can't do this.

FARREL enters from SL.

FARREL: (*pointing behind*) Wow, that is some angry mob out there.

NEW runs over to FARREL and starts dragging her off SL.

NEW: Farrel! You have to tell them you broke the calendar.

FARREL: (*tugging back*) I didn't break it.

NEW YEAR: (*tugging FARREL toward SL*) You did too!

FARREL: (*breaking away from NEW YEAR*) You're the one who tugged too hard.

NEW YEAR: Farrel!

FARREL: (*starts to run SR*) Gotta run!

NEW: Come back here. You have to help me!

FARREL: You're the New Year. This is your job. *(exits SR)*

NEW: *(pacing)* I can't do it. I can't do it. I'll never be able to fix this mess. *(holding the calendar above his head)* I quit!

NEW YEAR throws the calendar to the ground. The warning bell goes off. CROWD comes running on from SL and gathers CS.

CROWD: What's the matter? What's the matter? What's wrong?

CHANCELLORS: The calendar! Pick it up!

NEW YEAR picks up the calendar and the warning bell stops.

CHANCELLOR: What's going on here?

NEW: It's all my fault the calendar is messed up. Someone else should be in charge of the year. *(hands the calendar out to the CHANCELLORS)* I quit.

The CHANCELLORS step back from NEW YEAR.

CHANCELLOR ONE: You what?

CHANCELLOR TWO: You're kidding!

CHANCELLOR THREE: You can't!

CHANCELLOR ONE: It's your first day on the job.

NEW: And look what I've done. Can you imagine what the year will be like in June? So, how do I get out of the job? What do I do?

The CHANCELLORS look at each other.

CHANCELLOR ONE: No one has ever quit before.

CHANCELLOR TWO: Never!

CHANCELLOR THREE: Not in my lifetime.

CHANCELLOR ONE: Why don't you stick it out for a week or two and then see how you feel.

NEW: *(gesturing to the crowd)* But what about the holidays? They're really upset!

SANTA: We're not that upset.

NEW: Yes you are!

SANTA: Well, maybe a couple of moments ago. Then, sure. But now we've had some time to think. It was just the shock of it all.

The CROWD all nod their heads.

CUPID: It was a big surprise.

PILGRIM: We weren't expecting things to be different.

WINTER: Things are always the same for us!

SPRING: A change might do us some good.

SANTA: It's always the same thing.

BUNNY: Year in, and year out.

CUPID: Maybe Valentines Day would work better in October.

PILGRIM: How do you know unless you try?

CROWD: Yeah!

SANTA: This could be a whole new beginning!

CROWD: Yeah! Yeah!

SANTA: It could be even better!!

CROWD: Yeah, yeah, yeah!

NEW: But... but...

The CROWD talk excitedly among themselves. A trumpet sounds. The three HERALDS enter SR.

HERALDS: Father Time wants to talk to you.

They point at NEW YEAR. The CROWD gasps.

CHANCELLOR THREE: Father Time??

CHANCELLOR TWO: He never talks to anyone!

CHANCELLOR ONE: Maybe it won't be so hard for the New Year to quit after all.

NEW YEAR exits SR. The CROWD and the CHANCELLORS exit SL, talking quietly and shaking their heads. The HERALDS move DSC.

HERALDS:

Father Time is old and wise,

He sits atop a tower.
 He watches through his window as,
 Time passes by the hour.

Father Time controls the hours,
 And the seconds and the days.
 He calculates the minutes,
 Making sure they never stray.

But now there is a problem,
 And the problem is immense!
 Father Time's begun to worry,
 Till his brow is tight and tense.

Will he solve the situation?
 What will he do to the New Year?
 Father Time is far from happy,
 We can see that much is clear.

The HERALDS exit SL.

Scene Three – Father Time's Office.

NEW YEAR enters SR. and approaches FATHER TIME's secretary, FRANCIS, who is sitting at her desk. Her desk is covered in paper and she seems quite flustered.

NEW: I'm here to see Father Time. I'm the New Year.

FRANCIS: I've been expecting you. This is very unusual. *(she scatters paper over the desk)* Mr. Time doesn't see anyone! *(more paper goes flying)*

NEW: I know. *(he tries to help FRANCIS keep the papers on the desk)*

FRANCIS: *(pointing at NEW, her hands full of paper)* You must have done something really big.

NEW: Haven't you heard?

FRANCIS: *(continuing to try and keep the papers under control)* Mr. Time keeps me quite busy. I rarely read the paper these days. But believe you me, New Years are never asked to see Mr. Time on their first day on the job.

NEW: Maybe he heard that I quit.

At this FRANCIS throws her papers up in the air. She's in shock.

FRANCIS: Quit! You can't quit! No one ever quits!

NEW: (*trying to gather papers*) There's a first time for everything!

FRANCIS: Stay here. Don't move! Mr. Time will be in to see you shortly. (*she leaves SR, a trail of papers behind her*) Quit! I never heard of such a thing. What will these young people think up next!

A trumpet sounds. The three HERALDS enter from SL, followed by FATHER TIME.

HERALDS: (*all gesture to FATHER TIME*) Father Time.

FATHER: That's enough, that's enough. (*waving his hands toward the HERALDS who run off SL*) Skedaddle, you three. I grow weary of being introduced everywhere I go. Can't even go to the grocery store anymore. Who are you?

NEW: (*bowing*) The New Year sir.

FATHER: Oh you are, are you?

NEW: Yes sir.

FATHER: I never speak to New Year's on their first day on the job. (*he gestures to FRANCIS' desk*) Look what you've done to Francis. She's in a state.

NEW: I'm sorry sir.

FATHER: Sit.

NEW: Yes sir.

FATHER: And stop with the sir.

NEW: Yes sir.

FATHER TIME leans on FRANCIS' desk. NEW sits in the chair.

FATHER: You have been up to quite a bit of nonsense. You think this job is a joke?

NEW: No! I take it very seriously.

FATHER: Then why will I be celebrating Christmas on July 14, my young friend?

NEW: It was an accident.

FATHER: A whopper of an accident.

NEW: Yes sir.

FATHER: (*waving arms in the air*) A super stupendous, so huge I can hardly see around it, tremendous accident.

NEW: (*holding out the calendar*) That's why I have to quit.

FATHER: (*standing*) Quit?

NEW: I tried to explain to the Chancellors.

FATHER: (*crosses to CS*) You can't quit.

NEW: (*following behind FATHER TIME*) But I really messed up!

FATHER: (*turning to face NEW YEAR*) No, no, no, you don't understand. (*pointing at NEW YEAR*) You're not allowed to quit.

NEW: What!!

FATHER: Didn't you read the fine print on the contract? (*calling out*) Francis! Bring in a copy of the New Year contract will you! (*to NEW YEAR*) You should always read things before you sign them.

NEW: It was all the celebrating I guess.

FRANCIS enters from SR with a huge document. She is still trailing paper. She plunks the document on the desk.

FATHER: Ah, here we are. Read out Section 1012, Paragraph 740, part B, will you?

FRANCIS: (*opens book and reads*) Once the New Year has signed the contract, there is no backing out. You're stuck with the year, and the year is stuck with you.

FATHER: Thank you Francis.

FRANCIS: I knew they couldn't quit! (*she exits SR*)

FATHER: (*to NEW*) You see?

NEW: But I'm terrible. I can't do it.

FATHER: (*leans against the desk again*) You keep saying that. But have you actually tried to do the job?

NEW: (*sits in chair*) Sure, and I messed everything up.



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