

Merry Christmas -- No Matter What!

By Kathleen Conner Combass

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STORY OF THE PLAY

Jacob and Marie Carlson have been married for 17 years, and all that time, Jacob's father, Melvin, and Marie's mother, Antoinette, have hated each other. Disastrous holidays have been avoided by alternating the parents' invitations to special occasions. But this Christmas, Antoinette changes her mind at the last minute and surprises the family by arriving *after* Melvin has already settled in!

Their little verbal jabs at each other soon escalate when Antoinette hides Melvin's false teeth and he retaliates by hiding her wig. The tension and hilarity rise even more when the extra outdoor lights from the neighbor boy are turned on and found to be advertising for an alcoholic beverage. Needless to say, that sends the elderly ladies visiting from church into a real tizzy!

But when the problematic neighbor lady arrives, everyone in the family digs deep into their hearts to not only forgive one another but reach out and show true Christian love. Finally, Melvin and Antoinette are united for an unforgettable holiday.

By the author of the popular play, "Jesus Loves Fruitcakes."

Performance Time: An hour.

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

(3 M, 7 W, 5 teen girls, 2 teen boys)

FAMILY:

MELVIN CARLSON: 60-70s, widower, Jacob's father.
ANTOINETTE STILES: 60s, widow, Marie's mother.
JACOB CARLSON: 30-40s, Melvin's son.
MARIE CARLSON: 30-40s, Jacob's wife.
LISA CARLSON: Teenager, Marie and Jacob's daughter.
JUNIOR CARLSON: Teenager, Marie and Jacob's son.

FRIENDS AND CHURCH MEMBERS:

SNOW: Teenager, Junior's best friend.
DOLORES OXFORD: 60s, church lady.
SHIRLEY ROBERTSON: 60s, another.
MICHAEL WILKINS: 30-40s, family friend.
LEONA WILKINS: 30-40s, Michael's wife, family friend.
HEATHER WILKINS: Their teen daughter.
JENNIFER WILKINS: Their teen daughter.
JUDY BOLTON: 40s, pastor's wife.
SHEILA BOLTON: Pastor's teen daughter.
LUCY BOLTON: Pastor's teen daughter.
KAREN HART: 40s, Snow's mother.
PASTOR TIM BOLTON: Optional character.

Synopsis of Scenes

Act I

Scene 1: Late afternoon, a few days before Christmas.
Scene 2: A short time later.
Scene 3: A little later, after dinner.

Act II

Scene 1: The following morning.
Scene 2: That afternoon.
Scene 3: Early evening.
Scene 4: The next morning, Christmas Eve day.

SETTING

The Carlson living and dining room set the stage. The living room occupies the left side of the stage. One easy chair faces the audience. A sofa sits angled against the left-hand wall. The cushion closest to the audience is flatter than the others. Onstage right is a dining room table with six chairs. If area permits, a buffet or hutch may be utilized. One doorway on the right leads to the kitchen. There are two doorways stage left. One leads to all other rooms in the house, and the other doorway leads to outside. A decorated Christmas tree is displayed in a corner of the room.

PROPS

Coats	False teeth
Cane	Shopping bags
Suitcases	Dessert plate, tiered
Christmas presents	Christmas lights
Dress (black and blue)	Signs for Dolores/Shirley
Stuffed pig that squeaks	Bandana
(2) Rags	Plastic bag
Brochure	Jello
Oreos package	Glitter wig
Plate of donuts	
Various serving dishes and cups	

Scene 1

*(AT RISE: Late afternoon, a few days before Christmas.
ENTER MELVIN and JACOB from outside carrying luggage.)*

MELVIN: I'm glad Antoinette decided not to come this year. I would have hated spending Christmas all by myself.

JACOB: Dad, all the single ladies living in your condominium complex would have loved to spend the day with you.

MELVIN: True. But I'd prefer to be with my family.

(MARIE ENTERS from kitchen as the men take off their coats. She tries to get JACOB'S attention without MELVIN seeing her. Melvin sees her.)

MELVIN: *(Rushing to HER, giving her an exuberant bear hug.)*

There you are! I wondered where Jacob was hiding you.

Merry Christmas, Marie.

MARIE: Merry Christmas, Dad.

MELVIN: I'm sorry your mother couldn't come, but I sure am glad I got to come.

MARIE: I'm glad you're here, too, Dad. Jacob, I need to talk to you.

JACOB: What's the matter, honey?

MARIE: I need to talk to you alone. Now.

MELVIN: I'll go unpack my bags.

MARIE: Thanks, Dad.

(MELVIN EXITS.)

JACOB: What's wrong?

MARIE: Mom just called.

JACOB: And?

MARIE: She's on her way.

JACOB: Did you tell her not to come?

MARIE: No.

JACOB: Did you tell her Melvin was here?

MARIE: No.

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JACOB: We have to call her back before she gets on the plane.

MARIE: She's already been on the plane.

JACOB: You mean, she's here? In town?

MARIE: We've got fifteen minutes at the most.

JACOB: Not good. Let's run away.

MARIE: We can't. We have children.

JACOB: They won't notice we're gone.

MARIE: Come dinnertime they will. Jacob, you need to tell your father my mom's coming. I'll wait outside and tell my mom Melvin's here.

JACOB: How about I wait for your mom and you tell my dad?

MARIE: No. And remember that we're on the same side.

JACOB: What side is that?

MARIE: The you-and-I-and-kids'-side. If our parents can't behave, that's their problem. I don't want our Christmas ruined.

JACOB: I'm with you. Can I stand behind you when the fighting starts?

MARIE: No. You can stand next to me.

JACOB: If you insist.

(JACOB and MARIE hug. Marie EXITS outside.)

JACOB: *(Calling offstage.)* Dad, I need to talk to you.

(MELVIN ENTERS.)

MELVIN: Something wrong?

JACOB: Well, it depends how you look it. I don't think "wrong" is the right word.

MELVIN: What are you talking about?

JACOB: Dad, Antoinette decided to come. She'll be here in a few minutes. Please don't be mad.

MELVIN: Why didn't you tell me she was coming before? I would've stayed somewhere else or not come at all.

JACOB: There wasn't time. I just found out she was coming.

MELVIN: Why didn't you tell her I was coming?

End of Freeview

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