

Snow Angels

By Kathleen Conner Combass

*By the same playwright who brought you
"Jesus Loves Fruitcakes" and
"Merry Christmas—No Matter What!"*

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STORY OF THE PLAY

Emory and Eleanor Vanderbilt take pride in hosting their big annual Christmas Eve party for family and friends, but this year's gathering will be a life-changing event.

While a snowstorm prevents most of their friends from attending, their daughters are certainly adding "life" to the party with their problems and sibling rivalry. Jocelyn, the oldest, harbors a hidden secret; Samantha's marriage is in danger; Sarah's dream of becoming a missionary is diminishing; and Esther, the youngest, rebels against almost everyone and everything, especially designer clothing!

Arthur, the beloved family butler, adds cryptic humor, as does Howard, Jocelyn's meek husband who likes to cross-stitch.

Soon a police officer arrives announcing the need to use the Vanderbilt home as a temporary shelter for three homeless people. Mrs. MacEntyre, who claims she's a descendent of royalty; Elijah, a philosopher; and Lanona, an ex-hairdresser, bring their own brand of fun to the neurotic family, and any dream of an elegant evening turns into the reality of an offbeat, but warm celebration.

In the midst of the chaos, relationships are mended and new friends are made. The true meaning of Christmas is revealed in the act of giving, not of gifts but of oneself.

Props

A vacuum cleaner with wand attachment.

Snack dishes, serving trays with snacks.

Book or newspaper for Emory.

Suitcases and cross-stitch for Howard.

Assorted bags of belongings for homeless people.

Hawaiian shirt for Elijah.

Pillows and blankets.

Coats and winter wear for all except Grandmother.

(Note: In the original production, no coats or jackets were used except for Howard and the Police Officer. It was assumed that Arthur would have hung up the coats after answering the door.)

CAST OF CHARACTERS
(5 m, 9 w, 2 girls)

FAMILY:

EMORY VANDERBILT: Mid-50s, wealthy businessman.

ELEANOR VANDERBILT: Mid-50s, Emory's wife.

JOCELYN VANDERBILT-NELSON: 35ish, oldest daughter.

HOWARD NELSON: 40s, Jocelyn's husband.

SARAH VANDERBILT: Early 30s, second-oldest daughter.

SAMANTHA VANDERBILT-REYNOLDS: Late 20s, third
daughter.

ESTHER VANDERBILT: Early 20s, their youngest daughter.

GRANDMA BELL: Mid-70s, Eleanor's mother.

TIFFANY: Young daughter of Samantha.

CRYSTAL: Another young daughter of Samantha.

OTHERS:

ARTHUR: Ageless butler.

OFFICER JACKSON: Neighborhood police officer.

MRS. MACENTYRE: Homeless woman, thinks she's royalty.

ELIJAH: Homeless man, philosopher.

LANONA: Homeless woman, ex-hairdresser.

Time: Christmas Eve, current day.

Setting

The action takes place in the Vanderbilt living room.

Stage Right is a wide entry hall with coat closet. On the downstage side of the entry is the living room with two sofas. The room is elegantly decorated for Christmas entertaining. Optionally, a staircase leading up to bedrooms is upstage center. On the upstage side of the entry, and not really visible, is the dining room and hallway to other parts of the home, including the bedrooms if a staircase is not used.

Stage Left leads off to other, unseen areas of the home as the kitchen, butler's pantry and back door.

The last scene between Howard and Jocelyn takes place DSR, outside the home.

Snow Angels

-4-

Scene 1

(AT RISE: The living room of Emory and Eleanor Vanderbilt home is decorated for entertaining. It is late afternoon. A vacuum cleaner with a wand attachment is sitting in the middle of the floor. SARAH VANDERBILT ENTERS from stairs. She is wearing sweatpants and a tee-shirt. She spots the vacuum. She turns it on and begins vacuuming under a table. ELEANOR VANDERBILT ENTERS from SL. She is elegantly dressed. She CROSSES to Sarah.)

ELEANOR: Sarah? Sarah. Sarah! Saaaaaaaraah!

(ELEANOR reaches down and shakes SARAH. Startled by Eleanor's touch, Sarah turns and swings the vacuum's wand into Eleanor's stomach. The suction pulls in Eleanor's dress. The two women struggle trying to free Eleanor. ARTHUR ENTERS. He slowly CROSSES and unplugs the machine. Eleanor collapses onto the couch while Sarah untangles herself from the vacuum cord. Arthur gathers the vacuum together and EXITS SL.)

ELEANOR: I will never consider liposuction again.

SARAH: I'm so sorry, Mother.

ELEANOR: It's really not your fault, dear. When I was eight months pregnant with you, I ...

SARAH: Fell down a flight of stairs.

ELEANOR: Yes. I think the fall did something to your...

SARAH: Brain.

ELEANOR: Equilibrium.

(ARTHUR RE-ENTERS.)

ELEANOR: Yes, Arthur.

ARTHUR: Snowstorm.

ELEANOR: Yes?

ARTHUR: No help.

ELEANOR: No help?

ARTHUR: No help coming.

Snow Angels

-5-

SARAH: Mother, I could help Arthur serve.

ELEANOR: No, dear. Arthur, just make everything buffet style.

ARTHUR: Yes, madam.

(ARTHUR EXITS SL.)

SARAH: Mother, why can't I help?

ELEANOR: Safety for the guests, dear. Besides, you might meet someone nice tonight.

SARAH: I thought you just invited friends and family.

ELEANOR: I did.

SARAH: Mother, all your male friends are Dad's age.

ELEANOR: Someone your age shouldn't be so choosy.

(EMORY VANDERBILT ENTERS from upstairs.)

EMORY: Who shouldn't be so choosy?

ELEANOR: Sarah's afraid she won't meet anyone exciting tonight.

SARAH: Dad, I'm not afraid. There's no one exciting to meet.

(ARTHUR ENTERS again.)

ELEANOR: Yes, Arthur.

ARTHUR: Alastair Gregory rang.

EMORY: And ... ?

ARTHUR: He won't be able to attend this evening.

ELEANOR: Why?

(ESTHER ENTERS from upstairs and grabs a bowl of snacks from an end table. ESTHER dresses unusually.)

ARTHUR: He accidentally dropped his toupee in the garbage disposal.

(ARTHUR EXITS.)

SARAH: Bachelor eliminated.

ESTHER: What bachelor eliminated?

Snow Angels

-6-

SARAH: Alastair Gregory.

ESTHER: Bummer. You would have made a cute couple.

ELEANOR: You two are aware we're having a Christmas party tonight. Right?

ESTHER: You don't like my outfit?

ELEANOR: Esther, Mother named you after a queen for a reason.

ESTHER: I thought it was to build up my self-esteem, not my wardrobe.

EMORY: I thought she was named after Esther Williams.

ESTHER: Who's she?

EMORY: An Olympic swimmer who became a movie star. A good looking woman, if I do say so myself.

ELEANOR: Emory!

EMORY: Not as good looking as you, sweetheart.

ELEANOR: I named you after a biblical queen hoping you would inherit her flair for fashion.

SARAH: Mother, Esther didn't save the Jewish nation just because she was wearing designer clothes.

ELEANOR: One should always look their best when going into battle.

ESTHER: I think I'll wear a bikini tonight.

ELEANOR: Emory, say something.

EMORY: Now, Esther, we don't want you catching cold.

ELEANOR: I give up.

(ELEANOR begins to EXIT up the stairs.)

SARAH: Mother, where are you going?

ELEANOR: Upstairs to lie down. I've been impaled, insulted, and thrown over by a swimmer. I'm tired. Don't bother me unless it's an emergency.

SARAH: Is there anything we can do to help?

ELEANOR: Lock yourselves in your rooms, don't touch anything, and stop eating all my hor d'oeuvres.

(ELEANOR EXITS.)

End of Freeview

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