

The Three Gifts

by

Daris Howard

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by Daris Howard

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Characters

(Note: This play may be performed by three girls in the teenage roles instead of the boys. It probably would work better with boys, but if needed teenage girls can be substituted.)

Justin Jackson - Teenage boy, a bit rebellious.

Sam Johnson - Teenage boy, really into basketball.

Tom Howard - Teenage boy,

Judge Jensen - A tough, no nonsense woman.

Attorney Mathews - Prosecution. A woman.

Fred Jackson - Middle aged man. A lawyer and Justin's dad.

Mary Harris - Middle aged woman. Emily and Timothy's mom.

Emily Harris - A young girl that looks about six to eight.

Precocious.

Timothy Harris (Or Tamara if little girl) - Emily's little brother (or sister).

About two. This child has no speaking parts and a doll as a baby can be substituted.

Dr. Howard - Tom's dad. Middle aged man.

Others - It would be good to have children to play Tom's brothers and sisters. It would also be good to have some more adults to play parents of Sam and maybe Tom's mom.

If desired:

Bailiff

Court Clerk

This story comes from some experiences with some of my own friends and also some of my students. I got together with some of my friends shortly after we were all married and talked of past events in life. During the conversation it turned to one Halloween that my three friends stole some children's Halloween candy. I was not with them on this escapade, but listened to their telling of it and how embarrassed they were.

This event, plus some things that have happened to me and those I have known gave me the basis for this play. For that reason I would like to dedicate this play to my friends, family, and the students I have taught over the years.

Daris Howard

Sets

There are really only three simple sets and then some done in front of the curtains or in front of the stage. These can easily be done by building the living room set on a stage wing and after the court scene switching to the hospital scene on the main stage. This makes it so there is really only one scene change.

- 1) Court room. (This can be done with a counter for the judge and chairs with tables for the attorneys, defendants, and family.)
- 2) Women's Crisis Center. (This can use the same counter as the court scene and perhaps a couch with a rug for children to play on and maybe a playpen.)
- 3) A very simple, poor, bare, living room with a couch, small bed, and crib, plus a few other furnishings.
- 4) The hospital waiting room could be the same as number 2 with the playpen and other children's things removed.

Act I Scene 1

{The scene is a courtroom. Three young men, Tom, Sam, and Justin, are the defendants. Justin's father is their lawyer. The judge, Mrs. Jensen, is a no nonsense kind of woman.}

Judge Jensen: The court finds the defendants guilty of assault and theft as charged. Do the defendants have any final words with respect to this matter?

Justin: *{As Justin's father is trying to make him sit down}* Go ahead and make us sit in jail a few days, who cares.

{The boys all snicker.}

Judge Jensen: You boys don't seem to feel that this crime is a big deal.

Justin: Ok. So we swiped a few little kids' Halloween bags. Big deal. Guys do it all of the time.

Judge Jensen: Young man, just because others do something does not make it right. You do not seem to realize that some children have very little to look forward to. Simple things like Halloween candy can mean a lot to them.

Justin: So go ahead and give us the jail time and forget the lecture. You're not our mother.

{Judge Jensen leans back in her chair to think a few seconds. Make it long enough that the boys squirm just a bit.}

Attorney Mathews: May the prosecution approach the bench?

{Attorney Mathews, also a woman, is signaled to the bench by Judge Jensen. They whisper in hushed tones.}

Tom: You've gone and done it now Justin. I think they're really ticked.

Justin: So what's the big deal? What's she going to do, add a couple of days on our sentence? It's just more school we'll miss.

Sam: But what if it goes into basketball season?

Justin: It will probably only be a weekend jail sentence anyway.

Tom: And I had planned to go hunting and get some more golf in before it gets too cold.

{Finally Attorney Mathews returns to her seat and Judge Jensen leans forward as if she has made a decision.}

Judge Jensen: *{Keying in on the boys conversation.}* And I had considered some jail time for you, but the more I look at it the more I think that would just give you something to brag about at school. Since your crime was against children, I think the punishment should be related. Attorney Mathews and I work as volunteers at the Women's Crisis Center at the hospital and they are always in need of help. Taking into consideration the counsel of the prosecuting

attorney, you are hereby given a sentence of 100 hours each of service in the children's room at the Women's Crisis Center.

Justin: Wait a minute! You're saying we have to babysit?! I would rather go to jail! If we refuse, what will you do, just send us to jail? *{Jumping up and putting his hand up as if volunteering.}* Well, then I will just refuse.

{The other two boys pull him back into his seat.}

Judge Jensen: Since you used a car to travel around town doing your misdeeds it is obvious you used a vehicle in the course of committing your crime. Therefore, I will not put you in jail, but I will suspend your driver's licenses until such a time as this court can verify you have completed your 100 hours of service.

Justin: Service! You call that service! That is blackmail that's what it is. Why that...

Sam: Would you shut up?! Every time you open your mouth it just gets worse.

Judge Jensen: To further insure you do not procrastinate this, it is the decision of this court that you will have time at nights after school and on weekends to complete this sentence before Christmas, since there is eight weeks left. For each week beyond that for which it is not completed there will be six more hours added to the sentence. And none of you better be caught driving before Christmas or before this court has revisited this case or your license will be suspended for another full year. Further, when this sentence is completed the court holds the discretion of reviewing the attitude of the defendants pertaining to this matter to determine whether this should be cleared from your records. Does the defense attorney have any comment?

{The boys look to Mr. Jackson hopefully as he slowly rises to his feet.}

Mr. Jackson: The defense feels that is a fair sentence.

Justin: Dad! What kind of defense is that?

Mr. Jackson: I agree with the judge. It's time you learned to take responsibility for your behavior. I don't blame Sam or Tom near as much as you. You were the one driving and if I know a thing or two this was your idea.

Tom: Great idea, Justin. Let's hire your dad.

Justin: I thought he'd be on our side.

Judge Jensen: The defendants may pick up their personal belongings. You must turn your driver's licenses over to the court clerk at this time.

Justin: What a mean judge?

Tom: Yeah.

{They walk over to the judge who has a box sitting there with their things. As Justin reaches for his keys his father takes them.}

Mr. Jackson: I will take those.

Justin: But Dad, don't you trust me?

Mr. Jackson: Trust has to be earned and right now you have some earning to do. *{Looking at the three boys.}* Have all of you turned in you driver's licenses. *{They nod.}* Ok. We are going to have a meeting with all of your parents and make sure you get these hours filled.

{As they head out they each are flanked by their parents who have been in the courtroom, Mr. Jackson turns and smiles at the judge and nods and she smiles and nods back. Lights fade.}

Act I Scene 2

{This scene can be played in front of the curtains or to the side. Behind the curtains or on main stage will be the Women's Crisis Center. There is a small nursery where a boy (or a girl if needed) of about two and a girl about 6 are playing. There is a help desk there with a woman busily doing paper work. This could be the judge, but if not she will be there to greet them when they come in. The young men are talking outside the Women's Crisis Center, nervous about going in.}

Sam: *{Fidgeting with his basketball.}* I suppose we might as well go in.

Justin: Do you really plan to go in there?

Sam: Yes, I do. My parents said unless I can show I am making progress on filling my sentence there would be no more basketball.

Justin: What's it with you and basketball? When basketball season comes you play the Houdini act and we never see you until it's over.

Sam: Basketball is my ticket out of here.

Tom: What do you mean?

Sam: I mean, with your dads being a doctor and a lawyer you have parents that can afford to send you to college. But for me, since the mill closed down and my dad hasn't had steady work, if I don't have a scholarship I don't go.

Justin: Who wants to go to college anyway? I'm going to be a race car driver. You don't need a diploma for that.

Tom: No, but you do need a driver's license.

Sam: And now thanks to you, none of us have that.

Justin: Sure, blame me.

Tom: What I blame you for is mouthing off in the courtroom. You don't have to put up with a zillion little brothers and sister, but I do. Now I've got to work with more small children. It makes me downright nauseous.

Justin: Someone needed to stand up for our rights.

Sam: You two do what you want, but I'm going in.

Tom: I'm coming too.

Justin: If you two wimps are going to give in I suppose I might as well go with you.

{They enter the clinic. Judge Jensen is there to meet them. She is not dressed like a judge, but as a volunteer at the Women's Crisis center.}

Judge Jensen: It's about time. You're late. I expect you to be on time. You can sit down here and sign up for your times.

Sam: Ma'am, do you mind if I go first? If it's all right I would like to work late evenings and Saturdays so I can still play basketball.

Judge Jensen: I have no problem with that. I suppose if you're busy you can't get into trouble. *{Getting up and going to the other two.}* While Mr. Johnson is signing up for some hours let me introduce you to a couple of the young people who are here. *{She grabs Justin and Tom, one in each arm and leads them reluctantly over to the children.}* Mr. Jackson, Mr. Howard, I would like to introduce you to Emily and her little brother Timmy. I will leave you for a few minutes to get acquainted.

{Judge Jensen leaves and goes back over to the desk. Justin and Tom look very uncomfortable. They poke each other for a minute trying to get the other to talk first. Finally Tom turns totally away leaving Justin to talk.}

Justin: Uh, so hey, kid, what are you in for. Did you get stuck here like us because you did something wrong? *{He laughs at his own joke then stops as if realizing it isn't that funny.}*

Emily: We're in for about eight hours while my mommy finishes swinging shift over at the bakery. I don't know if I did anything wrong. Maybe I did; maybe that is why daddy left.

{By now Sam has joined them.}

Tom: What do you mean that is why your daddy left?

Emily: One night he came home drunk and he started hitting mommy. I started crying and yelled for him to stop. He hit me really hard. I don't remember any more, but when I woke up I was in the hospital and Daddy never came back.

Sam: Is that where you got that gash on your face?

Emily: Oh, no. Daddy left a long time ago. I got this gash when three guys tried to steal Timmy's Halloween candy. I didn't mind when they stole mine, but when they tried to steal Timmy's I held on to his bag real tight and they jerked me off of my feet and I hit my face on the sidewalk.

{The three young men look at each other embarrassed.}

Sam: I'm going to go ahead and take tonight's shift. You two can go sign up. I've signed up my hours clear through to Christmas.

Justin and Tom Together: Christmas!

{Tom starts to head over to the desk with Justin reluctantly following.}

Justin: I can't believe you guys are really going to go through with this.

Tom: Maybe the judge is right. Maybe there are some things we need to learn.

Justin: Great, now you are beginning to sound like my father.

{As the other two are signing up, Sam sits down on a chair and pulls Emily on to his lap. When the other two get done they can leave, even making some faces behind Sam's back as if teasing him.}

Sam: So, little lady, how long have you been coming here?

Emily: Since not too long after my daddy left. When Daddy never came back we ran out of food so Mommy brought us here. Now we stay here each night while she works. Maybe Daddy will come home for Christmas. Mommy says he might.

Sam: And so this is your little brother?

Emily: Yes, his name is Timmy. Actually his real name is Timothy, but we call him Timmy because Momma says Timothy is such a big name for such a little boy. *{If it is a girl it could be Tammy and Tamara.}*

Sam: I know a great basketball player whose name is Timothy.

Emily: Do you play basketball?

Sam: When I can.

Emily: Could you teach me?

Sam: *{A bit hesitant}* I suppose I could.

Emily: How about Timmy?

Sam: He's a bit young.

Emily: He could be the mascot.

Sam: Yea, I suppose he could.

Emily: My daddy used to watch basketball. Maybe if I learned to play he would like me better.

Sam: You don't need to learn to play basketball so he will like you. There is no reason he shouldn't like you.

Emily: But if I could be more like what he wanted.

Sam: You don't try to beat someone playing their game but by emphasizing your own strengths.

Emily: What does that mean?

Sam: It means you just need to be yourself.

Emily: I like that.

{Judge Jensen comes over.}

Judge Jensen: It's time for Emily to get some sleep now. She and Timmy need to sleep until their mother comes and gets them later.

Emily: Can we have a story?

{Judge Jensen looks at Sam who catches the hint.}

Sam: Oh, sure. What story would you like?

Emily: "Tommy and Tippy"

Sam: "Tommy and Tippy"?

Emily: Yes, it's one of my favorite story because it has a puppy in it.

{She goes and gets the book. These next couple of lines might be skipped if Timmy is small and doesn't want to go to Sam.}

Emily: Can Timmy sit on your knee?

{She puts Timmy on Sam's lap before he can say anything.}

Sam: Uh, sure.

{Emily then gets up close and leans against Sam and Sam puts his arm around her. Sam opens the book and starts to read.}

Sam: "Tommy was a little boy who lived on a farm. He had many animals that were his friends. He had a calf named Harry and a rabbit named hopper. He had a chicken named Squawk and turkey named Gobble. But his very, very best friend was his puppy named Tippy. Tommy and Tippy went everywhere together. When you found one you always found both. One day...

{Sam's voice fades off as the lights go down.}

Act I Scene 3

{As the lights come up Sam is sitting asleep with the kids on his lap or with him. Mary comes in and smiles. She lifts Timmy out of his arms or gently shakes him.}

Sam: *{Sleepily}* Alright, Mom. I'm awake. I'm awake. *{Then coming to and looking around.}*
Where am I?

Mary: You are at the women's crisis center.

Sam: Oh yeah. I remember. Who are you?

Mary: I'm Mary Harris. These are my children.

Sam: They sure are adorable little kids.

Mary: Thank you. I kind of think so.

Sam: I suppose you're here to take them home?

Mary: Yes.

Sam: I'll help you carry them out to the car.

Mary: I don't have a car.

Sam: You don't have a car? Where do you live?

Mary: In the apartment building on Ironwood Drive.

Sam: But that's clear across town and in the worst part of town. How are you going to get there?

Mary: We'll walk.

Sam: I'll go with you.

Mary: Oh, no, I couldn't ask...

Sam: I insist. You carry Timmy and I'll carry Emily.

Mary: Thank you.

{They pick up the children and go out the door. The next part can be played in front of a curtain or in front of the stage as if walking.}

Sam: Ma'am, do you mind if I ask you a question?

Mary: Go ahead.

Sam: Well, I was talking to Emily and she told me about your husband and what he did to you and to her and how you are hoping he might come home for Christmas and well...

Mary: What is it?

Sam: Well, it may not be any of my business, but it just seems to me you would be better off without him. Why do you, or at least Emily, want him to come home?

Mary: I know maybe it sounds crazy to someone who has never been there, but I still love him and so does Emily.

Sam: How can you love someone that does that to you?

Mary: Love is deeper than just what one does or does not do?

Sam: I don't understand.

Mary: You can love someone and not really like them very much.

Sam: That doesn't make any sense to me whatsoever.

Mary: Well, maybe someday it will. I suppose you're right. I'm probably better off without him, especially for the safety of my children, but I still love him and I have a hard time bringing myself to give up on him.

Sam: If I were you I would divorce the... the.. *{trying to find a word not to offend}* guy and get a restraining order.

Mary: Thank you for your concern. What was your name?

Sam: Sam. Sam Johnson.

Mary: Are you Adam and Elizabeth Johnson's son?

Sam: Yes.

Mary: They are good people. It's no wonder you volunteered to help at the Women's Crisis Center.

Sam: I didn't volunteer exactly.

Mary: Oh?

Sam: Well I was... Oh, never mind. I'm just glad I could help out.

Mary: I am too.

{They go onto the house scene and go through the door. The room has a couch and/or old chair, a small bed, and a crib.}

Sam: Do you want me to take Emily in the bedroom?

Mary: Actually there is no bedroom.

Sam: You all share this one room?

Mary: Well, this a kitchen and a bathroom. My husband ran up so much credit card debt I am still trying to pay off that I can't afford anything else.

{Sam starts to put Emily into her bed as she wakes just a bit and hugs him.}

Emily: Goodnight, Sam.

Sam: Goodnight, Emily.

Mary: *{As Sam is leaving}* Thanks, Sam, and goodnight.

{Sam starts to walk away, stops and looks back for a brief instant, then continues to walk slowly away.}

{Blackout.}

Act I Scene 4

{The scene is the Women's Crisis Center.}

{Justin comes in wearing headphones and kind of dancing . Finally the judge catches his eye and she points at her watch and at the sign in sheet. He reluctantly checks in at the desk. The judge points at his headphones and he rolls his eyes, but puts them down around his neck. He then gets up and comes over to where Emily and Timothy are.}

Justin: Well, kid. I guess you got to put up with me tonight, or vice versa.

{He drops into the chair.}

Emily: Is that your name?

Justin: What?

Emily: Vice Versa.

Justin: No.

Emily: Than why did you say it?

Justin: Because it means... Oh, never mind. It's a long story.

Emily: *{Running over and dropping in a chair by his and scooting it over by him.}* Oh good. I like stories.

Justin: *{Scooting his chair just a bit away.}* I don't mean story like story you'd read or anything.

Emily: *{She scoots her chair closer again.}* What kind of story is it?

Justin: It's not a story at all.

Emily: Than why did you say it was?

Justin: It's not a story. It's a nightmare.

Emily: Do you have nightmares too?

Justin: I'm in the middle of one right now.

Emily: Me too. I keep dreaming my daddy comes back and is hitting my mommy.

Justin: I bet your glad your daddy is gone?

Emily: I hope he'll come home for Christmas.

Justin: Why would you want him to come home for Christmas if he hits you and your mom?

Emily: Because Christmas is a time for families to be together and sometimes he's nice.

Justin: When he's not drunk, huh? Does he drink often?

Emily: Almost every day.

Justin: Then maybe almost everyday you'd be better without him.

Emily: But I miss him.

Justin: I still think you should forget about him and go on.

Emily: Don't you want your mommy and daddy both home for Christmas?

Justin: It would be nice, but it ain't going to happen.

Emily: Why not?

Justin: My mother is dead. She died about a year ago.

Emily: That's sad. *{There is a short pause as if they both think. Then Emily grabs his shirt excitedly.}* Hey, I know. I have a mommy and you have a daddy. I can share my mom with you and you can share your daddy with me and we can both have a mommy and daddy at Christmas.

Justin: *{Smiling and starting to loosen up a bit}* It's not quite that easy. What if they don't want to be shared?

Emily: I don't know why not. My momma is really nice. Is your daddy nice?

Justin: I suppose you could say so.

Emily: Does he drink?

Justin: No.

Emily: Then I'm sure he's nice.

Justin: Who knows? He hasn't been around enough for anyone to find out.

Emily: Did he run away too?

Justin: No. He just works all of the time and is never home.

Emily: *{After a short pause}* What's your name?

Justin: Justin.

Emily: My name is Emily and my little brother's name is Timothy but we call him Timmy. Justin, if I shared my momma with you and you shared your daddy with me for Christmas would that make you my big brother? I've always wanted a big brother.

Justin: *{Showing a bit of emotion.}* I suppose it would. Why do you want a big brother?

Emily: Because we could play catch together and go to the park together and go fishing together.

Justin: But big brothers could be a pain. They might tell you what to do and leave the house messy.

Emily: I could clean the house and then we could watch some movies together.

Justin: Cool! What kind of movies?

Emily: Bambi, The Little Mermaid, Toy Story, ...

Justin: You've got this all figured out, huh?

Emily: Pretty much.

Justin: What about Timmy?

Emily: When he gets bigger we could take him fishing with us. He might even catch the biggest fish. I guess you'll never make the basket if you never take a shot.

Justin: You'll never make the basket if you never take a shot? You've been around Sam too much.

Emily: He's going to teach me how to play basketball. Do you like to play basketball?

Justin: Sure, but I don't let it rule my life.

Emily: What do you mean?

Justin: It's just that when it's basketball season Sam doesn't know how to switch gears.

Emily: Switch gears?

Justin: You know, like on a car?

Emily: Do you have a car?

Justin: Just an old Buick. But someday I'm going to have a real car.

Emily: We had to sell our car to pay bills when Daddy left. I know, maybe you could give me a ride in your new car.

Justin: *{Not paying attention.}* Sure kid. *{then realizing}* Whoa. Hold on here a minute. We need to go back to first gear.

Emily: First gear?

Justin: You know. Start at the starting line.

Emily: Ok. Let's start at the starting line.

Justin: You see, I don't have a new car yet.

Emily: But when you get one you're going to give me and Timmy a ride in it?

Justin: It's Timmy and me.

Emily: Good, then it's all settled.

Justin: What's all settled?

Emily: That me and Timmy get a ride in your new car.

Justin: I didn't say that, I just said, *{He looks at her and she stares at him and then gives him a big smile. He kind of laughs.}* Sure, kid. You can have a ride in my car.

Judge Jensen: *{Coming up}* Mr. Jackson, I'm afraid it's time for Emily and Timmy to sleep.

Justin: Oh. Good.

{Justin gets up and heads to the door.}

Emily: Can we have a story?

{Judge Jensen clears her throat and Justin stops and turns around.}

Judge Jensen: A story?

Justin: *{Coming back and dropping in the chair, realizing he has to stay the whole time.}* Oh sure. What do you want to read?

Emily: How about "The Night Before Christmas"?

Justin: "The Night Before Christmas"? But it isn't even Thanksgiving yet.

Emily: The stores are all decorated for Christmas.

Justin: The stores are decorated for Christmas in July.

Emily: But in that story both the mommy and daddy are there for Christmas.

Justin: Ok. That's cool.

Emily: What does cool mean?

Justin: It means uh, great, neat, I like it. Things like that.

Emily: Oh. *{short pause}* Cool! *{Justin smiles. Emily goes and gets a book. She comes back and gives it to Justin. She then goes and gets Timmy and plops him on Justin's lap as she says the next line.}* Can Timmy sit on your lap? He likes stories.

{Justin acts like the baby makes him nervous and like he would like to say no, but it is too late. Emily then leans against him as he reads.}

Justin: "Twas the night before Christmas and all through the house. Not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse. The stockings..."

{Justin's voice fades as he puts his arm around her and the lights fade and Judge Jensen smiles in the background.}

Act I Scene 5

{Mary comes in and Takes Timmy or gently shakes Justin who is asleep with Emily against him also asleep.}

Mary: Hi. I'm here to take my children home.

Justin: *{Somewhat groggy, but coming out of it.}* Oh. You must be Emily's mom.

Mary: Yes. My name is Mary Harris.

Justin: *{Carefully leaning Emily against the chair and off of him so as not to wake her he stands to shake hands.}* Nice to meet you. I'm Justin. Justin Jackson.

Mary: Are you Fred and Alice Jackson's son?

Justin: Yes.

Mary: They were both good friends of mine going to school. Tell them hi for me, will you?

Justin: *{A little stiffly since his mother is dead}* Sure.

Mary: I need to get Emily's coat on her.

Justin: *{Taking it from her.}* Here, let me.

{He starts to put Emily's coat on and as he does she wakes up a bit.}

Emily: Momma?

Mary: I'm here Emily. You need to wake up enough we can go home.

Justin: I could carry her.

Mary: I live over on Ironwood Drive.

Justin: That's fine. I need the air.

{The next could be as they are walking and go in front of the curtain or down on the floor.}

Emily: Momma, could you be Justin's momma for Christmas?

Mary: *{Maybe just slightly embarrassed at the question}* But Emily, he has his own mother.

Emily: She died about a year ago.

Mary: *{Shocked to Justin}* Alice died?

Justin: Cancer.

{It would be good to have some kind of bench so they can sit down, especially Mary as if she is in

shock.}

Mary: I'm so sorry. I didn't know. I haven't been able to afford a newspaper for quite a while. She was a good lady.

Justin: *{Somewhat choked up}* Yes.

Mary: Your mother and father were just a bit older than my husband and me in high school, but we were all friends.

Emily: So do you think you could be his mother? Just for Christmas.

Mary: But, Emily. It takes more to be a mother than just to be there for Christmas.

Emily: But he said maybe he could share his daddy if daddy doesn't come home and then he could be my brother and I could ride in his car and...

Mary: Oh, I see. But Emily...

Emily: Just for Christmas?

Mary: *{To Justin}* I'm sorry. She gets an idea in her head and there's not much changing it.

Justin: I've noticed. But it's no problem. She's a wonderful little girl.

Emily: *{To Justin}* Well, could you still be my big brother.

Justin: Sure.

{They arrive at the apartment.}

Mary: *{A bit embarrassed}* Well, this is it. Home sweet home.

Justin: *{Looking around noticing how poor it is}* This is it, huh? Nice and cozy.

Mary: *{Pointing to Emily's bed.}* That's Emily's bed over there.

Emily: *{Giving Justin a hug as he puts her in bed}* Goodnight, Justin.

Justin: *{With a hint of emotion}* Goodnight, Emily.

Mary: *{As he is leaving}* Thank you, Justin. And goodnight.

{Justin nods. He goes a ways then stops and looks back for a moment. He then turns and puts on his headphones and continues off stage, the lights fade as he is leaving.}

Act I Scene 6

{The scene is the Women's Crisis Center. Emily and Timothy are playing as usual and Tom walks in wearing sunglasses whistling and acting cool. He goes over and checks in at the desk and as he does the judge points at her watch. Tom then comes over and points both fingers at Emily like an Elvis imitation.}

Tom: Hey kiddo. You are the lucky winner that gets to spend the evening with me.

Emily: *{Standing and putting her hands on her hips.}* Hold on a minute here. We better start in first gear. Justin said I had to be careful of strangers and he said no one was stranger than you.

Tom: *{Laughing.}* Oh he did, did he?

Emily: Are you as nice as the other two guys? I like them.

Tom: I'm even nicer.

Emily: That would be as hard as making ten out of ten free throws. Are the three of you friends?

Tom: Yea.

Emily: How did you get to be friends?

Tom: We've been friends for as long as I can remember.

Emily: So what's your name?

Tom: My name is Tom.

Emily: Tom. That's almost like Tim for Timmy.

Tom: Almost. You really love Timmy, don't you?

Emily: Of course. He's my brother, you know?

Tom: Yes, I know.

Emily: Do you have a brother?

Tom: Three of them. And four sisters.

Emily: You're so lucky.

Tom: I am?

Emily: I bet it's great having that many people to love you.

Tom: *{A bit shocked}* Yeah, I guess. I've just always thought it was too much pandemonium.

Emily: *{Stumbling over the word}* What is pande...pande...?

Tom: Pandemonium. Noise.

Emily: Happy noise? I like happy noise. Things like birthday parties, parades, Christmas carols...

Tom: *{As if thinking thoughts he'd never thought}* Yeah. Maybe it does mean happy noise.

Emily: Sam plays basketball and Justin likes cars. What do you do?

Tom: What do I do?

Emily: Do you play basketball or drive cars?

Tom: Some. But I mostly like my time for me.

Emily: For what?

Tom: To hunt, fish, golf. There's nothing better than just taking time out to live.

Emily: I bet you have fun with all your brothers and sisters.

Tom: Are you kidding? That's just the point. They are so annoying. I just tell them to leave me alone. I just want to get away from them so I can be me.

Emily: Are you somebody different when you're with them?

Tom: *{Almost confused}* No. I mean I don't know.

Emily: My daddy's somebody different when he's drunk. I think a person should be the same all the time and be nice. Don't you?

Tom: That's not quite what I meant.

Emily: Then why do you have to get away from them so you can be you. Shouldn't you be you all the time.

Tom: Did anyone ever tell you you should be a lawyer?

Emily: Justin did. Do you and Justin and Sam do a lot together?

Tom: When we were small we built a fort together. We used to go to the zoo together. All those kind of things friends do.

Emily: I heard someone say that now you get in trouble together.

Tom: *{A bit embarrassed}* Uh, yeah. That too.

Emily: I wish I had a friend like that. I mean not get in trouble, but one I could go to the zoo with.

Tom: Oh, really. *{Sliding down by her.}* What part of the zoo do you like best?

Emily: I don't know. I've never been.

Tom: You've never been to the zoo?

Emily: Nope. Not that I can remember.

Tom: How about the circus? Surely you've been there?

Emily: Nope.

Tom: How about the amusement park?

Emily: What's that?

Tom: What's that! That's where they have things like merry-go-rounds, miniature golf, and all sorts of things.

Emily: That sounds like fun. But I've never been.

Tom: Well, we're going to have to remedy that.

Emily: What does remedy mean?

Tom: That means we're going to have to go.

Emily: Could Timmy come too?

Tom: Sure. We couldn't leave out Timmy.

Emily: Cool!

Tom: *{Smiling and nodding like he sees Justin's influence}* Cool.

Judge Jensen: *{Coming over}* It's time for Emily and Timmy to sleep now.

Emily: Can we have a story?

{Judge Jensen looks and acts questioningly to Tom.}

Tom: Oh, sure. What would you like to read?

Emily: How about "My Day At The Zoo". I like that one.

Tom: Sure.

Emily: *{Getting Timmy and plopping him on Sam's lap.}* You hold Timmy and I'll get the book.

{Tom cuddles Timmy up. Emily brings over a book and Tom starts to read.}

Tom: "We are going to the zoo today. I love to go to the zoo. There are many things to see. There are..."

{The lights fade as Tom's voice trails off.}

Act I Scene 7

{As the lights come up Tom is asleep against the chair with Emily laying her head on his lap and Timmy is on Tom's lap. Mary comes in and takes Timmy or gently shakes Tom.}

Tom: No I don't want to watch cartoons with you. Go back to bed.

{Mary shakes him again or Tom or the chair could slide dropping Tom to the floor. He sits up and looks around.}

Mary: It's me. I've come to take Emily and Timmy home.

Tom: Oh, sorry. I thought you were my little brothers and sisters.

{He starts to get Emily's coat on. Judge Jensen comes up.}

Judge Jensen: Mary, I was wondering. Since your children are the only ones here, and these three young men come to watch them, what if they just came to your house to watch the children?

Mary: I hate to be any trouble.

Judge Jensen: I think it would be more comfortable for the children if these young men don't mind.

{She says the last part directed at Tom.}

Tom: Oh. I don't mind.

Judge Jensen: But you would have to be there a bit early so Mary could get to work.

Tom: That's fine with me. I'll talk to the other two, but I don't think it will be a problem.

Mary: Thank you. That's very nice of you. Come on, Emily.

Tom: Here, let me carry her.

Mary: But I live clear over on Ironwood Drive.

Tom: That's ok.

{Tom gets down and Emily climbs on his back. They walk for a little ways before Emily talks.}

Emily: Momma, guess what. Tom read me eight books tonight.

Mary: Oh, Emily, you shouldn't ask for so many.

Tom: It was ok. I had fun doing it.

Mary: She will have you read all night if you let her.

Emily: And Tom is going to take Timmy and me to the zoo Saturday.

Tom: That is, if it's alright with you.

Mary: That would be fine, but you really don't have to.

Tom: I would love to. Besides, my own little brothers and sisters have wanted to go and I've been ignoring them, but I think maybe I would enjoy the pandemonium.

Mary: Enjoy the pandemonium?

Emily: Happy noise.

Tom: Yea. Happy noise.

{They enter the house and Mary, as always, seems a bit embarrassed.}

Mary: That's Emily's bed over there.

{Tom crosses to her bed and puts her in it. She hugs him.}

Emily: Goodnight, Tom.

Tom: Goodnight, Emily. *{Crossing to leave}* Goodnight, Mrs. Harris.

Mary: Goodnight, Tom. And thank you.

{Tom starts off whistling, stops and looks back and is quiet for a moment. He then turns and heads off stage whistling again as the lights fade.}

Act I Scene 8

{This scene can be played out in front of the curtains or in front of the stage. Tom comes on from one side and is crossing. If there are children available he could be bringing them as his little brothers and sisters. As he is crossing he meets Sam and Justin.}

Justin: Where are you going?

Tom: To get Emily and Timmy. *{If there are little brothers and sisters available one of them could say, "Tom, is taking us to the zoo." instead of this next sentence.}* I am taking them and my little brothers and sisters to the zoo.

{Tom continues on across and the other two wait for him. Mary is there waiting and has the two children ready.}

Mary: Have fun.

Emily: We will.

{Tom comes back to the group with Emily and Timmy.}

Emily: We're going to the zoo.

Sam: So I've heard.

Emily: And next week to the circus. Do you like the zoo?

Sam: I haven't been for a long time.

Justin: The three of us used to go a lot when we were younger.

Sam: That was before the mill closed. My dad had a good job then.

Justin: I thought you were going fishing today, Tom.

Tom: I decided I had more important things to do.

Justin: Well, you look like the Pied Piper.

Tom: Hey. Why don't you guys come along?

Sam: I don't have any money.

Tom: I'll pay. Mom was so shocked when I told her I wanted to take everyone to the zoo she gave me plenty of money to take all my brothers and sisters along and there's plenty for some extras. She was excited for a break. In fact why don't you go get all your brothers and sisters?

Sam: Really?

Tom: Really.

Sam: Hey, I'll grab some stuff for lunch and we'll have a picnic.

{Sam runs off stage.}

Emily: Hey, Justin. Why don't you go get your brothers and sisters too?

Justin: I don't have any brothers and sisters.

Emily: That's sad.

Justin: Maybe I like it that way.

Emily: I can't imagine how. Hey, I know. We can all be your brothers and sisters today.

Justin: But what if I don't...

Emily: *{Taking Timmy from Sam and handing him to Justin}* Here, you can carry Timmy and I'll hold your hand and you can be my big brother.

Justin: *{Looking a bit embarrassed}* Well, what are waiting for? Let's go to the zoo.

{They could all go off or Sam could come back on with an entourage of kids and picnic stuff and then they all go off.}

{Lights fade}

Act I Scene 9

{The scene is Mary's house. Justin is there with Emily and Timothy. Emily is sitting there staring out the window.}

Justin: Emily, what are you staring at?

Emily: *{In a sad tone.}* Nothin'.

Justin: *{Coming to the window}* It's starting to snow. Isn't it beautiful?

Emily: I suppose so.

Justin: What's the matter, Emily?

Emily: Nothin'.

Justin: *{Picking her up.}* Oh, come on. That isn't the Emily I know.

Emily: It's just that it's almost Thanksgiving and Daddy still hasn't come home.

Justin: When did he leave?

Emily: Not long after last Christmas.

Justin: *{Sitting down and putting her on his lap.}* Emily, why do you want him to come home if he is mean to you?

Emily: Because he's still my daddy. He's the only daddy I've got. And Mommy gets so tired trying to work and take care of us.

Justin: Well, now you have Tom and Sam and Me.

Emily: *{Throwing her arms around Justin's neck}* I love you, Justin.

Justin: *{Very emotional}* I love you too, Emily.

Emily: I better check on Timothy. *{She goes to him.}* Oh, oh.

Justin: What?

Emily: He needs his diaper changed. I'll get the stuff ready so you can change him.

Justin: But I... *{Emily exits. Justin looks to see that she's gone then goes to the phone. Make sure to put pauses at the ... as if listening to Tom on the other end. He has only started on the phone when Emily comes back in and stands behind him hearing the whole thing. He can act for a second like he is waiting for it to ring and be saying, "Come on. Be home." Finally he acts like he gets through.}* Hi, Tom. This is Justin. Hey, I'm over here at Harris's house and I need you to come over. ... No, no, the kids are fine. It's just Timothy needs his diaper changed and where you have seven little brothers and sisters... I don't know how to change it. ... What do you mean possession is nine tenths of the law? Listen, I'll pay you ten bucks to come change the diaper. ... Ok, twenty. ... Oh, who's idea was it to babysit here anyway? ... Well, sure it was Judge Jensen's but... No, I'm not going to call her to change it. ... Oh, yeah? Well you already smell like a diaper so it wouldn't matter if you... Well don't call me for a ride in my car! ... I mean, when I do get my license back, you moron! Goodbye! *{Justin hangs up in a bit of a huff and turns and sees Emily standing there with a diaper staring at him.}* Hey, you know on this diaper thing...

Emily: I'll change him. You bring him.

Justin: Cool!

{Justin gets Timothy and follows Emily off stage through the kitchen door holding him at arms

length. There is a knock. Justin comes in to answer it. When he opens it his father is there.

Justin: Dad!

Mr. Jackson: Hi, Son. May I come in?

Justin: Uh, sure. *{Mr. Jackson comes in.}* You'll have to excuse me for a minute. We're changing Timothy.

{Justin slips off stage.}

Mr. Jackson: *{Speaking loudly as if still talking to his son.}* I remembered hearing you say that lady you babysit for was getting off work a bit early tonight so I thought I'd stop and give you a ride.

Mary: *{Coming in and not noticing Mr. Jackson.}* I'm home.

Emily: *{Running to her mother}* Momma! I missed you.

Mary: I missed you too.

{Mr. Jackson notices Mary even though she hasn't noticed him and looks shocked. Justin comes in carrying Timothy.}

Mr. Jackson: Mary. Mary Jensen, I mean Harris. I haven't seen you in years. How are you?

Mary: *{Turning and seeing him, a bit embarrassed at her situation}* I'm fine, Fred. How are you?

Mr. Jackson: I'm doing fine. I had no idea that my son was babysitting for you.

Mary: I was sorry to hear about Alice. I didn't know until Justin told me.

Mr. Jackson: *{Trying to hold back the emotion}* Yeah. *{Trying to change the subject}* And how is Jack? I don't think I've seen him since about the time you got married.

Mary: Uh, well, he...

Justin: Dad, maybe we need to talk on the way home.

Mr. Jackson: Oh, Ok. I just thought I'd pick up my son on my way home from work. *{Kind of joking}* He can't drive you know.

Mary: You're working awful long hours, aren't you?

Mr. Jackson: Oh yea, always a lot to...

Justin: It beats being home.

Mr. Jackson: Now, what was that supposed to mean?

Justin: Oh, come on, Dad. You stopped in here because you need me to give you directions on

how to get home, it's been so long since you've been there.

Mr. Jackson: Now, wait just a minute...

Mary: If you'll excuse me, I better get Emily and Timothy ready for bed.

{Emily runs to Justin and throws her arms around him.}

Emily: Goodnight Justin.

Justin: *{Emotionally}* Goodnight, Emily.

{Emily runs to her mother and Mary, Emily, and Timothy exit.}

Mr. Jackson: So what was that smart remark about?

Justin: Oh, come on, Dad. You know very well you do everything you can to avoid being home.

Mr. Jackson: What do you mean? I've always been there for you. I've never missed a baseball game you played in.

Justin: Dad, I haven't played baseball since before Mom died a year ago.

Mr. Jackson: You haven't?

Justin: Face it, Dad. Since Mom died you have done everything you could to avoid being home. We haven't even eaten a meal together in over a year, let alone take a vacation or anything. When I lost my mother you walked out too. With Mom gone you had no reason to be home.

Mr. Jackson: But I...

Justin: Oh, well, don't worry about it. I'll have graduated by next summer. I'll be gone soon anyway. There's no need to worry about me. And I can walk home just fine.

{Justin goes out the door while Mr. Jackson just stands there as if in shock. Mary comes in.}

Mary: Fred, are you alright?

Mr. Jackson: I didn't realize. I didn't even think what I was doing to my son. I guess when Alice died I just concentrated on work to avoid the pain. Before his mother died he was such a good kid. Ever since then he's been into one problem after another. I didn't realize maybe it was my fault I wasn't there when my son needed me the most.

Mary: He's still a good kid and he still needs you.

Mr. Jackson: The only time we've spent together over the last year is when I had to go get him out of jail.

Mary: My father always said that you spend the same amount of time raising a child one way or another. Either you spend it on the front end doing things with them or on the back end getting them out of jail.

Mr. Jackson: Boy, was he right. Well, I better go. Say hello to Jack for me.

Mary: Uh, yeah.

{Mr. Jackson leaves. Justin could be sitting on the bench. When he sees his father he gets up to continue on.. Mr. Jackson comes quickly after him.}

Mr. Jackson: Justin! Justin, wait up.

Justin: Dad, what about the car?

Mr. Jackson: Oh, I thought I might just get it tomorrow. It's a beautiful night for a walk. Besides, you said there was something we needed to talk about on the way home.

Justin: *{A bit upset}* Dad, I am babysitting for Mrs. Harris because she has to leave her children at the Women's Crisis Center. Do you know what that is?

Mr. Jackson: Sure. That's where women who have had marital problems and abuse... Wait a minute. You mean to tell me that Mary...

Justin: Dad, you come walking in there asking about her husband, acting like he is your old pal.

Mr. Jackson: But Jack isn't that kind of person.

Justin: He may not have been, but when he drinks he is. He nearly killed both Mrs. Harris and Emily. Then he ran away and left them totally destitute with huge bills.

Mr. Jackson: I can't believe it.

Justin: Believe it because it's true. And poor Emily wants nothing more than to have her father home for Christmas. Her father that abused her and didn't care for her.

{Justin really emphasized the last words as if accusing his father. There is a short pause while both think.}

Mr. Jackson: Justin, about not being home. I just didn't realize...

Justin: Oh, yeah. You didn't realize. *{Going to the bench to sit down and facing away from his father.}* You're no different than Mr. Harris.

Mr. Jackson: *{Getting a bit angry himself}* That's not fair. I love you. And I loved your mother.

Justin: From what I hear from Emily, Mr. Harris loved them too.

Mr. Jackson: But I have never mistreated you.

Justin: Neither did Mr. Harris when he was sober. But he loved his alcohol more than he loved them.

Mr. Jackson: I have never loved anything more than I loved you and your mother.

Justin: What about work?

Mr. Jackson: What about work?

Justin: You'd rather be there than home.

Mr. Jackson: I would not.

Justin: Your actions speak otherwise.

Mr. Jackson: I'm just trying to provide for my family.

Justin: How much money do two people need?

{There is a short pause while both think. Finally Mr. Jackson, as if swallowing his pride and his sorrow goes over and sits on the bench by his son.}

Mr. Jackson: Justin, I'm sorry. *{Starting to get emotional}* It's just that when your mother died the pain was almost unbearable. Everything at home reminded me of her. The curtains, the furniture, the carpets, everything. I found that immersing myself in my work helped the pain go away. I never meant to not be there for you, it's just...

{Mr. Jackson starts to cry, even though he acts like he is trying to hold it in.}

Justin: *{Putting his hand on his father's shoulder.}* It's ok, Dad.

Mr. Jackson: *{Trying to gain control of himself and standing though still emotional.}* No. No, it's not ok. But I promise if you'll help me, I'll be there too. We've got Thanksgiving coming up and that will be nice. I have to be out of town a few days before Christmas. But then I'll be back for Christmas and I can start sharing some of the workload with some of the other lawyers in the office. Together we can get through this.

{There is a short pause while both think and they could walk.}

Justin: Dad, is there anyway you could help Emily and Mrs. Harris find Mr. Harris?

Mr. Jackson: Do they want him to come back?

Justin: Even with what he did Emily loves him.

Mr. Jackson: And Mary?

Justin: She does too.

Mr. Jackson: He may not want to come back for fear of facing criminal charges.

Justin: I know. But maybe if you could find out where he is they could talk to him on the phone or something.

Mr. Jackson: I'll talk to Mary tomorrow when I go to get the car. I'll see what I can do.

Justin: Thanks, Dad.

{There is another short pause.}

Mr. Jackson: Justin, I'm glad you're my son.

Justin: I know, Dad. I'm glad I'm your son too.

{Lights fade as Mr. Jackson puts his arm around his son's shoulders and they walk off.}

Act I Scene 10

{It is Mary's apartment the evening before Thanksgiving. Sam and Tom are already there. There is a knock at the door. Emily jumps up excited.}

Emily: I'll get it!

{She runs to the door. It is Justin and his Dad. They are carrying a salad.}

Justin: *{Picking up Emily.}* Hey, Punky. What are you doing?

Emily: Just waiting for you. Guess what. Tom brought a Turkey and Sam brought rolls.

Mr. Jackson: And we brought salad. *{Then to Mary.}* Would you like me to put it in the kitchen?

{Mary nods.}

Emily: We're going to have a feast just like the Pilgrims, only we won't have any Indians to share it with. And Mom says the turkey is big enough we can eat turkey for a whole week.

Justin: Is that supposed to be appetizing?

Emily: Sure, we can have turkey casserole, turkey sandwiches, turkey on rice, turkey...

Mary: Ok, Emily. It's time to eat. I'm so glad you could all join us. With Thanksgiving being tomorrow I couldn't think of any friends we would rather share it with.

Emily: And were glad for all of the food too.

{Everyone laughs. Mr. Jackson's cell phone rings. He answers it.}

Mr. Jackson: *{Make sure to give pauses as if one side of a telephone conversation.}* Yes. ... Yes it is. ... Yes I am. ... Where? ... Yes I see. How did it happen? ... All right. Thank you.

Justin: What is it, Dad?

Mr. Jackson: I'll tell you later. Would you boys mind taking Emily and Timothy into the other room and let me speak to Mrs. Harris alone?

{The boys take the children and exit.}

Mary: Is it Jack?

Mr. Jackson: Yes. I'm afraid he was killed in a car wreck. It happened not long after he left

here. He apparently used a false name to get a rental car and got drunk and wrecked. It happened almost a thousand miles from here. Until I posted that missing persons bulletin the police had no way of identifying him. An absolute match was made this morning against his dental records. *{Mary drops onto the couch sobbing.}* I'm sorry, Mary.

Mary: Somehow I knew. I knew he was gone. I probably should feel it is the best with what he did to me and the children, but I still loved him. When we were first married life was so good. Then he started doing a little drinking for social occasions and pretty soon he drank all the time. He was horrible when he was drunk. But I still loved him. *{She cries for a short time then tries to pull herself together.}* How am I going to tell Emily?

Mr. Jackson: I don't know. Would you like us to leave?

Mary: No. She looks at these boys as brothers. I think she is going to need them.

Mr. Jackson: Maybe you can go in and send the boys out here.

{Mary goes off and soon the boys come back on.}

Justin: What's going on, Dad?

Mr. Jackson: Mr. Harris was killed in a car wreck. He was drunk.

{There is a short pause then Emily comes running on stage screaming and crying. She runs to Justin who kneels down and scoops her into his arms.}

Emily: *{Sobbing}* My daddy. My daddy is dead.

Justin: I know.

Emily: He won't be home for Christmas.

Sam: No, but you have three new friends that will be here. And we can be just like brothers.

Emily: Big brothers?

Tom: Yeah. Big brothers.

{The three boys look at each other and smile as Emily hugs them all. The lights fade.}

Act I Scene 11

{This scene is down in front of the stage. Christmas music is playing. Sam and Justin come walking out from one side talking.}

Justin: So, Sam, what are we going to do when we finish our hours babysitting?" I mean, we met Emily and we go over there because we have to babysit. What are we going to do when our hours are up?

Sam: I'd never thought of that.

Justin: Mary will still need our help. She will still need someone to watch Emily and Timmy. I think I will just plan on going over there still.

Sam: *{Thinking and nodding}* Me, too.

{Tom comes in from the other side whistling carrying so many packages he can't see and runs into Sam and Justin who deliberately make him spill his packages.}

Tom: Would you two Christmas bells watch where you're going?

Sam: What do you mean Christmas bells?

Tom: Ding-a-ling-a-lings.

Justin: Funny. Hey Tom, what's with all the packages?

Tom: Just doing a bit of Christmas shopping.

Sam: For who?

Tom: Maybe a few of my many girl-friends. What's it to ya?

Justin: *{Picking up some packages and reading as Tom is trying to stop him}* Susan, David, Emily, Timmy. Hey, these aren't for any of your girl friends. These are for your brothers and sisters and Emily and Timmy.

Tom: I had you going there for a minute, though.

Sam: No way. We know no girls would have you.

Tom: Thanks, Sam. So what are you two doing down here at the mall?

Justin: Trying to pick up some chicks.

Sam: Don't let him feed you full of bull. We're down here to go Christmas shopping for Emily and Timmy too.

Tom: Just don't get them the same things I did.

Justin: What's that?

Tom: I got Timmy a big teddy bear. And I got Emily a bear that tells stories.

Sam: You trying to put Mary in the nut house or what? You know Emily will play that until it dies.

Tom: It won't die very soon. I also got her a pack of fifty batteries.

Justin: You are cruel.

Tom: So what are you going to get them?

Justin: I thought I would get Timmy some matchbox cars and one of those remote control cars

for Emily.

Sam: I don't have too much so I thought maybe a couple of miniature basketballs.

Tom: Why am I not surprised?

{Justin and Sam help Tom with his presents and he begins to leave.}

Justin: Hey, Tom. You does your face hurt.

Tom: *{Runs his tongue around inside his mouth and makes a few faces as if checking it out.}*
No, I feel fine.

Justin: Well, it sure hurts me looking.

{Justin and Sam laugh and high five each other.}

Tom: Ha, ha. Thousands of comedians out of work and I get stuck with you two.

{Justin and Sam laugh again.}

Justin: Hey, see you, Tom.

Tom: See you guys later.

{Tom exits.}

Justin: You know, Sam, it's kind of fun to come down here again. I haven't been here since I came with my Mom. I think I needed Emily and Timmy and didn't even know it.

Sam: I know what you mean.

Justin: Maybe someday I'll have to thank the judge.

Sam: Let's get our driver's licenses back first.

Justin: *{Standing and pointing off stage}* There's the toy store. Come on. Let's go shopping.

Sam: *{Standing}* I'm right behind you.

Justin:

{They run off stage as the lights fade.}

Act I Scene 12

{It is Mary's apartment. Tom and Justin are there. There is a small Christmas tree with presents under it. Timothy can be in his crib. Tom is setting up a tv/vcr. Justin is reading a story to Emily. There can be some sounds of thunder and such.}

Justin: "...And so the bunny and the duck were friends and no one was ever alone again."

Emily: That is one of my favorite stories.

Tom: Mine too. At least the first three dozen times I read it.

Justin: I think we need to get you some new books from the library, Emily.

Emily: You will? Cool!

Justin: It would be our pleasure.

Tom: *{Sarcastically}* It would be our sanity.

{Emily goes to the tree and shakes one of the presents.}

Tom: Emily, quit shaking that.

Emily: But it's for me.

Tom: Not until Christmas.

{There is a knock at the door. Sam pokes his head in dressed in sweats.}

Sam: Hi, guys. Sorry I'm late. The basketball game went into over time.

Tom: How's basketball going?

Sam: Good. So far I'm the team high scorer. I've had quite a few colleges send talent scouts to talk to me.

Tom: By the way. How's it going with your dad and Mary, Justin?

Justin: Ok, I suppose. They've been seeing each other since Thanksgiving.

Sam: You don't seem too excited.

Justin: Oh, I like Mary ok. It's just..

Tom: Just what.

Justin: She's not mom.

Tom: If you are so concerned why did you ask your dad to take Mary out.

Justin: It was because...

{Justin pauses, not knowing how to say it.}

Sam: What is it Justin?

Justin: You're going to think I'm stupid.

Sam: Justin, we've known you for a long time. We know you're stupid. *{They all laugh..}* No, seriously, we're all friends and we have been for a long time. You can tell us.

Justin: It's like my mom told me to.

Tom: What do you mean?

Justin: I used to be able to sense my mother was in the crowd when I played baseball, even if I didn't see her. It was kind of like that.

Tom: So you think your mother wanted your father to take Mary out.

Justin: Kind of. I don't quite know how to explain the feeling that made me tell Dad he needed to ask her.

Tom: Maybe your mother is your guardian angel now.

Justin: I don't know, but I've felt like she's been with me some.

Sam: When else have you felt she was there?

Justin: This may really sound stupid, but the day we were sentenced in the courtroom I felt she was there.

Tom: Do you think she might have helped influence the judge and the District Attorney into giving us this sentence?

Justin: I've wondered. I just don't know if I'm ready for someone else to be my mother and Mary's just not quite like Mom.

Sam: She never will be quite the same as your mother was. If things work out for them you will have to just let Mary be Mary.

Justin: I just don't know if I'm ready yet. My dad and I have spent some more time together lately. We've been looking at cars. Dad said I'd need one when I graduated. He acted real coy about how I might need to drive our old Buick, but I found my Christmas present already so I know he's bulling me.

Tom: What is it?

Justin: It was a check for fifty thousand dollars so I could get the car I wanted.

Sam: *{Almost choking}* Fifty thousand dollars!

Justin: Yeah. It had a note with it that it was to be both my Christmas and graduation present.

Sam: But fifty thousand. You could pay for all of your college with that or even get a small house.

Justin: But you ought to see the car I plan to get. She's a beaut'

Emily: Can I go for a ride in your car?

Justin: Sure. I plan to let all the foxy chicks go for a ride.

Emily: What's a foxy chick?

Sam: A cute girl.

Emily: *{Embarrassed}* Oh. Cool!

Tom: Ok, Emily, I brought over a tv and video player. We're ready for the video. What will it be? We got *{holding up some videos. Any children's videos can be substituted.}* "Bambi", "Toy Story", "Chicken Run" and "Monsters Inc."

Emily: How about "Toy Story".

Justin: "Toy Story" it is.

Emily: I'm feeling kind of funny. I'm going to go get a drink.

{Emily exits.}

Tom: You know, guys. We're kind of funny. Here we are watching "Toy Story" on a Friday night.

Sam: Yeah. I know what you mean. I had someone ask me what I was doing tonight after the game. I told him I had a date to watch cartoons with a six year old. You should have seen the look I got.

Justin: I've got to admit that she's changed the way I think about things.

Tom: Me too. I've decided I probably won't become a doctor.

Justin: Really?

Tom: Yeah. My dad has a doctor friend that runs an orphanage in Peru. I've been corresponding with him and he could use an assistant. I've pretty well decided to devote my life to working with children.

Sam: Ok. Who are you and what have you done with the real Tom?

{They all laugh.}

Justin: I might have guessed watching you with that entourage to the zoo, the circus, the amusement park.

{Suddenly the lights go to a moonlit blackness.}

Tom: Oh, shoot. The power is out.

Sam: I'll grab a flashlight.

{Sam fumbles for a minute then turns on a flashlight. Some dim stage lights come on. Storm sounds can be heard, thunder and lightning.}

Justin: So much for a movie.

Sam: Emily? Emily we got a flashlight. Come on out here. *{Going to edge of the stage and*

calling off stage} Emily, are you alright? *{There is no answer.}* Emily *{Sam goes off stage. There is a brief pause then Sam screams.}* Emily! *The other two run for off stage as Sam comes stumbling on with Emily in his arms unconscious.}* Guys, help. She's unconscious.

Justin: What's the matter?

Sam: I don't know. She was already unconscious when I found her.

Tom: *{Feeling her forehead.}* She's got a fever. We've got to get her to the hospital.

Sam: Shoot. We don't have a car or nothin'.

Justin: Call 911.

Tom: *{Checking the phone}* The phone's dead. What are we going to do?

Justin: *{As Tom keeps trying to interrupt him.}* I'm going to run to my dad's office. He's out of town so his car will be there and I know where he hides an extra set of keys. You get her and Timmy ready and leave a note for Mary.

{Justin takes off out the door.}

Tom: *{Yelling out the door.}* But you could get in trouble if you drive.

Justin: Who cares!

{Justin takes disappears back stage.}

Tom: Sam, I'm going to run home and get my dad. I want him to be her doctor. I'll meet you at the hospital.

{Tom takes off out the door.}

Sam: Emily, hang in there. We'll get you some help. Dear Lord, please help her. I will do anything to help her. Please. Please.

{Sam starts to cry.}

{The lights fade.}

Intermission If Desired

**To Read The Rest, Please
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