Chapter Seven Christmas

By Andrew M. Frodahl

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DEDICATION

This play is dedicated to my mother, Kathy Frodahl, a true Proverbs 31 example. Thanks for the years of unconditional love and support.

STORY OF THE PLAY

What would you do if you lost your job, lost your home, and were on the verge of filing Chapter 7 bankruptcy… yet everyone in your family was already planning to spend Christmas with you? If you're Melvin Maldaput, you call upon your real estate buddy to lend you a million-dollar home for the holidays. Melvin and his wife Miranda end up telling a string of lies to keep the ruse going. The last thing Melvin wants is his parents or in-laws to discover that he is a failure. Melvin's rich hillbilly neighbors, Prudy and Pruitt, even pretend to be his servants. But keeping a home perfect with visitors who scrape the fine china, clog the toilet, and bring a crazy cat is nearly impossible, and as the sibling rivalry heats up, the truth could be revealed. With the help Prudy and Pruitt, Melvin and Miranda learn the true meaning of Christmas. A debt needed to be paid, and two thousand years ago God sent his only Son to this world to pay the debt -- a debt that has been paid in full. About an hour.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(6 m, 6 w, 1 flexible)

MEVLIN MALDAPUT: A professional pianist who just recently lost his job with the New York Philharmonic.

MIRANDA MALDAPUT: Melvin's wife who has only been married to Melvin just over a year. The couple is dealing with many trials for such a young marriage.

QUINN: (flex.) A realtor who is an old friend of Melvin's. He/she owes Melvin a favor.

PRUITT PROUTY: An old-timer who invented a seagull call that repels seagulls. The call is named the *Seagull Commander.* It made Pruitt and his wife Prudy overnight millionaires. But they are humble folk. Some people might confuse him with the Duck Dynasty fellers.

PRUDENCE (PRUDY) PROUTY: Pruitt's wife and co-business partner in the *Seagull Commander* empire. She likes to keep her gun handy, but keeps her faith closer.

BRIAN MALDAPUT: Melvin's father who wants his son to be more like him.

CHARLOTTE MALDAPUT: Melvin's mom who just wants everyone to get along.

DENNIS DINWIDDLE: Miranda and Tanya's father. They say the meek will inherit the earth. If that's the case, Dennis will be emperor.

DELORES DINWIDDLE: Miranda and Tanya's mother. Dennis's wife. She is loud, proud, and not taking slack from anyone. She never shies from her opinion.

TANYA MOUNTAINWAY: Miranda's competitive sister who loves having the upper hand. She and her husband Tate run a diet shake pyramid business called Mountainway Fat Be Gone Shakes.

TATE MOUNTAINWAY: Tanya's husband and founder of Mountainway Fat Be Gone Shakes. His favorites things are a mirror, money, and Tanya. Probably in that order.

HEZEKIAH KNUCKLES: The conductor of the New York Philharmonic who fired Melvin. He is the pillar of high society.

CYNTHIA KNUCKLES: Hezekiah's wife who sees everyone beneath their status.

SET BREAKDOWN

It's a one set location. Four scenes and packed with comedy and slapstick.

Setting: A mansion in upstate New York. An upscale living room is stage right with a door upstage right. It has a couch, wingback chair, fireplace with mantel, coffee table and a coat rack by the door. A window is to the side of the door. A very luxurious dining room is stage left with a door to the kitchen upstage left. The dining table is angled for blocking. Eight chairs, two on the ends for Miranda and Melvin. The other six upstage.

Scene 1: December 23rd.
Scene 2: Christmas Eve midday.
Scene 3: Christmas Eve evening.
Scene 4: Christmas morning.

NOTES

Spoofy the cat is a stuffed animal. Unless of course you have a very talented cat who takes good direction. I haven't met one.

Scene 1

(AT RISE: An upscale home living room and dining room on December 23rd. MELVIN and MIRANDA MALDAPUT enter from the kitchen door with QUINN behind him.)

MIRANDA: That kitchen is bigger than our house!
MELVIN: Former house. And Miranda, our house wasn't that small.
QUINN: And here is the dining room.
MIRANDA: These hardwood floors are incredible!
QUINN: English white oak. The wood once served as the deck of the British clipper *HMS Endeavor.* The one Captain James Cook commanded when he explored Australia.
MELVIN: You're kidding?
QUINN: No, I'm not. This dining room table is carved from a single redwood tree. And all the china dates back to the Ming Dynasty.
MELVIN: Honey, it can easily seat everyone, even your mom and her personality.
MIRANDA: Melvin, I don't know. This place is huge. Everything looks so expensive!
QUINN: That's because they are. Melvin, buddy, don't use the chinaware. Don't even let anyone look at it.
MELVIN: Everything will be fine. It's just for two days.
MIRANDA: Melvin, no one is going to believe we live in this mansion. You couldn't find something less extravagant?
MELVIN: With my new job of course we can afford it.
MIRANDA: What new job?
QUINN: Oh, Melvin didn't tell you? He is the new keyboardist for the new Christian rock band, Gideon's Fleece.
MIRANDA: Serious? That's the cover story? A Christian rock band?
MELVIN: *(Proud.)* Pretty awesome right?
MIRANDA: Why a Christian band? At least make it believable.

MELVIN: Because no one in our family listens to religious tunes. Easier to convince.
MIRANDA: Quinn, are you sure this is all right?
QUINN: No, it's not all right. It's very wrong, but I owe your hubby here a favor.
MELVIN: A big favor.
QUINN: We don't need to discuss why, Melvin. But I think letting you use one of my client's home for Christmas makes us even.
MELVIN: I appreciate it, Quinn.
QUINN: Keep it clean and leave no trace when you are done.
MIRANDA: There isn't a chance that the homeowners will show up, is there?
QUINN: No, no, no, no, no. Not a chance. They are in Fiji for the holiday. Besides, they already have a new home in Seattle.
MELVIN: See? No worries. This will work.
MIRANDA: They just left all their belongings?
QUINN: They are selling the furnishings with the house. The lady of the estate said she is bored with these trifles.
MELVIN: Trifles?
QUINN: It's what she said.
MELVIN: Out of curiosity what is the value of this estate you're selling?
QUINN: Eight million. Give or take.
MELVIN: EIGHT MILLION!
MIRANDA: I'm gonna throw up.
QUINN: Not in here you're not.
MELVIN: She will be fine. The house will be fine. Probably better for us being here. You know homes that stay vacant too long can get stale.
QUINN: Melvin, just stop trying to convince me everything will be fine. It makes me nervous. Just get the key back to me day after Christmas. I've got shopping to do.
MELVIN: Thanks, Quinn.
MIRANDA: Why does Quinn owe you anyway?
QUINN: Somethings are best left unsaid.
MIRANDA: Okay?

End of Freeview

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