

Christmas in the Red

By Rev. Craig Howard

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STORY OF THE PLAY

Vickie Webster, an elderly mother, grandmother and widow, has a mess on her hands. She and her family are in the middle of a financial nightmare that threatens to take her home, her son's family, and all the joy out of Christmas. They are all in the "red" and can see no possible way out of it. But with the faith and love of her two crazy "sisters" and the rest of the "family," they find that God has provided some amazing and comical answers to the problems they face. With the help of an angel that has stepped in before, and a provision that God put in place long before anyone knew it would be needed, Christmas in the "red" turns into a Christmas of blessing. About 90 minutes.

SCENES

Scene 1: Vickie's home, a few days before Christmas.

Scene 2: Vickie's home, a few days later.

Scene 3: Vickie's home, the morning of Christmas Eve.

Scene 4: Outdoor Nativity, a few minutes later.

Scene 5: Vickie's home, later that evening (Christmas Eve).

Scene 6: Outdoor Nativity, a few minutes later.

Scene 7: Vickie's home, later that evening.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(5 m, 4 w, 1 flexible and 1 young teen)

VICKIE WEBSTER: A widower who is in danger of losing her house.

ELISABETH: A widower. She is very interested in finding a man. Played over the top with exaggeration, adding humor to the play. She is the most outspoken and "Pentecostal." She has a deep faith.

DAPHNE: A widower. She is a little man-crazy. She is slightly younger than the others. She is a little slow to catch on to things occasionally, but not a complete "dumb blond" type character.

JOHN WEBSTER: Vickie's son. He is a good guy who got drawn into the world of gambling.

DANIELLE WEBSTER: John's wife. She is a good woman who is frightened for her family, and this has made her angry.

PAYTEN WEBSTER: The 12-year-old son of John and Danielle. This part has a fair amount of lines and must express a lot of emotion. (It could be played by a girl with minimal modification.)

MARCUS: Daphne's son. He has been in prison for the last several years. He is wary of police but is a good guy who came into a strong faith while in prison.

ERIC THE ANGEL: An angel sent to help the family and make sure that nothing bad happens to Payten. If he carries a little extra weight, that fits into the character. His facial expressions during Daphne's advance can add humor to the situation.

LEE: Elisabeth's younger brother. He has a strong faith. He is soft spoken but when he speaks, he is worth listening to.

JERRY: Vickie's outspoken brother. He is a widower who is spending his first Christmas without his wife. He has a way of cutting to the point of the matter and bringing a clarity to the situation. He is played loud and full of emotion. A take-charge type who loves his family and the Lord.

OFFICER: (Male or Female) Small part.

PRODUCTION NOTES

Throughout the show, Vickie, Elisabeth and Daphne refer to each other as “sister” and the children call them “aunt,” but they are not literal family ... just lifelong friends.

We had fun with four names in the play. You could change them to fit your congregation, if desired:

Pastor Craig is our pastor, but you could use yours.

Delmas Mauzy is a good-natured man in our congregation that everyone laughed at when they talked about Elisabeth flirting with him.

Juanita is another good-natured person in the congregation; we had fun poking fun at Juanita and her daughter Kristy.

Kevin Coblents is another well-known man in the congregation that is about as far from being a dangerous bookie as you could get.

Costume note: For the officer, we borrowed a sheriff deputy's ball cap with the words “Deputy Sheriff,” and a radio, to outfit him for the part. Your local police department may agree to similar cooperation. A black short coat completed the look. Full uniform is not necessary.

Most of the play takes place in Vickie's home.

For the Nativity scene, we used an outdoor Christmas Nativity on a side stage with blue lights.

Scene 1

(AT RISE: Vickie's home a few days before Christmas. VICKIE is on the phone with the hospital.)

VICKIE: I understand what you are sayin' but you're not listenin' to me. I am payin' all I can. My husband is gone. His income is gone. Our savings is gone. My last name is not Gates and I have nothing else to give you more than I have been doing. I will pay it off, but I need some time.

I can't borrow any more money. I had to borrow money to replace my old furnace that broke down at the end of last winter. The bank won't lend me any more money because my income is too low.

You just think it isn't your problem. When I come down there and hit you with a round house karate kick that bounces your head off of the wall, you might change your mind.

You're the one that is makin' the threats. Tellin' me you are goin' to take me to court and file a lien against my house. I have lived in this house for the last 45 years. All my kids grew up in this house and now you are tellin' me you want to take it away from me to pay a hospital bill that didn't even save my husband's life?! How do you sleep at night? I bet your momma is really proud of you takin' homes from poor widows.

Your momma is your supervisor?! Oh my dear Father in Heaven! Is there no compassion left in this world?

I know you're just doin' your job, and you know what ... Your job stinks!!! *(Hangs up the phone. Starts pacing and muttering.)* How could a momma tell her boy to do that to a poor widow? I'm gonna go down there and give them both a round house kick. *(Hits a karate stance, lets out a big "Hy-yah!" and starts to swing a kick, then grabs her back with a groan.)* Maybe I'll wait till tomorrow. *(Sits down.)*

(ELISABETH and DAPHNE enter, wearing headbands and using canes.)

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ELISABETH: Sister, what in the world has come over you in here?

DAPHNE: Yes, we heard you a-yelling and a-Hy-yah'n all the way out to the sidewalk. Are you having another spell?

ELISABETH: Oh sister, please, not another spell.

VICKIE: I didn't have a spell. I just had a fit!

DAPHNE: (To *ELISABETH*.) Isn't a fit like a spell?

ELISABETH: Yes, I believe it is.

DAPHNE: I thought so.

VICKIE: It wasn't that kind of fit!

ELISABETH: Well you don't have to get snappy with us.

DAPHNE: Yes, we didn't do anything.

ELISABETH: We just came to see if you were alright, because we love you.

DAPHNE: Yes, we do.

VICKIE: Oh, I know, sisters. It's just that I am so mad at that hospital!

DAPHNE: Do you mean you was in here yelling at the hospital? It's clear across town. They can't hear you from here.

VICKIE: I was on the phone with them. They are tellin' me they are going to take my house if I don't pay off the bill from Adam's hospital stay.

ELISABETH: Sister, that's terrible. They can't take your home. It's Christmas!

DAPHNE: Haven't you been making payments?

VICKIE: Of course I have, sister! But that pea-brain in the collections department says a few hundred dollars a month isn't enough. He says at that rate it will take over thirty years to pay off the bill and to be blunt, he says, he doubts I will be around that long.

ELISABETH: He said that?!

DAPHNE: Well, sister, he's probably right.

VICKIE: I know he's right; I can count, I've got a mirror, but he didn't have to say it like that!

ELISABETH: What are you going to do?

VICKIE: I thought I might go down there and give him one of those karate kicks to the head I learned in that self-defense class. That would give him something to think about.

End of Freeview

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