

HOLLY DAY'S INN

By Alberta Hawse

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STORY OF THE PLAY

Hollister Day is not sure why on Christmas Eve he is keeping open his hamburger stand, Holly Day's Inn at Crossroad Corners. So many of the customers are unhappy including Ray and Betty Emerson, a young, troubled minister and his wife; Ethel Bromfield, a grandmother who has spoiled her daughter; Linda and Jody, whose mother and father have had a serious quarrel; and George and Irma Malone, the battling newlyweds. Even Holly's wife, Mamie, lacks the Christmas spirit. But God works in mysterious way with those who come into the inn and they find their answers. HOLLY DAY'S INN is easy to stage and fun to do. The church carolers with their music and Scripture will make the first Christmas seem very near. And you will rejoice with Holly and Mamie as the joy of the season finally comes to all of those who have faced serious crossroads in their own lives.

STAGE SETTING

This can be done very simply, or as elaborately as stage carpenters can make it. At the USR there is a long counter or high bar. At least two stools should be in front of the counter. Behind the counter Holly needs a shelf or a low table to set his supplies on. Two exits; one to outside USL, one to kitchen USR. At USR, there is a small restaurant type table with three chairs. One with its back toward the counter, one on the R of the table, and one in front of the table. The fourth chair is sitting at the side of the booth table. At DSL, opposite table, there is a small booth like seating place. If possible a piano should be on-stage against SR wall. If it is not possible to have a piano on-stage, offstage accompaniment can be used just as well. The shop is decorated for Christmas - not too elaborately but enough to give the Christmas spirit. As a whole Holly Day's Inn gives the impression of coziness and informality. Appropriate handwritten signs on walls; hamburgers, hot dogs, chili, etc., with prices.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(4m, 5w, 1b, 2g, extras)

HOLLISTER DAY: Proprietor of a small hamburger shop at Crossroad Corners.

MAMIE: His wife.

RAY EMERSON: A young and troubled minister.

BETTY EMERSON: His wife.

ETHEL BROMFIELD: A grandmother who has "spoiled" her daughter.

LINDA: Ethel's granddaughter, about 12.

JODY: Linda's sister, about 8.

BUTCH: A neighborhood boy about 12.

GEORGE MALONE: Newly married.

IRMA: His battling wife.

SHIRLEY: Ethel's "career" daughter.

JOHN: Shirley's husband.

BUS DRIVER: A very small part.

CAROLERS: A flexible group *(Not less than six)* depending upon the amount and type of music used in their scene. Author suggests using one small boy, *(For shepherd)* two teenagers *(For Mary and Joseph)* and adults as needed.

TIME: Christmas Eve.

PLACE: Holly Day's Inn, a small hamburger joint.

PLAYING TIME: 60-70 minutes depending on type and amount of music used. No time is lost between scenes since there is no change in stage settings.

ACT I

(AT RISE: Holly Days Inn. Stage is empty as CURTAINS rise. Christmas MUSIC is coming from small radio on counter. Phone begins to RING. HOLLY enters from kitchen with tray of glasses. He sets them on a shelf under the counter as he talks on the phone. He switches off the radio before he picks up the phone.)

HOLLY: *(With holiday cheerfulness.)* Hello. Holly Day's Inn. Oh, hello, Ethel. Merry Christmas. What can I do for you on this lovely Christmas Eve? *(Listens.)* A package on the bus? Sure I'll be staying open until the bus gets in. No trouble. If Hiram has anything for you, I'll bring it over. No need for you to come out on a cold night. What have you heard from Shirley and the kids? *(Listens.)* Well, you know - no news is good news. At least she's sending you something on the bus. *(Listens.)* Yeah, with her job and the girls and Johnny, I reckon she does find it hard to find time to write. Don't worry. I'll see that you get your package. Maybe Mamie will come with me. Christmas Eve gets pretty lonesome for the two of us - but I guess you know all about that. Now don't you come running out as soon as you hear the bus stop. Mamie and I will be seeing you shortly. *(Hangs up phone and talks to HIMSELF, disgusted.)* THAT Shirley. A package on the bus at the very last minute. *(Is straightening the salt and pepper shakers on the table as MAMIE enters. She is carrying a pie. She has come from outside so she is wearing suitable clothing.)*

MAMIE: Who is going to be seeing us shortly?

HOLLY: Oh, hi, honey. You shouldn't be out in this cold.

MAMIE: I just ran over to bring you this pie. *(SHE is putting it in the pie or cake container on the counter.)* I heard you talking while I was cutting it.

HOLLY: I was talking to Ethel Bromfield. Shirley had one of her secretaries call Ethel and tell her there was something for her on the bus. *(HE sits at SR table.)*

MAMIE: A secretary. *(SHE is disgusted too.)* Do you mean to tell me that Shirley couldn't even take time to talk to her own mother on Christmas Eve?

HOLLY: Oh, I guess Ethel got the call earlier today.

MAMIE: I don't care when she got it. *(SHE sits at table with HOLLY.)* Shirley ought to know her mother would want to hear from HER.

HOLLY: I didn't hear Ethel complaining.

MAMIE: Of course you didn't. When did Ethel ever complain about anything Shirley did or didn't do?

HOLLY: I know. Her heart could be breaking and Ethel wouldn't say anything. Anyhow, I told her I'd deliver her package and maybe you would come with me and ...

MAMIE: Hollister Day, you know that I do not intend to spend my Christmas Eve with anybody but you - at home. Unless you close up and we go over to church together.

HOLLY: I just thought since she's lonely and we're ...

MAMIE: *(With a little heat.)* When will you face the truth? You'll do anything; keep this place open, wait for the bus, deliver packages, just anything to keep from being at home on Christmas Eve.

HOLLY: Oh, come on now, Mamie.

MAMIE: You promised me last year.

HOLLY: I know. But the bus is running late. And Ethel is expecting a package. And somebody just might want a sandwich. And besides the carolers will be coming after their free pop and ...

MAMIE: *(Flaring, and rising.)* It has been THREE years, Holly! The first Christmas I could understand how you felt about Christmas Eve because I felt the same way. The second year I could still sympathize because I know how much you miss them. But now ...

HOLLY: *(Showing emotion.)* But our Christmas was so special with the boys. The four of us and church and ... *(HE covers his trembling lips.)*

Holly Day's Inn

-6-

MAMIE: *(Leaning over the table with HER hands on it.)* Do you think Christmas is easy for me? If I thought for a moment that there wasn't a purpose behind what happened, I couldn't stand it.

HOLLY: Maybe this is my way of coping out *(Seems to indicate the counter and tables.)* but ...

MAMIE: You talk a good faith, Holly. *(Puts HER hand on HIS shoulder.)* But inside you are still crying like a baby. *(HER voice grows gentle.)* Crying isn't for Christmas, darling. If it were, the angels would have wept over Bethlehem that first Christmas Eve. *(Walks away from HIM and speaks with beautiful emotion.)* The Prince of Heaven was leaving His glory to start His lonesome walk over the hills to Jerusalem's cross. But the angels didn't weep, Holly. They sang!

HOLLY: I know. *(HE is still in an attitude of grieving.)*

MAMIE: Why do you think they could sing?

HOLLY: *(Raising HIS head.)* I've never thought about it, Mamie.

MAMIE: Because they could see the end from the beginning. They could look ahead and see that open tomb in the garden. It's time for you to look ahead, Holly. Our sons were Christians. We're Christians. We can depend upon the Lord's promise that someday we will all be together again.

HOLLY: *(Rises and puts HIS hands on HER shoulders.)* I know it, honey. I know we'll meet again, but

MAMIE: *(Understanding and gentle.)* You are sinning when you let Satan rob you of Christmas joy.

HOLLY: Mamie, as soon as the bus comes, and I get everything out of the way, I'll come home. If we still have time, we'll go to the service together.

MAMIE: Good. I'll go home and change. The pie is still warm. *(Touches the case as SHE goes out kitchen exit.)*

(As SHE exits the BELL on the entrance door jangles. RAY and BETTY enter. Betty wears a hand-knitted scarf. They wear casual clothes such as one would wear in a car on a cold evening.)

End of Freeview

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