Merry Christmas From Heaven

By
Rev. Craig Howard

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STORY OF THE PLAY

Delmas, the father of three daughters and several grandchildren, is fighting a losing battle with cancer. This comes only one year after his wife passed away. Delmas also grieves over an estranged brother with whom he wants to reconcile before it is too late.

Two of Delmas' daughters are dealing with their own problems, with the third daughter caught in the middle. The sisters, with emotions on edge, begin to argue over inheritances and cause added pain to an already difficult situation.

Four of the grandchildren struggle with losing someone they love so much, and how to make sense of it. A loving but somewhat goofy uncle shows unexpected wisdom to bring the situation back into focus. All the while an angel and angel trainee, sent to escort Delmas to heaven, are working in the background. With their help, and the reading of the 23rd Psalm and the Christmas story from Luke, we see that death is only a step in life. About an hour.

DEDICATION

This play is dedicated to the memory of Kristine Luken, a wonderful Christian woman who was murdered in Israel while training as a missionary to the Jews just before Christmas. Her death brought extreme pain to her twin sister Kathlene who attended the performance of this play and though still in pain, found comfort in its message.

ORIGINAL PRODUCTION

The play premiered at the Brake Church of the Brethren in Petersburg, WV to two packed performances on the 19th and 24th of December, 2010.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(3 m, 4 w, 2 flexible, 3 girls, 2 boys)

JOAN: Widowed daughter of Delmas who is staying with him to care for him during his illness.

DELMAS: Father of the family, in a losing battle with cancer.

ANDRIA: Middle daughter of Delmas. The peace maker of the family. Mother to Erin and Carley.

VICKIE: Youngest daughter of Delmas. Angry over being abandoned by her husband for another woman and the loss of her mom and coming loss of her dad. Mother to Hannah and Tyler.

UNCLE FRED: Delmas' older brother. Kind of eccentric but with his own kind of wisdom.

HANNAH: Teenage daughter of Vicky. Loves her pappy and is trying to act strong for everyone but has some real fears of her own that no one knows about.

TYLER: Can't understand why God won't fix this situation.

ERIN: Typical teen. Has a good heart but sometimes self-absorbed.

CARLEY: Erin's younger sister, a tomboy. Doesn't understand her sister and doesn't want to.

NICK: A neighbor child who alerts the family of a fall Uncle Fred has taken.

MALEK: *(Flexible role)* Apprentice angel on his first assignment.

KIRK: *(Flexible role)* Angle trainer.

JERRY: Estranged brother of Delmas.

NURSE:

SETTING

The entire play takes place in the living room of Delmas' middle-class home. At one side is a door to the exterior; at the other side is a door to his bedroom. Among the pieces of furniture should be a large, comfortable recliner. Initially the living room has no Christmas decorations.

While most props are very basic, the play does call for a walker, a blanket, an oxygen canella, a blood pressure cuff, and small medical bag for the Nurse.

The time frame spans a period of several days, ending on Christmas Eve.

Scene 1

(AT RISE: Simple living room scene. There are no Christmas decorations. ANDRIA enters from SL in a winter coat. She looks around the room and shakes her head in dismay.)

ANDRIA: This looks like the place Christmas forgot. Doesn't Joan know it is only 5 days away?

(SHE takes off her coat and hangs it on a coat rack, as she is doing so JOAN enters room SL.)

JOAN: Oh, you're here, good.
ANDRIA: I just got here. I was hanging up my coat then I was going to see where you were.
JOAN: I was back taking care of Dad. I really appreciate you coming over on such short notice but I have to get out and do some Christmas shopping or it will be too late.
ANDRIA: I was wondering about that. No decorations, no tree, I thought maybe you had turned to scrooge this year.
JOAN: I haven't had time. As soon as I get out of Dad's sight he starts yelling for me to get him something else, or he has a question he needs to ask me, or something else to drink or….
ANDRIA: I get the picture.
JOAN: This is not the way to spend Christmas. *(Pause, moving around room. Tearfully.)* It doesn't even feel like Christmas. *(Goes over to ANDRIA.)* How can you celebrate Christmas and watch your father die at the same time? I don't want to celebrate, I don't want to be happy, I can't... I can't.
ANDRIA: *(Embraces HER in a hug.)* I know. It's not as hard for me. I get to go home and get away from the pressure. It's not fair you. You are here all the time. I am sorry you have had to carry so much of the load.
JOAN: You all have your families, and Dad wanted to come home. He didn't want to stay in the hospital and there is no way he would stand for going to a home. I guess I understand.

JOAN: *(Cont'd.)* I was the logical one to move in and take care of him. Since Bill's wreck I haven't wanted to spend much time at the house anyway. Without him there and the kid's all grown it just feels like a different place. It's not a home anymore; it's just a place to sleep. I walk through the house and wish I was any place but there. *(Pauses, wipes eyes.)* Listen to me; maybe I am turning into scrooge. I have to get out of here. Maybe if I can get to the mall and hear some Christmas music it will cheer me up. I haven't done any shopping yet, is there anything Carley and Erin want for Christmas?

ANDRIA: Carley is easy, games, jeans, even some hunting stuff. She loves to hunt with her dad. You know Erin, clothes, shoes, makeup, clothes, jewelry, clothes, did I mention clothes. Almost anything makes her happy but you can't go wrong with clothes. Especially if you give her the sales receipt so she can take it back and get what she wants.

JOAN: Sounds like I just need to get her one of those prepaid Visa's and let her do her own thing.

ANDRIA: A prepaid credit card? She would be in heaven. She dreams of the day she can have her own card with no limit and someone to pay it off for her.

JOAN: That's a dream alright! Well this one will definitely have a limit. *(Walks over to the coat rack to get her coat.)* Dad has had his medicine and will probably sleep for a while. They increased the dosage again to control the pain so he is sleeping more. I should be back in a couple of hours and if you need me you have my cell number.

ANDRIA: Will you get out of here, I'll be fine. Just go and relax. Stop at that bookstore you like that has the little coffee shop in it. Get a book and a cup of coffee and relax for a while. I can take care of things till you get back and I don't have anywhere else I have to be today so don't hurry back.

JOAN: Thanks Andie, you are a good sister.

ANDRIA: I know, but I had a good big sister to teach me.

(JOAN exits. ANDRIA starts looking around the room.)

End of Freeview

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