

Mission John 10:10

The Original Stageplay



Cleveland O. McLeish

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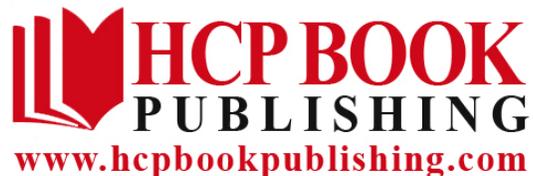


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Characters

Gene

Anna-Kay

The Accuser/ Principal Dawkins/Jason/Police Officer

Minister Lee

Jeff

Angel 1

Angel 2

Setting

Scene 1 takes place at a School.

Scene 3 takes place on Bethlehem/Biblical Street.

Scene 2 & 4-12 utilizes a Living Room Setting with all the appropriate furniture.

(You are limited only by your imagination)

The Story

A single mother family comes under a sinister plot when the enemy infiltrates their homes with the sole intention to steal, to kill and to destroy. This is a powerful story that highlights the cunning attempts of the enemy to destroy a family, and God's divine way of guiding us to victory.

As long as we are on the earth, the enemy will always strike at our heels, but we have the capacity to crush his head. What defeats us many times is our ignorance to the enemy's devices.

This family will learn a valuable lesson that will take them from defeat to victory.

You can perform this play as a full production, or monthly as a series, doing one scene per month.

Play Details

Length: 120 Minutes

Cast: 5 Males, 2 Females

Audience: Teens & Adults

Genre: Contemporary Drama

THE SCRIPT



SCENE 1

LIGHTS UP

Anna-Kay is seated up front with her arms folded and rolling her eyes occasionally.

Gene burst in the room

GENE: Oh, I can't believe you're doing this to me again.

ANNA-KAY: Mom, not now okay.

GENE: How could you start the New Year like this?

ANNA-KAY: Mom!

GENE: No, you listen to me, young lady, let this be the last time I hear you creating mischief in this school, or else.

ANNA-KAY: Or else what, mother.

GENE: Or else, or else. Oh, you're trying to drive me crazy.

Gene finds a seat and rubs her forehead.

Enter Principal Dawkins (Played by the Accuser).

DAWKINS: Ah, Ms. Reid. You're here. How's the New Year treating you?

GENE: It was fine, until now.

DAWKINS: Uhm. Well, I hate to be the one to have called you about this, but your daughter here believes that somehow she is in charge of this school and has the freedom to do and not do as she likes.

GENE: What did she do or not do this time?

DAWKINS: Well, she snuck into the kitchen and poured two bottles of hot pickle pepper sauce into a pot of stew that was served at lunchtime today.

GENE: What!

ANNA-KAY: We get that horrible stew every single day.

GENE: Shut up! Nobody asked you anything.

Anna-Kay turns her head away.

DAWKINS: Anyways, you can imagine what something like that did at lunch. You would have thought it was a mass grieving ceremony down there in that lunch room. The water wasn't flowing fast enough for those poor kids, and our staff. Frankly, Miss Reid, I don't know what to do about this young lady you call daughter anymore. I don't even know if she's human and, I don't think I want her to be a part of my school anymore.

Pause.

GENE: Principal Dawkins, can I have a moment with my daughter, please?

DAWKINS: Sure. I'll be in the next office.

Principal Dawkins exit.

GENE: Is that what you want? To be expelled from this school?

ANNA-KAY: Maybe.

GENE: Why are you doing this, Anna? Why can't you be more like your sister?

ANNA-KAY: I am not my sister, okay. I am me. Maybe if people start seeing that, I would be a better person.

GENE: Look, no one expects you to be perfect ---

ANNA-KAY: Really!

GENE: Will you just listen. *(pause)* It reflects badly on you when you do these mischievous acts, as a Christian, I mean. You know those who aren't saved will look to you for an example, and you're not being a very good one right now.

ANNA-KAY: Mom, I really don't care right now.

GENE: Why? What happened this past holiday to make you so angry? Was it something I did?

ANNA-KAY: No.

GENE: Then what is it.

Pause.

Longer pause.

ANNA-KAY: It kills me when I'm around my friends, and they talk about the things they do with their father. I can't share anything except to say how the coward left when he found out you were pregnant with me.

GENE: You have a Heavenly Father, dear.

ANN-KAY: Yes, but I can't see Him. I can't touch Him. I can't go fishing and bowling with Him or play hockey or football with Him. It's not the same, and you know it.

GENE: What do you want me to do?

ANNA-KAY: I can't pretend as if it don't bother me that my father isn't here. Maybe if you called him, maybe if you apologize, he would come back.

GENE: Life don't work like that, Anna. It's easy to say, but far more complicated than that.

ANNA-KAY: You would say that without even trying.

GENE: I did try.

ANNA-KAY: (*sarcastically*) Yeah, I'm sure you poured your heart into it.

Pause.

Enter Minister Lee.

Anna-Kay is not happy to see him.

ANNA-KAY: Did you have to call in the Calvary?

LEE: Happy to see you too, child.

Gene heads for the door.

GENE: (*close to tears*) I'll be in the foyer.

She exits, closing the door gently behind her.

LEE: I thought you loved your mother?

ANNA-KAY: What makes you think I don't?

LEE: You don't hurt people you love, KK.

Anna starts to cry.

Minister Lee hugs her for a while, until she regains control.

ANNA-KAY: I'm sorry.

LEE: You don't owe me an apology.

Anna sees the Bible in Minister Lee's hand.

ANNA-KAY: Don't you ever go anywhere without your Bible?

LEE: A soldier should be armed at all times. *(opens Bible)*

ANNA-KAY: You're a soldier now, huh?

LEE: Do you have any idea how many battles I've fought for you?

Anna doesn't respond. She knows.

LEE: Why do you trouble yourself with matters you have no control over?

ANNA-KAY: If I had a remote, this is where I would press the mute button.

LEE: Very funny. Ya know I gotta give you some scripture, don't you. *(pause)* Proverbs three verse five to six, Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths.

ANNA-KAY: I know that passage.

LEE: You have to remember that we're in a spiritual warfare, child. The weapons of our warfare are not carnal but ---

ANNA-KAY: --- mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds.

LEE: The devil will always be trying to take up residence in your home. You know that; Cassandra and your mother knows that. But you can't let that old accuser of the brethren triumph in your life.

ANNA-KAY: Yeah.

LEE: So, no more peppering the stew?

ANNA-KAY: No more.

LEE: Or setting a pin on your teacher's chair?

ANNA-KAY: In the past.

LEE: Or dropping water balloons on the freshmen?

ANNA-KAY: Uhm, that's pushing it.

LEE: Anna.

ANNA-KAY; Okay.

LEE: Good. I won't even mention some a that other stuff you used to do.

ANNA-KAY: Please don't.

Lee gets up to go.

ANNA-KAY: You know, you may be the closest person I have to a father.

LEE: I know that, child.

Lee smiles and exits.

Enter Jason (Played by Accuser). He throws his knapsack aside and drops down in a seat near to Anna-Kay.

JASON: This stupid school blows, man. *(he looks across at Anna, who stares back at him)* Whatcha looking at, angel face.

ANNA-KAY: I don't really know, but it moves, and talks.

JASON: You disrespecting me, girl?

ANNA-KAY: You don't come to this school, do you?

JASON: Sure I do.

ANNA-KAY: I never seen you before.

JASON: Oh, so you one a those people?

ANNA-KAY: What people?

JASON: The ones who know everybody. Well, let me tell you something that's gonna rock your pencil-case, angel face. I ain't never seen you around here either. *(teasing)* Do you come to this school?

Pause.

JASON: Whatcha in for?

ANNA-KAY: Peppering the stew pot.

JASON (*laughs*): Man, that was you. That stuff is old school.

ANNA-KAY: What are you in for?

JASON: They caught me spray-painting 'DORK' on the vice principal's office door.

ANNA-KAY: (*smiles*) He is a dork.

JASON: Yeah, no doubt. They shoulda seen what I was gonna write on the Guidance Counsellors door.

Anna laughs knowing too well the kind of person the Counsellor is.

JASON: So, you a Christian?

ANNA-KAY: How'd you know?

JASON: You got that glitter in your eyes.

ANNA-KAY: (*blushing*) Glitter?

JASON: Yeah.

ANNA-KAY: Yes I am. You?

JASON: Nah.

ANNA-KAY: Why not?

JASON: You love chicken?

ANNA-KAY: Yeah.

JASON: Christianity is like eating fry chicken every day. I can't limit myself to that when I can have sweet & sour, bar-be-cue, stirred, baked, jerked and the list goes on.

ANNA-KAY: That's a funny way to look at it.

JASON: Well, if you ever get tired of Fried Chicken you let me know.

Anna-Kay just sits there staring at Jason. It is clear that she's considering all that he has said.

Jason just smiles back at her when he realizes she's staring.

Enter Gene and Minister Lee. The smile on Jason's face disappears.

GENE: We just had a talk with Principal Dawkins, and he is offering you another chance, but if you pull another stunt like this again, you're on your own. Do you understand?

ANNA-KAY: Yes, mom.

GENE: Let's go home.

Anna gets up and follows behind her mother.

Minister Lee remains, staring at Jason who stares back.

LEE: I know you.

JASON: Oh yeah, uhm, were you at the Garden of Eden, no, the Tower of Babel perhaps?

LEE: What do you want?

JASON: When I get it, you'll know.

LEE: You know you can't win. Jesus already won this battle for us by dying on the Cross.

JASON: The battles just began, preacher. For you and your friends at least. Consider it a test. You pass, you get a testimony. You fail, I get what I want. Fair deal, don't you think?

Jason smiles & exits.

Minister Lee looks out at the audience.

LEE: Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armor of God that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high *places*. Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all --- stand.

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Minister Lee exits.

LIGHTS OUT

SCENE 2

LIGHTS UP

Cassandra is wrapped up on the couch with bags under her eyes looking really sick. Her head is wrapped, and there's a temperature needle in her mouth.

Gene rushes out buckling a watch on her hand. She's dressed in a floral red and white formal dress and her hair is wrapped.

Gene goes over to the couch and pulls the needle from Cassandra's mouth. She looks at it, shakes it and looks at it again.

GENE: You don't have a fever.

CASSANDRA: Really? I'm burning up.

GENE: Well, maybe something is wrong with this thing. Did you take the pills?

CASSANDRA: Yes, mom.

GENE: Good. I have to go. Minister Lee has been waiting for the past half hour so, later, baby.

Gene kisses Cassandra on her forehead.

GENE (*calling offstage*): ANNAKAY – We're LATE.

Gene exits.

Anna Kay rushes out, putting on her slippers.

She stops and looks at Cassandra, who looks back with a threatening eye.

ANNAKAY: You really shouldn't do this you know.

CASSANDRA: Shut up and go you little brat.

ANNAKAY: I'm gonna tell.

CASSANDRA: I dear you.

Annakay exits with a scoff.

A beat.

Cassandra jumps from the couch and goes to the window. She looks out.

Satisfied that they are gone, she pulls the bathrobe off to reveal a smashing party dress. She goes to the phone and dials.

CASSANDRA: It's me. Yes, they're gone. It worked like a charm. Girl, I have no vibes for no boring pre-valentines church program. I want to go where the real fun is. So, you sure Kevin is gonna be there. Great. I'll meet you at the spot in ten minutes. *(pulls a mirror from her purse and looks at herself)* You know what, make that twenty minutes. *(she hangs up and exits)*

A beat

LIGHTS OUT

LIGHTS UP

Gene, Anna-Kay and Minister Lee enter.

GENE: You really outdid yourself this time, sir.

LEE: To God be the glory, Sister, great things he has done. I just hope everyone enjoyed themselves as much as you two. Only a pity Cassandra couldn't come.

GENE: Yeah. I can't wait to tell her all about it. *(looks around)* She's probably in bed. I'll go see how she's doing.

Gene exits.

LEE: How have you been, Anna?

ANNAKAY: Okay, I guess. Trying to live a worthy life.

LEE: Aren't we all. So, who's your valentine this year?

ANNAKAY: I don't have one.

LEE: Uh, really. Is that by choice?

ANNAKAY: I don't think so. I mean, there are guys who have asked me, but you know, I just usually say no. *(pause)* I don't think I should be talking to you about this.

LEE: I was beginning to wonder when you were gonna say that.

ANNAKAY: Who's your Valentine?

LEE: Jesus.

Annakay smiles.

ANNAKAY: You're nuts. You know Jesus ain't nobody's valentine. You just don't want to admit that you're a pretty lonely man.

LEE: I am lonely, but happy. There's a big difference there. Most people are lonely but sad. That's a terrible combination.

ANNAKAY: Don't you wish you had someone?

LEE: I do have someone.

ANNAKAY: That's not what I mean.

LEE: Yeah, sometimes. But I'm patient enough to wait on the Lord. I've seen what rushing into relationships to overcome loneliness can do to someone; can do to a family.

ANNAKAY: --- has done to my family.

LEE: Jesus is all you need, girl child. The sooner you learn that, the sooner you'll start to experience true happiness.

ANNAKAY: Yeah, but I think it's still a bit awkward to have Jesus as my Valentine.

LEE: Well, if you ever find yourself alone, and there's nobody else around, just remember that nobody loves you like Jesus does. You think you can remember that?

ANNAKAY: Sure. But I'm almost sure I won't be alone for a good while to come.

LEE: We'll see.

Gene comes back out.

GENE: Cassandra is not here.

LEE: I thought she was sick.

GENE: She is, or she said she was.

Gene looks at Annakay knowing very well that if something is up, she would know.

GENE: Anna, where's your sister?

Pause.

GENE: Anna!

ANNAKAY: I'm not supposed to say.

Gene throws her hands in the air.

GENE: Dear God. When will this girl stop doing this to me!!!

The door opens, and Cassandra comes backing in holding onto the hands of Jason. Jason sees the others looking at them and smiles. Cassandra bumps into something. She's obviously a bit drunk.

CASSANDRA *(fingers to lips)* Shhh. Don't want me momma to hear ya. *(giggles)*

JASON: I think she already did.

Jason points behind her, and she whips around to look. Jason waves and leaves.

Cassandra turns back around to see that Jason has left. She stands alone.

GENE: Cassandra, how could you lie to me? How could you pretend to be sick just because you didn't want to come to church?

CASSANDRA: Momma, can we have this discussion tomorrow when I ain't so topsy turvy.

Cassandra heads for the exit.

LEE: I think she's drunk.

CASSANDRA: I just had one beer. Or was that one case of beer. *(giggles)*

Gene wants to respond, but doesn't.

Cassandra exits.

ANNAKAY: I'll go help her find the bedroom.

Annakay exits.

Gene breaks down.

GENE: I was having such a wonderful evening.

Minister Lee keeps staring at the door where Jason was just standing.

LEE: (*puzzled*) He just smiled and left.

GENE: What?

LEE: The young man who was standing there. He just smiled and left.

GENE: My daughter is drinking and partying herself to hell, and all you think about is that young man smiling. Who is that young man anyway?

LEE: That's the question.

GENE: Oh, what am I going to do? My daughter is an alcoholic. Now she is even lying and deceiving, so she can go out and drink. Oh, what great sin did I commit in my life to deserve this?

LEE: Let's pray.

GENE: What? Pray? How do you expect me to pray at a time like this?

Gene tries to hold back her sobs and exits.

LEE: In the name of Jesus ---

The front door opens, and Jason steps in and stands at the doorway holding the knob.

JASON: What say you now, preacher man?

LEE: Get out!

JASON: Very soon I'll be the one standing there, and you'll be on the other side of this closed door (*laughs*).

LEE: In the name of Jesus, begone!

Jason disappears behind the door closing it.

LEE: Fine. You want a war. (*finds his Bible and opens it*) Greater is He who is in me than he who is in the world. Through Jesus, I am more than a conqueror, and no weapons --- no weapons that is formed against this family will stand. Every evil that rises against this family will fall. I declare victory, in the name of Jesus.

Lee exits after Jason carrying his open Bible.

A beat.

Annakay comes back out. She looks around and realizes that Minister Lee is no longer there. She drops on the couch.

She sits there alone.

The phone starts to ring, but she ignores it. She begins to cry as the phone continues ringing.

LIGHTS OUT

SCENE 3

LIGHTS UP

Cassandra and Annakay are laying onstage, unconscious. They slowly come to and Look around but are not really familiar with the surroundings.

CASSANDRA: Where are we? What is this place? And why are we dressed in these old clothes?

Anna gets up and looks around.

ANNA: I know this place.

CASSANDRA: Really?

ANNA: Yes, I think we're in Jerusalem.

CASSANDRA: Great. I hate it when we're both in the same dream.

ANNA: Wow. I've never had a dream like this before.

CASSANDRA: Well, is this your dream or mine?

ANNA: I don't know. It doesn't really feel like a dream, does it?

CASSANDRA: Look at what I'm wearing. Duh. I wouldn't be caught dead in something like this.

Anna goes over to Cassandra and pinches her really hard.

CASSANDRA: Owww. Whatcha do that for?

Anna is uncomfortable with the answer.

ANNA: This is a very strange dream. People don't feel pain in dreams.

CASSANDRA: There has to be some other explanation. I sure felt that, but this whole thing can't be real. Look over there (*points somewhere offstage*) We don't build houses like that anymore. This place is ancient, this is just a dream so I'm gonna sit right here and wait for either you or me to wake up, so I can get back to my normal life.

Cassandra finds a place to sit.

Annakay sits with her.

They wait and wait and wait.

A man runs onstage apparently tormented by evil spirits. His face looks like running mascara. He finds a rope somewhere and starts to make a noose. Once the noose is made, he puts it around his neck and pulls it tight. He holds the other end of the rope trying to find a good branch to throw it over.

CASSANDRA: Hey, hey, hey. What are you doing?

For a moment the sanity of this man returns.

MAN: It's not what I'm doing. It's what I've done.

CASSANDRA: Hey, it couldn't be that bad.

MAN: I betrayed Him.

Annakay is recognizing some resemblance to knowledge she already has.

ANNAKAY: Betrayed who?

MAN: I betrayed him! I am unworthy of life.

The insanity returns and he exits still trying to find himself a tree.

Cassandra wants to exit after him, but Anna stops her.

ANNA: No.

CASSANDRA: Why? That man needs help.

ANNA: I think that was Judas.

CASSANDRA: You know him?

ANNA: I think so.

CASSANDRA: From where? School? Church?

ANNA: You have no idea who I'm talking about, do you?

CASSANDRA: I don't understand why you don't want to help him.

ANNA: Cass, that's Judas. The disciple who betrayed Christ.

Pause. Silence.

Longer pause. Silence.

ANNA: Don't you see, we're probably reliving the day Jesus died.

More silence.

ANNA (*a little excited*): This is unbelievable.

CASSANDRA: If I didn't know better, I would think you're taking this dream a little too seriously.

ANNA: This is one dream I think we should. Besides, you're the one who wanted to chase after a madman to try and help him.

Pause.

Gene enters, crying uncontrollably.

CASSANDRA: Mom. You're here too? Oh brother.

GENE: It's terrible.

Anna goes to try and comfort her mother.

ANNA: What did you see?

GENE: They beat Him so bad. Spat in His face. They used a whip laced with glass. Thirty-nine. I counted every last stripe. He got thirty-nine lashes from a whip laced with broken glass. His flesh was everywhere, blood, oh God. It was terrible. (*sobs*)

CASSANDRA: Mom. It's just a dream.

GENE: I know. But this happened for real child. (*more tears*) It happened for real.

There's a little commotion offstage.

They stand up to see what it is.

Moments pass and Minister Lee, bruised, broken and weak enters carrying the Cross as Jesus did.

GENE: It's Him.

Following close behind is the Accuser dressed as a Roman soldier carrying nails,

a big hammer and a sword at his side.

He leads Jesus/Lee through the aisle, enter Stage Left and moving across Stage Right to exit.

Jesus/Lee looks at Cassandra, Gene, and Anna as He passes. The Accuser/Roman Soldier stops.

THE ACCUSER: What have you to say for yourselves now? You followed this man with all your hearts. You believed him when He proclaimed himself God's son and now look at Him. How can He save you when He can't even save himself?

GENE: He came for this reason.

THE ACCUSER: To die? Some Savior He is. If this is why He came, then so be it. He dies today. And so will your hope. *(laughs and exit)*

Gene and her daughters go to Stage Right and watch offstage as Jesus is crucified.

We hear every nail that is driven, every strike of the hammer, every whimper and groan and scream from Jesus' lips. We hear the soldiers laughing, jeering Him to come down from the cross. We hear, we feel, we know.

Anna is hanging tightly to her mother; all three are in tears as they react to the offstage sounds, as they react to what they are witnessing first hand.

CASSANDRA: Why?

GENE: For us. He did it for us.

ANNAKAY: It feels like the end of it all.

GENE: It's not. He said He would rise again on the third day.

CASSANDRA: Even so. It's a terrible price to pay.

GENE: He's paying a debt He doesn't owe, to cancel a debt we cannot pay.

Pause.

CASSANDRA: Lord, forgive me.

GENE: Forgive us.

Silence.

GENE: Look. (*points offstage*)

CASSANDRA: I see it.

ANNAKAY: The sky is getting dark.

JESUS (*Offstage*): Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit.

Sound of thunder offstage, then ---

The stage goes completely dark.

ANNAKAY: Mom.

GENE: Shh. Don't be afraid.

Silence.

The lights come back up.

Cassandra and Annakay are asleep as before. They come to this time realizing that they are dressed normally and in their familiar environment.

Cassandra and Annakay look at each other momentarily, none knowing what to say.

CASSANDRA: I just had the strangest dream.

ANNAKAY: Me too.

The thought scares them both.

Gene enters.

GENE: Dinners ready.

Annakay jumps up and goes to hug her mother.

ANNA: Hey mom.

GENE: Hey, what's gotten into you?

ANNA: Nothing. Just happy that we're together. I'll set the table.

Anna exits.

Cassandra and Gene just stand there looking at each other for a beat.

CASSANDRA: I'm sorry, mom.

GENE: It's okay. We all make mistakes.

CASSANDRA: *(hangs her head. Knows it's time to confess)* I'm addicted to alcohol and I need help.

Gene goes to her and hugs her.

GENE: That's a start. *(pause)* Let's talk after dinner.

They exchange smiles and exit.

A beat.

The Accuser comes on. He looks offstage in the direction they exited and then at the audience.

THE ACCUSER: Strange. *(thinks)* Very strange! Something just happened to turn their hearts, but what? *(thinks)* Well, in any case, I think its time to turn up the heat in this kitchen *(laughs and exits)*.

LIGHTS OUT

SCENE 4

LIGHTS UP

Cassandra is at center stage, reading her Bible.

After a beat, she gets to her knees in prayer. The Holy Spirit enters and remains on stage.

Enter Gene. She waits for Cassandra to finish praying.

Cassandra gets off her knees.

CASSANDRA: Mom, I really don't know if I can do this. The urge is just too strong.

GENE: You can baby, you can. You have to believe that.

CASSANDRA: I want to, but it's just too strong.

GENE: Greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world.

CASSANDRA: What does that mean exactly?

GENE: It means you have access to the greatest power. Everything is subjected to that power and that is what you carry inside your mortal body.

CASSANDRA: It sounds good in theory.

GENE: Yes it does, but you have to believe its true. Only then can you truly become more than a conqueror.

CASSANDRA: Help me to fight it, mom.

GENE: Baby, I can't. Some battles you will have to fight on your own, like this one. I can't always be there to stop you from drinking.

Pause.

GENE: I'm gonna go for a while. I need to get some stuff at the supermarket. Will you be okay?

CASSANDRA: Is there any alcohol in the house.

GENE: No.

CASSANDRA: Well then, I think I will be fine.

HOLY SPIRIT: The armor.

GENE: Put on the whole armor of God, that you will be able to stand.

CASSANDRA: Yes mom. It does sound really good in theory.

Gene kisses her on the forehead and exits.

Long pause. Cassandra is sweating.

Jason enters. He looks around to make sure the coast is clear. It's obvious he is aware of the Holy Spirit's presence.

JASON: *(to Holy Spirit)* Why do you have to be everywhere? *(to Cassandra)* Hey, girl.

CASSANDRA: What are you doing here?

JASON: Just came by to check and make sure you're okay.

CASSANDRA: What are you really doing here, Jason?

JASON: Are we alone?

CASSANDRA: Yes, so you can't stay.

JASON: Don't be like that girl. You know I ain't gonna hurt you.

CASSANDRA: It's not just that, but ---

JASON: Girl, you need to relax a bit. If I wanted to do something to you, I woulda done it that night you were drunk in my arms. Anyway, I brought you something.

Jason pulls out a bottle of alcohol and puts it on the table before Cassandra.

CASSANDRA: No, no, no. Please no.

JASON: Look, I know you a bit stressed and the fam going through some tough times, but there's a way to de-stress, if ya know what I mean.

Cassandra is sweating.

JASON: I know you can appreciate some a this stuff, so I thought you probably need the break. I'm gonna go to the kitchen and get us two glasses with some rocks, okay?

Jason exits leaving Cassandra with the bottle.

The war begins.

HOLY SPIRIT: Resist the devil, and he will flee from thee. Submit yourselves to God. Draw nigh to Him, and He will draw nigh to you.

CASSANDRA: It sounds good in theory.

HOLY SPIRIT: No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; He will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, He will also provide a way out so that you can *stand up* under it.

CASSANDRA: How --- how do I resist this? It is sitting right in front of me, practically calling me by name. How do I fight this?

HOLY SPIRIT: Fasten the belt of truth around your waist.

Cassandra mimes bucking a belt around her waist.

HOLY SPIRIT: Put on the breastplate of righteousness, the helmet of salvation, and take the sword of the spirit, and the shield of faith. Now this does sound good in theory, but believe that the battle is the Lord's, and He will give it into your hands.

CASSANDRA: I believe.

HOLY SPIRIT: Now look within, and see God.

Cassandra opens her eyes, and sees the bottle still in front of her.

HOLY SPIRIT: You will find strength, but for a moment. When your desire to serve God is stronger than your desire to gratify the flesh, in that moment, in that split second, you must remove the temptation. If you hesitate, or doubt, you will fall.

Cassandra grabs the bottle and throws it across the room smashing it.

The Holy Spirit applauds.

HOLY SPIRIT: Heaven rejoices daughter.

CASSANDRA: Will it always be this hard?

HOLY SPIRIT: The more you do it, the easier it gets. You must never let your guard down. The enemy will keep coming until you break and die.

Jason runs onstage.

JASON: Hey, what was that sound?

CASSANDRA: Sorry, Jason. I think I broke your bottle.

JASON: Why would you do that?

CASSANDRA: Same reason I'm gonna ask you to leave.

JASON: What?

CASSANDRA: Please leave!

JASON: Is this what I get for trying to be your friend?

CASSANDRA: Right now, I would rather be friendless and free, than to have friends and lose my way. You can let yourself out.

Cassandra exits.

The Holy Spirit exits behind her, smiling at Jason's defeat.

JASON: Man, this is gonna be harder than I thought. I need to change my tactic, find new doors, and I think I know what my next move is gonna be. *(smiles)* They ain't ready for what's about to hit them. *(he exits)*

LIGHTS OUT

SCENE 5

LIGHTS UP

Cassandra, Anna, Gene and Minister Lee is onstage.

It is Mothers Day, and everyone is celebrating with Gene.

Gene takes up her first gift.

GENE: Okay, this is from Cassandra. *(opens the gift)*

CASSANDRA: I hope you like it.

GENE: *(finds a watch and bracelet)* Actually, I love it. Thank you.

CASSANDRA: Happy Mothers Day, mom.

Gene takes the other gift, opens it and finds a new Study Bible.

GENE: A new Study Bible! Let me guess. This is from you, Minister Lee?

LEE: It's that obvious, huh?

EVERYONE: Yeah.

LEE: Happy Mothers Day.

GENE: And, there are no more presents.

ANNA: Oh, mine is just not here yet.

GENE: Not here yet, huh. You make it sound like a person.

Anna just smiles.

The doorbell rings.

MINISTER LEE: I'll get it.

ANNA: No, sir. Mom should get that.

GENE: Why? Who's at the door, honey?

ANNA: Only one way to find out, mom.

Gene reluctantly goes to answer the door. She is frozen for a beat as standing on the other side of the door is her past boyfriend, Jeff.

JEFF: Hi.

GENE: Jeff!!!!

JEFF: Yep, can I come in, please?

GENE: Why?

JEFF: I'm happy to see you too, Gene.

Gene turns to look at Anna as

LIGHTS FADE

LIGHTS UP

Jeff and Gene have the stage to themselves.

JEFF: Why'd you send the children away?

GENE: What did you expect?

JEFF: I'm here for them too.

GENE: Why? Why after fifteen years you would show up here and expect a hero's welcome?

Pause.

JEFF: I'm glad you kept the house. It's a beautiful house.

GENE: Where else were we to go?

Pause.

JEFF: You're not going to make this easy for me, are you?

GENE: I don't see how I could.

JEFF: I'm sorry. I know I hurt you when I left and I'm sorry.

Gene looks at Jeff and just starts to laugh.

GENE: You're sorry. I fathered and mothered two children for fifteen years. You never called, you never wrote, you didn't even think to send me a simple postcard, and you're sorry?

JEFF: What else do you expect me to say?

GENE: So, I should just forgive you now and pretend as if you didn't crush my heart in a million pieces?

JEFF: If you can, yes.

GENE: I'm sorry, Jeff. I can't do that.

JEFF: How do you expect to be forgiven, if you don't forgive?

GENE: Wow, quoting scriptures to me now?

JEFF: It's a serious question.

GENE: God will just have to understand with this one. I can't forgive you for what you did to me, Jeff; to Cassandra, or to Anna, especially Anna. She never stopped asking for you --- crying for you --- You have any idea what that was like?

JEFF: I'm here now. I'm your mothers day gift.

GENE: I've had enough gifts. Go back to where you came from, Jeff. There is nothing left here for you.

Gene exits leaving him alone on the stage.

Anna comes out, followed by an awkward and uncomfortable beat.

ANNA: Hi.

JEFF: Hi.

Pause.

ANNA: I fasted and prayed for a whole week, that God would return you to us.

JEFF: You're not mad at me for leaving?

ANNA: Oh, yes I am, but I would prefer to be really mad at someone I can see.

Jeff goes over to Anna and hugs her.

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ANNA: Why did you leave?

JEFF: Because I was a coward.

ANNA: Well, you're here now, and you have a whole lot to make up for.

JEFF: Yes I do. This is really a nice house. I just realized how much I miss this place.

Anna smiles and exit.

Jeff remains onstage, lost in thought. His eyes slowly lifts as he stares at the audience, a sudden mischievous smile sweeps across his face as

LIGHTS FADE

SCENE 6

LIGHTS UP

Gene & Minister Lee is on the stage.

GENE: Why now?

MINISTER LEE: Why are you having such a big problem with this? I thought this was what you wanted.

GENE: You thought so very wrong.

MINISTER LEE: I can see that.

GENE: You know where they are now?

MINISTER LEE: No idea, but I'm sure you're about to tell me.

GENE: Fishing. He took the girls out fishing. I have fathered those children for fifteen years while he lived life to his own comfort and luxury and he shows up and takes full credit for it.

MINISTER LEE: Is that what he's doing?

GENE: Oh, you should see the girls. They haven't had that look on their faces for God knows how long, and he gets it. I don't, but he does.

MINISTER LEE: I think you're harboring way too much bitterness for this guy.

GENE: Oh, I ain't bitter. I'm mad as hell.

MINISTER LEE: Yeah, bitter and mad. Excellent combination.

GENE: Why are you here?

MINISTER LEE: Do you want me to go?

GENE: Just answer the question.

MINISTER LEE: I don't know. I never really think about that.

GENE: You're just a friend, and you are here. He's their father. Why can't he be here?

MINISTER LEE: He is.

GENE: He lives two hours from here. It wouldn't take a snail fifteen years to get here.

MINISTER LEE: Gene, is this just about how you feel about this man? Or even him being here?

GENE: What are you talking about?

MINISTER LEE: I think the enemy has orchestrated a plan to destroy this family.

GENE: I am really not in the mood for one of your sermons.

MINISTER LEE: Listen to yourself. You're angry, bitter and you still haven't learned to forgive.

GENE: And you are out that door, if you don't stop.

MINISTER LEE: Do what you want to do, Gene? Don't expect me to just sit idly and quietly by while the enemy destroys you.

GENE: Why do you care?

Pause.

MINISTER LEE: I just do.

GENE: Is there a special reason you come by here so often?

Pause.

MINISTER LEE: I would rather not say.

Before Gene can press on, the door opens and Jeff, Anna, and Cassandra enter.

ANNA: Wow, that was amazing.

CASSANDRA: Pretty boring too.

ANNA: You don't know how to have fun, that's why.

JEFF: Cmon girls, let's not waste time arguing.

ANNA: Mom! I caught a fish.

GENE: Good for you.

ANNA: Dad caught many fish, and Cassandra, well, she still hasn't learned how to fish.

CASSANDRA: Shut up, brat. I'm going to my room.

Cassandra exits.

ANNA: Mom, can we have fish for dinner?

GENE: Only if you do the cooking.

ANNA: Okay. Dad, I'm gonna cook you a great dinner.

GENE: Dad?!?

JEFF: Looking forward to it, baby.

ANNA: You can consider it your pre-fathers day dinner. You are coming to church with us tomorrow, right?

JEFF: Yeah.

ANNA: Good. Now everyone will see that I have a father too.

Anna exits excitedly.

GENE: I sure hope you know what you are doing.

JEFF: Are you accusing me of something?

GENE: Of course, always leaving.

MINISTER LEE: Maybe I should go.

GENE: Stay where you are.

JEFF: He should go. You and I need to talk.

GENE: He stays.

MINISTER LEE: I'll go.

GENE: If you go out that door, don't bother coming back.

MINISTER LEE: I will see you later, sister.

Minister Lee exits.

JEFF: Smart man.

GENE: Listen to me, buster, you don't come here and decide who stays and who goes.

JEFF: You want me to have a conversation with my wife in front of a preacher.

GENE: I am not your wife, and you need counselling.

JEFF: I don't need counselling.

GENE: I'm sure you don't.

JEFF: You know, Gene, I'm really trying here. I wish I could say the same for you.

Jeff exits.

Anna enters.

ANNA: Mom, I fasted and prayed for two weeks for my father to come home so I could see him, maybe even experience going fishing with him. I like having him here. Please don't run him away again.

GENE: You think I chased him away the first time?

ANNA: Mom, you're selfish. You like having your own way. Men run from that.

GENE: So, I should pretend so men, can be comfortable.

ANNA: Not men, mom, just this one.

Anna leaves.

GENE: I'm not prepared for this. Lord knows I'm not.

VOICE: Trust in the Lord with all thine heart and lean not to thine own understanding. But in all thy ways acknowledge Him and He shall direct thy path.

GENE: Sounds so good in theory, but I feel like I'm going completely out of my mind.

Cassandra enters.

CASSANDRA: Mom, who are you talking to?

GENE: I don't know honey. *(the tears come)*

CASSANDRA: Why are you crying, mom?

Pause.

Cassandra goes to her mother and hugs her.

GENE: How do you feel about your father's unexpected return?

CASSANDRA: I don't know. He pays more attention to Anna, than me.

GENE: You were only three when he left. Anna wasn't born yet.

CASSANDRA: Well, I guess she's the apple of his eye.

GENE: Why would he care now, all of a sudden, after fifteen years? Why would he care now?

CASSANDRA: I don't know, mom. But you always said the Lord works in mysterious ways.

GENE: Well, this is one blessing I wasn't prepared for.

CASSANDRA: I know. Seems strange how Anna seemed to be the only one who expected it; who knew that he was coming.

GENE: Seems strange indeed. Something is weird about that.

CASSANDRA: I really think so.

GENE: Uhm!

Pause.

LIGHTS OUT

SCENE 7

LIGHTS UP

Anna burst onstage with a letter in her hand.

ANNA: Mom! Mom!

Gene comes out wiping her hand in a towel.

Anna throws the letter at her.

ANNA: What did you do, mom?

GENE: What is this?

ANNA: A letter. From dad.

Gene takes the letter and reads it.

GENE: Anna ---

ANNA: He's gone, mom. And I know it's your fault.

GENE: That's not what he wrote here.

ANNA: You think he was gonna write the truth, huh. It's you and your constant bickering. It gets on top of everybody's nerves, mom.

GENE: Your father has a life outside of us sweetheart.

ANNA: We are his life. I don't care about nobody else.

Pause.

Cassandra enters.

CASSANDRA: Why all this shouting?

ANNA: You're just as responsible too.

CASSANDRA: For what?

GENE: Jeff is gone again.

CASSANDRA: And how am I responsible?

ANNA: He pays more attention to me. You don't like that. You want everything.

GENE: Listen to yourself, Anna, and be rational about this.

ANNA: Why do you guys hate me so much? I worked hard to get him here.

Pause.

GENE: Anna, baby, what are you talking about?

ANNA: I have been talking to him for over a year now, mom. He called one day and I answered. He was afraid to talk to you, but I convinced him to come, and he did, and you and her just couldn't take the fact that for once I was happy.

GENE: You talked to him for over a year?

ANNA: Yes.

GENE: And you said nothing, to nobody.

ANNA: Why should I?

GENE: I can't believe you did that to us.

ANNA: What about all the things you do to me?

GENE: Do you ever once stop to think about anybody but yourself.

ANNA: I really hate you right now, mom.

CASSANDRA: Don't say that Anna.

ANNA: I hate you too. You have always been mom's favorite.

CASSANDRA: That's not true.

ANNA: I'm calling my father. I wanna go live with him.

Anna exits quickly.

CASSANDRA: Is it really gone?

GENE: Yep.

CASSANDRA: I'm going for a walk.

Cassandra leaves.

Gene holds her head. She's angry, but it can only come in tears.

GENE: What did I do to deserve this?

Minister Lee is standing nearby.

MINISTER LEE: Do you see now, Gene?

GENE: How do I fight this?

MINISTER LEE: The battle is the Lord's, my dear. You will rise above this all.

GENE: I cannot possibly rise above this.

MINISTER LEE: The weapons we fight with are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds.

GENE: Are you telling me that everything that has happened, that is happening right now is a plan of the enemy?

MINISTER LEE: Yes. We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers; rulers of the darkness of this world.

GENE: How do I win?

MINISTER LEE: First, you must forgive.

GENE: I can't.

MINISTER LEE: You cannot win until you do. Forgive yourself. Forgive others and God will forgive you.

GENE: I can't.

MINISTER LEE: Say you can, Gene. Start there, but whatever you choose to do, do it quickly. The enemy will keep on coming.

Minister Lee exits.

GENE: I just can't.

Pause.

LIGHTS OUT

SCENE 8

LIGHTS UP

Anna is alone onstage, until Jason arrives.

JASON: Hey.

ANNA: You shouldn't be here.

JASON: I know, but I thought I would drop by to cheer you up.

ANNA: Who said I needed cheering up?

JASON: Girl, you spend way too much time eating fried chicken. I'm offering you something new, something fresh.

ANNA: Not interested.

JASON: I was prepared for that. Listen, doll face, I know you're into this God stuff, but how long before you realize or even admit that your loving God likes to sit idly by and watch His people suffer?

Pause.

JASON: Think about that. I know you're in pain, just give me a day, and I promise you it will be a day free from pain.

ANNA: How will you do that?

JASON: I can only create the moment, baby. You have to enjoy it, but if you're scared I understand.

ANNA: I am not afraid.

JASON: Yeah, so you say.

ANNA: I'm not scared. Stop it.

JASON: Then, come away with me for a while.

Pause.

ANNA: Fine.

JASON: Great. Let's go.

Jason exits. Anna exits behind him as

LIGHTS FADE

LIGHTS UP

Cassandra and Gene enters.

GENE: Have you seen, Anna?

CASSANDRA: Not from yesterday. Probably locked away in her room as usual.

GENE: No, she's not there.

CASSANDRA: She does this all the time, mom, don't worry.

GENE: I have to worry.

CASSANDRA: Why?

GENE: Something Minister Lee said to me, I can't stop thinking about it.

CASSANDRA: Let me guess, demons are invading our home?

GENE: Something like that.

CASSANDRA: Mom, Minister Lee is one of those too heavenly minded to be any earthly good.

GENE: True, but in some ways, he does make sense. Aren't we supposed to accept the Bible as the truth?

CASSANDRA: I guess.

GENE: Then how can I ignore what he says. He hardly uses any words of his own.

CASSANDRA: Why are we sitting here talking about Minister Lee?

Pause.

GENE: I don't know.

CASSANDRA: (*suspiciously*) Moom!

GENE: I would love very much if we could change the subject, now.

Pause.

CASSANDRA: You love him, don't you?

GENE: How are you coming on with your --- issues?

CASSANDRA: You're changing the subject.

GENE: Yes I am. So, how are you?

CASSANDRA: I'm fine. Its hard, but I'm fine.

Pause.

CASSANDRA: Why is it so hard to refuse what is wrong?

GENE: Good question. I think naturally we're born bad.

CASSANDRA: That's consoling.

GENE: I can't explain it any other way and maybe I'm just not qualified to explain something like that. It's best you ask ---

CASSANDRA: Minister Lee, yeah I know. Kinda hard not talking about him. He's just always there, like a guardian angel, like a father.

GENE: Yeah. He's a good man.

CASSANDRA: You really think so?

Gene sees where the argument is going.

GENE: You're not that smart. I have things to do.

Gene exits.

Pause.

CASSANDRA: Lord, strengthen this family, and prepare us for what the enemy is up to.

Anna enters, very distressed.

CASSANDRA: Where have you been?

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Anna stops for a beat. She is in tears. It's obvious she wants to say something, but she is too emotional to talk.

CASSANDRA: Anna, what's wrong?

Anna leaves, unable to offer a response.

CASSANDRA (*calling offstage*) Moooom!

LIGHTS OUT

SCENE 9

LIGHTS UP

Gene is onstage pacing back and forth as Minister Lee tries to keep them calm.

Cassandra sits nearby, hardly saying anything.

MINISTER LEE: You both need to eat something.

GENE: Not hungry.

MINISTER LEE: You haven't eaten for three days.

GENE: [*Forceful*] I said I'm not hungry.

Pause.

GENE: I'm sorry.

MINISTER LEE: No need to apologize.

GENE: Why did she run away?

MINISTER LEE: I don't know.

GENE: Well, that's something I don't hear you say every day.

MINISTER LEE: I don't know everything, Gene. I never pretended that I do.

GENE: Anna talked to you. She always did. She never talks to me, so why did she run away?

Pause.

GENE: You know where she is, don't you?

Pause.

MINISTER LEE: I don't know where she is, but I might know why she left.

GENE: Why? Why did she leave?

MINISTER LEE: I can't be the one to tell you.

GENE: Then why are you here?

MINISTER LEE: To prepare you.

Gene starts to laugh.

CASSANDRA: Why don't you just come straight and say what ya got to say? It is not helping nobody this constant beating around the bush.

MINISTER LEE: I have already said what I have to say.

GENE: Say it again.

Pause.

MINISTER LEE: This family is under attack.

GENE: Right, yeah, what, my daughter was kidnapped by demons?

MINISTER LEE: Don't be silly.

GENE: Well, buster, I'm giving you two options. You either tell me why my daughter left, or leave and don't come back.

Pause.

MINISTER LEE: You trust me don't you, Gene?

GENE: I don't have time for your games.

MINISTER LEE: I'm not playing. You know I would tell you, if I thought you were ready. Why don't you just trust me?

GENE: I have already made myself clear, so choose wisely.

Pause.

Longer pause.

MINISTER LEE: She's pregnant, Gene. Anna is pregnant.

Pause.

Gene faints.

Cassandra's mouth drops open as

LIGHTS OUT

LIGHTS UP

Anna is at Jason's front door.

She knocks. The door opens, and Jason is standing there buttoning his shirt.

He seems really surprised to see her there.

JASON: What are you doing here?

ANNA: Excuse me.

JASON: What do you want?

ANNA: Jason, I need somewhere to stay.

JASON: Okay, if I hear of anyone renting I'll let you know.

Pause.

JASON: What is it?

ANNA: You know I don't have any money to pay rent.

JASON: So, how do you expect to get somewhere to stay?

ANNA: I want to stay with you.

JASON: Aww, sorry, doll face. Rooms full. Why don't you go to your friend Sabrina?

ANNA: That's where I have been for the past four weeks, but I had to leave.

JASON: That's too bad. Go home then.

ANNA: How do you expect me to face my mother with this? Why can't I just stay with you for a while?

JASON: You just can't.

Pause.

ANNA: You have someone here ,don't you?

JASON: Yah, kinda. I won't lie to you. Many fish in the sea.

ANNA: I thought we had something.

JASON: We did!

ANNA: Jason, I'm pregnant.

JASON: That's good. That's very good. You'll make a nice little mummy. Now, if you'll excuse me.

Anna grabs Jason by his collar.

ANNA: I gave you my life, and this is how you repay me.

Jason breaks free from her grip.

JASON: It was your choice. You will just have to deal with the consequences, baby. Ain't that how it is with you Christians? God forgives and restores right?

ANNA: You're just like the rest of them.

JASON: Actually, I'm worst. You will remember me as the one who destroyed your family.

Jason slams the door in Anna's face.

Anna breaks down and starts to cry.

ANNA: What am I supposed to do now?

Enter Holy Spirit.

HS: Go home.

ANNA: I can't.

HS: What choice do you have?

Pause.

ANNA: If I kill myself now, the world will be free.

HS: Maybe, but you won't be.

Pause.

HS: God has a plan for your life.

ANNA: Is this a part of His plan?

HS: No. But there is no mistake He cannot use for good.

ANNA: God promised never to give us more than we can bear.

HS: Doesn't stop anyone from biting off more than they can chew. Go home, Anna. You can't keep running.

Holy Spirit exits.

ANNA: I just cannot face mom with this. I just can't --- and why am I standing here having a conversation with myself? I must be going crazy.

LIGHTS FADE

SCENE 10

LIGHTS UP

Cassandra is onstage with Minister Lee.

MINISTER LEE: How are you holding up?

CASSANDRA: I want to see my little sister come home. That's all.

MINISTER LEE: You don't hold what she has done against her?

CASSANDRA: It's a cruel world out there. I made the same mistake she did, I just didn't get pregnant.

MINISTER LEE: Do you see how important it is to share your testimony?

CASSANDRA: I don't know which planet you come from, but on earth, you don't walk about telling people you fornicated.

MINISTER LEE: Why not?

CASSANDRA: Hello, what would people think of you then?

MINISTER LEE: People will always assume the worst anyway, so why hide the truth? Does a spotless reputation mean more to you than keeping someone from making the same mistakes you did?

CASSANDRA: We all have to learn on our own.

MINISTER LEE: We do. But a little help wouldn't hurt. The problem in our churches these days is that Christians are too afraid to talk, too afraid to help, too afraid to stand up for what is right.

CASSANDRA: Sounds real good in theory.

Minister Lee smiles.

Gene enters looking weak and completely drained.

Minister Lee helps her to the couch.

MINISTER LEE: What are you doing out of bed?

GENE: I can't sleep.

MINISTER LEE: You don't need sleep, but you need rest.

GENE: Haven't you heard anything from the police?

MINISTER LEE: No, but I am praying. I feel a breakthrough coming on.

GENE: Good for you. I feel nothing but pain. Cassandra, have I failed as a mother?

CASSANDRA: No, mom.

GENE: Weird. I feel like a failure. What did I do to deserve this? How will I face my church with this embarrassment?

MINISTER LEE: Gene, there are two sides; that of your daughter, Anna, who will need your support and love and understanding more than anything else and on the other side are the people who really don't care much about you but just love to judge, assume and talk. When the time comes, please choose the right side.

GENE: Understanding? You want me to be understanding? You don't see Cassandra going out and getting pregnant do you?

CASSANDRA: Mom!

GENE: No, let me finish. Anna has always been a very rebellious child. Do you see how much hurt she has caused me and this family? Do you know how many times I regret---

MINISTER LEE: Don't say anything you will regret later.

GENE: I'm not sure I'm ready for this.

There's a knock at the door.

CASSANDRA: I'll get it.

MINISTER LEE: Just remember this, Gene. Nobody's perfect. You made your own share of mistakes in the past.

GENE: Yeah, but never one as big as this.

MINISTER LEE: In Gods eye, sin is sin, none bigger than the other. If He forgives, we should too.

Cassandra returns with a Police Officer behind her.

GENE: *(her heart sinks)* Nooo.

POLICE OFFICER: Sorry to disturb you people, but do you know a Miss Anna-Kay?

GENE: Is she okay?

POLICE OFFICER: Yes, actually she's fine.

Everyone breathes a sigh of relief.

POLICE OFFICER: I'm very sorry. I realize my presence may have suggested that she was not okay, but she is. Thing is, she asks me to come here with her to prevent her mother from committing murder.

GENE: Where is she?

POLICE OFFICER: I'll go get her in a minute. I just need to know if everything is okay here.

GENE: Yes, officer, everything is fine. Can you go get my daughter, please?

POLICE OFFICER: Okay. Have a nice day then.

The Police Officer leaves, and Anna enters dragging her luggage behind her.

Cassandra is the first to hug her.

Gene is unsure how to react. She decides to exit.

ANNA: Mom hates me, right?

CASSANDRA: No, sister, give her some time. She has not quite been herself since you left.

ANNA: I don't know if I can really face her.

CASSANDRA: You wouldn't be here if you weren't prepared to try. I'm really glad you are home, and we already know you are gonna be a mommy.

Anna looks over at Minister Lee who shrugs and smiles.

Cassandra takes Anna's bags.

CASSANDRA: I'll take these to your room for you.

ANNA: Okay.

Cassandra exits with the bags.

Pause.

ANNA: You didn't have to tell them.

MINISTER LEE: I wouldn't be here if I didn't. My choices were very limited.

ANNA: Of course. Mom plays rough.

Pause.

ANNA: I don't know how to do this. I think I really messed up, really bad this time and it hurts so much.

MINISTER LEE: I know. I'm here. Don't worry. I'll walk you through it.

ANNA: What would I do without you?

MINISTER LEE: Don't worry about that. I'm just glad you found the courage to come back home. Baby girl, that was the easy part.

ANNA: I was afraid you would say that.

Pause

LIGHTS FADE

SCENE 11

LIGHTS UP

Gene is onstage having a cup of coffee.

Anna enters.

ANNA: Mom, you have to talk to me sooner or later.

No response.

ANNA: I wish you wouldn't be like this.

No response.

ANNA: Have it your way, mother.

Anna leaves.

Cassandra enters.

CASSANDRA: Mom, the Bible has a name for that you know.

GENE: A name for what?

CASSANDRA: It's called malice, and it is actually a sin.

GENE: Thank you for that very uplifting Bible lesson.

CASSANDRA: How long do you plan on not talking to her?

GENE: Would you rather I kill her?

CASSANDRA: Oh, you can be so childish sometimes.

GENE: Are you done?

CASSANDRA: Yeah, mom. I gotta go anyway.

Cassandra leaves.

Anna comes back.

ANNA: Mom, nobody knows outside of this family. If you want me to do an abortion, I will do it.

Pause.

GENE: Why would I want you to do that?

ANNA: To save this family any more embarrassment. I am sorry, mother. I really am. I let you down, and I know that. I just want to fix this.

GENE: We'll deal with it. We'll get through this. But I think we need to clear the air about some things.

ANNA: Sure, mom. Anything.

GENE: Do you have any idea how close I came to hating you?

ANNA: I thought you did.

Pause.

GENE: Why did you come back?

ANNA: Mostly because I didn't have a choice.

GENE: And?

ANNA: Minister Lee said a whole lot of stuff I couldn't forget. To be honest, mom, on my way here I didn't think I still had a home to come to, but Minister Lee always said if we are brave enough to make a mistake, we should be brave enough to face the consequences.

GENE: I guess I'm partly responsible.

ANNA: Mom, you hurt me plenty over the years, but when I was out there in my confused and lost state, God visited me, He encouraged me, and I realized He loved me more than I thought He did. That realization made it so easy to forgive you and myself.

Tears come to Gene's eyes.

GENE: The devil tried to tear this family apart.

ANNA: He comes only to steal, kill and destroy.

Minister Lee enters.

MINISTER LEE: But Jesus came that we might have life and have it more abundantly.

Mission John 10:10 by Cleveland O. McLeish

GENE: Always finish the verse, right?

Minister Lee takes their hands.

MINISTER LEE: Always.

ANNA: You know, I think we're gonna be okay.

GENE: Sounds good in theory.

Pause.

LIGHTS OUT

LIGHTS UP

Jason enters the bare stage and makes himself at home.

JASON: Aww, yes, place seems so quiet. Somehow, I see a promotion coming up for me.

Minister Lee comes out with his Bible in hand.

MINISTER LEE: What are you doing here?

JASON: I won. What have you to say for yourself now, preacher man?

MINISTER LEE: This house, this family has been claimed for Christ. You don't belong here.

JASON: Listen up, preacher. In case you haven't notice, allow me to bring you up to speed. This family has been crushed. Unforgiveness and bitterness in the heart of the mother. Daughters a struggling alcoholic, fornication, adultery, malice --- the whole nine yards and might I mention pregnancy of a minor. Ohhh, that one will keep your precious church talking.

MINISTER LEE: I'm giving you a chance to leave peaceably, without incident.

JASON: I own this place. I ain't leaving, and if you stick around long enough, you will be the one packing and moving out.

Gene, Cassandra & Anna enters.

GENE: I don't think so.

Jason seems shocked that they would stand against him as one.

ANNA: We stand in the liberty for which Christ has made us free.

CASSANDRA: We will no longer be entangled in the yoke of bondage.

GENE: We know the truth, and the truth has set us free.

CASSANDRA: No weapons that is formed against us will prosper, and all who rise against us will fall.

MINISTER LEE: I bet you didn't see that coming.

JASON: You silly people. You think you can undo all that I have done these past few months. You think you can survive the chaos I will unleash on this family? People will talk about you, they will ridicule you, they will hate you, but I can help you.

GENE: Keep roaring, imposter. We know the real Lion.

Jason is shaking.

GENE: Help yourself to the door.

JASON: I ain't leaving, and none a you can get me to leave.

MINISTER LEE: Maybe not, but we know someone who can.

Two angels enter and grab Jason pulling him through the exit.

JASON (*offstage*) This ain't over.

Pause.

ANNA: Is it over?

MINISTER LEE: For now. (*pause*) I guess you guys won't need me anymore.

CASSANDRA: Are you kidding? You're like a father to us.

ANNA: Yeah.

CASSANDRA: And besides, mom likes you.

GENE: Cassandra!!!

CASSANDRA: I mean, she really, really likes you. You guys should talk about that. Come, little sister. Time to go.

They giggle and exit leaving two very uncomfortable adults.

MINISTER LEE: I sense this family will enjoy a season of peace.

Gene approaches him without saying a word and hugs him tightly.

GENE: Thank you, for being there.

MINISTER LEE: That's what friends are for.

Pause.

MINISTER LEE: So, about what Cassandra said.

LIGHTS FADE

SCENE 12

LIGHTS UP

Gene, Cassandra, Anna and Minister Lee is onstage decorating a Christmas Tree.

ANNA: Man, this is really starting to feel like a family again.

CASSANDRA: Yeah, I could get used to this.

GENE: There is absolutely nowhere I would rather be than here with you guys, my favorite people; you too, Minister Lee.

MINISTER LEE: Ha, very funny. I'm only here for the food.

ANNA: *[mischievously]* Sure you are.

Pause.

CASSANDRA: This day is so perfect. I feel like nothing could possibly go wrong.

There's a knock at the door.

CASSANDRA: I don't think we should get that.

Knock, Knock.

GENE: Maybe if we just ignore whoever that is, they will just go away.

Knock, Knock.

MINISTER LEE: Someone should get that. It may not be anything bad.

Knock, Knock.

ANNA: Considering the last few months, it can't possibly be anything good. I vote we ignore it.

CASSANDRA: Second here.

GENE: Third over here.

ANNA: Majority rules.

Minister Lee shakes his head and goes to the door swinging it open.

Jeff is standing on the other side, holding three perfectly wrapped gifts.

MINISTER LEE: Jeff.

JEFF: Pastor.

GENE: Great. I told you not to open the door.

JEFF: I'm happy to see you too.

GENE: What do you want?

JEFF: Hi, girls.

ANNA: *(dryly)* Hi.

CASSANDRA *(off)* Hi.

Jeff looks at Minister Lee.

MINISTER LEE: *[taking the hint]* I'll get you something to drink.

Minister Lee exits.

JEFF: I know you all must be very upset with me right now. I just wanted to apologize.

GENE: Wow. That's new.

ANNA: Why did you leave like that?

JEFF: Because I wasn't man enough to face you, and tell you I had to leave.

GENE: Again.

JEFF: But it has bothered me every single day since and I owe you all an apology, and if there is any room for me, and if you can somehow accommodate the fact that I live a separate life with other responsibilities, I would still like to be a part of your life.

Anna smiles.

Cassandra frowns.

Gene considers.

GENE: You seem very genuine, but I have fallen for that way too many times.

JEFF: I know. I understand. I brought you guys some gifts. It's nothing much, but, yeah.

Jeff places them on the center table and prepares to leave.

JEFF: I am really sorry. I will leave and not bother you again.

Pause.

ANNA: Wait, we don't want you to go. Right, mom?

GENE: Huh.

ANNA: Mooom!

Pause.

GENE: We are having a family dinner. You are welcome to stay.

JEFF: Great. Thank you.

CASSANDRA: Be grateful we have Jesus. Forgiving you has been one of the hardest things we have had to do.

GENE: Fifteen years, Jeff. Fifteen years I have been crippled by my hatred for you. But I must say I am free, and it feels good.

JEFF: You mean, you won't hold the past against me?

GENE: We have forgiven you as Christ forgave us.

JEFF: I --- I don't know how to respond to that.

GENE: Good. Now as long as you are here, and you are in no rush to get back to your other life, you may as well help with this tree.

JEFF: I thought you would never ask.

Minister Lee comes back with a drink for Jeff.

MINISTER LEE: Judging by the fact that you're still here, I assume everything is okay.

JEFF: *[taking the drink]* Couldn't be better.

GENE: I am sure Minister Lee has a few things to talk to you about, namely your immortal soul.

JEFF: Oh, oh.

Another knock sounds at the door.

GENE: Seriously, if any of you touches that door I will break your hands off.

Everyone starts to laugh, except Jeff, who is confused as to what could possibly be so funny.

LIGHTS FADE