

JESUS LOVES FRUITCAKES

by
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STORY OF THE PLAY

The Jesus House, an independent elderly care facility, is getting a new resident on Christmas Eve. The Christian staff and residents prepare to welcome Ellery Jamison into their world. His daughter, whom he hasn't seen in twenty years, is responsible for arranging his present placement. Unfortunately, Mr. Jamison is an atheist, and the last place on earth he wants to be is in a Christian nursing home. Setting aside their harsh judgment of Jamison, the folks associated with the Jesus House persevere and demonstrate love and acceptance that can only come from Jesus. The reuniting of a family after twenty years provides a surprise ending for all involved.

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

(8 men, 12 women, 7 children)

STAFF OF JESUS HOUSE

ELLEN DANIELS: mid 30s, registered nurse, very professional.

LUCY MADISON: mid 30s, registered nurse, the rock of Jesus House.

DELLA GOLDBERG: 20s, nurse's aide, a fun-loving single.

ALEX: early 20s, mentally slow, has a heart for Jesus.

RESIDENTS OF JESUS HOUSE

CHESTER DAVIDS: retired English professor, aristocrat.

BUBBA HENDERSON: a good-old country boy, big heart.

WILMA PARKS: a retired missionary, spirit-filled.

EMILY HUGGINS: a cantankerous, scripture-quoting lady.

ELVIRA JEWEL: good humored, a little bit of a flirt.

ELLERY JAMISON: a self-made man who is an atheist.

NEIGHBORHOOD AND FAMILY SUPPORT

ATTENDANT/PIZZA BOY: college age.

PASTOR JEFF: 30s, down-to-earth.

STEPHANIE MADISON: teen, Lucy's daughter.

MELISSA: teen, friend of Stephanie's.

CHUBBY HENDERSON: 40s, Bubba's son.

COOKIE HENDERSON: 40s, Chubby's wife.

NORMAN HENDERSON: 10, their son (non-speaking role).

EUNICE TUXEDO: 50s, Chester's sister, non-stop talker.

WILLARD TUXEDO: 50s, Eunice's husband, the silent type.

CHILDREN'S HOME STAFF AND KIDS

JANE: 20s, staff.

JAMES: 12-14 years old.

JENNY: 10-12 years old.

WILLIE: 8-10 years old.

JESSIE: 8-10 years old.

ELSIE: 8-10 years old.

LISA: 10-12 years old.

ANGEL

CLEANING WOMAN: non-speaking role but sings a solo.

Doubling Possible: The Cleaning Lady may double as Jane, Eunice or Cookie. The Pizza Boy/Attendant may also play Willard.

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Synopsis

- Scene 1: Early morning, Christmas Eve.
- Scene 2: Several hours later. Lunch time.
- Scene 3: Early evening.
- Scene 4: The middle of the night.
- Scene 5: Christmas morning.

Setting

The entire play is set in the fictional Jesus House, an independent Christian nursing home located in Florida. It is based on the concept of a group home so the residents are responsible for maintaining the house and its grounds. Ellen, a registered nurse, is on duty at night. During the day Lucy and Della oversee the residents. The main area is used as a living room/fellowship hall. Furniture includes a chair and desk for the staff and comfortable sofas and chairs for the residents. Later in the play, folding chairs will be needed to accommodate the family and guests attending the Christmas Eve program. The room should be decorated for Christmas but the tree should not be completely decorated. There are three entrances: one to the outside, one to the kitchen/dining area, and one to the bedrooms. A window faces the street. There is a water cooler near the desk or a pitcher of water and glasses on a side table.

Props

- Scene 1:** Coats and purses for Ellen, Lucy and Della; two bags of candy; wheelchair for Ellery; office papers for Attendant.
- Scene 2:** Alex's wrapped gifts for Lucy (a huge Valentine heart and a key chain that says "I love Jesus"); pill; towel; trays of sandwiches, etc; lunch bell.
- Scene 3:** Folding chairs; candy, cookies, holiday dishes and napkins; math textbook; angel tree topper; crèche; pizza boxes; money (dollar bill) for Ellery; poem on a sheet of paper for Alex.
- Scene 4:** Feather duster for cleaning woman.
- Scene 5:** Christmas presents and fruitcakes under the tree.

Scene 1

(AT RISE: It is early morning on Christmas Eve, and shift change is about to happen. LUCY MADISON and DELLA GOLDBERG ENTER. ELLEN DANIELS is on duty.)

ELLEN: I thought you'd never get here. *(ELLEN grabs her coat and pocketbook.)*

DELLA: Good morning to you, too, Ellen.

LUCY: Bad night?

ELLEN: That's putting it mildly.

DELLA: It was a full moon.

LUCY: What happened?

ELLEN: Where do I begin? I'll give you a brief version: First, Bubba made hot wings for everyone, and I mean HOT wings. And now we're twenty packs low on Roloids. *(LUCY and DELLA look at each other, eyes wide.)*

LUCY: What?

DELLA: I guess you did have a bad night.

ELLEN: Oh, that's not the half of it. Miss Emily pulled the fire alarm, and when the fire department came, she wanted them to fill up the neighbor's kiddie pool for water baptisms. Oh, and then Wilma was on the roof go-go dancing. But don't worry. When the reporters came Miss Emily let them have a good dose of Jesus.

LUCY: Reporters!?

DELLA: What!?

ELLEN: One last thing. I got a call this morning from our beloved administrator herself. We have a new resident arriving today.

DELLA: On Christmas Eve?

ELLEN: Yup. His name is Ellery Jamison.

LUCY: Know anything about him?

ELLEN: I suppose the fact that he doesn't want to be here is important. And his daughter placed him here, that's important.

DELLA: That's not so unusual.

ELLEN: Yes it is. Mr. Jamison hasn't had contact with his daughter in over twenty years.

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LUCY: Well, she picked Jesus House. Maybe once he gets here he'll be happy about it. Jesus has a way of working things out.

ELLEN: He's an atheist.

DELLA: Jesus?

ELLEN: No, Della. Mr. Jamison. Gotta run. (*ELLEN rushes to front door.*)

LUCY: Wait! We need to discuss all the details about what happened on your shift.

ELLEN: No, we don't. I'm out of here. If you're lucky, I might be back tonight. (*ELLEN EXITS.*)

DELLA: I wish I had stayed home in bed. So, where do we begin?

LUCY: I think we'd better pray.

(*Before THEY can begin, they hear a loud GROANING. ENTER CHESTER DAVIDS.*)

LUCY: Good morning, Chester. How are you feeling?

CHESTER: As if an elephant tangoed in the very bowels of my being.

DELLA: How poetic.

CHESTER: Della, you wouldn't recognize good poetry if it slapped you in the face. Talk about using Tabasco sauce. I hope Bubba will be reprimanded for trying to eliminate us last night.

LUCY: What do you suggest?

CHESTER: A public stoning.

LUCY: A little drastic, don't you think, Chester?

CHESTER: Another opportunity to compromise my stance. Well, I won't. He tried to kill us with those "world-famous" hot wings of his. Don't allow him to enter the kitchen ever again.

DELLA: (*Putting her purse at the desk.*) Hey, Lucy, the two bags of candy you had for the kids are missing.

LUCY: Are you sure?

DELLA: Positive. They were here last night when we left.

CHESTER: Ellen probably devoured them.

End of Freeview

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