

Miracle on 34th Street

The famed Christmas classic movie *Miracle on 34th Street*, which premiered in 1947, was originally released in June, not December.

That's right. The studio knew that it had a potential hit on their hands, so they didn't want to forego the extra dollars that a summertime blockbuster could rake in. Apparently, blockbusters weren't yet a sure deal back in the 1940s.

Producers knew that selling a Christmas movie in the summertime could be a bit tricky, so they billed it as a romantic comedy – a love story – and totally downplayed the film's holiday theme. The marketing department even tailored the movie posters to show the film's "love interest" stars, Maureen O'Hara and John Payne, coyly eyeing one another, with the film's other stars – Edmund Gwenn, who played Kris Kringle, and then child-star Natalie Wood – tucked neatly and discreetly in the background.

In essence, it was a Christmas story pretending to be a love story.

The ploy worked, and the film was a huge success. It has now been viewed and cherished over and over again – not in the summer, but every Christmas by every generation since.



Do you realize that the Christmas story – you know, the real one with shepherds and wise men and the baby Jesus – isn't just a Christmas story?

At its heart, it is a love story! A love story that just happens to be celebrated at Christmas. It first premiered more than 2,000 years ago and has been cherished over and over again – not just at Christmas, but every day, by every heart longing to be loved, in every generation since.

This holiday season, don't just rehearse a Christmas story. Rehearse the greatest love story ever told – the gift of Jesus. And be part of it.

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life (John 3:16 NKJV).

– Beecher Hunter

