

HOLLY'S CHRISTMAS DETOUR

By Alberta Hawse

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STORY OF THE PLAY

Playwright Alberta Hawse first introduced that very special couple, Hollister and Mamie Day, in the Christmas play, "Holly Day's Inn." As a warm, understanding, Christian couple they helped others find the true spirit of Christmas. That play was followed by a sequel, "Holly's Christmas Runaway." Now Holly is back, trying to get home to Mamie in time for Christmas church service. But his detour may be heaven sent. He's needed to unite a regretful grandmother with her lonely grandchild and bitter daughter-in-law; to show a young man and woman the sacredness of marriage and family; and remind an older couple that true love never really dies.

STAGE SETTING

A lobby in a small motel. Very homelike and informal with tables, chairs, sofa (*CS front*), lamps, etc. Newspapers and magazines are scattered about. Coffee pot and accessories are on a small table with a plate of cookies. Christmas decorations add a festive touch. There is a check-in desk or counter. If counter is used there is a high stool behind it. The counter or desk holds those things usually seen in a motel lobby, as a phone, used for inside and outside calls; a registry book or files; a rack for room keys; and racks for postcards and maps. A large nativity scene should be placed in full view of the audience. Each piece should be large enough to be recognized by the viewers. A decorated Christmas tree stands nearby. There are two exits - one to outside and one to hallway and rooms. If possible, a window at one side or UPS should be decorated with "snow" and have the letters for MARTIN'S MOTEL put on for the audience to read backwards.

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

(3 m, 4 w, 2 g, 1 b, also a group of carolers, or recorded music)

HOLLISTER DAY: Good-natured, middle-aged proprietor of Holly Day's Inn at Crossroad Corners, is now involved in the problems of a few guests at another motel. He personifies Christian love and concern.

RON MARTIN: Temporary manager of Martin's Motel. About mid-20s, cynical about Christianity and marriage.

CAROL HAINES: Pretty assistant at motel. About 22. Very much in love with Ron and concerned about his lack of excitement over Christmas.

ARLENE KENT: A divorced woman in late 30s, fashionable but rather cold. Very bitter against her mother-in-law.

TRACEY KENT: Arlene's young daughter, 9-12 years old. *(Depending on the girl's age, adjust length of time separated from grandmother.)* She is a lovable, persistent girl.

LEONA KENT: Tracey's grandmother, a likable, comfortable woman in mid or late 50s. She has loved her son too much to see his faults.

ELMER BUDDINGTON: A likable man with a touch of country humor. About 70. Probably would wear suspenders.

LUCY BUDDINGTON: His beloved wife who is being unusually cantankerous.

MICKY: A little girl in pretty snowsuit, 7 or 8 years old.

JAMIE: Micky's 9 or 10-year-old brother; also in a winter outfit.

CAROLERS

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TIME: Late, snowy afternoon and late evening of Christmas Eve.

PLACE: A small motel on a country detour.

PLAYING TIME: About 60-70 minutes.

SOUND EFFECTS and **MUSIC:** Phone ringing; and car horn and caroling from slight distance outside. Suggested vocal music includes "O Little Town of Bethlehem"; "Blue Christmas" or "You're All I Want For Christmas"; "Rudolph, The Red-Nosed Reindeer" or "Frosty, the Snowman"; "It's Beginning to Look a Lot Like Christmas"; and "His Name is Wonderful." Other carols and hymns may be played between Acts.

PROPERTIES: Ring box, ring and small tool box for Ron; small bag or attache case and wrapped box of candy for Holly; two similar bags for Buddingtons; one large bottle of liniment for Elmer; purse, small overnight bag, and a shopping bag of gifts for Leona; small wrapped package for Leona; crumpled business letter for Elmer; a popular boxed game for Tracey; small wrapped gifts for Carol and Leona to give; an extra key for Carol to find on couch; extra ornaments for tree; wand with a sparkling, starlike tip for Mickey.

COSTUMES: Holly wears a businessman's suit and later changes the jacket for a sweater. Elmer wears suspenders with his slacks, shirt, and cardigan sweater. All other actors wear attractive outfits. Guests entering from outside door should wear appropriate winter clothing. All robes and pajamas should be colorful and Christmasy.

LIGHTING: Lights are dimmed slightly during second act to denote night.

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ACT I
Scene 1

(AT RISE: CAROL is working at tree or nativity scene, humming or singing "O Little Town of Bethlehem." RON is behind desk with newspaper.)

RON: *(Looking over paper.)* Carol, why do you bother?

CAROL: *(A little irritated as if THEY have been arguing.)*

Ron, I've told you. Because it's Christmas Eve, that's why.

RON: Nobody's going to be dropping in at Martin's Motel tonight except a few hardy souls who are already booked. *(Flips a couple of registration cards.)* We can thank the highway department for them. We're the only motel on the detour.

CAROL: Well, whoever comes, I want them to have a tree and *(Picks up manger and baby and sets it in place.)* be able to celebrate the birth of Jesus with me. You're no help.

RON: Anybody out on a day like this is nuts. That detour in a snow storm is murder.

CAROL: People want to be with their families for Christmas Day.

RON: Families! Bah and humbug!

CAROL: Ron, don't be silly. What would this world be without families?

RON: Peaceful. *(Goes back to paper.)*

CAROL: Oh, you. *(Considers throwing an ornament at HIM.)*

(TRACEY enters from inner doorway.)

TRACEY: Has she come yet?

CAROL: *(Patiently as if SHE has said it before.)* Not yet, Tracey.

TRACEY: Oh. You don't suppose she's changed her mind?

RON: I told your mother we'd let her know when your grandmother gets here.

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TRACEY: *(With anxious emphasis.)* But I want to see her FIRST. I haven't seen my grandmother since I was very little. And I don't remember that far back. Over six years.

RON: We'll let you know. Cross my heart.

TRACEY: *(Persisting.)* First?

CAROL: *(Puts arm about TRACEY.)* Honey, we don't quite understand your problem.

TRACEY: I want to see my grandmother first because when my mom sees her, they won't do anything but fight.

CAROL: Fight?

TRACEY: They don't like one another. My mother has hated my grandmother ever since the divorce.

RON: See what I mean? Families! Bah!

CAROL: Oh, be quiet. Honey, don't pay any attention to him. He hasn't any Christmas spirit.

RON: Probably my aching feet or something I ate.

CAROL: He needs a wife to cook for him.

TRACEY: Can you cook?

CAROL: Sure.

TRACEY: Then why doesn't he marry you?

RON: Whoa!

TRACEY: I think you like one another.

RON: What gave you that idea?

TRACEY: *(Smiling.)* When Mother and I came in earlier today you had your arm about her. I think you were kissing her.

RON: Really? That must have been the last of my Christmas spirit.

CAROL: You'd have more spirit if you looked more like Christmas. Put on a red tie, or something.

TRACEY: *(Seriously.)* If you do get married I hope you don't get divorced. That's what caused all my mother's trouble with Grandma. *(ARLENE has entered in time to hear.)*

ARLENE: Tracey, we don't discuss our personal lives with strangers.

TRACEY: I'm sorry, Mother. I just came out to help her trim the tree, didn't I? *(Throws CAROL an imploring look.)*

End of Freeview

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