

Andrea Gets Ready

The Characters:

Andrea Wyatt—A bubbly, melodramatic third-grader
Jim Wyatt—Andrea's father, a music teacher at Vista Falls Elementary School
Virginia Wyatt—Andrea's stepmother, also a teacher
Chauncey O'Casey—Andrea's great-uncle
Mario Cervantes—Andrea's friend from school
Diego Cervantes—Father of Mario, Jorge, and Felix
Alma Cervantes—Mother of Mario, Jorge, and Felix
Jorge Cervantes—Mario's five-year-old brother, twin of Felix
Felix Cervantes—Jorge's and Mario's brother
The Abuela—Mario's grandmother (Abuela—pronounced *ah buehlah*—is the Spanish word for grandmother)
Lucy Molton—A kind-hearted eighth-grader
Rick Drischoll—Lucy's friend
Dan Molton—Lucy's father, owner of the local hardware store

[Note: All characters can be played by any person of any age.]

The Scene:

The Wyatt family living room a few days before Christmas. Uncle Chauncey is seated upstage in his favorite chair. His cane is leaning against his leg. He's chatting with The Abuela. Mario, Alma and Diego are sorting through boxes of Christmas decorations. Virginia and Jim are assembling a Christmas tree stand. (Note: This as well as the boxes of ornaments can merely be suggested through pantomime should these items be unavailable). Lucy is cautiously watching Jorge and Felix run around. Rick is amused by the twins' antics. Andrea watches the whole scene from down center stage and seems to be growing increasingly impatient.

UNCLE CHAUNCEY: Look at young Andrea. She's so bright eyed. Today we had a chat and she told me that she can't wait to get ready for Christmas. I told her that I couldn't either.

THE ABUELA: Ah, you can chat with yours? Not me. Look at them. (*She points at the twins.*) They're like crazy people. Even my Mario is not himself this week.

UNCLE CHAUNCEY: The youngest are always the most excited. (*The twins start to laugh and talk loudly—as little boys do.*)

ANDREA: (*To no one in particular.*) Is he ever going to get here?

JIM: Who?

ANDREA: What? I can't hear you over (*She points to the twins who are still running around.*) them.

LUCY: Sorry. I've tried everything I know to keep them calm, but nothing's working. You'd think I could handle them what with me being a twin myself. But, these two have more energy than Vera or I ever had. (*She tries to reason with them.*) Now, Jorge, Felix, if you don't settle down, I'll be very disappointed.

(*The twins laugh and continue running.*)

THE ABUELA: Ay! Stop, you two!

(*The twins stop and go to sit by their grandmother.*)

JIM: Well done, Mrs. Cervantes.

THE ABUELA: Gracias. (*She tilts her head forward modestly.*)

LUCY: Oh, thank goodness! (*She looks embarrassed.*) Here I've gone and volunteered to watch the little kids and I haven't done a very good job.

THE ABUELA: (*With a smile.*) Don't worry, girlie, you'll get it one day. You just have to know how to talk to them.

LUCY: I guess I'll learn in time.

THE ABUELA: You will. I see you are good with the children. After all, the baby (*She waves her hand at an unseen staircase.*) up there sleeps very quietly.

ALMA: (*Coming forward.*) Yes, Beatrice has taken to you right away. She was very fussy when we first arrived, but you got her to quiet down in no time.

THE ABUELA: You do well with the little ones. It's the bigger ones that you don't know so well.

LUCY: (*She laughs.*) I thought they'd never stop running and screaming!

THE ABUELA: Time...time...it all takes time.

ANDREA: (*Really agitated by now.*) I'll say! Lucy, when's your dad going to get here with our tree?

LUCY: As soon as the store closes. He'll drop off your tree and take me home. Well, me and Rick.

RICK: We've got to practice for the big Christmas pageant at the junior high tonight. Lucy and I are playing Mary and Joseph. I can't wait!

LUCY: I can't either. But we have so much to do. We've got to practice our lines and try on our costumes. Oh, and then we have to make sure we have tickets reserved for our family and friends.

ANDREA: (*Sarcastically.*) That's really exciting, but that doesn't get our tree here any quicker.

JIM: Andrea!

VIRGINIA: Jim, patience. She's just over anxious.

JIM: That's no excuse for being rude to our guests. After all, Lucy's father is doing us a big favor by bringing our tree all the way from his store. Not everyone in town gets delivery service for free.

ANDREA: I'm sorry.

UNCLE CHAUNCEY: She really is, Jim. She's a good kid. Aren't ya, Handy Andie?

ANDREA: Mostly.

JIM: (*Softening.*) Yes, yes you are—mostly. Let's try to stay calm and be polite, Andrea. Okay? I know you're busting with enthusiasm about the tree and our little decorating party. But let's just be...ummm...cool.

ANDREA: (*Giggling.*) Nice try, Dad.

VIRGINIA: While your dad may not be the coolest guy in the world, I think he's pretty great.

JIM: Thanks...I think.

DIEGO: Don't worry, Jim. I'm not so very "cool" either. Am I, Mario? (*Mario doesn't answer.*)

ALMA: Mario, are you listening?

MARIO: What? Oh, sorry, Mama, I was thinking about something.

ALMA: Your papa was talking to you.

DIEGO: I was just being silly. What's on your mind, Mario?

MARIO: I was thinking about all I need to do to get ready for Christmas. I have so many presents to wrap. And, I have cards to make.

FELIX: Oh, presents! What did you get us?

JORGE: Yeah, what, Mario?

MARIO: I'm not telling you.

JORGE: If you tell us, you won't have to wrap it.

FELIX: Yeah, just give us our presents now.

THE ABUELA: Quiet, you two! Mario, you do a very nice job with your wrapping paper and ribbons. You always take your time and it all looks so nice.

MARIO: Thanks, Abuela. But, this year, I don't know how nice everything will look. There's just so much to do.

(The twins stop talking.)

VIRGINIA: I understand, Mario. We're so behind around here. That's why I was so grateful to Dan for bringing our tree and to all of you for coming to help decorate.

RICK: Not a problem, Mrs. Wyatt. Besides, you're feeding us and everyone knows you make the best sugar cookies. I'd carry a tree on my back for your sugar cookies.

VIRGINIA: That's sweet, Rick. But, honestly, I've only made a couple of batches. And, if I'm going to put together trays for all the other teachers and for my students, I'd better get baking—fast!

ANDREA: Well, we're not gonna need any cookies or presents or anything else unless the tree gets here soon. I just can't wait any longer!
(Dramatically.) Without the tree we might as well not even have Christmas.

UNCLE CHAUNCEY: The tree is that important, Andie?

ANDREA: Well, yeah. It's the thing that the presents go under. You've got to get the tree ready—you know all pretty and decorated. How can we do anything else unless we have the tree? That's what Christmas is all about. You even said yourself how we need to get ready for Christmas.

UNCLE CHAUNCEY: *(Leaning on his cane as he stands.)* I didn't mean with presents and trees and cookies and tickets and costumes. I thought you understood.

ANDREA: I thought I did, too. If you didn't mean all those things, what did you mean?

UNCLE CHAUNCEY: I meant that we had to remember why we celebrate Christmas at all. It's Jesus' birthday. We have to get ready to receive our King!

ANDREA: How do we do that?

THE ABUELA: By remembering how we came to know him.

RICK: The Christmas story. It's not about putting on a play in the school theatre.

LUCY: It isn't about us being stars on stage.

UNCLE CHAUNCEY: It's about Jesus' birth. Rick, Lucy, would you like to tell us about Jesus' birth in the manger?

RICK: Yes, Mr. O'Casey.

LUCY: I'd like to.

THE ABUELA: Everyone gather 'round and listen.

(Uncle Chauncey takes his seat next to The Abuela while the others sit on the floor around Rick and Lucy. After a few seconds, there's a knock on the door. Virginia goes to answer it. Enter Dan Molton. Everyone turns to face him. Virginia stays at his side. Jim and Andrea stand.)

DAN: I've got your tree out in the truck. Jim, you want to help me carry it in? I hear there's a young lady in here that's getting a little impatient.

ANDREA: I guess I was a little impatient.

THE ABUELA: Time, little one. It all takes time.

DAN: So, let's go on out and get that tree. It's a real beauty! Who's coming with me? Jim?

JIM: (*Looking at his daughter.*) What do you think, Andrea?

ANDREA: Do you think we could wait awhile?

DAN: Sure. I'm in no hurry. I thought you were.

ANDREA: Well, you see, right now, we're getting ready for Christmas. And, for that, I have all the time and in the world.

END SCENE.