HOLLY'S CHRISTMAS ANGEL

By Alberta Hawse

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STORY OF THE PLAY

Hollister Day has closed his hamburger stand, Holly's Day Inn, early just to spend Christmas Eve day finishing his gift to his beloved wife, Mamie. (And maybe to enjoy his favorite, mince pie.) But Mamie insists they spend the day at the home of their neighbor, Octavia, who is recovering from heart surgery.

It doesn't look or feel much like Christmas at Octavia's. The tree is bare, the lights don't work, and the angel doll is a mess.

Octavia's daughter, Opal, doesn't even want to be with her mother since all they do is quarrel about Opal's impending divorce. Curtis, Opal's husband, is furious that Opal has their son, Nathan, on his scheduled holiday. Poor Nathan is almost sick over his parents' fighting.

And Brittany, a young neighbor girl, reveals she is facing an unplanned pregnancy alone. As Holly looks at the battered angel doll he asks, "Would you work some of your magic in this house? I never saw a home so in need of peace and goodwill."

Firmly convinced that miracles do happen on Christmas Eve, Holly and Mamie do what they can to help - showing each that through prayer, bitterness, anger and hurt can be replaced with forgiveness, love and joy.

A unique nativity scene which features Sunday school children portraying the shepherds spreading the good news of Jesus' birth to the villagers, highlights Act III.

By late that night, the home is full of love. There is hope and strength for new beginnings. Even the angel doll, now perfect and beautiful, seems to smile.

SETTING

An attractive, but slightly old fashioned living room. There is a sofa CS with a footstool near it. At least two large chairs. A table on which there is a small artificial Christmas tree. Several lamps, and end tables by sofa. A coat rack is needed by the outside door. Another door leads to kitchen and other rooms. If a third exit is available it should lead to upstairs. Action is often centered around sofa and the Christmas tree so the furniture should be placed with care so the audience have them in plain view. There is a telephone on one of the end tables.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(2m, 3w, 1 g, 1 b, extras)

HOLLISTER DAY: Owner of Holly's Day's Inn, a hamburger joint in the small community of Crossroad Corners.

MAMIE: His patient, ever-loving wife. These two personify the Spirit of Christmas.

OCTAVIA: A well-meaning neighbor unable to get along with her married daughter. Slightly older than Mamie, she is recovering from heart surgery.

OPAL: Confused and unhappy because of her relationship with her mother and husband. Mid-30s.

CURTIS: Opal's confused and unhappy husband.

NATHAN: Their confused and unhappy 8-10 year old son.

BRITTANY: An 18-year-old neighbor, in trouble.

EXTRAS: Small flexible group of junior or intermediate children from the church. One older girl who is a soloist. The main part of their skit can be prepared separately from the play.

SYNOPSIS

ACT I - Middle morning of the day before Christmas.

ACT II - Middle afternoon.

ACT III - Early evening. *(Christmas Eve)*

PLAYING TIME: About 70 minutes.

LIGHTING: Ordinary lights with lamps on in third act. A spot could be used on the group of children in third act.

SOUND: Telephone, and carolers from a slight distance. Singing could be recorded or be done by the group of children that do the skit.

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ACT I

(AT RISE: OCTAVIA'S home, mid morning, the day before Christmas. There is a bare Christmas tree, boxes of ornaments, a wreath, a string of lights, and an angel doll in bad condition lying near the tree. The room has no other Christmas decorations. There is a soft KNOCK on the door. MAMIE enters and calls softly.)

MAMIE: Octavia! *(There is no answer.)*

(HOLLY follows MAMIE in. Mamie carries three or four Christmas packages and a brown paper bag. She puts them on sofa. Holly takes her coat to coat rack.)

HOLLY: *(Not in the best of humor.)* Mamie, my love, I'm going to ask you again. Why did you have to agree to this?

MAMIE: Hollister Day, I didn't have to do this. Octavia is my friend and she needs help.

HOLLY: *(Still griping.)* You know I turned off my hamburger grill and closed Holly Day's Inn today so I could do a few Christmas chores at home.

MAMIE: I know … but I didn't like the idea of being alone in the house with a woman who has just had a pace-maker installed. How could I handle her if she fainted?

HOLLY: *(Grumpy.)* Opal should be here if her mother faints. *(Finds something else to grouch about.)* And why would anyone leave the door unlocked? Anybody could come in and lift the presents. *(Looks around and grunts.)* What presents? Doesn't Octavia know tomorrow is Christmas?

MAMIE: *(Trying to be patient.)* When Opal called she said her cousin, Edna, would leave the door unlocked so we could get in. I assured her we'd come right over. She said Edna would see that Octavia was in bed for her morning rest before she left.

HOLLY: *(Still pouting.)* I could be putting the polyurethane finish on your microwave cabinet.

MAMIE: *(Very sweetly.)* Holly, if you don't get it under our tree

by midnight … remember it's the thought that counts. Now I'm going to peek in on Octavia. *(Exits quickly to bedroom.)*

HOLLY: *(Disgusted as HE picks up something from the Christmas box and shakes his head as he puts it down.)* And I leave a nice house with a beautiful tree and candles on the mantel and plates full of cookies for this? I've never seen a place looking less like Christmas. *(HE holds up some sorry looking tinsel.)*

MAMIE: *(Returning.)* She's sleeping but she looks pale.

HOLLY: So would you if were recovering from a heart attack and needed a little regulator in your chest to keep you going.

MAMIE: Honey … let's just thank God that I'm not.

HOLLY: You're right but *(Firmly.)* Opal should be here. *(HE looks at his wristwatch.)* When did she say she'd get here?

MAMIE: Sometime this morning.

HOLLY: I don't see why her cousin couldn't have stayed a few hours longer.

MAMIE: Edna had plane to catch. She wanted to be home for Christmas.

HOLLY: So do I. *(Dolefully.)*

MAMIE: *(Shaking HER finger under HIS nose.)* Another word out of you and there will be no mince pie tonight. Where is that kind, patient boy I met years ago who took time off from shelving groceries to lead me to Christ?

HOLLY: *(Smiles and hugs HER.)* Maybe a Grinch stole his Christmas. *(HE begins to work on tree. PHONE RINGS.)*

MAMIE: *(Answering.)* Hello. Oh hello, Opal. I suppose you're anxious about your mother? *(Pretends not to see HOLLY'S derisive motions.)* She's sleeping. We got here right after Edna left. *(Listens and casts a frantic look at HOLLY who moves closer as if to hear.)* But Opal, this is Christmas! All mothers want to see their children and their grandchildren on Christmas! *(Listens and appears to be getting a little angry.)* Yes, yes, I understand how you feel but we aren't prepared to stay. Holly has something he wants to do and I … Then you will be here? For sure?

HOLLY: *(Leans close to phone.)* Opal, Mamie and I are going to leave at noon. *(MAMIE pushes HIM away.)*

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MAMIE: All right. But, I'm telling you again as I have several times. God never intended for mothers and daughters to have bad feelings between them. *(Listens again.)* Yes, and the same goes for husbands and wives. Curtis should be here on Christmas Eve with you and Nathan and his mother-in-law. Christmas is a time for families. *(Hangs up looking distressed.)*

HOLLY: Well what did she say?

MAMIE: *(Quoting with a tearful tone to HER voice.)* "My visits with Mother are always more pain than pleasure. I don't know if I can take it."

HOLLY: We're stuck! I knew it! I just knew it. There goes the microwave stand and the mince pie and …

MAMIE: What is the matter with you? *(Actually aggravated.)* You sound like a little boy who has just found out there is no red wagon under his tree … or some of those unpronounceable things kids want nowadays.

HOLLY: Opal pulled the same stunt on you last summer when her mother sprained her ankle. We lost a day of our vacation just because they had a fight …

MAMIE: I'll admit she makes me provoked but she was almost crying. She said she had driven past and couldn't stop because she dreads holidays with her mother. I don't really blame her, Holly. I remember last July -

HOLLY: Don't remind me. All of Crossroad Corners was torn up with those two fighting like … *(Searches for words.)*

MAMIE: Like two stubborn adults who refuse to get along. It's been the same ever since Opal hit adolescence.

HOLLY: *(Sourly.)* She has no right to steal my favorite day. I will never get your cabinet done.

MAMIE: *(Trying to soothe HIM.)* Midnight is a long way off.

HOLLY: It's partly my fault. I should have started earlier. I've just been too busy with the school board and the hassle about sex education for the kindergarten and …

MAMIE: You have to be kidding! *(Begins to open a box of ornaments.)*

HOLLY: Don't I wish. And everybody and their sibling has been in for hamburgers. What's happened to Arby's cheddar-beef

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