

# Christmas Memories

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## **ACT I Scene 1**

Setting: A finely decorated Victorian room  
Year: 1912

*(Older Colleen sits in a rocking chair, her granddaughter sitting in a chair beside her. The room is decorated for Christmas.)*

**Older Colleen:** I love Christmas so much. It is certainly my favorite time of year. You know, looking back, I realize that everything important in my life happened near Christmas time. *(reflectively)* The first really memorable Christmas I had was the time my family left our home in Ireland to come to America.

**Marian:** I don't think I've heard that story, Grandmother. Would you tell me about it?

**Older Colleen:** Of course I will, my dear sweet Marian. Of course I will...

*(Lights fade on scene, then come up on Flashback: Terrence and Mary are sitting at a rustic table in a small Irish cottage, talking quietly.)*

**Older Colleen:** *(narrating)* I was just a girl when my father had the trouble with the English landlord. Lord Fenton had raised the rent on our little house so much that my good parents just couldn't pay it. So, on Christmas Eve of my tenth year...

**Terrence:** I just don't know what ta do, Mary. We don't have the money. They know that.

**Mary:** Well, we could use that bit my mum left me.

**Terrence:** No, Mary. That's not what it was intended for. Besides, 'twouldn't be enough for all the back rent. *(wistfully)* 'Tis almost enough for all four of us to buy passage to America. You know 'tis my dream, *(frustrated)* to be free from *(with disdain)* Lord Fenton, the cruel man that he is. He just keeps upp'in' the rent to force us out of our home! *(shakes his head angrily)* I just don't know how much longer I can put up wi' it. I just don't know! *(slams fist on table)*

**Mary:** *(putting her hand on his, saying soothingly)* Now Terrence, I know 'tis a terrible thing himself has done, and it breaks my heart ta think of me own home *(looking around her with sadness)* bein' pulled down ta make pastureland for sheep. But we both know it's how the world works. Besides, 'tis God's right to allow it ta happen.

**Terrence:** *(sighs, calming slightly)* You're right, of course, Mary. *(Smiles briefly)* Ya usually are, are ya not?

**Mary:** Usually.

**Terrence:** *(sobering, saying thoughtfully)* Maybe the best way ta get to America is for ya ta take the children and go on ahead o' me. I think we'd have enough money for that. I could follow along after, once I had saved enough for me own passage. *(Sighs, shakes his head)* I just can't stand ta see my family turned out inta the cold. What do ya think, Mary? Would ya do that for me? Would ya take the children and make a new start for them?

**Mary:** Oh, Terrence, I could never go without ya.

**Terrence:** It seems like 'tis the only way to see our dream. Besides, 'twould not be long before I'd be joinin' ya. Will ya do it Mary?

**Mary:** *(nods, beginning to cry)*

*(Lights fade; Aidan and Young Colleen enter. Family is standing together in room; Mary and Aidan each have a small carpetbag in their hands.)*

**Terrence:** *(sadly, but trying to keep a brave front for his family)* Well, ya'd better be goin', I'm thinkin'. William is waitin' out there with the dray.

**Young Colleen:** Oh, Father, we can't leave you. What will ya do without us?

**Terrence:** *(kneeling in front of her)* Now Colleen, me darlin', I'll be missin' ya, and your mum, and brother *(glances at both)*, very much. But 'twill not be long before I'll sailin' inta big New York harbor, just like you're goin' ta do soon. What an adventure you are goin' on. Are ya not?

**Young Colleen:** *(fighting tears)* Yes, Father.

**Mary:** We'd better be goin' now.

**Terrence:** You're right, ya should. Aidan, son, you look after your mum and sister for me, won't ya? You're the man o' the family in my absence.

**Aidan:** Of course, Father.

**Terrence:** Good. I know I can count on ya, son. *(Turning back to Mary)* Mary, dear...*(embraces her, then each of the children)*

*(Lights fade on scene)*

## ACT I Scene 4

**Older Colleen:** My concern for Mum was great. What would Aidan and I do if something should happen to her? She was the center of our lives. We needed her so much.

**Marian:** That must have been so difficult for you, Grandmother, being so young.

**Older Colleen:** Oh, it was. But I had no need to worry. My mother had a gracious heavenly Father who had a plan for her to fulfill. He also had a plan for my life, and He was working it even then.

Aidan and I helped at the mission as much as we could. Pastor and Mrs. Benton were so kind to us. They took good care of us, and tried to give us help spiritually. Dr. Woodward, who spent a lot of time at the mission, tried to help also. I just could not see God's goodness in what had happened until that Christmas Eve just a few weeks after we had come to the mission. Mrs. Benton knew just what I needed...

*(Lights come up on Flashback; Young Colleen and Mrs. Benton are talking as they clear dishes from a table in a simple but festively decorated room.)*

**Mrs. Benton:** I'm so thankful for all the help you've given since you came, Colleen. You've been a blessing to have around.

**Young Colleen:** *(shyly)* I'm glad to help, ma'am.

**Mrs. Benton:** Your mother seems to be doing much better. Dr. Woodward was just telling me he thinks she'll be up and about in a few days. *(Pauses; looks around the room as if searching for something)* Hmm. Now where did that gravy boat go? I thought I put it right here on the hutch. *(Glances quickly over room, then looks questioningly at Young Colleen)* Did you happen to notice where that is?

**Young Colleen:** *(stifling a giggle, nods, and points to the gravy boat on the table)* It's right there, ma'am. I saw you put it there a few minutes ago.

**Mrs. Benton:** Oh! Of course. *(Laughing)* I would forget my head if it weren't attached, I really would.

**Young Colleen:** *(Giggling)* Yes, ma'am. *(Growing serious, speaks hesitantly)* Mrs. Benton, could...could I ask you something?

**Mrs. Benton:** *(Also growing serious)* Of course my dear, anything.

**Young Colleen:** Do you think God might be punishing me for doing wrong?

I mean, could Mum's sickness be because I got angry with Him when my father died?

**Mrs. Benton:** (*hugs Young Colleen, says compassionately*) Oh, my dear, I don't think so. God loves you. Sometimes He allows things to come into our lives to draw us closer to Him. We can't question why things happened the way they did for your family, but we can be sure that God has a purpose to fulfill in all of it. Your mother knows that, and I believe Aidan does as well. Romans 8:28 says that "all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."

**Young Colleen:** But I was really angry with God. I blamed Him for father dyin', then my mum got sick. I was very wrong. (*starting to cry*)

**Mrs. Benton:** (*sitting at the table, motioning for Colleen to sit*) Colleen, the Bible tells us that all people have sinned. Everyone falls short of what God expects us to be.

**Young Colleen:** (*tearfully*) Really?

**Mrs. Benton:** Really. But the Bible also says that Jesus came to die on the cross for the sins of the whole world, so that we could all be forgiven by God.

**Young Colleen:** Mum told me about when Jesus died. She said Jesus was God's Son.

**Mrs. Benton:** Yes, He was. It was very hard for God to send Jesus to earth to be crucified, but He knew it was necessary to that we could be forgiven and go to heaven with Him. (*Stands, takes Bible from hutch, sitting again, opens to John 3:16*) Let's look at John 3:16 to see what God says about it. (*Reads John 3:16 aloud*) You see. God gave Jesus because he loves us so much. God wants to forgive you for your sin and make you His child, just as He did for your Mum, and for me, and for Aidan, and Dr. Woodward, and Pastor Benton.

**Young Colleen:** How can I be forgiven and be His child?

**Mrs. Benton:** You simply need to pray and tell Him you know you're a sinner and you are sorry for that. Accept His free gift of salvation.

**Young Colleen:** Can I pray right now, with you?

**Mrs. Benton:** Of course.

**Young Colleen:** *(bowing her head)* God, I know I did some bad things, and I know they were sin. I'm sorry for that and I would like you to forgive me, please. I want to be Your child. I pray You'll make Mum better soon. She loves You very much, I'm sure she does. Thank you, Lord. Amen.

**Mrs. Benton:** Oh Colleen, I'm so happy for you. Now you are my sister in Christ. Welcome to the family! *(hugs Colleen)*

*(Lights fade on scene)*

## ACT I Scene 7

**Older Colleen:** By the next Christmas, David and I had formed a friendship, which eventually grew deeper. He spent a lot of time with my family, so we got to know each other well. We found we had much in common.

**Marian:** *(smiling)* I know how the rest of this goes.

**Older Colleen:** *(laughing)* Yes, I suppose you do. *(growing thoughtful)* Ahh, he was quite a man. That special Christmas Eve when I was eighteen...

*(Lights fade, come up on Flashback; David is just outside the parlor door, pacing and mumbling under his breath. He turns suddenly, nods his head resolutely, and enters the parlor. Colleen is seated in the parlor of the Woodward home.)*

**David:** Colleen...

**Colleen:** Yes, David?

**David:** *(nervously clears his throat)* I'll be right back! *(He exits quickly from the parlor and pantomimes chiding himself for being such a coward, prays silently, then gets down on one knee and practices his proposal before entering the parlor again. He begins to sit down, then changes his mind and quickly stands and clears his throat again)* Colleen, we've known each other for about a year now.

**Colleen:** Yes, exactly a year tonight.

**David:** *(distracted, starts pacing again)* Yes. And, ah, we've learned a lot about each other in that time.

**Colleen:** *(nods)* Yes.

**David:** *(starts to sit again, then stands and paces again)* And, well, I've come to truly enjoy your company.

**Colleen:** Thank you. I enjoy being with you as well.

**David:** Me too. I mean—being with *you*. I enjoy being with *you*. *(finally sits down, but continues fidgeting nervously)* Yes, well, I suppose what I'm trying to say...that is, what I mean to say...

**Colleen:** *(with anticipation)* Yes?

**David:** I, um...

**Colleen:** *(chuckling)* David, what is it?

**David:** *(shakes his head, sighs in frustration)* Oh Colleen, I've botched this whole thing. What I wanted to say was—*(kneeling down on one knee in front of Colleen)* Will you make me an extremely happy man by giving me your hand in marriage? I truly believe God wants us together. I've spoken to Dr. Woodward and your mother. I—

**Colleen:** *(cutting him off, says excitedly)* Oh, David. Of course I will marry you!

**David:** *(with slight surprise)* You will? I mean, you believe it's God's will for us?

**Colleen:** Yes, David, I do.

**David:** *(with relief)* I do, too! Thank you for saying yes.

**Colleen:** *(sweetly)* You're welcome, David. There is one thing I would really like to ask of you, though.

**David:** What's that, *(hesitating briefly, emphasizing the word)* "dear?"

**Colleen:** *(shyly)* Could we have the wedding on Christmas?

**David:** Christmas. A Christmas wedding... No, that would be fine!

**Colleen:** Then you wouldn't mind waiting a year?

**David:** A year? Next Christmas! *(trying to sound convincing)* No, not at all. Next Christmas would be perfect. *(pausing, as if suddenly realizing how long a year is, turns towards audience and mutters under his breath)* A whole year.

*(Lights fade on scene)*

## ACT I Scene 10

**Older Colleen:** *(sighs, smiling)* Andrew was the light of our life. He was such a good and happy boy. But, I must say, he had a stubborn streak. As he grew to be school age, his independence became very evident. He liked to do things his way, though he was for the most part an obedient and dutiful boy.

I shall always remember the Christmas Eve when he was seven. While we had taken him to Sunday School and church all his life, and he always learned his lessons and memorized his verses, he hadn't truly come to know



the Lord in his heart--until the night of the church Christmas pageant. The message of the program had made Andrew think...

*(Lights fade, come up on flashback: Young Andrew is seated on a chair in the Frasier's sitting room with a thoughtful expression on his face. Colleen enters with a tray of cookies, sets the tray down on a table, then looks carefully at Young Andrew.)*

**Colleen:** Andrew, is something wrong?

**Young Andrew:** *(shrugs)*

**Colleen:** *(Sitting down beside Andrew)* I was very proud of you tonight. You did a good job. You were undoubtedly the very best shepherd in the pageant.

**Andrew:** *(sullenly)* Thanks.

**Colleen:** *(Glancing at the tray she brought in)* I thought you might like some cookies.

**Andrew:** Thanks. Where's Papa?

**Colleen:** He was called out. He left just a few minutes ago. Mr. Linstrum has pneumonia again.

**Andrew:** Oh.

**Colleen:** Was there something you needed him for?

**Andrew:** *(shrugs)* I just wanted to talk to him, is all.

**Colleen:** Well, I know I'm not the same as Papa, but perhaps you could talk to me?

**Andrew:** *(glancing at Colleen, looking then down)* I guess so. See, I wanted to ask Papa about Jesus.

**Colleen:** That's one of my favorite subjects. What did you want to know?

**Andrew:** Why would God want to make his Son into a little baby just so He could grow up and die? Wasn't that really hard for Him to do?

**Colleen:** My, you have been thinking about this, haven't you?

**Andrew:** (*nods his head*)

**Colleen:** Well, to answer your first question, God sent His Son to die for us so that He could pay the penalty for our sin. You know what sin is, don't you?

**Andrew:** (*nodding*) It's when you do something wrong that would get you into trouble.

**Colleen:** Right. It is anything that disobeys what God said in His Word, the Bible.

**Andrew:** So why would Jesus have to die because I sin?

**Colleen:** The Bible says that the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. Jesus died in yours and my place so that we would not have to have an eternal death in hell.

**Andrew:** That would be bad, wouldn't it?

**Colleen:** Yes, but because Jesus died for us, we can have eternal life in Heaven with Him.

**Andrew:** But why would He want to do that for us?

**Colleen:** Because He loves us so much. You know, Andrew, it was very difficult for God to give Jesus to die. But because of that love He has for us, He did it anyway. It is a gift from Him to us. All we must do is accept it.

**Andrew:** (*thinking*) All right, Mother. Thanks for the cookies. (*yawns*)

**Colleen:** You look tired son. Perhaps you should go up to bed now.

**Andrew:** Can't I wait up for Papa?

**Colleen:** Not tonight, sweetheart. Papa will probably be home late.

**Andrew:** *(Rises to leave)* All right. G'night, Mother. *(hugs Colleen)*

**Colleen:** Goodnight, Andrew. I love you, son.

**Andrew:** *(pauses in doorway)* Love you, too, Mother. *(exits)*

**Colleen:** *(Musing, with concern bows head to pray)*

*(Lights fade on scene)*

## **ACT II**

### **Scene 1**

**Older Colleen:** When one is young, looking ahead to life, one is filled with so many plans and dreams. As time goes on, many of those plans and dreams go unfulfilled. *(Pauses, as if memory is difficult)* Hurts and disappointments come and catch you unaware. *(slowly, emotionally)* The Christmas your father turned twenty was one of those times. We tried to raise Andrew to love God. We were unable to have any more children, so we were devoted to lovingly rearing our son as best we could. *(Pausing, seeming to search for an answer)* Sometimes we allow the cares and influences of the world to creep in without our even realizing and things get off track. Sometimes we don't do the kind of job we had hoped to...

*(Lights fade, come up on flashback; David and Colleen are seated in sitting room. Colleen is knitting and David is reading a book. Andrew, now grown, enters energetically.)*

**David:** *(Looking up from his book, saying sternly)* Well, son, where have you been so late, and on Christmas Eve? You should have been home with your family.

**Andrew:** *(defensive)* I was with some of my friends.

**David:** (*Sarcastically*) Really? Well, you missed the Christmas Eve service at church earlier. We expected you to be there. We had plans to celebrate your birthday, as well.

**Andrew:** I was at the lecture hall. Marshall Wilkinson was speaking tonight. I simply could not miss it.

**David:** What would that man have to say that would be more important than celebrating the birth of Christ, not to mention your own birthday, with your family? You know we do not approve of Mr. Wilkinson's philosophies. He is far too worldly-minded to be any kind of moral influence.

**Andrew:** (*frustrated*) You wouldn't understand, Father. You are too close minded to be objective. Besides, you don't know anything about Dr. Wilkinson. He is a respected authority on many subjects.

**David:** (*Visibly angry, rises to confront Andrew*) As I understand it, he also subscribes to Mr. Darwin's theories, among other things.

**Colleen:** (*trying to calm him*) Please David, not now. Andrew, please.

**David:** No, I will not have my son buying into the hogwash the modernists are trying to sell. Thank the Lord you will be isolated from most of it when you return to college.

**Andrew:** Well, Father, that is something I needed to speak with you about. You see, I won't be going back to college after the holidays.

**David:** (*Explosively*) What?!

**Colleen:** Andrew, what are you saying?

**Andrew:** I'm dropping out of school so that I can do a bit of traveling. Some of my friends will be going abroad after the new year, and I plan to join them.

**David:** No son of mine will go traipsing around Europe with a group of free thinkers!

**Colleen:** *(says soothingly to David)* David, calm down, dear. *(Turning to Andrew)* Andrew, are you sure you want to do this? What about your medical training?

**Andrew:** My medical training? You mean the education in a field I never wanted to go into in the first place?

**David:** You have always wanted to be a doctor.

**Andrew:** So I can hand out medication and be away from my family day and night? You always wanted me to be a doctor. Ever since I was a boy, you've been telling me how you hoped I would follow in your footsteps. How could I when you were never there long enough for me to get to know you?

**Colleen:** Andrew, you are not being fair. Your father spent a great deal of time with you when you were growing up.

**David:** *(As if in shock, shaking his head)* No, Colleen, let him have his say.

**Andrew:** I have nothing else to say, Father. I will be leaving in the morning. Goodbye, Mother. *(Exits angrily)*

*(David sits down slowly, wearily, puts his head in his hands. Colleen looks toward door, placing a hand on David's shoulder. Lights fade on scene.)*

## ACT II

### Scene 3

**Older Colleen:** God answered our prayers, sooner than either of us expected. By the next morning, in fact...

*(Lights fade, come up of flashback: Colleen is in sitting room, sipping a cup of tea. There is a knock, she turns toward door as Andrew enters.)*

**Andrew:** Mother? I...I knocked; I wasn't sure if—

**Colleen:** (*Cutting him off*) Andrew! (*Rises quickly, rushes to Andrew and hugs him*) My son! My prayers have been answered. You are safe and you have come home!

**Andrew:** Yes Mother, I am home.

**Colleen:** Your father will want to see you. He is in the library. I'll go get him. (*Turns to leave*)

**Andrew:** (*Stops her, says apologetically*) Mother, wait. First I want to tell you how sorry I am. I...

**Colleen:** I know son. I know.

**David:** (*Saying as he enters*) Colleen, I thought I heard...Andrew? You're—

**Andrew:** (*With humility*) I'm home, Father. I—

**David:** (*Rushes to Andrew, hugs him*)

**Andrew:** (*Still in David's arms*) I'm so sorry about what happened. Can you forgive me for how I treated you and Mother—for leaving?

**David:** (*Stands back with his hands on Andrew's shoulders*) My son has returned. Yes, I forgive you.

**Andrew:** I was so wrong to leave. It was in pure rebellion against God as well as you both. But I have learned my lesson. I had to learn it the hard way, but I did learn it. Life away from the Lord and home wasn't what I expected. The Lord was convicting me the entire time. He was drawing me, I knew He was. I finally listened to Him and allowed my heart to come home to Him. Then I knew I had to come home to you as well.

**David:** (*Emotionally*) Welcome home, son.

(*Lights fade on scene*)

## ACT II

## Scene 6

**Older Colleen:** I still miss him, especially at Christmas. I know he is in heaven, in the very presence of the Lord, and God will call me home to join him some day. We had so many happy years together.

Looking back on my life, I can see the hand of God working in each situation. Each special Christmas season has His hand print on it. So many Christmases, with so many memories. Times of sorrow, and times of celebration, all blessings from the Lord. Cherished gifts from the heart of the Father to me, His child. May glory and honor go to He who gave me all those Christmas memories.

*(Lights fade on scene)*

THE END

