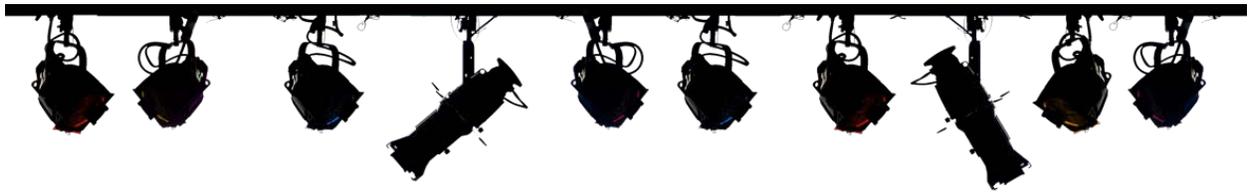


# Hiding Christmas

The Original Stageplay



Cleveland O. McLeish

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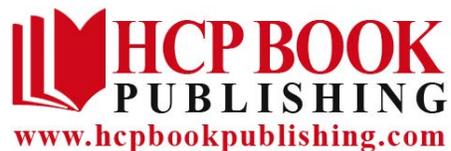
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## The Characters

Harold	Beverly's Husband; Samantha's Father
Beverly	Harold's Wife; Samantha's Mother
Samantha	Harold's & Beverly's Daughter
Rachael	Wife; Melissa's Mother
Melissa	Rachael's Daughter
Charlie	Drunk Driver from the Past
Nordia	Charlie's Wife.
Jesus	
Janna	
Bishop Jones	
Shawn	Harold's and Beverly's Deceased Son
Angel of Past Things	Can be Male or Female. Wears a Red Dress.
Angel of Present Things	Can be Male or Female. Wears a White Dress.
Angel of Future Things	Can be Male or Female. Wears a Black Dress.
Charlotte	

## **Setting**

Living Room setting with appropriate amenities and furniture. There is a plain Christmas Tree erected Stage Left (SL), a couch Centre Stage (CS), center table, a dining area further Up Stage (UP), a few paintings on the wall and a door leading to another room but facing the audience. This door is of particular interest. Presently, it is closed and littered with signs: “Do Not Enter” “Keep Out” Etc.

There is another door for the entrance and another for exiting offstage.

## **The Story**

Harold is a Principal by profession, and his wife is an Infant School teacher, so there is nothing strange about them being home for the Christmas Holidays. A normal family would consider this a blessing, but not this family. For them, Christmas is the most uncomfortable and painful holiday they have to endure.

Six years ago their young son was killed in a car accident on Christmas Day, and Harold was driving. You can imagine how difficult it might be for a family to celebrate the birth of God's Son on the same day they lost their only son under tragic circumstances, but the head of this family has a very important lesson to learn about love, and it will take a visit from three Angels representing the Past, Present, and Future.

Harold believes that he can hide from Christmas by locking himself away in a specially designed room in his house for days, but can he really hide? Can any of us?

## **Play Details**

**Length:** 60-90 Minutes

**Cast:** 5 Males, 6 Females, 3 Angels (Male or Female)

**Audience:** Teens & Adults

**Genre:** Contemporary Drama

# THE SCRIPT



## **SCENE 1**

### **LIGHTS UP**

*Beverly enters with a box of decorations. She carefully puts the box down at the foot of the tree and begins sorting through it.*

*Samantha enters wearing a backpack.*

**SAMANTHA:** Mom, you were supposed to wait until I got home.

**BEVERLY:** I tried, but you know how anxious I can get when I have something to do.

**SAMANTHA:** Uhm, uhm.

**BEVERLY:** What is that supposed to mean?

**SAMANTHA:** Nothing.

**BEVERLY:** How was your trip to the library?

**SAMANTHA:** Non-productive. My friends chatted out the whole time.

**BEVERLY:** And I bet you listened.

**SAMANTHA:** Well yeah. It was an interesting conversation.

**BEVERLY:** What were they talking about?

*Pause.*

**SAMANTHA:** Do I have to answer that?

**BEVERLY:** You just did.

**SAMANTHA:** No I didn't.

**BEVERLY:** Oh yes you did. You just admitted that you spent the past three hours at the library talking about boys?

**SAMANTHA:** Unless I tell you, mom, you are just assuming.

*Samantha lays her backpack aside and begins to help Mom sort through the decorations.*

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**SAMANTHA:** You know I really hate this time of the year.

**BEVERLY:** I know, but we have to try and make the best of it.

**SAMANTHA:** I wish Dad would see it that way.

**BEVERLY:** He will come around eventually.

**SAMANTHA:** When? It's been six years, and nothing has changed. *(Walks over to the door)*  
He is in there, isn't he?

*No response necessary.*

**SAMANTHA:** And why do you let him do it every year?

**BEVERLY:** What am I supposed to do, Samantha? If that is how he wants to handle it, then  
it's up to him.

**SAMANTHA:** We are never gonna get past this.

*There is a knock at the entrance.*

**BEVERLY:** Come in. It's open.

*RACHAEL walks in with her teenage daughter MELISSA.*

**RACHAEL:** Hi.

**BEVERLY:** You must be the new neighbors.

*Beverly shakes her hand.*

**RACHAEL:** Yes, we wanted to come by from yesterday but decided to stop by Mr. Wallaby  
next door first and well, let's just say he had a lot of stories to tell.

**BEVERLY:** Yes, he does have a gift to talk unceasingly but only if he has found a willing ear.

**RACHAEL:** Well, I guess he did. My name is Rachael, and this is my daughter, Melissa.

**BEVERLY:** It's so nice to meet you. I am Beverly, and this is my daughter, Samantha.

*They exchange greetings.*

**BEVERLY:** Samantha, can you get our guests something to drink.

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**RACHAEL:** Oh, we don't want to be a bother.

**BEVERLY:** Not at all. *(Nudges Samantha)*

**MELISSA:** Can I help?

**BEVERLY:** So sweet. Sure.

*Samantha and Melissa exit.*

**RACHAEL:** That is a lovely Christmas Tree.

**BEVERLY:** Wait till you see it fully decorated.

**RACHAEL:** Do you always put it up so early?

**BEVERLY:** Christmas is just a few days away. If not now, it may never go up with all the rush and chaos.

**RACHAEL:** I should take a page out of your book.

**BEVERLY:** If you need help, just let us know.

**RACHAEL:** I couldn't help but notice that picture over there.

*Beverly looks over at the picture.*

**BEVERLY:** That's my husband and son.

**RACHAEL:** They are not here?

**BEVERLY:** My husband is here, but my son is not.

**RACHAEL:** Is he away at school...church...?

**BEVERLY:** He's dead.

*Pause.*

*Longer Pause.*

**RACHAEL:** *(embarrassed)* I'm sorry.

**BEVERLY:** Why? There is no way you would know that.

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*Samantha and Melissa return with two glasses of juice. Melissa helps herself to one and gives the other to Rachael.*

**SAMANTHA:** Mom, can I take Melissa on a tour of the neighborhood?

**BEVERLY:** I thought you were going to help me with these decorations.

**RACHAEL:** I will help you.

*Pause.*

**BEVERLY:** I guess its okay then.

*Samantha and Melissa leave excitedly.*

**RACHAEL:** Teenagers!

**BEVERLY:** Yeah. I remember the days.

*They dig into the box of decorations.*

**BEVERLY:** Are you married?

**RACHAEL:** I am not sure.

**BEVERLY:** What does that mean? Its either you are married or not.

**RACHAEL:** I went to church with Melissa's father. Took the vows and all. He went to Canada on a business trip, and I haven't seen him since.

**BEVERLY:** Does he call?

**RACHAEL:** Occasionally.

**BEVERLY:** You don't really want to talk about that do you?

**RACHAEL:** Not really.

**BEVERLY:** I know the feeling. We all have something we hate to talk about.

*They continue sorting through the decorations in silence.*

**LIGHTS OUT**

## **SCENE 2**

### **LIGHTS UP**

*Harold is sleeping on the couch.*

*An Angel sits by the side of the couch watching him. He slowly opens his eyes and jumps from the couch when he sees the Angel.*

**HAROLD:** Who are you?

**ANGEL:** Why does your first question have to be the most irrelevant?

**HAROLD:** How did I get on this couch?

**ANGEL:** Irrelevant.

**HAROLD:** What is this?

**ANGEL:** That question is not specific enough to be answered.

*Pause. Harold holds his head, trying to make sense of what is happening.*

*He goes to the door and turns the knob, but it is locked.*

**HAROLD:** I am supposed to be in this room, and the door is supposed to be locked to keep everybody out, so why am I the one who is locked out, unless I am inside the room but then, this is not making sense. Can you please tell me what is going on? Why you are in my house and why on earth are you wearing a red dress?

**ANGEL:** Have you ever heard a story about a man named Ebenezer Scrooge?

**HAROLD:** I can't say I have.

**ANGEL:** Really?

**HAROLD:** What's this about?

**ANGEL:** You have never read The Christmas Carol?

**HAROLD:** I don't read much.

**ANGEL:** Well, have you ever watched the movie?

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**HAROLD:** I don't recall.

**ANGEL:** They did a remake just a few years ago with Jim Carey playing Mr. Scrooge.

**HAROLD:** I have no idea what you are talking about.

**ANGEL:** Too bad. Would have made this trip a little more condensed.

**HAROLD:** Is this really happening, or am I dreaming?

**ANGEL:** If I should answer that, I would say it's a combination of both.

*Pause.*

**ANGEL:** That is a beautiful Christmas Tree.

*Harold looks in the direction of the tree as if for the first time. He quickly looks away.*

**HAROLD:** Whatever.

**ANGEL:** Scrooge would have said 'Bah Humbug.'

**HAROLD:** What?

**ANGEL:** Never mind. I am supposed to take you on a journey into the past.

**HAROLD:** Why?

**ANGEL:** Why should people have to relive the past, Harold?

*Pause.*

**ANGEL:** Because they forget. There is no present without the past, and there can be no future without the present. You, for instance, have been reliving this day now for six years.

*Enter Harold's 12-year-old son Shawn.*

**SHAWN:** Where are you going, Dad?

**HAROLD:** *(eyes filled with tears)* To the mall. I need to get a few more presents for Grandma and Grandpa.

**SHAWN:** Can I come? Please, Daddy, I promise I won't give any trouble. Please.

**HAROLD:** Okay. Get your coat.

*Shawn exits excitedly.*

**HAROLD:** It was all my fault.

**ANGEL:** The man who hit your car was drunk, Harold, but the question I would want to ask you is, what would you do if you saw that man today?

*Harold's expression says it all.*

*Charlie enters.*

*Harold sees him and instantly gets in a rage. He leaps at Charlie who does not attempt to run.*

*Angel grabs Harold before he can lay his hand on Charlie.*

**ANGEL:** Harold, you cannot touch him, even if you wanted to.

*Harold shakes himself free and breathes to calm himself.*

**HAROLD:** Why are you doing this to me?

**ANGEL:** His name is Charlie and that night changed his life. He became a born-again Christian and is now a strong advocate against drinking and driving.

**HAROLD:** Doesn't change anything.

**ANGEL:** He now has a family; a wife, and a son.

*Harold bites his lips.*

**HAROLD:** A son???

*NORDIA enters, hugs Charlie.*

**NORDIA:** Found you.

**CHARLIE:** Where's Shawn?

**HAROLD:** *(angry)* What did he say?

**ANGEL:** Yep. He named his son after yours.

*Harold wants to grab Charlie, but the Angel restrains him.*

**NORDIA:** You know Shawn. He is into arcade games. I can't get him to leave.

**CHARLIE:** Okay. We will give him a few more minutes.

**NORDIA:** I hear talk that they want to make you Deacon at church.

**CHARLIE:** Why would they do that?

**NORDIA:** They say you have a servant's heart.

**CHARLIE:** I just want to do the will of Father, save as many lives as I can.

**NORDIA:** There is no higher calling.

**CHARLIE:** I have done so many bad things in my life. Things I can't undo.

**NORDIA:** I know. You still wake up in the nights screaming.

**CHARLIE:** It's always the same dream.

**NORDIA:** I wish I could free you from this pain.

**CHARLIE:** You have done a marvelous job so far. I don't know what I would do without you.

**NORDIA:** I have a few ideas.

*Charlie wipes a tear.*

**NORDIA:** What if you ever saw that father again? What would you do?

**CHARLIE:** Embrace him. Ask for forgiveness.

**HAROLD:** *(screams)* I would never forgive you!

**CHARLIE:** *(chuckles to himself)* The odds of ever meeting him again in this life is a million to one. Maybe I will see him in heaven. If I do, I will know he has forgiven me.

*NORDIA grabs unto Charlie's hand.*

**NORDIA:** Let's go get our son, and go home. It has been a long day.

*Charlie and Nordia exit.*

**HAROLD:** He took my son. And God gave him a son. Where is the justice in that?

**ANGEL:** You think you are the only one who has ever lost a child on Christmas Day?

*Two ladies dressed in Biblical attire entire. Their names are Charlotte and Janna. Charlotte carries a blanket with blood stains.*

**CHARLOTTE:** He was only a year and a half. He could not even defend himself. Why?

*Janna tries hard to comfort Charlotte as they exit.*

**ANGEL:** One man wanted to kill one baby, and slayed thousands of innocent boys. How do you think those parents felt?

*Pause.*

**HAROLD:** I have seen enough. Wake me up from this dream.

**ANGEL:** Not yet. There is one more thing I need to show you.

*Beverly enters carrying a young baby wrapped in a towel. She walks over to Harold looking at her child. She shows him.*

**BEVERLY:** Isn't he beautiful?

**HAROLD:** Yes.

**BEVERLY:** Missed being born on Christmas Day by just a few days. Our own special gift from God.

*Beverly begins to rock the child in her arms.*

**BEVERLY:** I have been thinking about Samuel and how his mother prayed for a son. She vowed that if God blessed her womb she would give the child back to him and she did. Such a noble thing to do, but it could not have been easy for her. Have you ever thought about that, Harold?

**HAROLD:** About what exactly?

**BEVERLY:** Would you give your son back to God as willingly as He gave him to us?

*Pause.*

**HAROLD:** The most logical answer to a question like that must be yes. But why would you ask me something like that?

**BEVERLY:** I don't know. *(Looks at the child)* Harold, he is smiling.

*Beverly exits leaving Harold in a solemn mood.*

**ANGEL:** Did you mean it when you said yes?

*Pause.*

**HAROLD:** No.

**ANGEL:** It's easier to receive from the hand of the Lord, than to give back. Wouldn't you agree? Yet, He freely gave His only Son to be tortured and killed in your place. That is what Christmas is all about, isn't it, Harold? The entrance of God into this world as flesh and blood to suffer and die for you.

**HAROLD:** Is that what this is all about? Christmas?

**ANGEL:** This is a lesson about love, Harold, and what it is and what it means. You need to learn, as others do, that love is not just about holding on, but sometimes it's about letting go.

*Angel moves to the exit.*

**HAROLD:** Who are you?

**ANGEL:** I am the Angel of Past Things.

*Angel leaves.*

**LIGHTS OUT**

### **SCENE 3**

#### **LIGHTS UP**

*The décor of the Christmas Tree is still incomplete. Christmas Carols are playing in the background.*

*Beverly enters with a tray of food and drink. She goes to the forbidden door, opens it and enters leaving the door open.*

**HAROLD'S VOICE:** Close the door, please.

**BEVERLY'S VOICE:** You know I'm claustrophobic.

**HAROLD'S VOICE:** Shut it! You are letting in the sound of that insipid music.

**BEVERLY'S VOICE:** I am not closing the do ---

*The door slams shut.*

*There is a knock at the entrance. Several more knocks before Samantha appears wrapped in a kitchen apron and drying her hands. She scans the room and goes to open the door.*

*Bishop Jones enters.*

**BISHOP JONES:** Sis Samantha. How are you?

**SAMANTHA:** Hi, Bishop. I am fair to fine.

**BISHOP JONES:** What does that even mean?

**SAMANTHA:** Means I am okay for now sir.

**BISHOP JONES:** That's what I like to hear. Looks like you were in the kitchen.

**SAMANTHA:** Just washing up some dishes.

**BISHOP JONES:** Does that mean I am late for dinner?

**SAMANTHA:** A little bit, sir.

**BISHOP JONES:** Too bad.

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*Pause.*

**SAMANTHA:** Do you want something to drink, sir?

**BISHOP JONES:** Yes, thank you. Diet Coke.

**SAMANTHA:** We don't have anything in diet.

**BISHOP JONES:** I will take what you have, thank you.

**SAMANTHA:** That would be lemonade.

**BISHOP JONES:** Water is fine. Thank you.

*Samantha exits as Beverly comes out of the room. Her facial expression changes from anger to surprise when she sees the Bishop.*

**BEVERLY:** Bishop, I didn't know you were here.

*She gives him a slight hug.*

**BISHOP JONES:** Is everything okay?

**BEVERLY:** Yes.

**BISHOP JONES:** Is everything okay, Sister Beverly?

*Pause.*

**BEVERLY:** No. I was hoping this Christmas would be different, but it's more of the same.

**BISHOP JONES:** Meaning your husband has again gone into hibernation?

**BEVERLY:** Yes, sir.

**BISHOP JONES:** Is he really convinced that he can hide from Christmas?

**BEVERLY:** Convinced enough to try.

*Pause.*

*Bishop walks to the door.*

**BISHOP JONES:** Sister, there comes a time when we have to move past the passive support

to a more forceful and direct approach. I am going to have a talk with Brother Harold.

**BEVERLY:** Maybe it's not such a good idea for you to go in, sir.

**BISHOP JONES:** I am his pastor. What is the worst that can happen?

*Bishop opens the door.*

**BISHOP JONES:** Brother Harold ---

**HAROLD:** Get out!

**BISHOP JONES:** We need to tal ---

*Objects start flying out hitting Bishop Jones all over. He quickly closes the door.*

**BISHOP JONES:** I guess you are right. Nothing's changed in six years.

**BEVERLY:** And to think, he is only like that for one or two weeks out of the entire year. Otherwise, he is fine.

**BISHOP JONES:** Do you guys talk about what happened?

**BEVERLY:** We talk about everything else, but that.

**BISHOP JONES:** There goes your first problem.

**BEVERLY:** We tolerate each other better if we avoid bringing it up.

**BISHOP JONES:** Tolerate? Sister Beverly, there is hardly a solution to any problem outside of communication.

**BEVERLY:** Sounds good in theory, sir, but we are the ones who have to live with what happened.

**BISHOP JONES:** You think you are the only ones who have ever lost a love one on Christmas Day?

**BEVERLY:** Please don't bring it up.

**BISHOP JONES:** I sense another problem here. You still blame him for what happened.

**BEVERLY:** Of course I do.

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**BISHOP JONES:** He was hit by a drunk.

**BEVERLY:** He was on his cell phone ---

**BEVERLY:** He was talking to you.

**BEVERLY:** --- and Shawn was not wearing any seatbelt. *(brings her to tears)*

*Pause.*

*Samantha enters with a glass of water. She gives it to Bishop and notices her mother is crying.*

**SAMANTHA:** What's going on?

**BEVERLY:** Bishop was just leaving.

*Pause.*

**BISHOP JONES:** *(drinks and hands the glass back to Sam)* Sister Beverly, you are probably the only one who can go into that room without being bowled at. You should make use of that privilege.

*Bishop exits.*

**SAMANTHA:** Why are you crying, mom?

**BEVERLY:** *(avoiding the question)* Are you finished tidying the kitchen?

**SAMANTHA:** Why won't you talk to me?

**BEVERLY:** What do you want me to talk to you about, Samantha? Just do what I tell you to do and stop being such a nuisance.

*Samantha is hurt. Beverly instantly feels regret.*

**BEVERLY:** I'm sorry.

*Samantha exits quickly without responding.*

**BEVERLY:** *(looks up with clenched fist)* My life was perfect. I never asked for any of this. Why give us the gift of children and take them away so suddenly? Why?

*Pause.*

**LIGHTS OUT**

## **SCENE 4**

### **LIGHTS UP**

*Harold is again asleep in the couch.*

*Beverly enters and slaps him on his foot. He jumps out of his sleep. He looks around and looks at the Christmas Tree, then at his wife.*

**HAROLD:** You look just like my wife.

**BEVERLY:** I am your wife.

**HAROLD:** This is not a dream?

**BEVERLY:** Harold, we can't keep doing the same thing every year. Sooner or later we are gonna have to face up to this.

*Pause.*

**HAROLD:** *(looking very confused)* Didn't we already have this conversation?

**BEVERLY:** I am serious. I don't want you locking yourself in that room this year. It's really having a negative influence on our daughter.

**HAROLD:** I feel very strange.

**BEVERLY:** Are you even listening to me?

*Harold gets up and goes to the door. He tries to open it, but it's locked.*

**BEVERLY:** Are you trying to avoid me, Harold?

**HAROLD:** No dear, it's just that we already had this conversation, and I feel a little bit stupid doing it again.

**BEVERLY:** Why do you keep saying that?

**HAROLD:** In a few moments our daughter is going to walk into this room and ask for help with her midterm paper.

*Samantha enters.*

**SAMANTHA:** Dad, I need some help with my midterm paper.

**HAROLD:** Not now.

**SAMANTHA:** But Dad.

**HAROLD:** I said not now. What is wrong with you?

**SAMANTHA:** You never have time to help me with anything.

*Samantha exits.*

**BEVERLY:** *(confused)* How did you do that?

**HAROLD:** I can't explain it for you to understand, but this is actually a dream or something like that.

**BEVERLY:** You are acting very strange, Harold.

**HAROLD:** The season is getting to my head.

**BEVERLY:** Christmas is not for another three weeks.

*Pause.*

**HAROLD:** Christmas is just a couple days away.

**BEVERLY:** Check the calendar and stop talking nonsense.

**HAROLD:** Why is the Christmas Tree up then?

**BEVERLY:** What Christmas tree?

*Harold points at the erected and almost fully decorated tree.*

**HAROLD:** That Christmas Tree.

**BEVERLY:** *(staring at the tree)* There is no tree Harold. The tree is still in the backyard. I am staring at a blank wall. *(frustrated)* You know what, I got things to do.

*Beverly exits.*

*Harold walks over to the tree and touches it. Sure enough, it is real.*

*Angel of Present Things enters laughing.*

**ANGEL2:** Now that was fun to watch.

*Harold turns to face the angel.*

**ANGEL2:** That is a nice tree.

**HAROLD:** Why couldn't you just appear like the other one instead of putting me through that little episode?

**ANGEL2:** I like to lay a foundation.

**HAROLD:** And who might you be?

**ANGEL2:** I am the Angel of Present Things.

**HAROLD:** Presently, I should be enjoying some peace and quiet behind that door.

**ANGEL2:** So true, but then, in your solitude you would have no idea what goes on outside that door.

*Beverly enters and goes to the door. She considers and chooses to walk away from it. She goes to the family picture and takes it in her hands allowing the tears to flow freely down her face.*

**BEVERLY:** I miss you, Shawn.

**HAROLD:** She blames me for his death.

**ANGEL2:** You don't know that for sure.

**HAROLD:** I see it in her eyes.

**ANGEL2:** What you see in your wife's eyes is a reflection of your own. You blame yourself.

**BEVERLY:** God, I have done all I could do. I have tried to talk to him, get him to come with me to counseling, pray and fast and believe that one-day things will change. But nothing has changed, and I can't stand to grieve alone anymore. It's not working out God, and I want out of this marriage.

**HAROLD:** What did she just say?

**ANGEL2:** She wants out of this marriage.

*Pause.*

**HAROLD:** Just like that. What about our vows?

**ANGEL2:** You vowed to never keep any secrets; to always be an open book to each other, support each other in the good times and bad, forgive each other as God forgave you. Harold, how many of those vows have you kept?

*Pause.*

**BEVERLY:** I want out *(breaks the picture frame)*

*Samantha enters.*

**SAMANTHA:** Mom.

**BEVERLY:** Leave me alone.

**SAMANTHA:** Why are you guys always shutting me out? I know I was just nine when Shawn died ---

**BEVERLY:** Don't!

*Pause.*

**SAMANTHA:** Don't do what, mom? Pretend as if you guys don't act like you only had one child?

**BEVERLY:** I can't do this with you right now, Samantha. I can't do this by myself.

*Beverly exits.*

*Samantha rubs her head in utter frustration. She begins a search until she finds a bottle full of pills.*

**HAROLD:** What is she doing with those sleeping pills? *(Goes over to her)* Samantha, put those pills away.

**ANGEL2:** I don't think she can hear you, Harold.

*Pause.*

*There is a knock at the entrance. Samantha goes to the door and lets Melissa in.*

**MELISSA:** Hi. We still going to the mall?

**SAMANTHA:** I can't.

**MELISSA:** But you said ---

**SAMANTHA:** Just leave me alone.

*Pause.*

**MELISSA:** I don't know if it's something I did, but you are obviously upset about something, and I won't leave you like this.

*Pause.*

**SAMANTHA:** *(breaks down)* Mel, I don't know how much more of this I can take?

**MELISSA:** How much more of what?

**SAMANTHA:** Life.

**MELISSA:** What are you talking about? Samantha, I envy your life. You have a mom that loves you, a father who is around ---

**SAMANTHA:** My father has no time for me. We haven't had a conversation in years. He might as well have died in that accident.

*This statement stuns Harold.*

**MELISSA:** What accident?

*Pause.*

**SAMANTHA:** *(sighs)* Six years ago, my father and brother were on their way to the mall on Christmas Day. They never made it. Ran off the road by a drunk and --- and --- my brother died.

**MELISSA:** I'm sorry, my friend. *(hugs Samantha)*

*Pause.*

**MELISSA:** Is that why your father locks himself away in that room?

**SAMANTHA:** Yes, he is hiding from Christmas. The family visits, the carols, the lights, food, Christmas tree, and especially the music. He hates hearing carols.

**MELISSA:** I had no idea, Samantha.

**SAMANTHA:** You still envy my life?

**MELISSA:** What are you going to do with those pills?

**SAMANTHA:** Maybe you should go.

**MELISSA:** I need to go to the mall to get a gift for mom, and I don't know my way around yet. Please come with me.

*Pause.*

*Samantha considers.*

**SAMANTHA:** Okay.

**MELISSA:** Let me keep those.

*Melissa takes the bottle of pills from her.*

*Samantha leaves with Melissa.*

**ANGEL2:** Are you thinking what I am thinking?

**HAROLD:** What if Melissa hadn't come over?

**ANGEL2:** The good Lord works in mysterious ways, I tell you. Miracles like this happen every day, and still people wonder if there is a God. *(Pause)* Harold, not to give the assumption that I am not enjoying this, but I gotta go.

*Angel exits leaving Harold standing with his thoughts.*

**LIGHTS OUT**

## **SCENE 5**

### **LIGHTS UP**

*Someone is knocking vigorously at the front door.*

*Beverly comes out tying a night robe around her. She opens the door and Rachael comes in.*

**BEVERLY:** Rachael, its 5 am.

**RACHAEL:** I know, but I don't have anybody else to talk to. *(considers)* I'm sorry --- maybe this is not such a good idea. *(heads for the door)* I will come back later. *(Beverly stops her)*

**BEVERLY:** It's okay. Tell me what happened.

**RACHAEL:** It's my husband or whatever he is called.

**BEVERLY:** What is he up to?

**RACHAEL:** He wants to come home.

*Pause.*

**BEVERLY:** You mean, like one of his regular rare short visits.

**RACHAEL:** No. Permanently. He wants us to be a family again.

**BEVERLY:** That was unexpected.

**RACHAEL:** I have only had him for the first six months of our marriage before he went away. After all these years, Beverly. I don't know where he has been or who he has been with and I am supposed to just open my doors and say *'Welcome home, honey.'* How do I do that?

*Pause.*

**BEVERLY:** Can I refer you to someone?

**RACHAEL:** I have seen enough shrinks to last me a lifetime. Every time I think I am okay and have gotten to the point where I can make my own way and celebrate my involuntary independence, he does something like this. I can't do this now. Not now.

**BEVERLY:** When is he planning to come?

**RACHAEL:** Christmas Eve.

**BEVERLY:** That soon.

**RACHAEL:** I think I'm going mad. Is there a medication for that?

**BEVERLY:** My grandmother always told me that when you have gone as far as you can go, and feel that you can't go any further, that is the time to pray.

*Pause.*

**RACHAEL:** I haven't prayed in ten years. I doubt God remembers who I am.

**BEVERLY:** *(pause to consider)* Our church is having a seminar this evening. I wasn't planning to go, but I am thinking we can both use the support.

**RACHAEL:** What kind of seminar?

**BEVERLY:** It's for single married women.

*Pause.*

**RACHAEL:** I have been trying for years to figure out what this is, and you just said it. I am a single married woman.

**BEVERLY:** We can't do this on our own, Rachael.

**RACHAEL:** I have been thinking about your little dilemma, and I wonder if maybe you stopped carrying food to your husband, he may come out of that room.

**BEVERLY:** I tried that last year.

**RACHAEL:** And ---

**BEVERLY:** He went on a seven days supernatural fast, and an additional seven days in the hospital with an almost ulcer stomach.

**RACHAEL:** Well, at least he never left.

**BEVERLY:** I am not so sure about that. By the way, when did this conversation become about me?

**RACHAEL:** I'm sorry. It's easier to talk about someone else's problem.

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**BEVERLY:** I know exactly what you mean.

**RACHAEL:** I hope I didn't wake you.

**BEVERLY:** I was already up. Can't sleep much these days.

**RACHAEL:** Well, we have that in common.

**BEVERLY:** Been having some crazy nightmares.

**RACHAEL:** Me too.

**BEVERLY:** Since you are here and I am up, we might as well make breakfast.

**RACHAEL:** Oh, that is a wonderful idea. Cooking usually takes my mind off stuff.

**BEVERLY:** What do you do for a living?

**RACHAEL:** I am a Nurse.

**BEVERLY:** Do you like being a Nurse?

**RACHAEL:** Sometimes, maybe most of the time. What do you do?

**BEVERLY:** I am a Teacher at an Infant School. Same School where my husband is Principal.

**RACHAEL:** I thought about teaching a few times.

**BEVERLY:** And ---

**RACHAEL:** Not with these generations of kids. Having to deal with one is scary; being in the same room with 25 to 40 kids scares the daylights out of me.

**BEVERLY:** I wish someone had said that to me before I went to college. *(Gets up)* Let's go make breakfast.

*Beverly exits. Rachel follows closely behind.*

**LIGHTS FADE**

## **SCENE 6**

### **LIGHTS UP**

There is a man dressed in a suit and holding a briefcase standing by the forbidden door. He knocks gently.

**KEITH:** Harold, its Keith.

**HAROLD'S VOICE:** What do you want?

**KEITH:** Can you come out here a sec. Hard to do business through a door.

*Pause.*

*The door opens, and Harold steps out. His hair is grey, and he looks 20 years older.*

**KEITH:** Looking good, Harold, but I wonder why you keep locking yourself in that room when you have the whole house to yourself.

**HAROLD:** What do you mean? Where's Beverly? And Samantha?

**KEITH:** Have you stopped taking your meds again, Harold?

**HAROLD:** What?

*Harold goes to a nearby mirror and looks at himself. He screams out at his own reflection.*

**HAROLD:** I am old.

Keith is shaking his head.

**KEITH:** Where are your pills?

**HAROLD:** I am not on any pills. Where are my wife and child?

**KEITH:** I really can't keep going over this with you, Harold. It's a little frustrating.

**HAROLD:** Just tell me where they are.

**KEITH:** Your wife left you fifteen years ago. She is married with two children and now lives with her new family in Jamaica.

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**HAROLD:** Jamaica? What about Samantha?

*Pause.*

**HAROLD:** Tell me.

**KEITH:** She committed suicide 17 years ago.

*Pause. Harold breaks down.*

**HAROLD:** She really did it.

**KEITH:** You knew she was going to kill herself?

**HAROLD:** I can't explain it for you to understand. *(pause)* You must be the Angel of Future Things.

**KEITH:** No, Harold, I am just your lawyer.

*Keith sits and opens his briefcase producing some documents.*

**HAROLD:** Why do I need a lawyer?

**KEITH:** The foreclosure on this house is now complete. You just need to sign a few documents.

**HAROLD:** I am selling my house?

**KEITH:** *(rubs head in frustration)* No, Harold. It's being repossessed. Since quitting your job, you haven't been able to make the mortgage payments. Haven't we been through this already? If you want me to come back another day, I will.

**HAROLD:** No, please, I'm trying to make sense of all this.

**KEITH:** Now you want to do that?

**HAROLD:** What do you mean?

**KEITH:** Why didn't you try to make sense of it when you had a perfect family? Instead of locking yourself away in that room because of what you lost and end up losing what you had.

**HAROLD:** Maybe I wasn't as strong as everybody else.

**KEITH:** That is why we need each other. We were never created to live in isolation.

*Pause.*

**HAROLD:** Are you sure you are a lawyer, cause right now you sound like a counselor. Did my wife put you up to this?

**KEITH:** That's it. I'm outta here. *(Starts putting his things back together)*

**HAROLD:** I am not falling for this. You hear me!

**KEITH:** Call me, if you ever find yourself in your right mind.

**HAROLD:** *(grabs Keith)* Tell me who put you up to this.

**KEITH:** Take your hands off me, Harold.

**HAROLD:** Not until you tell me.

*Keith physically restrains Harold and pushes him on the couch.*

**KEITH:** You are losing your mind.

**HAROLD:** Get out! I don't need you. I don't need anybody.

*Keith exits.*

**HAROLD:** If this is a dream, why didn't I wake up on the couch as usual, huh? Where you at Angel of Future Things. I know you are here, somewhere.

*Angel of Future Things is standing at the entrance.*

**ANGEL3:** Your arrogance is appalling, Harold.

**HAROLD:** What do you hope to gain from showing me this?

**ANGEL3:** I stand to gain nothing, old man.

**HAROLD:** Then leave me alone.

*There is a knock at the entrance.*

**HAROLD:** Go away.

*A little older Bishop Jones enters.*

**BISHOP JONES:** Merry Christmas. Harold. How have you been?

**HAROLD:** It's Christmas?

**BISHOP JONES:** Oh yes, the Season to be merry.

**HAROLD:** Great. Any chance you will go away and leave me alone?

**BISHOP JONES:** I have been compelled by the Holy Ghost these past few weeks to pay you a little visit.

**HAROLD:** Why?

**BISHOP JONES:** Harold, why have you turned your back on God?

**HAROLD:** What are you talking about? I was in church a couple of weeks ago.

**BISHOP JONES:** You haven't been to church in 18 years, Harold.

**HAROLD:** Are you saying I backslid?

**BISHOP JONES:** I know you have been through a lot, but turning away from our loving God solves nothing.

**HAROLD:** Loving God, huh! He took my son. Apparently He takes my wife and daughter as well. There is nothing loving about a God who gives and takes back.

**BISHOP JONES:** Can you give what He gave?

**HAROLD:** I don't need to hear this right now.

**BISHOP JONES:** You have an opportunity to recommit yourself to God.

**HAROLD:** Not interested.

**BISHOP JONES:** Please think about it.

**HAROLD:** I have. Now, please, just leave me alone.

**BISHOP JONES:** Well, you have always preferred solitude over company, so I will just move right along.

**HAROLD:** Thank you.

**BISHOP JONES:** Life is short, Harold, and you might not see it now, but God knows exactly what He is doing.

**HAROLD:** If you say so.

**BISHOP JONES:** Goodbye, my friend.

*Bishop Jones exit.*

*Harold feels a cramp in his chest. His knees grow weak, and he falls to the ground.*

**HAROLD:** Help me, somebody.

**ANGEL3:** Not this time, Harold.

*Harold tries to speak, but no words come out of his mouth. He lies prostrate on the ground, unable to move, unable to breathe.*

*Angel shakes his head and exits.*

*Jesus walks on with Shawn walking beside him. He touches Harold, who begins to gain consciousness.*

**HAROLD:** What just happened?

**JESUS:** You just crossed over.

**HAROLD:** To where?

*Harold sees Shawn.*

**HAROLD:** Shawn! Is that really you?

**SHAWN:** Hi, daddy.

*Shawn goes to Harold who hugs him.*

**JESUS:** I brought him to say goodbye.

**HAROLD:** What do you mean?

**JESUS:** Shawn has been waiting for you, Harold, and his mother and sister. He was heartbroken when Samantha took her own life condemning her soul to hell, but he is even more heartbroken now to know that you choose not to be where he is.

**HAROLD:** I want to be with him.

**JESUS:** You lost your faith in me, Harold. Only those who believe can be saved. You should never have taken your eyes off me.

**HAROLD:** I'm sorry.

**JESUS:** I know. Come, Shawn, we have to go.

**HAROLD:** No.

*Harold grabs Shawn. Angel3 comes on and pulls Harold away from Shawn.*

**JESUS:** Why did you doubt, Harold?

**HAROLD:** Just answer me this one question, please. Why give us children and take them away so early?

*Pause.*

**JESUS:** If I didn't, there would be no children in heaven.

*Jesus takes Shawn and exits.*

**HAROLD:** This is not happening. This is not happening.

**ANGEL3:** Every choice you make in life has a significance on the outcome of the future, Harold. Remember that!

*Harold weeps.*

*Angel3 leaves.*

**LIGHTS FADE**

## **SCENE 7**

### **LIGHTS UP**

*It's Christmas Day.*

*Rachael and Beverly put the finishing touches on the Christmas Tree.*

**BEVERLY:** So, is he here?

**RACHAEL:** Who?

**BEVERLY:** Your husband.

**RACHAEL:** Oh, I must have forgotten to tell you. He called this morning. His flight was delayed. Bad weather.

**BEVERLY:** So, he is really coming?

**RACHAEL:** Apparently.

**BEVERLY:** You seem a whole lot calmer than you were a few days ago.

**RACHAEL:** I got a word at that seminar we went to the other night. Put it in the hands of God, and leave it there. So, I am doing just that.

**BEVERLY:** Good for you.

*Samantha and Melissa enter.*

**SAMANTHA:** You guys still not finished decorating the tree?

**BEVERLY:** Just about.

Beverly stands back and brushes off her hand. Rachael comes beside her, and they stand looking at the tree for a moment.

**BEVERLY:** I think that's it.

*Beverly finds the plug and takes it in her hand.*

**BEVERLY:** Everybody ready?

**MEL, SAM, RACHAEL:** *(excitedly)* Yeeeeeees.

**BEVERLY:** Okay, here goes.

*Beverly is about to plug in the Christmas Tree when there is a knock at the door.*

**BEVERLY:** Are we expecting anybody else?

**SAMANTHA:** It's probably Bishop Jones. You know he is always trying to catch dinner.

*Samantha goes to the door and collects a package. She comes back looking bewildered.*

**SAMANTHA:** Someone ordered some movies from Netflix?

**BEVERLY:** I didn't.

*Samantha opens the package and pulls out some DVD's.*

**SAMANTHA:** Christmas movies. *(Looks at the title)* This one is the Christmas Carol with Jim Carey.

**RACHAEL:** That is a good remake of a genuine classic. I watch it every Christmas.

**BEVERLY:** If we did not rent these, who did?

*The forbidden door opens, and Harold steps out.*

**HAROLD:** I did. I thought maybe we could watch them, as a family.

*Samantha faints, and Melissa catches her. Beverly goes to him.*

**BEVERLY:** Harold, do you know what today is?

**HAROLD:** Yes. Our son died in a car accident on this very day, and I was partially responsible, but God's Son was also born on this day, and I am thinking that maybe I have been celebrating the wrong thing.

**BEVERLY:** Oh my God. Is this a dream?

**HAROLD:** I am pretty sure this is real. *(looks at Rachael and Melissa)* I am seeing some new faces.

**BEVERLY:** Oh, sorry. This is our new neighbor, Rachael, and her daughter, Melissa. They just moved next door.

*Harold shakes their hands.*

**HAROLD:** It's nice to meet you both. I have this strange feeling that we have already met.

**RACHAEL:** Well, we have practically just been outside your door.

**HAROLD:** Something smells good.

**BEVERLY:** We were just about to light up the tree and go have dinner.

**HAROLD:** May I?

*Pause.*

**BEVERLY:** Sure.

*Beverly hands him the plug, and he finds the socket.*

**HAROLD:** Merry Christmas.

*Harold plug in the lights and the tree comes to life. A beautiful sight.*

*Harold puts his arms around Beverly and then Samantha. Both women slowly respond by putting their arms around him.*

*Melissa and Rachael smile. They take the cue.*

**RACHAEL:** We will set the table.

*They exit.*

**BEVERLY:** What happened to you, Harold?

**HAROLD:** I had some strange dreams and just knew I had to change or I would lose you both, and I love you both too much to have to live without you. Well, I know sooner or later Samantha is going to get married, and move out of this house, and forget about us but ---

**SAMANTHA:** Daddy!

**HAROLD:** You know it's true. *(Pause)* I also realize that Shawn is in a better place and we will see him again. Conditions apply.

**BEVERLY:** Still, God didn't have to take him so soon. He was just a child.

**HAROLD:** If He didn't, there would be no children in Heaven.

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*Pause.*

**BEVERLY:** You have a point.

**HAROLD:** Let's go eat.

**BEVERLY:** Okay. (smile) I have never been more happy to see you.

**HAROLD:** Me too, darling.

**They walk to the exit.**

**HAROLD:** By the way, Bev, do you know anyone in Jamaica?

**BEVERLY:** Well, there is this guy who writes really good Christian Plays. We have talked a few times on Facebook. Why do you ask?

**HAROLD:** No reason.

They exit.

**LIGHTS FADE**

*— End of Play —*