

GATHER UP THE FRAGMENTS

By Alberta Hawse

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STORY OF THE PLAY

Easter, to Molly, means a time of rejoicing for her best Friend has risen from the grave and assured her of an everlasting life. But for her fullest joy, Molly needs her children about her in worship at the family church. Luanne and Brad, her daughter and son-in-law, have different ideas of how to spend a nice weekend. And they are going to take their daughter, Megan, with them, even though she has shown her willingness to listen to Grandma when she talks "religion." Molly's "old-fashioned" beliefs are also tested in her son's family against modern-day problems encountered by her other grandchildren, Sybil and Jeff. Easter morning comes and lilies are placed around the altars and loved ones remembered. But there will be some living loved ones that are not there and the circle will seem fragmented. One must do as Molly and her friend, Allen, do ... gather up the fragments and go on. For nothing can completely spoil Easter, the time of the empty tomb!

SETTING

Living room of modest, everyday home. Touches of love everywhere. Family pictures on wall and tables. One large picture of Jesus. Bible and large Bible story book on small table or bookcase. Comfortable couch with pillows. At least one large armchair. Two exits, one to the outside and one to the rest of the home.

TIME:

ACT I: Saturday afternoon before Easter.

ACT II: Early Easter morning.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(4 m, 5 w)

MOLLY: A widow in her 60s; a dedicated Christian concerned about the cracks in her family's foundation of faith; has a fairly good singing voice.

ALLEN: A widower and member of the same church who has fallen in love with Molly; a great support to her; also sings.

LUANNE: Molly's daughter, early 40s. Has grown up in church but evidently was never saved. Now she is willing to go along with her husband, who believes in nothing but himself.

BRAD: Luanne's husband; a successful man and a nice enough fellow but dead set against a belief in a higher Power.

MEGAN: Luanne's daughter, about 9-10 years old; a sweet child and deeply loved by Molly who wishes to see her become a Christian.

DONALD: Molly's son, late 30s. Very likable and a faithful Christian but concerned about his teenage children.

PATRICIA: His wife. Very loving and also deeply concerned about their teenagers who seem to think Christian parents are from an alien planet.

JEFF: Donald's son, 17. Usually a good kid, recently accused of theft and vandalism in his school.

SYBIL: Donald's daughter, 15, but thinks she is 18. A real problem with several undesirable personality traits including snobbishness, pride, and temper.

COSTUMES

All clothing is modern day casual wear with Sybil wearing the latest faddish clothes. In Act II, "Sunday best" is worn by everyone except Luanne and Brad who may be wearing sport type outfits. Megan needs a pretty robe for the beginning of Act II and an Easter outfit for later in the act. Women have purses wherever needed.

PROPS

Two Easter lily plants.
Clothes basket, at first with some darker clothes showing, later with sheets, etc.
Empty detergent box for Luanne.
Older looking Easter basket redecorated with pretty ribbon.
Several different sizes of suitcases and suit bags, including a make-up case for Sybil.
Small plates, cups, eating utensils.
Bowl of vanilla ice cream (cotton balls) for Jeff.
Hair curler for Luanne.
Apron and facial tissue for Grandma.
Small belt type radio with earphones and small cosmetic mirror for Sybil.
Grandma's sweater on the sofa.
Pair of shoes on the floor for Brad.
Car keys for Jeff.

MUSIC and SOUND EFFECTS

Church bell from a distance and sound of car starting and pulling away, if desired. Songs mentioned are only suggestion. Director should use whatever is best for his cast. A musical selection could be used to open the play or in between the acts.

ACT I

(AT RISE: MOLLY comes on-stage singing "He Lives" [Words and music by A.H. Ackley.] in an ordinary voice but with feeling. She is carrying a potted Easter lily and puts it on a small table or stand in a prominent place as she sings the triumphant ending phrases. "You ask me how I know He lives? He lives within my heart.")

MOLLY: (*Speaking to picture of Jesus.*) Lord, be with my family in this house today. We haven't been together for a long time and things have changed. Lewis and I built our home with You as the foundation but there are cracks, Lord. Like the tower of Siloam I can feel the walls crumbling ... help me. (*Bows HER head.*)

LUANNE: (*Enters with small clothes basket piled with laundry.*) Mother, are you talking to yourself again?

MOLLY: (*Laughing.*) It's a habit I've gotten into over the years, Luanne. Since your father died. A big empty house can be a lonesome place.

LUANNE: You can always come and live with us. Megan should see more of her grandma.

MOLLY: Thank you, honey, but I'd have to bring my best Friend with me (*Indicates picture of Jesus.*) and He wouldn't be exactly welcome in Brad's house.

LUANNE: Brad wouldn't be in sympathy, Mother, but he would never interfere with your church work.

MOLLY: (*A little sternly.*) Then why did you stop?

LUANNE: Let's not go around on that again. (*Change of tone.*) Do you have anything to add to the wash? I'm doing up Megan's play clothes and a few other things. Brad might want to take off early in the morning. (*Sets laundry basket down.*)

MOLLY: (*Disappointed.*) But he isn't even here yet. And all your old friends will be expecting to see you both, it's been so long...

LUANNE: Brad is looking forward to some golfing during this Easter break and I'm not going to insist on anything else.

Gather Up the Fragments

-5-

MOLLY: But surely you can take time for the morning services. There won't be any Sunday School. Everything is combined tomorrow so we'll be out a little earlier than usual.

LUANNE: It depends on Brad. I really don't care.

MOLLY: *(Troubled.)* Luanne, it worries me that you don't have time for God anymore.

LUANNE: Mother, my husband and I live a different kind of life than you and Daddy did. We both work hard in an office all week. So he golfs on Sunday morning, and I relax with my coffee and the paper.

MOLLY: What about Megan?

LUANNE: Sometimes she goes to Sunday School with a girl friend. Usually she watches cartoons.

MOLLY: When you were her age you never missed.

LUANNE: If I remember correctly, Don and I went to Sunday School and church or ELSE. *(As if the memory was rather painful. MOLLY seems shocked for a moment.)*

MOLLY: Luanne!

LUANNE: *(Trying to brush it off.)* Well, sometimes it seemed that way to us ... to me anyhow. *(Smiles as SHE picks up basket.)*

MOLLY: Christian training and faith are important, Luanne. What if Brad should die suddenly with a heart attack or an accident? He'd be separated from God for eternity because of his unbelief. Hasn't that thought ever occurred to you?

LUANNE: Mother, please. *(Rests laundry basket on sofa.)* My husband is past forty years of age and can certainly manage his own life. He is never going to see it your way.

MOLLY: How can you be so unconcerned? *(With definite sorrow.)*

LUANNE: I just don't think it is worth fighting about. *(Turns away.)*

MOLLY: Not worth fighting about! *(Takes a deep breath, as if to control HER anger.)* You'll find a couple of dirty towels in the kitchen. The spaghetti sauce splattered on them yesterday.

End of Freeview

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