

# ***CHRISTMAS on Merry Lane***

*By Mark Anderson*

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DEDICATION

*Dedicated to Kevin, Tony, and Susie, three of the best friends that a person can have. Thanks for your encouragement when I decided to write a Christmas comedy. Friends like you are a gift from God.*

*Mark Anderson, the playwright*

STORY OF THE PLAY

Merry Lane is a nursing facility the Brittenham brothers call home. Rufus, the oldest brother is a grouch who dislikes Christmas time. Edgar, the middle brother, is a kindhearted, soft-spoken man, the peacemaker, and Percy, the youngest brother is scatterbrained, but has a heart of gold. Despite Rufus' many objections, Percy shares story after story about their childhood. And if that isn't enough to drive Rufus crazy, the members of the Ladies Auxiliary stop in to sing Christmas carols and the young kids visit and "adopt" a grandparent. Magically one little girl touches Rufus in a way no one has before. He finds out she is his granddaughter and she helps heal the long-held rift between Rufus and his daughter and son-in-law. A warm, charming story that will appeal to Christians of any age.

\* \* \*

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**CAST OF CHARACTERS**

*(4m, 5w, 1 child)*

**EDGAR BRITTENHAM:** Mid 70's, kind-hearted, peace maker of family, brother of Rufus and Percy.

**PERCY BRITTENHAM:** Early 70's, scatterbrained, lovable, rambles a lot, brother of Edgar and Rufus.

**RUFUS BRITTENHAM:** 80-years-old, a grouch, dislikes Christmas, brother of Percy and Edgar.

**JANE HARTMANN:** Mid 40's. Nurse on duty - has a special fondness for Percy.

**BERTHA BEIDLEMAN:** Mid 50's. President of Ladies' Auxiliary, very prudish in a comical sense.

**MYRTLE STILLWELL:** Mid 50's. Member of Ladies' Auxiliary, also very prudish in a comical sense.

**STELLA MAYBURN:** Mid 50's, another prudish Auxiliary member.

**MARY JO STEPHENSON:** Mid 30's, Rufus' daughter. Hasn't seen her father since her wedding day.

**TERRY STEPHENSON:** Late 30's. Mary Jo's husband, the reason Mary Jo and Rufus haven't spoken.

**ALLISON STEPHENSON:** About 8-years-old, their daughter, has never met her grandfather.

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**Playing Time:** 45 minutes.

**SETTING**

Recreation room of Merry Lane Retirement Home, decorated for Christmas. SL is a comfortable furniture grouping of sofa, loveseat, chair and end table. CS is a card table and four chairs. SR is a Christmas tree only partially decorated. Exits are SR and SL.

**SYNOPSIS**

SCENE 1: Christmas Eve, morning.  
SCENE 2: Christmas Eve, afternoon.  
SCENE 3: Christmas Eve, evening.

**PROPS**

Scene 1: Books and newspapers on end table, cane and hearing aid for Rufus, tray with bowls and spoons and a chart for Jane.

Scene 2: Checker game on card table for Percy and Rufus, newspaper for Edgar, and charts for Jane.

Scene 3: Ribbons and tree decorations, foil-wrapped plate of cookies for Ladies, and shopping bag filled with presents for Mary Jo.

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SCENE 1

*(AT RISE: It is almost noon, Christmas Eve day . EDGAR is on couch reading a book, while PERCY is in chair reading the newspaper. JANE enters with RUFUS by the arm. In HIS other hand is his cane.)*

RUFUS: Now slow down, will ya? Are we going to a fire or something? You dragged me all the way down the hall for heavens sake, let me alone.

JANE: *(Sits RUFUS down in chair opposite PERCY.)* Now. There you are! Don't you all forget the Christmas party tonight, it will start around 8 o'clock or so.

RUFUS: I'm not going!

JANE: Yes, you are!

RUFUS: I'm telling you, I'm not going and that's final!

JANE: You'll have a lot of fun! Trust me!

RUFUS: Humph!

JANE: Everyone is going to the party, Rufus, remember that. I'm going to check on Mr. Peterson. Don't you take off any where, now! *(Exits.)*

RUFUS: Heavens to Betsy! Did you hear that? You can't get out of this prison.

EDGAR: This isn't a prison, Rufus!

PERCY: Yeah! There aren't any bars on the windows!

RUFUS: It's close enough! I'm telling you, the guards are disguised as nurses.

PERCY: Hey! It's Christmas! Time to deck the halls, jingle the bells, away the manger, and -

EDGAR: Rufus, he's right! It's Christmas, try and be happy!

PERCY: Yeah, I'm right and don't you forget it! *(Makes face.)*

EDGAR: You should be thankful.

RUFUS: Thankful? Happy? Edgar, what pray tell, do I have to be thankful for?

EDGAR: By the grace of God, you're still living and breathing, you've got your health, your family -

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PERCY: *(Interrupts)* And two brand-new batteries for your hearing aid!

RUFUS: I feel a whole lot better now! Thanks, Percy, for cheering me up, you little twit!

PERCY: That's OK. What are brothers for?

RUFUS: *(Messes with hearing aid.)* What?

PERCY: *(Louder.)* What are brothers for?

RUFUS: Huh?! Ah!! This hearing aid's on the blink again. Now what did you say?

PERCY: *(Yells.)* WHAT ARE BROTHERS FOR!!

*(EDGAR covers his ears and RUFUS jumps.)*

RUFUS: You don't have to shout! I'm not deaf, you know! And you say it is after 4:00? No wonder I'm tired. I've been sitting here all day long.

EDGAR: No, you haven't! It's only noon!!

RUFUS: Oh! *(To PERCY.)* I don't know why I even listen to you.

*(JANE enters.)*

JANE: All right, guys! How about a little snack?

EDGAR: Sounds good!

JANE: What would you like? Walnuts, peanut butter fudge, and sardines with white crackers on top!! *(EDGAR and RUFUS are sickened by this.)* Could I get you something else?

PERCY: Well ... *(Thinks about it.)*

JANE: How about some cottage cheese?

EDGAR: Sounds good to me, it's healthy and nutritious.

RUFUS: At our age, who needs nutrition?

JANE: You all need to eat healthy, Rufus!

RUFUS: Wonderful! That's the fifth time this week, we've eaten that stuff. Good ol' cottage cheese - yuck!

JANE: Now Rufus!

PERCY: *(Puzzled.)* I wonder where they came up with the name - cottage cheese? That sounds like a house cheese or something. I mean, cottage cheese comes from a cow,

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