# A Helping of Christmas

*By*
*Kathleen Conner Combass*

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## STORY OF PLAY

Volunteers from several local churches have joined together to open a mission kitchen in their community. But the church members soon discover it's not just the hungry and homeless who need help this Christmas.

Claire, one of the mission organizers, is shocked to see her long-estranged sister Jackie coming to the kitchen with her two children. Claire wonders if she'll ever be able to overcome Jackie's anger and resentment and get to know her young niece and nephew. Another worker, Mavis, admits her difficult past to Marvin, a homeless man who is afraid to get back in touch with his family. Plenty of humor is added by Jolee, a naïve, over-eager volunteer, and Albert, a college student overwhelmed by the attention from Wynetta and Cybil, two older ladies who think everybody should follow their perfect "Christian" example.

It's Rosie, the quiet homeless woman – or perhaps an angel – who helps everyone at the mission kitchen get a real helping of Christmas.

## CAST OF CHARACTERS

*(5 m, 8 w, 1 flexible, 4 teen girls, 1 boy)*

*(In order of appearance)*

**EARL WISE:** Volunteer at the mission kitchen, 40s-60s, calm and steady.

**CLAIRE TEMPLETON:** Volunteer at the mission kitchen, 40ish, kind-hearted, estranged from her younger sister.

**MARGARET WILSON:** Another volunteer, 30s – 60s, practical, does the cooking.

**JOLEE SMUTHERS:** Another volunteer, a nursing student, eager and somewhat naïve.

**MAVIS EVANS:** Volunteer from another church, 30s – 50s, kind of a "tough" gal.

**WYNETTA BOIL:** Volunteer from another church, 40s – 60s, concerned about her appearance, judgmental.

**CYBIL BOIL:** Wynetta's sister, like her but younger.

**ROSIE:** Combination of a homeless woman and an angel, 50s or older.

**ALBERT CRENSHAW:** College student, delivers donations.

**STRETCH LEBOWITZ:** Homeless man, mid-30s.

**MARVIN MERTZ:** Drifter, 40s – 50s.

**JACKIE:** Claire's younger sister, mid-30s.

**ABIGAIL:** Jackie's daughter, 12 years old.

**MAX:** Jackie's son, 8 years old.

**JENSEN MILLER:** *(Flexible)* Health inspector, 20s – 30s.

**SOMMER MERTZ:** Marvin's daughter. 17.

**JILLIAN:** Sommer's friend. 17.

**OFFICER JAMES MILLER:** Police officer, late 30s.

**WINTER MERTZ:** Marvin's younger daughter, 15.

## SYNOPSIS

**Act I:** Dinnertime, about a week prior to Christmas.
**Act II:** Christmas Eve and Christmas morning.

## SETTING

The setting is a large, multi-purpose room in a church in Florida. A food serving area is off to one side or upstage. Downstage functions as a dining area with tables and folding chairs. The room is partially decorated for Christmas. A smaller table, desk, or podium containing application forms is at the entrance to the room. The entrance is near the "outside" area which has a bench or two. A kitchen and game room are offstage. In Act II, the tables are replaced with cots, blankets, and pillows, and more Christmas decorations have been hung.

**Please see end of script for list of props.**

## ACT I
## Scene 1

*(AT RISE: The dining room is in semi-darkness. CLAIRE TEMPLETON and EARL WISE enter.)*

**EARL:** People are going to start showing up soon. Are we ready?
**CLAIRE:** What *exactly* do you mean by ready?
**EARL:** That we've done everything we can possibly do?
**CLAIRE:** Have we?
**EARL:** Yes. I think so. Haven't we?
**CLAIRE:** I asked you first.
**EARL:** Do you think this is going to work?
**CLAIRE:** Well, either it will or it won't.
**EARL:** That's not very encouraging.
**CLAIRE:** Earl, some things we don't have control over. No use stressing about it.
**EARL:** It's a great idea.
**CLAIRE:** Yes, it is.
**EARL:** Will people get what we're trying to do?
**CLAIRE:** We'll find out soon enough, won't we?
**EARL:** Yes. Why do I feel like we're waiting for a tornado to hit?
**CLAIRE:** Because we are.

*(MARGARET WILSON enters. She turns on the LIGHTS.)*

**EARL:** Evening, Margaret.
**MARGARET:** *(Jumps.)* Earl, you almost gave me a heart attack. Hey, Claire.
**CLAIRE:** Hey.
**EARL:** Everything ready in here?
**MARGARET:** Everything's good to go. I am a little nervous though.
**EARL:** Yeah, me too.
**CLAIRE:** Really. I didn't notice.
**EARL:** Smart aleck.

*(JOLEE SMUTHERS enters. She is carrying bags of Christmas decorations.)*

**JOLEE:** Hey, everyone. I'm so excited about tonight. I brought more Christmas decorations. Have the people from the *other* churches gotten here yet?
**EARL:** No.
**MARGARET:** Jolee, why do say "other" like it's a disease?
**JOLEE:** I don't know. I mean, the mission kitchen was our idea. I guess I just feel like "other" people are helping us.
**MARGARET:** The mission kitchen idea isn't originally ours, Jolee.
**CLAIRE:** Yeah, the disciples were working out the concept pretty well in the New Testament.
**JOLEE:** You know what I mean. It was our idea to start it here and now.
**EARL:** I don't think God gives bonus points for starting programs.

*(MAVIS enters carrying a tray of bread.)*

**MAVIS:** Where's Margaret? Hey, Margaret.
**MARGARET:** You don't have to howl like a hyena, Mavis. I'm right here.
**MAVIS:** Oh, don't get your girdle in a wad, Margaret. I just wanted to show you what I got.
**EARL:** Mavis, where did you get all that bread?
**MAVIS:** The nice owner of Conrad's Bread Bin donated them.
**JOLEE:** Cranky Conrad?
**CLAIRE:** I've never known him to donate anything.
**EARL:** I heard he tried giving his mother away.
**CLAIRE:** Right, but nobody wanted her.
**MARGARET:** Shoot, that man would rather watch someone starve to death than offer him something to eat.
**EARL:** Well, I guess that bread proves people can change.
**MAVIS:** Not really.
**JOLEE:** He gave you the bread, didn't he?
**MAVIS:** Yeah, but not out of the goodness of his heart.

## End of Freeview

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