



A CHARLIE BROWN CHRISTMAS™



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by Charles M. Schulz



RPKIDS
PHILADELPHIA • LONDON

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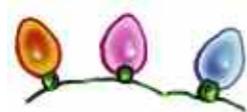
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CHRISTMASTIME was here—the time when snowflakes fell softly and the sounds of carols rang through the air. It was the time filled with happiness. And for children everywhere, it was their favorite time of year.

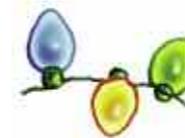




But one little boy wasn't feeling very excited about Christmas.

"I just don't understand Christmas," Charlie Brown said, as a light snow began to fall. "I might be getting presents, sending Christmas cards, and decorating trees, but I'm still not happy. I always end up feeling depressed."

"You're the only person I know who can take a wonderful season like Christmas and turn it into a problem," Linus replied. "Lucy's right. Of all the Charlie Browns in the world, you're the Charlie Browniest."



At the local skating pond, the boys found their friends playing a round of crack-the-whip. Snoopy grabbed Linus's blanket to drag him onto the ice—but he caught Charlie Brown in it, and sent him flying into a snow bank!

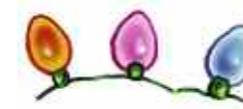
Charlie Brown wasn't surprised. Things like that *always* happened to him. And the holiday season, when he didn't get cards and even his own dog ignored him, only made it more obvious. He needed someone to talk to.





Lucy dashed over to her psychiatry booth to meet Charlie Brown. “May I help you?” she asked.

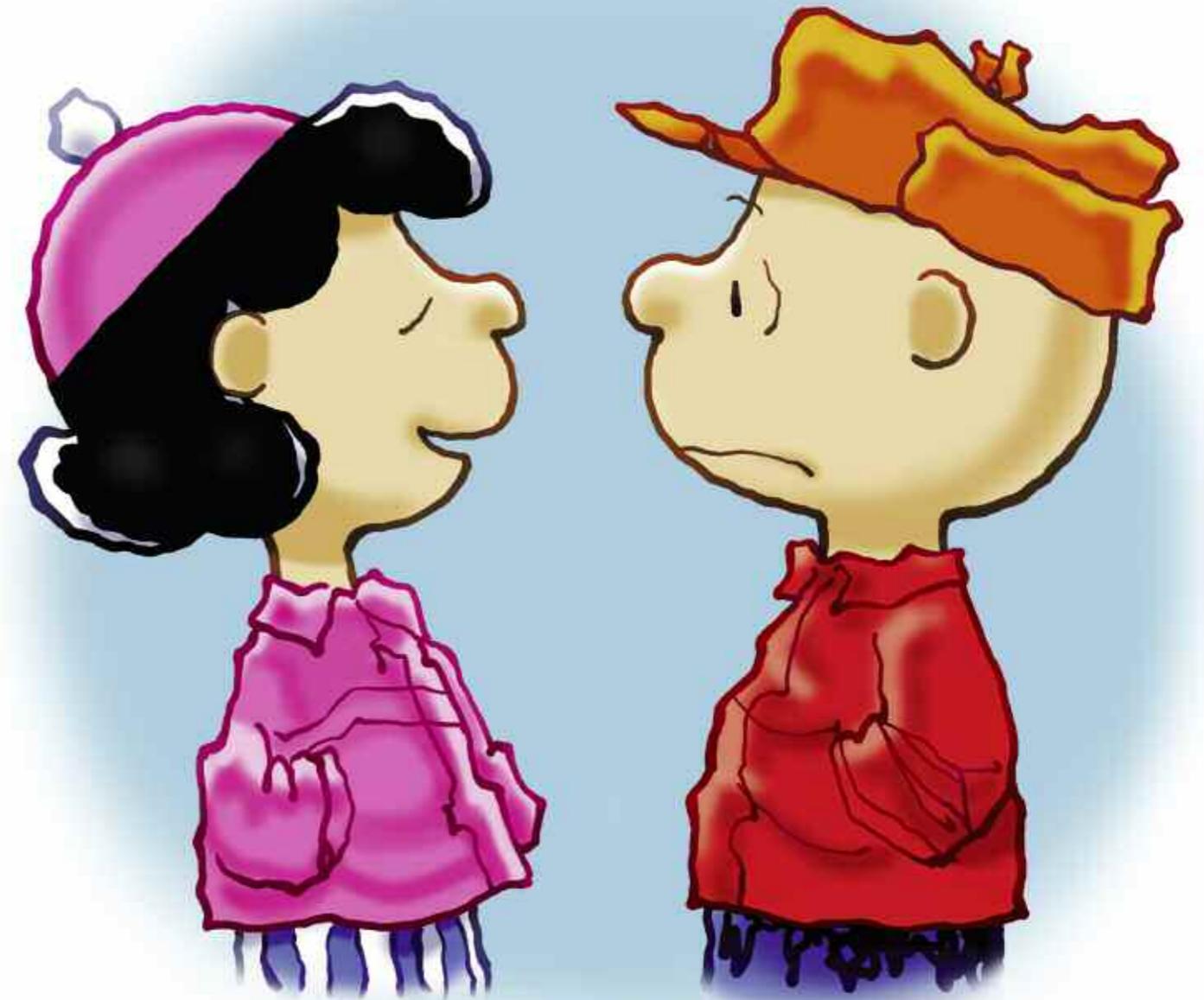
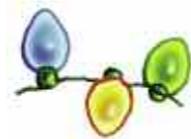
“I am in sad shape,” Charlie Brown replied with a sigh. “My trouble is Christmas. I just don’t understand it. Instead of feeling happy, I feel sort of let down.”



Lucy knew just how to fix Charlie Brown's problem. "You need to get involved in a Christmas project," she declared. "How would you like to be the director of our Christmas play?"

"Me? But I don't know anything about directing a Christmas play," Charlie Brown fretted.

"Don't worry. I'll be there to help you," Lucy said. "I'll meet you at the auditorium!"



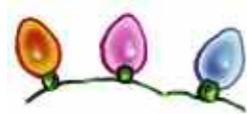


Just then Snoopy walked past, carrying a box filled with decorations. Charlie Brown followed Snoopy back to his doghouse.

“What’s going on here?” Charlie Brown asked. Snoopy handed him a flyer, and Charlie Brown read, “Find the true meaning of Christmas. Win money, money, money at the spectacular, super-colossal lights and display contest!” Oh, no. My own dog has gone commercial. I can’t stand it!” Charlie Brown threw the flyer on the ground.



On his way to the auditorium, he ran into his sister, Sally.
“I’ve been looking for you, big brother,” she said sweetly.
“Will you please write a letter to Santa Claus for me?”
Sally knew exactly what she wanted, but her list was so long. She decided it would be easier to ask for money.
“How about tens and twenties?” she suggested.
“Tens and twenties? Oh, even my baby sister!” Charlie Brown groaned. Surely Christmas was about more than money and presents!

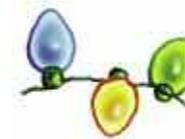




In the auditorium, the whole Peanuts gang danced to a jazzy tune that Schroeder played on his piano.

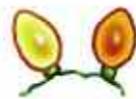
Charlie Brown walked onto the stage. "Let's get right down to work," he said. "It's important that you pay strict attention to the director. Am I right? I said, am I right?"

But no one paid any attention to Charlie Brown. They had started dancing again!



“Stop the music!” Charlie Brown yelled. “We’re going to do this play and we’re going to do it right. Lucy, pass out those scripts and costumes.”

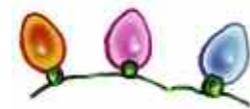
One by one, the kids found out their roles in the play. Frieda would play the innkeeper’s wife. Pig Pen would play the innkeeper. Shermy would play the shepherd. And Snoopy would play all the animals in the script—and even some that weren’t!





“Let’s rehearse the scene at the inn,” directed Charlie Brown. “Let’s take it from the top! Places! ACTION!”

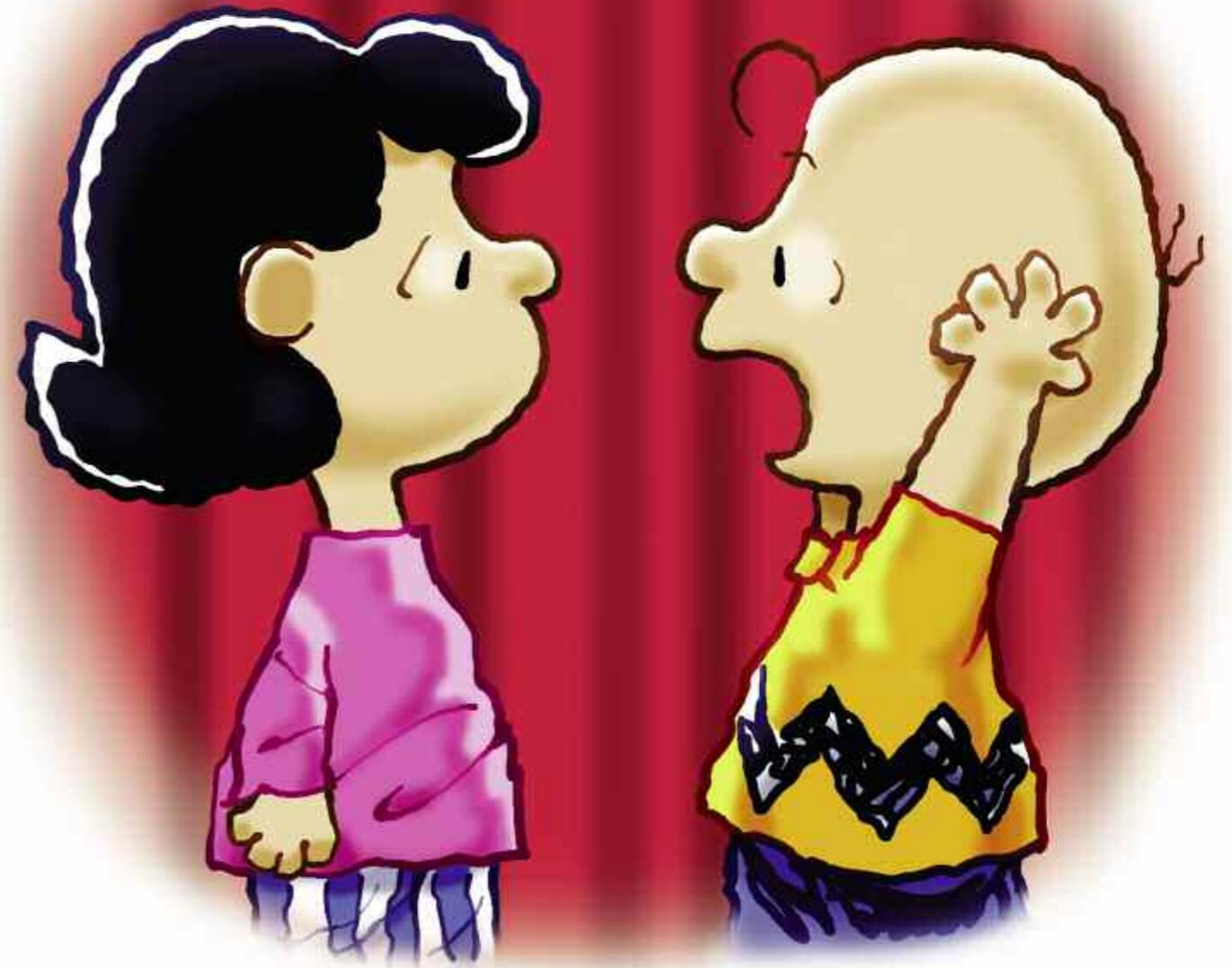
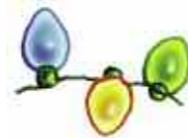
But once more, the kids started dancing and fooling around. Charlie Brown rolled his eyes. “Good grief!”

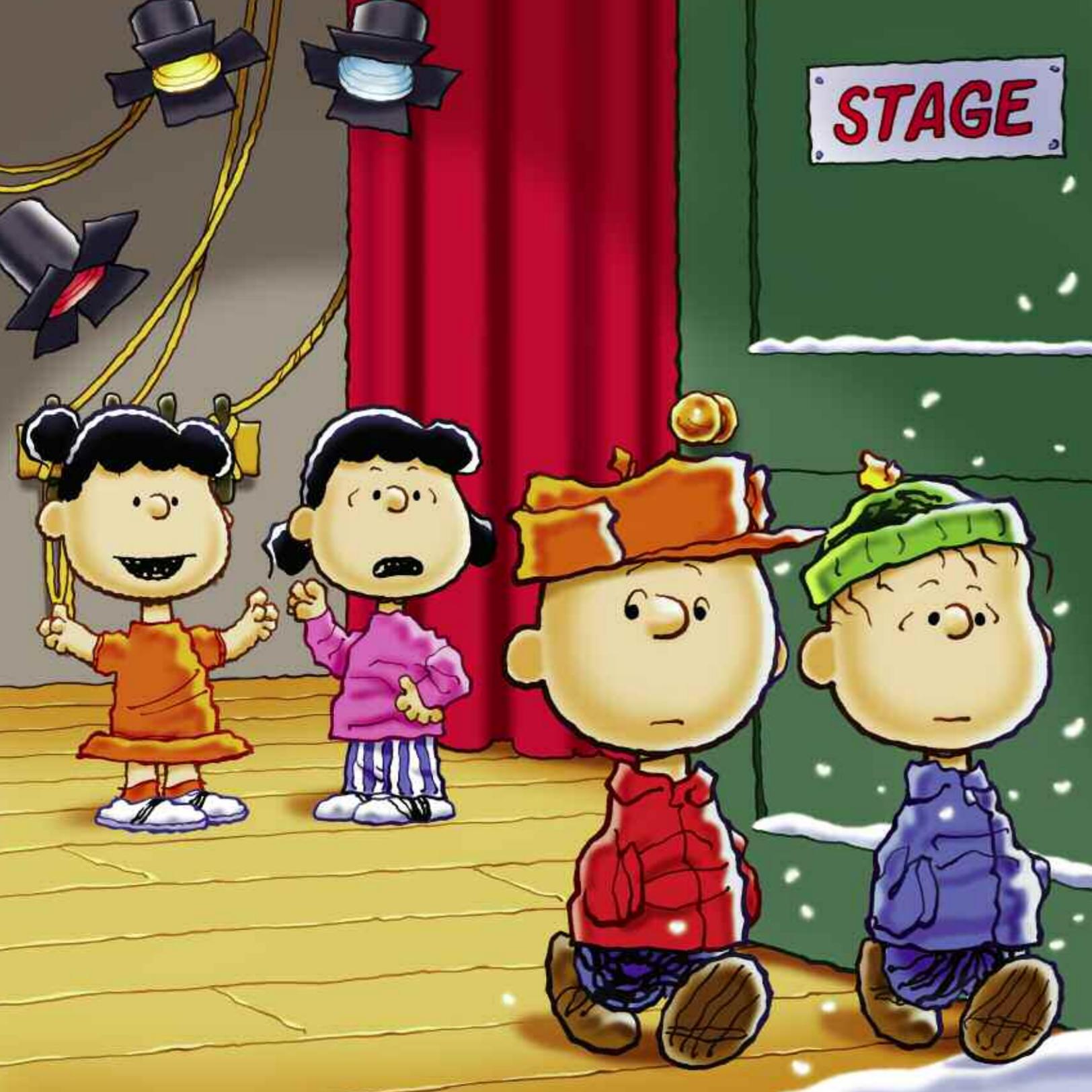


“That does it!” Charlie Brown exclaimed. “If we’re ever going to get this play off the ground, we’ve got to have some cooperation!”

“Let’s face it,” replied Lucy. “We all know that Christmas is a big commercial racket.”

“Well, this is one play that’s not going to be commercial!” Charlie Brown insisted. “We need the proper mood. We need a Christmas tree!”





Lucy nodded excitedly. “A great, big, shiny aluminum Christmas tree! That’s it, Charlie Brown! You get the tree. I’ll handle this crowd.”

“Okay. I’ll take Linus with me. The rest of you—practice your lines,” Charlie Brown said firmly.

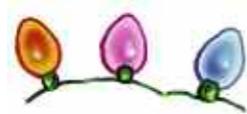
“Get the biggest aluminum tree you can find, Charlie Brown!” called Lucy.

“Yeah. Do something right for a change, Charlie Brown,” added Violet as the boys walked into the cold winter night.



They followed a set of gleaming spotlights to a Christmas tree lot. It was filled with shiny metal trees, polka-dotted trees, and trees in every color of the rainbow.

Clank. Clank. Clank. Linus knocked on one of the metal trees. “Gee, do they still make wooden Christmas trees?” asked Linus. He didn’t see anything like that in the Christmas tree lot.

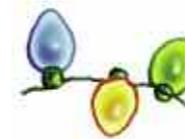




Then Charlie Brown spotted a small, scraggly pine tree. It had a wooden trunk and soft green needles. “This little green one here seems to need a good home!” he said excitedly.

“I don’t know, Charlie Brown,” Linus said. “Remember what Lucy said? This doesn’t seem to fit the modern spirit.”

“I don’t care,” Charlie Brown insisted. “We’ll decorate it and it will be just right for our play. Besides, I think it needs me.”

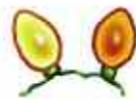


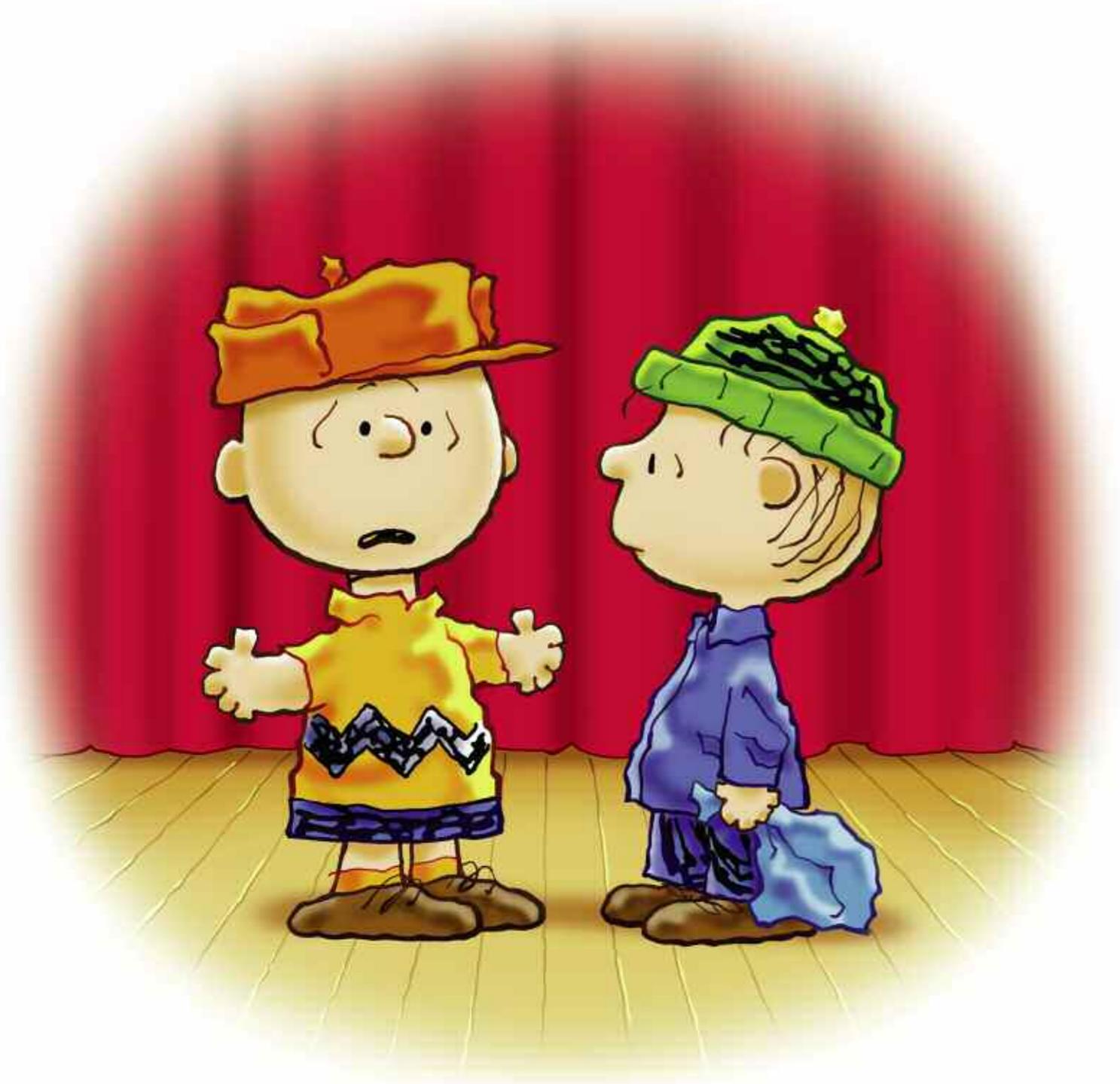
Soon Charlie Brown and Linus walked onto the stage.
“We’re back!” Charlie Brown announced as he set the tree
on top of Schroeder’s piano.

When the kids rushed over to see the tree, their mouths
dropped in shock. The scraggly little tree was *not* what they
had expected.

“You were supposed to get a good tree. Can’t you even
tell a good tree from a poor tree?” Lucy asked.

“You’re hopeless, Charlie Brown!” added Violet.





Charlie Brown sighed. “I shouldn’t have picked this little tree. Everything I do turns into a disaster. I guess I really don’t know what Christmas is all about. Isn’t there *anyone* who knows what Christmas is all about?” he exclaimed.

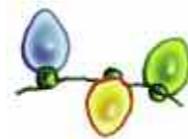
“Sure, Charlie Brown,” replied Linus. “I can tell you what Christmas is all about.”

Linus crossed to the center of the stage. The lights dimmed, and a spotlight shone down on him.



“And there were shepherds in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. The angel came and said, ‘Fear not, for behold, I bring you tidings of great joy, which will be to all people. For unto you is born this day a savior, which is Christ the Lord. Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes lying in a manger.’ And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, ‘Glory to God in the highest, and on Earth peace, goodwill toward men.’”

Everyone was silent when Linus finished. “That’s what Christmas is all about, Charlie Brown,” he finally said.



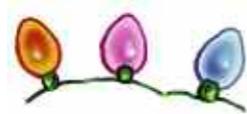


Charlie Brown picked up the tree and walked outside. He stared up at the night sky. “Linus is right,” he said. “I won’t let all this commercialism ruin my Christmas. I’ll take this little tree home and decorate it and I’ll show them it really will work in our play.”



When he passed Snoopy's doghouse, Charlie Brown pulled a shiny red ornament off the doghouse and proudly hung it on the tree.

But the tiny tree buckled under the weight of the ornament. A look of horror crossed Charlie Brown's face. "I've killed it! Oh, everything I touch gets ruined!" His head hung in defeat, Charlie Brown sadly walked away.

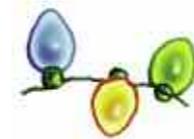




Then the rest of the Peanuts gang arrived.

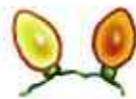
“I never thought it was such a bad little tree,” Linus said. He straightened the tree’s bent trunk and wrapped his blanket around its base. “It’s not bad at all, really. It just needs a little love.”

Without speaking, the other kids took the lights and ornaments off Snoopy’s doghouse and used them to decorate. Before their very eyes it transformed into a beautiful Christmas tree!



Charlie Brown walked up to the group—and barely recognized the tree. “What’s going on here?” he exclaimed.

“Merry Christmas, Charlie Brown!” the kids exclaimed. And together, gathered around that beautiful Christmas tree, they all began to sing:





*Hark, the herald angels sing,
Glory to the newborn King!
Peace on Earth and mercy mild
God and sinner reconciled.*

*Joyful, all ye nations, rise!
Join the triumph of the skies!
With angelic host proclaim:
Christ is born in Bethlehem.*

*Hark, the herald angels sing,
Glory to the newborn King.*