

ANOTHER Christmas Eve

By James Rhodes

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STORY OF THE PLAY

Everyone who loved James Rhodes' original play, "One Christmas Eve," will delight in this sequel. This time we find the wealthy Collinses, Bob, June, and their teenage son and daughter, Ken and Markie, now a secure, Christian family, waiting for their Aunt Rachel to arrive for a Christmas visit.

A somewhat flighty lady, and certainly not the best driver in the world, Rachel is long overdue. Worried that something has happened to her, the family prays for her safe arrival. The scene then switches to Rachel, stranded and alone, but helped by an unusually kind and understanding stranger who seems to appear from nowhere.

Never very religious before, a rescued and grateful Rachel later joins the Collinses and carolers as they sing, rejoicing into the Christmas night.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(5m, 5 w, extras as carolers)

Bob Collins: The father.

June Collins: The mother.

Ken Collins: The teenage son.

Markie Collins: The teenage daughter.

Officer McClintick: Christian police officer.

Eloyda Anderson: Christian neighbor.

Mercer Anderson: Her husband, also a Christian.

Hannah: The Collins' maid.

Rachel: The visiting aunt.

Man: A special, helpful stranger.

Carolers: Any number.

(Doubling possible: MERCER ANDERSON can double as the stranger or as the police officer.)

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SETTING

It is Christmas Eve, present day, and two of the three scenes take place inside the wealthy Collins home in a small town in California. The main set is their comfortable, tastefully furnished living room with a sofa CS and various chairs scattered SR and SL. There is an end table next to the sofa. In front of a picture window stands a beautifully decorated Christmas tree with presents underneath it. There are two entrances, one SL to the outside and the other SR to the rest of the home. Scene 2 is played before the curtains and needs only a rock or log on which Rachel can sit.

SYNOPSIS

Scene 1: Collins home, about 5 p.m., Christmas Eve.

Scene 2: Several miles outside of town, about 6 p.m.

Scene 3: Moments later, back at the Collins home.

PROPS

Cordless phone, two board games, candy and watch for Bob, tray of food for Hannah, winter coats for all, two presents under tree for Andersons, filled trash bag for Markie and Ken, suitcase and shopping bag filled with presents for Rachel, song books for carolers.

SFX: Doorbell.

Playing Time: About 30 minutes. Can be lengthened by adding more carols. Carols used in the script include "Silent Night"; "Deck the Halls"; and "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing."

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Scene 1

(AT RISE: We see JUNE COLLINS standing and talking on the phone. Daughter MARKIE and son KEN are playing a board game on the floor in front of the sofa.)

JUNE: Yes ... yes ... that's right, Mrs. Anderson ... she will be here tonight. My sister Rachel. As a matter of fact she is a little overdue... *(Walks over to window and looks out.)* yes ... yes ... we will ... Then you and your husband will drop by tonight. *(BOB COLLINS enters. Nibbling on a piece of candy, HE goes to JUNE.)*

JUNE: Good we'll see you soon ... good-bye. *(Hangs up.)*

BOB: That was Mrs. Anderson?

JUNE: She called to say she and her husband will be by tonight.

BOB: Wonderful! I like a crowded house at Christmas.

MARKIE: Why do we always call them Mr. and Mrs. Anderson? We've known them for over a year.

KEN: They just fit the "Mr. and Mrs." What are their first names anyway?

BOB: Mercer and Eloyda ... I think.

KEN: I'll stick with Mr. and Mrs. My move, Markie.

MARKIE: Your move? I think you are a cheater, Kenny Collins.

KEN: *(Raises hand.)* Scout's honor.

MARKIE: You never were a scout.

KEN: But I do have honor.

MARKIE: I'll think about that.

JUNE: Markie and Ken, it's Christmas Eve. We haven't seen the both of you in months.

BOB: Try and get along your mother is saying.

MARKIE: *(Looks at KEN. THEY both giggle.)* Truce? *(THEY shake hands.)*

KEN: Truce. Satisfied, Mom?

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JUNE: *(Smiling.)* You two. I never know when you are serious or not.

BOB: *(To JUNE.)* Have you heard from Rachel? *(Glances at watch.)* Wasn't she supposed to be here at four o'clock?

JUNE: That's what she said. But you know Rachel.

KEN: She isn't the greatest driver in the world.

MARKIE: *(In defense.)* I like Aunt Rachel. She's just ... just ... a cautious driver.

KEN: That translates into she isn't the greatest driver in the world in my book. But I agree with you, Markie. I like Aunt Rachel, too.

MARKIE: Why do you suppose she is so against Christianity?

KEN: She doesn't want to hear a thing about Jesus, the Bible, or being born again.

JUNE: Rachel wasn't always that way. It was after the death of her daughter Mary Louise that she changed. Somehow I think she blamed God for what happened.

BOB: I don't know why we always do that. It's as if He somehow has let us down. But just think how much more miserable you would be if you didn't have His grace when things get rough.

MARKIE: That's too bad. Maybe she will change. Maybe something will happen to restore her faith. I sure hope so.

JUNE: Do you think maybe we ought to call somebody ... somebody like the highway patrol, Bob?

BOB: Let's not overreact, June. She's just an hour late. There might be a perfectly logical reason why Rachel's held up. Could be anything.

JUNE: Like what?

MARKIE: I hope she doesn't have car trouble.

KEN: Yeah, Aunt Rachel hardly knows how to raise the hood of a car let alone what's under it.

BOB: Let's don't invite trouble ... try to think positive.

JUNE: I guess you are right. She has been late before.

(HANNAH enters carrying a tray of cookies which She puts on the end table.)

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HANNAH: Not this late. If you ask me, something's happened to Miss Rachel.

BOB: Now, Hannah, we don't know that.

HANNAH: Well, has she ever been this late before? Year before last she was fifteen minutes late and she spent the whole rest of the weekend apologizing.

KEN: What's on the tray, Hannah? Anything good to eat? *(Gets up and moves to table.)*

HANNAH: Your favorite, Kenny Collins. Chocolate chip AND peanut butter cookies.

KEN: *(Grabs HANNAH and kisses her cheek.)* You are a jewel, Hannah. Nobody can top you in the kitchen. *(Takes a handful of cookies.)* Except maybe Mom.

HANNAH: Your mother knows her way around a cookbook. She's taught me a thing or two. *(Goes to JUNE.)* Do you want me to stay on, Miss June? At least until Miss Rachel gets here?

JUNE: You run along, Hannah. Rachel will be here at any moment. You just have a Merry Christmas with your family.

HANNAH: It's like I have two families. Remember last Christmas Eve? There wasn't a stick of furniture in this whole place. Not one piece. Those prowlers had made off with everything.

BOB: Everything but what was important.

MARKIE: Yes. That was the best Christmas we ever had. No presents ... no food ... no furniture ... just the four of us together ... and Mrs. Anderson's Bible.

KEN: That night really changed all our lives. Dad read to us from Luke and we all began to know the true meaning of Christmas.

BOB: I had a different attitude toward the job. June, you always were close to the Lord, but I think even you got closer that night.

JUNE: It was a wonderful Christmas. This one will be even more so. Now ... you run along, Hannah. Wish everyone in your family a Merry Christmas from us. *(Doorbell RINGS.)*

End of Freeview

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