

CHRISTMAS SERVED HERE

By Mindy Starns Clark

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DEDICATION

For the members of the First Baptist Church of Red Bank, New Jersey, with affection and gratitude.

The Playwright, Mindy Starns Clark

STORY OF THE PLAY

It is the day of Eleanor's annual church Christmas dinner for the poor. She has brought along her new boyfriend, Leo, to meet her grown granddaughter, Jane, for the first time. Jane has also brought along her new boyfriend, Bobby, to meet her grandmother.

Unfortunately, they are so busy serving the dinner that the two couples do not get the chance for formal introductions. Through a series of misunderstandings, each person thinks the other is someone else entirely. Eleanor thinks Bobby is one of the homeless people; Bobby thinks Eleanor is a confused alcoholic and that Leo is her drunken boyfriend; Jane thinks Leo is an insane stalker; and Leo thinks Jane is a malicious thief. The confusion escalates until the final hilarious confrontation.

Here's the perfect play to serve after your own church's banquet or to perform as a special event to thank all your hard-working volunteers. Enjoy!

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

(2 M, 3 W, 2 Flexible)

JANE: A young woman, dressed casually but looks nice.

BOBBY: Jane's boyfriend, dressed too casually.

ELEANOR: Jane's grandmother, a Christian lady.

LEO: Eleanor's nearsighted boyfriend.

DOTTIE: The director of the church dinner.

OFFICER 1: Security guard. *(male or female)*

OFFICER 2: Another. *(male or female)*

PERFORMANCE TIME: Approximately 30 minutes.

PROPS

DOTTIE: Clipboard, apron, tray of salad plates, tissue.

BOBBY: Coat, plate of food, money in pocket.

JANE: Coat, apron, tray with several salad plates, butter.

LEO: Coat, hat, shattered pair of glasses, large piece of broken lens.

ELEANOR: Coat, apron, napkins, cup of coffee, basket of bread, money in pocket, watch.

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SETTING

All the action takes place at one end of the fellowship hall of a large church. There are two tables, set at angles so that when a person is sitting at one of the tables, his back is to the other. There are two chairs at each table. On each table is a festive tablecloth and a small Christmas centerpiece, perhaps some bright balls and greenery on a Styrofoam ring.

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(AT RISE: JANE and BOBBY enter from SL holding hands, talking. They are having a mild disagreement but are not too angry. Crowd of people are imagined offstage.)

JANE: I just can't believe you'd come here today dressed like this.

BOBBY: You said "casual."

JANE: Yeah, I said casual. Like, going-out-to-dinner casual. Having-some-friends-over casual. Not scrubbing-out-the-toilet casual!

BOBBY: I'm sorry. I said I was sorry.

JANE: I know, it's just that I'm nervous about you meeting Gram for the first time. This is very important to me. I'm sure she'll like you when she gets to know you, but first impressions are always crucial.

BOBBY: Honey, don't worry. Your grandmother and I are going to hit it off just great. And if she's as wonderful as you say she is, then she won't care how I'm dressed.

JANE: I suppose ... At least I know she'll be in a good mood today. This event is the highlight of Gram's holidays every year.

BOBBY: A community dinner for the poor? The highlight of her Christmas?

JANE: You have to know Gram. She loves the underdog, the indigent, loves to think she can go out and minister to the world. She's big on these things. She's been doing this for years at our church.

BOBBY: Well, I'm glad you invited me over. Maybe it'll even be fun.

JANE: Yeah, it is fun. A lot of work, but fun.

(BOBBY takes off his coat and looks around for the first time since THEY walked in.)

BOBBY: *(Looking offstage at "crowds.")* Whoa! It's so big!

JANE: *(Taking off HER coat.)* Yeah, I guess our church is pretty large.

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BOBBY: Well, that too, but I'm talking about all the people. There's just so many! Are we really going to feed them all? What a way to spend Christmas!

JANE: Last year we served over five hundred. It seems like a lot, but believe me, the time will fly.

BOBBY: I guess ...

JANE: Look at it this way. By helping out, you'll be bringing a little nourishment and cheer into some very needy lives. I'd say that's a nice way to spend Christmas.

BOBBY: Hmmm ...

JANE: At least we'll be together.

BOBBY: Yeah, you and me and five hundred of the city's most desperate homeless.

JANE: Don't feel bad, Bobby. At least with those clothes, you fit right in.

BOBBY: Ha ha. Are you calling me a bum?

JANE: If the shoe fits. But listen, seriously, don't use words like "bum" around Gram. She's very particular about things like that. You'll understand better when you meet her.

BOBBY: Whatever you say.

(DOTTIE enters from SR, waving and carrying a clipboard.)

DOTTIE: Jane! Oh, Jane!

JANE: Hi, Dottie. Merry Christmas.

DOTTIE: To you too, dear. Oh, and is this your new young man you were telling me about?

JANE: *(Nodding, smiling.)* This is Bobby.

DOTTIE: Bobby. How do you do?

BOBBY: Nice to meet you.

DOTTIE: I hope Jane warned you, we really work our volunteers to death.

BOBBY: I'm looking forward to it.

DOTTIE: Good. Well, no time to chat. *(Checking HER clipboard.)* Jane, you go report to Sue Wiggins. She's in charge of serving and she'll tell you what to do.

JANE: Okay.

End of Freeview

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