

# Christmas in Hell

The Original Stageplay



Cleveland O. McLeish

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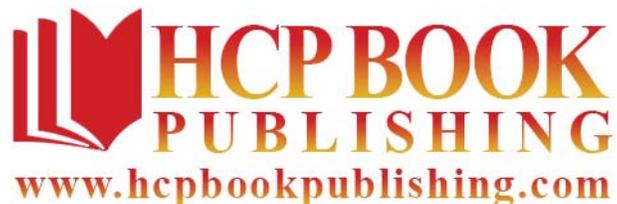
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## Characters

**Dives**      *Wealthy Entrepreneur*

**Lazarus**    *Poor man*

**Phillip**     *Dives Younger Brother*

**Sharon**     *Dives Wife*

**Jesus**       *Savior, Lord and Judge*

**Abraham**

**Daemon**

**Raemon**

**Poet**

**Harold**

**Young Child**    *(Can be boy/girl. Should be a singer)*

**Extras**

## Setting

Living room setting with adjoining kitchen (with a counter, if possible)

## The Story

Dives is a wealthy entrepreneur with a bad attitude towards Christmas, Christians and the underprivileged of our society. His goal is to make more money and enjoy all the pleasures that life has to offer. His brother Phillip provides some balance in his life, though an unbeliever himself.

Dives is married but seeking a divorce from his Christian wife, Sharon. Like Solomon, he denies himself nothing. In his own eyes, he is probably the most important man on planet Earth.

Fate would have it that there are things even Dives has no control over. The night before Christmas he dies and wakes up in hell. That's when his journey really begins as he spends Christmas Day in the worst place imaginable.

## Play Details

**Length:** 50-70 Minutes

**Cast:** 8 Males, 1 Female, Plus Extras

**Audience:** Teens & Adults

**Genre:** Contemporary Drama

# THE SCRIPT



**VOICE:** I knew pleasure. I found all that was good. I laughed many days, cheered myself with wine, and embraced folly. I wanted to experience all that was good for people to do under the heavens during the few days of life. I undertook great projects: I built houses for myself and planted vineyards. I made gardens and parks and planted all kinds of fruit trees in them. I made reservoirs to water groves of flourishing trees. I bought male and female slaves and had other slaves who were born in my house. I owned more herds and flocks than anyone before me. I amassed silver and gold for myself, and the treasure of kings and provinces. I acquired male and female singers, and a harem as well. I became greater by far than anyone before me. I denied myself nothing my eyes desired; I refused my heart no pleasure. In life, I had everything...*(pause)*....In death, I had nothing.

## SCENE 1

### **LIGHTS UP – Party Scene.**

*Decorations, music, food, and drinks in abundance. Guest are scattered all over the room, dressed in elegant, upper-class suits and dresses. Everyone has a glass as they drink in a celebratory mood. Laughter, chatter, eating and drinking.*

*DIVES walk in. If we thought the guest was dressed in fine clothes, Dives outshines them all. Everyone turns to him and applauds. He is poured some drink into a glass. He smiles and raises the glass. This is the man of the hour.*

**DIVES:** I have built an empire equal to none. I have earned more money than, than...what's the name of that Facebook guy?

**GUEST:** Mark Zuckerberg.

**DIVES:** Yes, Mark Zuckerberg. I have accomplished far greater things than, than...what's the name of that guy who founded Microsoft?

**GUEST:** Bill Gates.

**DIVES:** Yes, Bill Fakes. I am more popular than any performer. This month alone I have opened two new franchises. Instant profit, and who said there was no god on earth.

*One of the guests steps forward with his glass. His name is Phillip.*

**PHILLIP:** I think you have had too much to drink, brother.

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**DIVES:** I'm just getting started. *(Raises glass and drinks)*

**PHILLIP:** You promised last Christmas that you would not get drunk this time around.

**DIVES:** Christmas?

**PHILLIP:** It is Christmas. The season to be merry.

**DIVES:** No little brother. Christmas is for the weak and poor. Today we celebrate greater than Christmas. Today we celebrate me.

*Some applaud. Others just drink.*

**DIVES:** You all have a job because I provided. Christmas is for the underprivileged who need a crutch to lean on; some institution that will offer them bread. I provide more than bread. Meat, fine wine, and entertainment.

*He raises his glass to shouts of glee.*

*Phillip takes the glass before he drinks.*

**PHILLIP:** You've probably had enough.

*Dives reach for a bottle of wine.*

**DIVES:** I intend to get drunk tonight. *(He drinks)*

*Phillip takes him aside to have a private discussion.*

**PHILLIP:** It's Christmas Eve. We should send the people home to celebrate with their families.

**DIVES:** Do they look like they want to go home, Phillip?

**PHILLIP:** They probably have no idea what they want with all this liquor going around.

**DIVES:** Why are you such a killjoy, little brother? Learn to relax and have some fun without thinking of the minute details.

**PHILLIP:** You pay me to think of the little things.

**DIVES:** And I will pay you not to think if that will help you relax a little. Have some wine. Eat some pork. Invite one of these girls for a private session upstairs. This is our time brother. We are looking at a brand-new future.

**PHILLIP:** I know it's the wine talking.

**DIVES:** What's with the conscience all of a sudden?

**PHILLIP:** Just doing my job.

**DIVES:** In that case, when this night is over, make sure you tell every one of these people that I need them at work first thing tomorrow morning.

**PHILLIP:** It's Christmas Day.

**DIVES:** So, let them come in at ten instead of eight. Am I not generous?

**PHILLIP:** They should be home with their families.

**DIVES:** It's just another day to make money. We make our greatest profits on commercial holidays.

**PHILLIP:** It's not just a commercial holiday.

**DIVES:** You sound just like my wife.

**PHILLIP:** Soon to be ex-wife --- number six, if I might add.

**DIVES:** I know where you are going. Don't.

**PHILLIP:** People like to go to Church on Christmas Day.

**DIVES:** You think people are interested in going to a sanctuary to listen to some fairy tales of a king born in a horse pen?

**PHILLIP:** Sharon does it. Mom did it.

**DIVES:** Mom is dead. Some good that did. She was a fool and Sharon is exactly like her, which is why I moved out.

**PHILLIP:** She invited us over for Christmas.

**DIVES:** I have no time for that. If she wants to waste her years believing in all that God nonsense, it's up to her. I will have none of it.

**PHILLIP:** She asked me to convince you to come. She has something to tell us.

**DIVES:** Aw, the aura of mystery. It's a nice touch. Still not going. I would die first.

**PHILLIP:** You were so madly in love with her once.

**DIVES:** "Were" being the key word in that statement.

*Lazarus, much older and dressed in ragged clothes walks into the room. The guest turns up their noses and puts some distance between him and them, and he walks through looking at the table.*

*Dives see him. He shoves Phillip out of the way and walks over to Lazarus.*

**DIVES:** I told you never to come here.

**LAZARUS:** Food looks good. I could smell it from outside.

**DIVES:** Get out before I have you thrown out.

**LAZARUS:** Why you always treat me like a dog rich man?

**DIVES:** How else is a dog to be treated?

**LAZARUS:** You're not going to eat all this food. If it's even the leftovers, I'll take it.

**DIVES:** You will have none of this food. Go find some water in the streets to bathe yourself and stop trespassing on my property or I will have you arrested.

**LAZARUS:** Why so mean?

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**DIVES:** Get out.

**LAZARUS:** Merry Christmas to you too, sir.

**DIVES:** There's nothing merry about it for you. Go find a church. Those poor jackals will take you in. Beg them for some of their manna and holy water. Beg them some soap and toothpaste. Go find that Jesus you're always talking about. Maybe he will give you some fish and bread.

*Pause.*

**DIVES:** Go. Leave. Vamoose.

**LAZARUS:** God bless you.

*Lazarus turns and leaves.*

**DIVES:** *(turns to Phillip)* See what I mean brother. Filth. That's the kind that goes to church. Hungry, smelly, poor and dying. Its people like us that live forever. Not them. They can't afford it. We have the best of everything in this life and any other life to come, if there is such a thing.

*Dives drink some more.*

**DIVES:** We have only just begun to build my kingdom here on earth brother. There is plenty of work to be done, but today we eat, we drink, and we celebrate.

**VOICE:** 'You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?'

*Dives look around for the source of the voice. He looks at the bottle in his hand.*

**DIVES:** Did you hear that?

**PHILLIP:** Hear what?

**DIVES:** I heard a voice. *(laughs)* I think the wine is talking to me.

**PHILLIP:** You've had too much to drink. *(Takes the bottle away from Dives)*

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**DIVES:** Think I'm going to lie down a bit. The smell of that beggar has somehow upset my stomach.

*Dives leaves. Phillip re-joins the other guest. The party continues.*

**LIGHTS OUT**

## SCENE 2

### LIGHTS UP

*Dives is lying motionless in the middle of the room.*

*A POET sits on a nearby table with a notepad and pen. He speaks as he writes. He is dirty, dressed in ragged clothes that appear burnt and torn, eyes darkened from lack of sleep. This is the same room, but somehow different.*

*There is an undecorated Christmas Tree erected on stage.*

**POET:** Deep in sleep I found myself flying through the air, "Where am I and what am I doing here?"

*Dives stir and begins to sit up.*

**POET:** It was from these images my body was set ablaze, lit with fire, engulfed by fear. I was greeted by strange looking creatures, with skin charred, and blackened, scorched, that produced kink and stickiness, with worms eroding from their bodies, gory and smelly, and I looked in disdain.

*Dives rub his head. He looks at the Poet, who stares back from his notepad, but only for a second.*

**POET:** Soon, I began to cry, the tear-less cry. I cried. I cried. For yet another man laid helplessly before me. What will his first question be?

**DIVES:** Who are you?

**POET:** A million unanswered questions and your first is the most irrelevant. Who am I? Who are you? Who are we? You're new here?

**DIVES:** Why are you in my house?

**POET:** It's quiet. I always find the quiet spots, though it never lasts.

**DIVES:** *(forcibly)* Why are you in my house?

**POET:** A bit possessive aren't cha.

*Dives see the Tree. He is furious.*

**DIVES:** Who put this tree in my house?

*No response.*

**DIVES:** I'm not going to ask you again. I will go to my kitchen, in my house, for a drink of water. When I get back, you and this tree better not be in my house.

*Dives walk to the exit.*

**POET:** You don't want to leave this room.

**DIVES:** Why not?

**POET:** It's the safest place you could be. But they will never allow you to stay.

**DIVES:** You're not making any sense.

*Poet senses someone coming. He gets jittery and uneasy. He quickly exits.*

**DIVES:** Where're you going?

*Poet is gone. Dives is alone.*

**DIVES:** Something is not right. Is this a dream?

**VOICE:** More like a nightmare.

**DIVES:** I know that voice.

*Daemon enters. He wears a neat black and white suit, well groomed.*

**DIVES:** Did you just let yourself into my house?

*Daemon looks around.*

**DAEMON:** It does look like your house doesn't it? I made every effort to incorporate even the finest details. *(Looks at a painting on the wall)* I hate that painting by the way. Too much color. I'm more into black and white.

**DIVES:** And you are?

**DAEMON:** Pardon my manners. I am known by many names, but you can call me Daemon.

*Daemon extends his hand. Dives doesn't shake it.*

**DIVES:** Do I know you, sir? Can you tell me why you are in my house?

*Daemon walks over to the Christmas Tree. He touches a few branches.*

**DAEMON:** Do you know the significance of this tree? So many people erect one in their homes without knowing its history. It's good to know the history of everything you believe in. Don't you agree?

**DIVES:** I'm not religious. Sorry...

**DAEMON:** Yes. Pity. And you have no idea what you missed.

**DIVES:** ...and I didn't put that tree there.

*Daemon continues to admire the tree.*

**DAEMON:** There is no evidence that the modern custom of a Christmas tree originated in paganism, but many believe it did. The Romans decorated their houses with green trees and lights and exchanged gifts. Late in the Middle Ages, the Germans and Scandinavians placed evergreen trees in their homes or outside their doors to show their hope in the forthcoming spring. The modern-day Christmas tree evolved from these early German traditions. There is more, but I don't wish to bore you with the details.

*Daemon turns to Dives.*

**DAEMON:** We love the controversy surrounding it. Helps us in our attempts to switch focus off the birth of Christ to a more --- commercialized point of view. It works for most, but not for others --- like your wife for instance.

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**DIVES:** Soon to be ex-wife.

**DAEMON:** Actually, she is now a widow.

*Pause.*

**DIVES:** Am I dead?

**DAEMON:** Is there another way your wife could become a widow?

**DIVES:** Listen, I don't know how you know so much, but you should also know that I have money. If that's what you want. Just name your price.

*Daemon laughs.*

**DAEMON:** Show me your money, and the value it possesses?

**DIVES:** Take me to a bank.

**DAEMON:** Eternity has no financial institutions.

**DIVES:** Eternity?

**DAEMON:** Yes.

**DIVES:** Can I borrow your cell phone?

**DAEMON:** A pointless luxury afforded to you only during your brief time on earth.

**DIVES:** How can I access my accounts? Do you have a laptop?

**DAEMON:** No.

**DIVES:** Kindle? iPod?

**DAEMON:** Nope.

**DIVES:** Something a little more primitive, like a desktop.

**DAEMON:** There are only two things you can take from your earthly life into eternity. Your body and your soul. Everything else you leave behind.

*Dives beat his head with the palms of his hands.*

**DIVES:** Stop telling me rubbish. Do you even know who you are talking to? I am a very important man. The kind you don't want to mess with.

**DAEMON:** This time of the year we get a lot of drunks, over-dosed drug addicts, and old people. You're special. Rich, healthy, vibrant ---

**DIVES:** What do you mean this time of the year?

**DAEMON:** --- Clueless. This is the day the world celebrates the birth of God's Son. Oh, but you're not a believer, right? That's why you're here.

**DIVES:** This is not my house?

**DAEMON:** More like front row seats.

**DIVES:** For what?

*Daemon pulls out a WANTED Poster. On it is the face of Dives' Wife, Sharon. He hands the poster to Dives.*

**DAEMON:** Recognize that face?

**DIVES:** My ex-wife.

**DAEMON:** Widow.

**DIVES:** What is this?

**DAEMON:** She has been on *Hell's Most Wanted* list now for 15 years. Today is a very special day for her, and you get to watch.

**DIVES:** *Hell's Most Wanted* list? Are you telling me that this is hell?

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**DAEMON:** Not quite yet, but you'll know when you get to that part, which is soon. I really enjoyed our little chat.

*Daemon leaves.*

**DIVES:** *(calls offstage)* Wait...

*Dives fall to the ground holding the poster in his hand.*

**DIVES:** I'm in hell!? This can't be real.

*Dives look at the poster. He crushes it up and throws it away jumping to his feet.*

**DIVES:** This is ridiculous.

*He heads to the exit but walks into RAEMON, a large man carrying a whip in his hand.*

**RAEMON:** Going somewhere, Rich Man?

**DIVES:** Step aside and let me pass.

**RAEMON:** I see you're not very familiar with the rules that govern this place, *(He unrolls the whip)* which is understandable being your first day. You must know though that you have no authority here.

*Dives back up.*

**DIVES:** Who are you?

**RAEMON:** I am Raemon. I break in the new guys.

*Raemon pulls the whip back.*

**LIGHTS FADE**

*The sound of whiplashes and tortured screams permeates the darkness.*