

VIRTUES & VICES: A CHRISTMAS CAUTION

BY
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NOTE: BELOW ARE SHORT CHARACTER DESCRIPTIONS FOR THE MAJOR PLAYERS IN THIS STORY, THOUGH THERE SHOULD BE VARIOUS "EXTRAS" IN PRETTY MUCH EVERY PANEL. THE CHARACTERS ARE DIVIDED INTO THEIR APPROPRIATE GROUPS, EITHER "VIRTUES" OR "VICES."

VIRTUES:

- 1) **CAUTION (MALE):** OUR MAIN CHARACTER. YOUNG IN APPEARANCE (THOUGH OBVIOUSLY AGELESS), HE HAS THE AWKWARD APPEARANCE AND DISPOSITION OF AN INSECURE TEENAGER.
- 2) **WISDOM (MALE):** OLD IN APPEARANCE, WITH GRAY HAIR AND A GOATEE. HE'S A TAD BIT HEFTY AND HAS A JOLLY DISPOSITION.
- 3) **HONESTY (FEMALE):** RESEMBLES A HIGH-STRUNG SOCCER MOM. SHE HAS A PERPETUAL SMILE ON HER FACE, WHICH INSTEAD OF MAKING HER SEEM WARM AND FRIENDLY, ACTUALLY GIVES HER A BIT OF A DEMENTED LOOK.
- 4) **CHARITY (MALE):** THIN, NORMAL LOOKING, AND ALWAYS EAGER TO HELP.
- 5) **CHASTITY (FEMALE):** A PLAIN-LOOKING WOMAN WHO DRESSES LIKE SHE LIVES IN PURITAN NEW ENGLAND. BLACK CLOTHES, PLAIN, ASEXUAL.
- 6) **OPTIMISM (FEMALE):** ALSO YOUNG-LOOKING, BUBBLY, AND CONSTANTLY PRAISING THE GOOD THINGS TO COME.

OTHER NOTEWORTHY VIRTUES: SENSITIVITY, PATIENCE, RIGHTEOUSNESS, LOYALTY, AGREEABILITY, PERCEPTIVENESS.

VICES:

- 1) **RECKLESSNESS (FEMALE):** YOUNG IN APPEARANCE AND VERY PRETTY. SHE DRESSES LIKE A "PUNK" ROCKER AND IS VERY SPIRITED/FUN-LOVING.
- 2) **GREED & GLUTTONY (MALES):** ALWAYS TOGETHER, LIKE ABBOT & CASTELLO, GREED IS THIN AND WEASEL-LIKE, WHILE GLUTTONY IS OVERWEIGHT.
- 3) **DISCONTENT (MALE):** A HUMAN VERSION OF EYORE (FROM WINNIE THE POOH). WHINY & DEPRESSING.
- 4) **VANITY (FEMALE):** LAVISHLY DRESSED IN GOWNS & HATS, SHE RESEMBLES A NOBLEWOMAN FROM THE VICTORIAN AGE, AND HAS A POMPOUS ATTITUDE.
- 5) **LUST (MALE):** TALL, DARK, AND HANDSOME. HE WALKS AROUND WITHOUT A SHIRT TO SHOW OFF HIS CHISELED CHEST AND AB MUSCLES.
- 6) **INSINCERITY (MALE):** GOOD-LOOKING AND CHARMING, BUT OF COURSE, FULL OF IT.

PAGE ONE (6 PANELS):

PANEL ONE:

Close-Up Shot of Caution, our hero, looking bored and unamused.

1) CAPTION: YOU KNOW HOW THEY SAY HONESTY IS THE BEST POLICY?

PANEL TWO:

Close-Up Shot of Honesty, with a crazed smile slapped across her face.

2) CAPTION: WELL, WHAT THEY DON'T SAY IS THAT SHE ALSO GIVES THE CRAPPIEST CHRISTMAS GIFTS.

3) HONESTY: CAUTION! I WAS YOUR SECRET SANTA THIS YEAR!

PANEL THREE:

Two-shot of both Caution and Honesty. Honesty is shoving a Christmas gift into Caution's hands.

4) CAUTION: I, UM, THINK THAT'S SUPPOSED TO BE A SECRET.

5) HONESTY (THRUSTING GIFT): HERE!

PANEL FOUR:

Medium Shot of Honesty.

6) HONESTY: I HONESTLY COULDN'T THINK OF WHAT TO GET YOU, SO I GOT YOU THIS CHEAP, GENERIC, AND IMPERSONAL PHOTO FRAME THAT I WAS MOSTLY SURE YOU WERE GONNA HATE.

PANEL FIVE:

Close-Up Shot of Caution.

7) CAUTION: UM, THANK YOU FOR YOUR HONESTY, HONESTY.

PANEL SIX:

Honesty is walking away to rejoin the party, leaving Caution with his nicely wrapped photo frame.

8) HONESTY: YOU'RE WELCOME, SWEETIE. I'M GONNA GO SEE IF THEY REPLACED THAT DREADFUL FRUIT PUNCH WITH SOMETHING THAT TASTES LESS LIKE RAT VOMIT.

9) CAPTION: AWWW CHRISTMAS...

PAGE TWO (1 PANEL):

SPLASH PAGE:

Bird's Eye View of the Christmas party. Here and there, virtues of all kinds are mingling, socializing, having fun in a low key, "high school dance formal" kind of way. Caution is standing off to the corner and looking up at the banner that reads: "WELCOME ALL VIRTUES TO THE ANNUAL CHRISTMAS PARTY." The bottom of the page should be used for title and credits.

1) CAPTION (FINISHING SENTENCE): AIN'T IT GRAND?

PAGE THREE (4 PANELS):

PANEL ONE:

Caution is turning to look behind him as he hears a familiar voice.

1) VOICE (OP): WHY DO YOU THINK THEY PUT "ANNUAL" IN THE BANNER?

PANEL TWO:

Over-the-shoulder shot as Caution stands face to face with Wisdom, the oldest, and it goes without saying, wisest of the virtues.

2) WISDOM: IT SEEMS SOMEWHAT SUPERFOULOUS. IS THERE EVER A YEAR WITHOUT CHRISTMAS?

3) CAUTION: YOU WOULD KNOW, WISDOM.

PANEL THREE:

Two-Shot. Wisdom is putting his hands on Caution's shoulders as a friendly greeting, much like a grandfather to his grandson.

4) WISDOM: IT'S GOOD TO SEE YOU, CAUTION. I WAS AFRAID YOU MIGHT NOT SHOW, THOUGH I SUPPOSE IT'S IN YOUR NATURE TO BE HESITANT.

5) CAUTION: YEAH, I KNOW, IT'S NOT JUST THAT, THOUGH.

PANEL FOUR:

Close-Up Shot of Caution, quasi-crestfallen.

6) WISDOM (OP): WHAT IS IT, MY BOY?

7) CAUTION: IT'S JUST ALWAYS THE SAME, YOU KNOW? THESE PARTIES, YEAR AFTER YEAR, IT'S ALMOST AS IF IT WERE SCRIPTED...

PAGE FOUR (4 PANELS):

PANEL ONE:

Each of these four panels lies horizontally across the page, a pattern that will be repeated on various pages throughout the script. In this specific panel, Honesty is speaking with Sensitivity, who looks appalled by what she's saying.

1) CAUTION (OP): HONESTY IS ALWAYS TOO HONEST WITH PEOPLE.

2) HONESTY: OH MY, SENSITIVITY, YOU MUST HAVE GAINED 20 POUNDS SINCE I LAST SAW YOU. YOU LOOK LIKE A STUFFED TURKEY.

PANEL TWO:

In another section of the party, Charity resembles a waiter, holding cups and plates for others.

3) CAUTION (OP): AND CHARITY GOES AROUND BEING TOO NICE.

4) CHARITY: CAN I GET YOU SOMETHING TO EAT, PATIENCE? SOMETHING TO DRINK? MAYBE A MUFFIN.

5) PATIENCE: I CAN WAIT.

PANEL THREE:

Chastity is sitting by herself, knitting, while in the corner of the panel a few male virtues do their best not to make eye contact.

6) CAUTION (OP): AND CHASTITY IS ALL BUT IGNORED BY THE MEN AT THE PARTY.

PANEL FOUR:

Still elsewhere, Optimism is bubbling over with excitement about the party, the people, and everything else!

7) CAUTION (OP): AND, WELL, OPTIMISM... I DON'T THINK I NEED TO SAY ANYTHING THERE.

8) OPTIMISM: ISN'T THIS JUST THE BEST PARTY EVER! OH MAN, I KNEW THIS WAS GONNA BE GREAT! I CAN'T WAIT TILL NEXT YEAR, IT'S GONNA BE EVEN BETTER!

PAGE FIVE (6 PANELS):

PANEL ONE:

Close-Up Shot of Caution watching the party unfold with a defeated look on his face.

1) CAUTION: I GUESS I JUST DIDN'T SEE THE POINT, YOU KNOW? IT'S ALWAYS THE SAME BORING SCENE.

PANEL TWO:

Medium Shot of Wisdom.

2) WISDOM: AND YET YOU STILL CAME.

3) CAUTION (OP): YEAH, WELL, IT'S CHRISTMAS. WHAT ELSE AM I GONNA DO?

PANEL THREE:

Two-Shot of both Wisdom and Caution. Wisdom is patting Caution on the back encouragingly.

4) WISDOM: IF THIS IS HOW YOU FEEL, CAUTION MY BOY, YOU SHOULD TELL THEM!

5) CAUTION: TELL WHO?

PANEL FOUR:

Similar shot as Panel Four, except from behind them as Wisdom gestures to the party crowd.

6) WISDOM: TELL THEM! EVERYONE! YOU SHOULD STAND UP AND TELL ALL THE VIRTUES HOW YOU FEEL.

PANEL FIVE:

Close-Up Shot of Caution, suddenly very nervous.

7) CAUTION: UM, YEAH, I SHOULD. MAYBE LATER, YOU KNOW? IF EVERYTHING GOES ALL RIGHT.

8) VOICE (OP): HEAR YE! HEAR YE!

PAGE SIX (4 PANELS):

PANEL ONE:

The voice from last panel belongs to Forgiveness, who is standing on a chair so as to address the entire room.

1) FORGIVENESS: CAN I HAVE YOUR ATTENTION, PLEASE?

PANEL TWO:

Low Angle Wide Shot of Forgiveness addressing the virtues. This is a large panel, with various virtues looking up to Forgiveness in the foreground. One such virtue is Honesty, who is whispering to someone next to her.

2) FORGIVENESS: MY FELLOW VIRTUES! MY BRETHREN AND BROTHERS IN ARMS, I, FORGIVENESS, AM HONORED TO BE THIS YEAR'S PROPRIETER OF FESTIVITIES.

3) HONESTY (WHISPERING): I HONESTLY NEVER KNOW WHAT HE'S SAYING.

PANEL THREE:

Medium Shot of Forgiveness.

4) FORGIVENESS: THIS YEAR, IN KEEPING WITH MY NATURE, I HAVE EXTENDED THE TIME-HONORED HOLIDAY TRADITION OF FORGIVENESS TO THOSE WHO HAVE GONE UNFORGIVEN FOR FAR TOO LONG!

PANEL FOUR:

Similar shot to Panel Three, except that now Forgiveness is gesturing off-panel.

5) FORGIVENESS: OUR FALLEN COUSINS, OUR PRODIGAL BROTHERS & SISTERS.

6) FORGIVENESS: MY VIRTUOUS SIBLINGS, I PRESENT TO YOU...

PAGE SEVEN (3 PANELS):

PANEL ONE:

Wide Shot of the vices entering the room. The vices are a motley crew of various genders, ages, and appearances. Some look menacing, and others oddly benign. This is a large panel that highlights the vices, but still has Forgiveness gesturing on the side of the panel. In the bottom corner of the panel, Insincerity is greeting Chastity.

- 1) FORGIVENESS (OP): THE VICES!
- 2) INSINCERITY: HI, I'M INSINCERITY.
- 3) INSINCERITY: THAT'S A LOVELY DRESS YOU'RE WEARING.

PANEL TWO:

Medium Shot of various virtues reacting in shock!

- 4) FORESIGHT: I DON'T BELIEVE THIS!
- 5) HONESTY: I AM HONESTLY OUTRAGED!
- 6) CHARITY: CAN I GET ANY OF YOU SOMETHING TO DRINK? TO EAT MAYBE?

PANEL THREE:

Close-Up Shot of Caution, a smirk forming on his face.

- 7) CAPTION: AND JUST LIKE THAT, THE CHRISTMAS PARTY GOT A LOT MORE INTERESTING.

PAGE EIGHT (4 PANELS):

PANEL ONE:

This page's layout mirrors Page 4's layout, with each panel lying horizontally across the page. In this panel, Greed & Gluttony have stuffed their plates full of ALL the food from the snack table. Nearby, various virtues look at them in disgust.

- 1) CAPTION: THE VICES WASTED NO TIME DRIVING EVERYONE CRAZY.
- 2) CAPTION: FIRST WHEN GREED & GLUTTONY GOBBLED UP ALL THE FOOD.

PANEL TWO:

Discontent is standing by a group of socializing virtues. The virtues are looking at him in annoyance.

- 3) CAPTION: THEN WHEN DISCONTENT SUCKED THE AIR OUT OF THE ROOM.
- 4) DISCONTENT: THIS ROOM IS TOO SMALL. AND THE TEMPERATURE IS TOO COLD. I THINK THERE ARE TOO MANY PEOPLE. AND NOT ENOUGH PUNCH. AND THE MUSIC IS TOO LOUD.

PANEL THREE:

Vanity is standing among the virtues in her snottiest pose, looking up at the air while speaking, and only lightly gesturing to her hand.

- 5) CAPTION: AND VANITY CERTAINLY DIDN'T MAKE ANY NEW FRIENDS.
- 6) VANITY: THIS HAT IS MADE OF THE FINEST GOOSE FEATHERS OF SOUTH AMERICA. ONLY FOUR OF THESE HATS EXIST, AND I OWN THEM ALL.

PANEL FOUR:

Lust is surrounded by a small group of female virtues that are noticeably infatuated with his good looks.

- 7) CAPTION: ONLY LUST SEEMED TO BE POPULAR, PARTICULARLY AMONG THE WOMEN.
- 8) LUST: YES, LADIES, YOU CAN TOUCH, BUT ONLY IF I GET THE SAME PRIVILEGES.
- 9) HONESTY: I AM HONESTLY TURNED ON RIGHT NOW.

PAGE NINE (4 PANELS):

PANEL ONE:

Medium Shot of Caution as he watches the party from his corner of the room.

1) CAPTION: ME, I DECIDED TO PLAY IT COOL AND JUST WATCH IT ALL HAPPEN. YOU KNOW, ALL CAUTIOUS-LIKE.

PANEL TWO:

A slightly Wider Shot of Caution from behind. A silhouetted figure is approaching him.

2) CAPTION: THAT WAS THE PLAN, UNTIL...

PANEL THREE:

Large Panel Wide Shot. Caution is being kissed by Recklessness, a beautiful, punk rock girl similar in "age" to Caution. The expression on Caution's face is one of shock, while the girl has her eyes closed and is enjoying the moment.

[NO DIALOGUE]

PANEL FOUR:

Two Shot of both of them. Caution is confused.

3) CAUTION: WHY, UM, DID YOU DO THAT?

PAGE TEN (6 PANELS):

PANEL ONE:

Close-Up Shot of Recklessness, perplexed, almost like she's confused by the question.

1) RECKLESSNESS: WHY? CAUSE I WANTED TO. WHY ELSE? DON'T YOU JUST DO WHATEVER YOU WANT, WHENEVER YOU WANT?

PANEL TWO:

Close-Up Shot of Caution who's gone from shocked to uncomfortable.

2) CAUTION: YEAH, UM, SOMETIMES. NOT ALWAYS THOUGH. USUALLY NEVER.

PANEL THREE:

Close-Up Shot of Recklessness smiling.

3) RECKLESSNESS: YOU'RE KINDA CUTE. WHAT'S YOUR NAME?

PANEL FOUR:

Close-Up Shot of their hands as they shake in formal greeting. All dialogue is off-panel.

4) CAUTION (OP): CAUTION. I'M CAUTION.

5) RECKLESSNESS (OP): NICE TO MEET YOU CAUTION. I'M RECKLESSNESS. THOUGH YOU CAN CALL ME RECKY.

PANEL FIVE:

Close-Up Shot of Recklessness with an eager, mischievous look on her face.

6) RECKLESSNESS: WANNA GO SPIKE THE PUNCH?

PANEL SIX:

Close-Up Shot of Caution, who's hesitant.

7) CAUTION: UM...

8) CAPTION: I SHOULD HAVE SAID NO.

PAGE ELEVEN (4 PANELS):

PANEL ONE:

Once again, this page uses the 4 horizontal panel layout from previous pages. Recklessness is pouring a bottle of vodka into the punch while Caution looks on, anxiously.

1) CAPTION: BUT THERE WAS SOMETHING ABOUT HER YOU COULDN'T SAY NO TO.

PANEL TWO:

Recklessness is messing with Vanity's Hat while Vanity is busy painting her nails. Caution is still watching, though now he's less anxious. He's even smiling.

2) CAPTION: SOMETHING REAL, AND ENTICING.

PANEL THREE:

Recklessness is about to smash Optimism over the head with a chair, but Caution is stopping her.

3) CAPTION: THOUGH AT TIMES A BIT EXTREME.

4) OPTIMISM: I THINK NEW YEAR'S IS GOING TO BE EVEN BETTER. IT'S PROBABLY GOING TO BE THE BEST NEW YEAR'S EVER! NOTHING BAD IS EVER GOING TO HAPPEN AGAIN!

PANEL FOUR:

Caution and Recklessness are about to spill punch on Lust & Honesty, who are making out on the floor behind the snack table. You can see their upper bodies, while their lower bodies are obscured by the table. They're in the heat of the moment, of course, which is how they're not able to see Caution and Recklessness about to drench them.

5) CAPTION: I DON'T THINK I'VE EVER SMILED SO MUCH.

6) HONESTY (IN ECSTASY): OH MY!

PAGE TWELVE (5 PANELS):

PANEL ONE:

Two Shot. Recklessness is practically bouncing with excitement while Caution is mellow.

- 1) RECKLESSNESS: THIS IS THE BEST DAMN CHRISTMAS I'VE EVER HAD!
- 2) CAUTION: REALLY?

PANEL TWO:

Close-Up Shot of Recklessness.

- 3) RECKLESSNESS: YEAH. MOST YEARS ARE ALWAYS THE SAME DULL ROUTINE, BUT THIS...

PANEL THREE:

Wide Shot from behind as Recklessness gestures to the room in semi-chaos. Virtues and vices are arguing, fighting, making out.

- 4) RECKLESSNESS: THIS IS DIFFERENT. THIS IS LIVING!

PANEL FOUR:

Close-Up Shot of Caution, happy, smiling.

- 5) CAUTION: I THINK I KNOW WHAT YOU MEAN.

PANEL FIVE:

Two-shot of Caution and Recklessness.

- 6) CAUTION: RECKY, DO YOU, UM, THINK THAT MAYBE WE COULD...
- 7) VOICE (OP): ENOUGH! I SAY ENOUGH!

PAGE THIRTEEN (5 PANELS):

PANEL ONE:

Wide Shot of various virtues upset, and ready to riot. The ringleader is Righteousness, to whom the outburst from last panel belongs.

- 1) TEMPERANCE: CALM DOWN, RIGHTEOUSNESS.
- 2) RIGHTEOUSNESS: NEVER, TEMPERANCE! NOT WHILE I'M IN THE RIGHT!

PANEL TWO:

Close-Up Shot of Righteousness.

3) RIGHTEOUSNESS: THESE SAVAGE VICES HAVE SULLIED OUR PARTY AND SHED A DARK SHADOW ON THIS MOST VIRTUOUS OF HOLIDAYS!

PANEL THREE:

Wide Shot. Righteousness addresses the crowd, arms waving, rallying his supporters.

- 4) RIGHTEOUSNESS: WE DEMAND THEY BE CAST OFF!
- 5) AGREEABILITY: YEAH!
- 6) LOYALTY: VIRTUES BEFORE ALL OTHERS!

PANEL FOUR:

Close-Up Shot of Righteousness.

- 7) RIGHTEOUSNESS: LET US SEND THEM BACK TO WHATEVER DARK CORNER OF THE WORLD THEY--
- 8) VOICE (OP): STOP IT! JUST STOP!

PANEL FIVE:

Wide Shot. All eyes turn to Caution, who's now addressing the crowd.

- 9) CAUTION: I'M TIRED OF ALL YOUR POMPOUSNESS. HAVE YOU ALL LOST COMPASSION?
- 10) PERCEPTIVENESS: COMPASSION'S NOT LOST. HE'S HOME, SICK WITH THE FLU.

PAGE FOURTEEN (6 PANELS):

PANEL ONE:

Close-Up Shot of Caution.

1) CAUTION: THAT'S NOT WHAT I MEANT. CAN'T YOU ALL SEE THAT FOR THE FIRST TIME, IN A LONG TIME, WE HAVE A PARTY THAT ISN'T DREARY AND REPETITIVE. FOR THE FIRST TIME, WE'RE EXPERIENCING SOMETHING UNIQUE. WE'RE EXPERIENCING LIFE AS IT'S MEANT TO BE EXPERIENCED...

PANEL TWO:

Wider Shot. Caution is pointing at the vices.

2) CAUTION: ...WITH BOTH THE GOOD AND THE BAD.

PANEL THREE:

Caution is walking back to Recklessness in the corner.

3) CAUTION: ALL OF YOU CAN DO WHAT YOU WANT, BUT I, FOR ONE,...

PANEL FOUR:

Close-Up Shot of Recklessness smiling at what Caution is saying.

4) CAUTION (OP): ...KNOW A GOOD THING WHEN I SEE ONE.

PANEL FIVE:

Medium Wide Shot of Caution next to Recklessness and Wisdom.

5) WISDOM: QUITE A SPEECH, MY BOY. VERY WELL SAID.

6) RECKLESSNESS: YEAH, THAT WAS PRETTY SPONTANEOUS. MAYBE EVEN A LITTLE RECKLESS.

PANEL SIX:

Close-Up Shot of Caution, a confident smile on his face.

7) CAUTION: WHAT CAN I SAY? I'M LEARNING.

PAGE FIFTEEN (4 PANELS):

PANEL ONE:

This page once again uses the 4 horizontal panel pattern from before. In the first panel, Caution and Recklessness are walking side-by-side on their way out of the party. They're looking at each other and smiling. Around them are various virtues and vices.

- 1) DISCONTENT: THAT SPEECH WAS TOO LONG. AND TOO PREACHY.
- 2) OPTIMISM: THEY ARE THE CUTEST COUPLE EVER! THEY'RE TOTALLY GONNA LIVE HAPPILY EVER AFTER.

PANEL TWO:

The pair is closer now (as if the "camera" were staying in place while Caution and Recklessness were walking toward it). Caution is holding out his hand. Recklessness looks down at it. Near them, Righteousness approaches one of the vices.

- 3) RIGHTEOUSNESS: I'M, UM, NOT GOOD AT ADMITTING I'M WRONG.
- 4) INSINCERITY: DON'T BE SILLY! YOU WEREN'T WRONG AT ALL!

PANEL THREE:

The pair is are extremely close to the "camera" and all we can see is that they're holding hands.

[NO DIALOGUE]

PANEL FOUR:

The pair is completely gone, leaving the virtues and vices behind. Among them, we see Honesty wet from the punch that was splashed on her and Lust. She's watching, with worry, as Lust is walking away with Chastity, his arm draped around her shoulder. Lust doesn't even look back at Honesty as he responds.

- 5) HONESTY: YOU'RE GOING TO CALL ME RIGHT? HONESTLY?
- 6) LUST: YEAH, BABY, YOU KNOW. I'LL SEE YOU AROUND.
- 7) FORGIVENESS (RECITING THE CLASSIC POEM): "I HEARD HIM EXCLAIM, 'ERE HE DROVE OUT OF SIGHT..."

PAGE SIXTEEN (1 PANEL):

SPLASH PAGE:

Bird's Eye View of the Christmas party (similar to Page 2). Throughout the room we see virtues and vices are mingling, laughing, and generally getting along. Forgiveness is boisterously addressing the crowd, while standing next to him is Discontent. In the lower corner of the panel, there is a quote.

1) FORGIVENESS (FINISHING POEM): 'HAPPY CHRISTMAS TO ALL, AND TO ALL A GOOD-NIGHT!'"

2) DISCONTENT: WHATEVER.

3) CAPTION (QUOTATION): "A HAPPY LIFE IS FIFTY PERCENT VIRTUE AND FIFTY PERCENT VICE." – OSCAR WILDE

THE END