Never Too Old for Christmas

By Vicki Lake

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DEDICATION

To the memory of Bill and Sharlene Mellencamp.

STORY OF THE PLAY

Convinced that God doesn't really care about the elderly, 84-year-old Beatrice has become the resident Scrooge of her nursing home. No matter what her roommate says, or what Bible stories the expectant nurse's aide reads, Beatrice is adamant.

"God doesn't care about the elderly. His supposed only Son didn't even live past 33 years, so how does He know what it's like to be old!?" she declares.

But during a church service she reluctantly attends, she falls asleep and dreams of bits and pieces of the Christmas story she is hearing, scenes of the nativity involving others at the retirement home, and even herself as the wife of the innkeeper.

Beatrice eventually has a change of heart and attitude. She realizes that you are never too old for Christmas, never too old to allow Christ into your heart, and never too old to ask forgiveness for your sins.

Performance time from 30 to 45 minutes, depending upon music selections.

ORIGINAL PRODUCTION

The play premiered as part of a musical in December, 1995, at Community Church of Greenwood, IN.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

3 m, 5 w, numerous extras, choirs, optional pianist

BEATRICE: Querulous 84-year-old resident of Stone Manor Nursing Home who dislikes Christmas – and most everything else.

BESSIE: Beatrice's roommate, 90-years-old, sweet and spiritual.

BERNARD: 88-year-old gentleman resident of Stone Manor.

CONNIE: Young, pregnant nurse's aide.

DERRICK: Young nurse's aide.

CAROL: Head nurse.

SUE: Beatrice's daughter.

REV. WISEHART: Visiting pastor of local church.

EXTRAS: As residents, staff and visitors. There is also a choir director, children's and/or adult choir, and an optional pianist.

BIBLICAL CAST:

Mary *(Played by Connie.)*
Joseph *(Played by Derrick.)*
Innkeeper *(Played by Bernard.)*
Innkeeper's wife *(Played by younger Beatrice.)*
Shepherds
Angelic Choir
Simeon *(Played by Bernard.)*
Anna *(Played by Beatrice.)*

Dream Scenes

Within the play Beatrice has several dream sequences which can be played out anywhere on or near the stage. Lighting changes and soft music should differentiate these dream scenes from the rest of the play.

Setting

The large lobby of the Stone Manor Nursing home. A piano sits at one end. At the beginning of the play the room is being decorated for Christmas.

At DSR is Beatrice and Bessie's room, indicated by a small chest of drawers next to which they can move their wheelchairs.

Music Suggestions

The Musical Director may use suggested musical selections or choose his/her own music. Be sure to obtain permission before using copyrighted music or arrangements.

Scene 1

(AT RISE: An upbeat version of "Jingle Bells" is heard. It is mid-December evening in the lobby of Stone Manor Nursing Home. Several STAFF MEMBERS carry decorations and begin to decorate a tree, hang greenery, etc. EXTRA VISITORS enter, with packages, a poinsettia, fruit basket, etc. MANY try to speak to BEATRICE but she obviously grumbles back. Other RESIDENTS, including BESSIE and BERNARD, try to help and join the fun but Beatrice just sits.)

DERRICK: *(The young nurse's aide grabs BEATRICE'S wheelchair, swirling her around trying to cheer her up.)* Come on, Beatrice, let's go for a ride.

BEATRICE: Young man, I'll mind you to let go of my chair or I'll…

DERRICK: You'll what, Beatrice? You know you love every minute of this.

BEATRICE: *(Emphatically.)* Why, I'll run over your toes!

DERRICK: Christmas is only two weeks away. *(HE starts to sing.)* "Dashing through the snow, In a one-horse open sleigh, O'er the fields we go, Laughing all the way…"

BEATRICE: *(Trying to stop her chair.)* Enough of that!

DERRICK: *(Singing.)* "Bells on bob tails ring, Making spirits bright, Oh what fun it is to laugh and sing, A sleighing song tonight."

BEATRICE: *(Disgustedly.)* For goodness sake, stop that chatter. Christmas is for children. Leave me alone.

(Still smiling, DERRICK gives up. At some point, BERNARD has helped wheel BESSIE back to her room.)

BEATRICE: *(Cont'd. As DERRICK walks away to help decorate.)* Beside God doesn't care about the elderly. His supposed only Son didn't even live past 33 years, so how does He know what it's like to be old? What do you know what's it like? *(Bitterly wheels chair away to her room located DSR.)*

(As BEATRICE moves closer, we see CONNIE straightening items on the small chest of drawers. BESSIE is seated in her wheelchair with her large print Bible on her lap.)

CONNIE: Hello, Beatrice. Anything I can do for you before I help Bessie to bed?
BEATRICE: Yes, see if you can adjust the heat. Honestly, it's like a furnace room in here.

(CONNIE opens drawer to retrieve night clothes.)

BEATRICE: *(Cont'd.)* Someday I'm going to throw a glass and break that window to prove my point.
BESSIE: *(Giggling.)* You'll get more than one point across I dare say…and I believe some of the points might be a bit sharper than we'd desire.
BEATRICE: Oh, shut up. You old fool.
CONNIE: *(Scolding BEATRICE.)* Now Beatrice!
BESSIE: *(To BEATRICE.)* Well, you're not too far behind.
BEATRICE: *(Embittered.)* Can't you see? We're just wasting away.
BESSIE: Well, as far as my sight goes, it is getting more difficult to see each day. And as far as "wasting away," well, I think I just found some verses in the Good Book that refers to that. Here, Connie, would you mind?
BEATRICE: Oh, no. Here we go again. Give me my channel changer.
CONNIE: *(Smiles then reaches for Bessie's Bible.)* Where, Bessie?
BESSIE: *(Pointing to a place in the Bible.)* Begin right here.
CONNIE: 2 Corinthians 4:16, "Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. Verse 17 – For light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. Verse 18 – So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal." Why, Bessie, that is beautiful.

End of Freeview

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