

# A MOSTLY MINNESOTA CHRISTMAS

A FULL-LENGTH HOLIDAY COMEDY

By **Brian Mitchell**

Copyright © MMXII by Brian Mitchell

All Rights Reserved

Heuer Publishing LLC, Cedar Rapids, Iowa

ISBN: 978-1-61588-252-6

Professionals and amateurs are hereby warned that this work is subject to a royalty. Royalty must be paid every time a play is performed whether or not it is presented for profit and whether or not admission is charged. A play is performed any time it is acted before an audience. All rights to this work of any kind including but not limited to professional and amateur stage performing rights are controlled exclusively by Heuer Publishing LLC. Inquiries concerning rights should be addressed to Heuer Publishing LLC.

This work is fully protected by copyright. No part of this work may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without permission of the publisher. Copying (by any means) or performing a copyrighted work without permission constitutes an infringement of copyright.

All organizations receiving permission to produce this work agree to give the author(s) credit in any and all advertisement and publicity relating to the production. The author(s) billing must appear below the title and be at least 50% as large as the title of the Work. All programs, advertisements, and other printed material distributed or published in connection with production of the work must include the following notice: **“Produced by special arrangement with Heuer Publishing LLC of Cedar Rapids, Iowa.”**

There shall be no deletions, alterations, or changes of any kind made to the work, including the changing of character gender, the cutting of dialogue, or the alteration of objectionable language unless directly authorized by the publisher or otherwise allowed in the work’s “Production Notes.” The title of the play shall not be altered.

The right of performance is not transferable and is strictly forbidden in cases where scripts are borrowed or purchased second-hand from a third party. All rights, including but not limited to professional and amateur stage performing, recitation, lecturing, public reading, television, radio, motion picture, video or sound taping, internet streaming or other forms of broadcast as technology progresses, and the rights of translation into foreign languages, are strictly reserved.

**COPYING OR REPRODUCING ALL OR ANY PART OF THIS BOOK IN ANY MANNER IS STRICTLY FORBIDDEN BY LAW.** One copy for each speaking role must be purchased for production purposes. Single copies of scripts are sold for personal reading or production consideration only.

***PUBLISHED BY***

**HEUER PUBLISHING LLC**

**P.O. BOX 248 • CEDAR RAPIDS, IOWA 52406**

**TOLL FREE (800) 950-7529 • FAX (319) 368-8011**

## A MOSTLY MINNESOTA CHRISTMAS

By Brian Mitchell

**SYNOPSIS:** 'Tis the season to be merry...and annoyed by your family. As Bill and Abby prepare for Christmas in frigid northern Minnesota, long-estranged relatives start showing up on their doorstep to heal old wounds and reconcile irreconcilable differences. Besides the surprise relatives, Abby is busy producing and directing the Christmas Pageant at her church and let's face it, bringing together one's family to celebrate Christmas never goes quite as planned. With a sharp tongue and a soft heart, this rollicking comedy is a reminder of how Christmas and family go hand-in-hand, no matter what happens.

### CAST OF CHARACTERS

*(FOUR MEN, THREE WOMEN, FOUR EITHER (YOUTH ROLES))*

BILL HANSON (m) .....A Minnesota man, 35-50. *(282 lines)*  
ABBY HANSON (f).....Bill's wife, formerly Ed's wife, 35-50.  
*(187 lines)*  
VIC (m).....Grandpa, visiting from Texas, 55-80.  
*(182 lines)*  
RUTH (f).....Grandma, Vic's wife, 55-80. *(92 lines)*  
ED (m) .....Bill's brother from Miami. A weatherman,  
40-50. *(167 lines)*  
LISA (f).....Ed's (younger) wife, 30-45. *(129 lines)*  
JACK (m/f) .....Bill and Abby's son, 10-14. *(31 lines; gender  
flexible: JACKIE)*  
DIANE (m/f) .....Bill and Abby's daughter, 10-14. *(29 lines;  
gender flexible: DEAN)*  
CHRIS (m/f).....Ed and Lisa's daughter, 8-12. *(18 lines;  
gender flexible)*  
NICK (m/f).....Ed and Lisa's son and former reality  
television star, 10-14. *(40 lines; gender  
flexible: NICKIE)*  
OLIVER FUNKE (m).....Lisa's fling. *(21 lines)*

**SETTING**

The action of the play takes place in the house of Bill and Abby, somewhere in the northern Minnesota woods near a lake. It is Christmas weekend. The home is a huge old farmhouse, cold and drafty, with a fireplace and old but comfortable furniture. It is decorated for the holiday. A nativity scene is set up in the living room, complete with a manger and a plastic doll wrapped in swaddling clothes to represent baby Jesus. A small, rather sad looking Christmas tree is set up nearby; the decorations upon it are sparse.

**ACT ONE**

Scene 1: December 22nd

Scene 2: December 23rd

**ACT TWO**

Scene 1: Christmas Eve morning

Scene 2: Christmas Eve; 5:00 pm

Scene 3: Christmas Eve; 11:30pm

Perusal Only  
Do Not Copy

ACT ONE, SCENE 1

*As the lights come up on the Hanson's living room, Christmas music can be heard. ABBY and BILL enter together. BILL carries a beer in each hand. Their argument is one that is gently mocking, yet backed by an enduring love.*

**ABBY:** (*Shutting the music off.*) Must you drink that beer now? Your dad is going to be here any minute!

**BILL:** That's right, and then you won't let me have *any* beer. So, I'm storing it up for the holiday. I'm like a camel, except for beer.

**ABBY:** You're a camel, all right. You spit, you smell, and you have a nasty disposition.

**BILL:** What have you got against camels?

**ABBY:** Nothing. At the moment, I think I'd actually prefer them to you!

**BILL:** Well, Merry Christmas to you, too, darling.

**ABBY:** Can it, Bill! You didn't help with the food, the cleaning, the shopping, the wrapping, the shoveling of the walk, decorating the tree, or writing the Christmas cards; you have no right to be sarcastic.

**BILL:** I put the windows in upstairs, didn't I? And, how can you say I didn't help with the Christmas cards? I picked up the stamps, right? That's help!

**ABBY:** You work at the post office, Bill. Thanks for going above and beyond the call of duty for me! You couldn't even get Christmas stamps?

**BILL:** I thought I got Christmas stamps! Winnie the Pooh is fat and wears red, doesn't he? Admit it; you've mistaken him for Santa before, haven't you?

**ABBY:** Forget it. It's done.

**BILL:** I forgot it as soon as I did it.

**ABBY:** Bill, we need to make things special for Christmas this year. You know that the doctor thinks your dad is getting dementia. This might be the last year we have with the Vic we both know.

**BILL:** I know, hon. I'll make sure the kids are on their best behavior.

**ABBY:** (*Ensuring the window is completely closed.*) I'm more worried about you. (*Beat.*) I feel a draft coming from this window. Check the thermostat, will you?

**BILL:** What good is it gonna do? Until we get more insulation in the attic, we're not going to be able to keep this place warm.

**ABBY:** What is it set at?

**BILL:** It's *set* at eighty-five.

**ABBY:** And what's the actual temp?

**BILL:** Fifty-nine. No, wait! Fifty-eight. We lost a degree just now.

**ABBY:** If you'd let me get a job, we could afford some insulation. Or the heating bill.

**BILL:** We've already talked about this. Do you want everyone in town to know what you did? Because this is a small town and word would get out as soon as someone did a background check.

**ABBY:** Well, it's freezing in here! I'd rather the truth get out while I'm alive than die of hypothermia trying to keep my pride.

**BILL:** It's not just about your pride, Abby. Our lives would change completely! If everyone in town knew you were convicted of shooting your ex-husband, you could kiss our perfect little lives goodbye!

**ABBY:** Perfect little lives? Seriously? Bill, we live within a stone's throw from the North Pole!

**BILL:** It's northern Minnesota. It's not like we live in Canada or anything...or Wisconsin. The point I'm trying to make is that the truth would change our lives here. Do you think the other mothers at church would want a potential murderer directing their kids in the Christmas Pageant?

**ABBY:** I shot him with birdshot! It wasn't gonna kill him, just humble him a little. Besides, I was convicted of an aggravated misdemeanor, not attempted murder...it's not even a felony!

**BILL:** Still.

**ABBY:** Okay, have it your way. They'll find our frozen bodies in the spring, but at least you'll get your way. Like always...

**BILL:** Always? Always? Since when do I get what I want? It's never about what I want.

**ABBY:** Don't start.

**BILL:** I didn't want you to yell at me about the stamps.

**ABBY:** Maybe we'd better get a fire started.

**BILL:** Did we go to Vegas for vacation? Orlando? Nope, we visited your sister in Fargo. Fargo!

**ABBY:** Drop it, already!

**BILL:** Fine.

**ABBY:** It's so cold in here! I can't feel my toes, again.

**BILL:** I know. You get cranky when you're cold. I'm gonna turn the thermostat up to eighty-eight.

**ABBY:** It won't do any good. The furnace is running non-stop now.

**BILL:** At least I'll feel like I'm doing something!

*He returns to the chair and sits.*

**ABBY:** I think we're ready. How does everything look?

**BILL:** It looks fine.

**ABBY:** Where are the kids? I'll ask them.

**BILL:** Really, dear, it looks good.

**ABBY:** Well, it's too late now. This will have to do. Maybe I should have taken down the manger. We'll have to move it to the church tomorrow anyway...

**BILL:** The place looks great, hon. Okay? The food smells wonderful. The decorations are beautiful. The place is so clean you can't even smell the Christmas tree over the Pine Sol! You did a great job! Really!

*The doorbell rings.*

**ABBY:** It's too late now. I wish I had a few more minutes!

**BILL:** Gee, I'd tell you the place looks great, hon – but, *oh, wait!* I did!

**ABBY:** No, don't get up, Bill! I'll get the door!

**BILL:** You don't have to be insulting about it, dear.

**ABBY:** I'm sorry! *Please* let me apologize for being insulting. You must be *exhausted* from buying all of those secular *stamps* and pointlessly turning up the thermostat!

**BILL:** You know, I can *tell* when you're being sarcastic!

**ABBY:** Did you move the carcass like I asked you to?

**BILL:** It's fine.

**ABBY:** It is not fine, Bill. It's dead. If your dad finds a deer carcass in the garage he'll have a conniption fit. Move it.

*The doorbell rings.*

**BILL:** Now? It's cold outside.

**ABBY:** Imagine how cold it will be when you're sleeping out in the garage with the deer.

**BILL:** I can't leave it outside, the raccoons will eat it.

**ABBY:** Not my problem. Put it in the freezer.

**BILL:** The freezer isn't big enough.

**ABBY:** Not my problem. Ask Nelson if he'll take it.

**BILL:** No! He accused me of shooting at him last week! I don't trust him!

**ABBY:** *Did* you shoot at Nelson?

**BILL:** Well, not *at* him. I shot way over his head just to spook that big buck that wanders the south side of the lake.

**ABBY:** Unbelievable! You need to be more careful around him, Bill. That man came back from Iraq a few bricks short of a load. I swear, how is it that evolution hasn't completely gotten rid of men?

**BILL:** It's a mystery.

**ABBY:** Bill, I don't care what you do with that deer corpse; just get it out of the garage!

**BILL:** All right. I'll take care of it.

**ABBY:** You'd better!

**BILL:** You know there are times I wonder how Ed could have ever let you go...

*The doorbell rings.*

**ABBY:** It's a mystery...get rid of that beer!

A MOSTLY MINNESOTA CHRISTMAS

*ABBY goes to the door. BILL stashes the beer cans in the Christmas tree. VIC and RUTH enter. VIC carries a suitcase and wears a heavy coat. RUTH wears a very nice dress and some jewelry.*

**VIC:** Good God! It's freezing out there!

**RUTH:** Stop whining, you baby.

**ABBY:** It's December, Vic. It gets that way in Minnesota.

**VIC:** Take my coat, will ya? I think that cold air shrunk my bladder.

**ABBY:** You know where the bathroom is.

**VIC:** I haven't lost my mind, yet.

*VIC exits to bathroom.*

**BILL:** You all right, Dad?

**RUTH:** He's fine; just has a bladder the size of a pea.

**VIC:** *(Off.)* I just need a few minutes out of that wind. Where are the kids?

**BILL:** They're around someplace. Jack was watching hockey and Diane just got back from her piano lesson.

**VIC:** *(Off.)* I'm looking forward to her recital! It's so nice that you could incorporate it into the Christmas Pageant.

**BILL:** It'll be a big event. Abby put an ad in the paper so everyone would know about it.

**RUTH:** Well, I think it's fantastic that she plays the piano so well.

**ABBY:** She's worked really hard on the music. She's pretty nervous, though. There'll be almost a hundred people there.

**VIC:** *(Off.)* What piece is she playing?

**BILL:** Taco Bell Cannon.

**ABBY:** *Pachelbel!* Pachelbel Canon in D.

**RUTH:** It's the composer's last name, Bill.

**BILL:** Oh, really? If it isn't *Taco Bell Cannon*, then why are there *burritos* being shot out of a *cannon* at the recital?

**ABBY:** What are you talking about?

**BILL:** Diane said they were going to borrow those t-shirt cannons from the high school and fire burritos into the audience. *Taco Bell Cannon...*

**ABBY:** And you believed her?

**BILL:** I...I wanted to believe! (*VIC enters from bathroom.*)

**VIC:** I love Canon in D. You had that at your wedding didn't you?

**ABBY:** My first wedding...

**VIC:** Oh. Right. Sorry.

**RUTH:** Honestly, Vic.

**VIC:** Sorry.

**ABBY:** It's okay.

*DIANE enters in a fury. She is an average teen, dressed warmly and holding a small piece of paper.*

**DIANE:** How could you do this to me? Why?

**ABBY:** Why what, Diane?

**VIC:** Hello, Diane!

**RUTH:** You're growing up so fast!

**DIANE:** Look at this Grandpa! Look at what she did to me!

**VIC:** (*Taking the sheet of paper.*) It's an invitation to your piano recital. Nice!

**DIANE:** (*To ABBY.*) I told you we needed to order these, didn't I? But you said "We can just make them on the computer and save the money." Do you remember that, Mother?

**ABBY:** Well, yes...

**BILL:** There's no need to spend good money on pieces of paper that people will just throw away, Diane!

**DIANE:** You don't think so? Read it, Grandpa!

**VIC:** "Come see Diane's big recital." (*Beat.*) I like the moose in the tux...classy.

**DIANE:** (*Taking the invitation back and waving at ABBY.*) No, Grandpa! That is what the invitation *should* say! Instead it says, and I quote: "Come see Diane's big *rectal*." Did you catch that? You missed the 'l' in recital, Mom! People are coming to look at my *big rectal*! Spell-check, Mom. Use it!

**RUTH:** Oh, dear! That isn't good at all, is it?

**VIC:** No, that isn't good. Nope, not good.

**ABBY:** *(Takes the sheet and sees for herself.)* I used spell-check! I'm sure no one will even notice, Diane. I'm sorry!

**DIANE:** Sorry? My life at school is about to become toxic! How can I show my face there again? And the church? Are we supposed to even say 'rectal' in church? How can I show my face *anywhere* ever again?

**BILL:** On the upside, if people are concerned with your rectal, maybe they won't be looking for your face.

**DIANE:** Funny, Dad! Ha-ha! *(To VIC.)* Please tell me I'm adopted!

**ABBY:** It's not the end of the world, Diane.

**DIANE:** I guess I should just be happy you didn't tell them it was a *Christmas rectal!* People would expect me to have a string of green and red lights coming out of my butt!

**VIC:** Oh. That reminds me, Bill, do you have a plunger handy? You got weak plumbing in there.

**DIANE:** Grandpa! Honestly! How can I ever let anyone know I'm a member of this family!

*DIANE exits in a fury.*

**VIC:** What'd I say?

**ABBY:** It wasn't you, Vic. She's just being a teenager.

**BILL:** Maybe we shouldn't tell her that you sent a copy of the invitation to the newspaper?

**ABBY:** I certainly won't bring it up.

**VIC:** The plunger?

**BILL:** I thought you had to pee.

**VIC:** So did I! At my age, you still get surprised once in a while. When I flushed, it didn't even move. It's like an iceberg, except brown. *(Beat.)* It's a poop-berg!

**BILL:** There's a draft in there, Dad. It freezes the water. On the right side of the stool is a stick. Break the ice with it and try to flush again.

**VIC:** *(Retreating to the bathroom.)* Oh, I get it. It's like ice-fishing in reverse.

*VIC exits to bathroom.*

**BILL:** I heard that!

**RUTH:** He thinks he's funny.

*The sound of a toilet flushing. VIC enters from bathroom.*

**VIC:** So, Bill, have you told Abby the big news?

**ABBY:** What big news?

**BILL:** I meant to. I really did! But it just never seemed to be the right time.

**RUTH:** Bill!

**ABBY:** What were you going to tell me, Bill?

**BILL:** Well, it's kind-a complicated, dear. *(Pause.)* You know, it's Christmas time...

**VIC:** It's about Ed...

**BILL:** I got this, Dad.

**RUTH:** Oh, this is gonna get ugly.

**ABBY:** What about Ed?

**BILL:** Well, you and Ed haven't spoken for some time.

**VIC:** Fifteen years.

**BILL:** Right. Thanks. So, anyway, Dad thought it might be nice, with all that's happened this year, if I invited Ed here for Christmas. *(Pause.)* Don't be mad!

**RUTH:** Oh, she's mad!

**ABBY:** *ED* is coming here?

**BILL:** It'll be okay, dear. It's Christmas. Dad asked if it would be okay...what could I say?

**ABBY:** He's coming to *my house*?

**RUTH:** Should have told her, Bill.

**BILL:** How come when it's time to clean it's 'our house', but when Ed visits it's 'your house'?

**RUTH:** You're digging your own grave here, Bill.

**ABBY:** Your dad invited him here, to stay with us, and you didn't warn me?

**RUTH:** You can't still be upset after so long, dear? I mean, you did shoot him.

**BILL:** I told you she wouldn't like it.

**VIC:** It's been fifteen years!

**BILL:** I told you.

**ABBY:** No! No, it's all right. I mean, it has been a long time.

**BILL:** That's right! You're both remarried.

**VIC:** And he's all healed. And you can only see the scars when he drops his pants.

**RUTH:** Stop trying to help, Vic.

**ABBY:** He lived and I survived.

**BILL:** Exactly! And you got *me* out of the deal, right?

**ABBY:** Don't make this harder than it already is.

**VIC:** You gotta tell her; like a Band-Aid, all at once.

**ABBY:** What?

**BILL:** Oh, nothing, really...just that, you know, Lisa is com—

**ABBY:** No!

**BILL:** Well, yes, actually. He's planning on bringing Lisa and the, uh...the kids with him.

**ABBY:** No!

**BILL:** She *is* his wife now.

**RUTH:** And, it's Christmas!

**ABBY:** No!

**VIC:** Uh-oh. I think we got her brain stuck. It's probably the cold! (*Checks thermostat.*) It's only fifty-four degrees in here!

**BILL:** I know you still hold a little grudge from when he cheated on you with her, Abby. But let's be fair; you *did* shoot him! And...and, they're married now!

**ABBY:** And I married you.

**BILL:** Well, yeah! See? It all worked out, didn't it? (*Beat.*) Are you crying? Why are you crying?

**VIC:** Maybe you should give her a few minutes, Bill. Why don't you take my bags to the bedroom for me?

**BILL:** (*To ABBY.*) You know I would never cheat on you, don't you?

**ABBY:** I know. Because, Bill, I won't use birdshot again.

**BILL:** Point taken.

*BILL picks up the suitcases and exits to bedroom.*

**VIC:** You okay?

**ABBY:** I'm sorry. I really thought I was over Ed and...and...and...

**VIC:** Lisa?

*ABBY nods.*

**RUTH:** Poor dear. You've never really dealt with it after all this time...

**VIC:** He cheated on you. You shot him. It happens. Move on.

**ABBY:** I loved him.

**VIC:** Yep. You loved him. He screwed up. You got angry. He said he was leaving. And you shot him. Sounds like a movie Ruth watched on Lifetime now that I think about it...

**RUTH:** I went to bed, Vic. From then on, it was *your* movie on Lifetime.

**ABBY:** I'll be alright. I guess it was just the shock of it.

**VIC:** They'll be flying in tomorrow morning.

**ABBY:** Okay.

**VIC:** Can you handle it?

**ABBY:** I think so.

**RUTH:** All right.

*JACK enters.*

**JACK:** Hi!

**VIC:** Jack! How's the game?

**JACK:** Duluth won on a power-play. They need a new goalie, though.

**VIC:** That could be you in a few years.

**RUTH:** He's not a goalie.

**JACK:** I'm an offensive wing, Grandpa.

**VIC:** They'll need those, too. Duluth is a good school, isn't it?

**JACK:** I don't know. They play good hockey though.

**ABBY:** Jack, would you set the table for us? Supper will be ready, soon.

**JACK:** Sure, Mom.

*JACK exits.*

**VIC:** He's a great kid, Abby.

**ABBY:** Yes, he really is. I hope you're hungry. I made plenty!

**VIC:** Good. I had lunch in the airport. Fifteen dollar hamburgers and they were horrible. What are we having?

**ABBY:** Hamburgers.

**VIC:** Oh...good.

**RUTH:** Vic! Be polite!

**ABBY:** Sorry.

**VIC:** Sorry.

*BILL returns.*

**BILL:** (To VIC.) So the extra blankets are in the closet. It's only supposed to get down to ten below tonight, so you should be all right.

**VIC:** It'll be fine, Bill. I'm not that frail, yet. Besides, I'm used to the cold. It got down to sixty-three in Waco last week.

**BILL:** Right.

**VIC:** I had to put on pants. Worst winter in ten years, they say.

**RUTH:** He doesn't like pants.

**ABBY:** Yeah. Sixty-three? Sounds horrible.

**VIC:** Hey, don't blame me that you two moved to Siberia-ville, Minnesota! There are still homes in Texas available.

**BILL:** You know why we moved, Dad.

**VIC:** Sure, I do. But there are warmer places to move to.

**RUTH:** Abby wanted to move closer to home.

**VIC:** Unless you're descended from a clan of polar bears, there's no reason to move this far north.

*DIANE enters, still mad.*

**DIANE:** Jack says to let you know that super's on.

**BILL:** You mean, 'supper'?

**DIANE:** I dropped a letter. It's not important, right?

**ABBY:** Did you help?

**DIANE:** I came to get you, didn't I?

*ABBY, DIANE and BILL start toward kitchen.*

**BILL:** Are you coming to eat?

**VIC:** Be right there.

*ABBY, DIANE and BILL exit.*

**RUTH:** Better eat well now. I think it's gonna be a long weekend...

**VIC:** I don't think I can do it, Ruth.

**RUTH:** Yes, you can.

**VIC:** I want to go home.

**RUTH:** I'm not leaving until my sons are reconciled, Vic.

**VIC:** Look. I thought I'd be able to make a difference. I really did. But, I didn't count on Abby still being so...angry! Did you see the look in her eyes when she found out Ed and Lisa were coming?

**RUTH:** I'm counting on you, dear.

**VIC:** I know.

*BILL pokes his head in.*

**BILL:** Are you coming?

**VIC:** Yeah.

*BILL and VIC exit to kitchen. BLACKOUT.*

ACT ONE, SCENE 2

*The following afternoon. As the lights come up, BILL enters from outside, followed by ED and LISA and their children, CHRIS and NICK. BILL wears his heavy winter gear, while the others are less heavily dressed and are obviously chilled to the bone. Each of the adults carries a suitcase.*

**BILL:** Well, this is it! Come on in and warm yourselves by the fire.

*(Yelling.)* Jack! Come here! Your Uncle Ed and Aunt Lisa are here!

**ED:** How cold *is it* out there, Bill?

**BILL:** You're the weatherman, Ed.

**ED:** Yeah, but it doesn't get this cold in Miami. I doubt it gets this cold on Pluto!

**BILL:** It's probably only zero or thereabouts. The real damage is done by the wind. The faster the wind, the faster the heat gets pulled away from your body.

**ED:** How fast were you driving?

**BILL:** Yeah, sorry about that. I got that little convertible in July and just never got around to fixing the hole in the roof. It helps if you wear a couple of scarves and a few sweaters under your parka. Let me check you out, kids...nope, it doesn't look like you've got frostbite, yet.

**CHRIS:** My face is numb. So are my toes.

**ED:** That'll get better in a bit, Chris. Just come stand by the fire with your mom.

**LISA:** Ed, you know how delicate she is! I should probably take her temp and make sure she hasn't gotten sick.

**BILL:** Sorry, I thought you'd bring your winter gear.

**ED:** This *is* our winter gear, Bill!

**BILL:** Didn't you check the weather before you left? I mean, you're a weatherman!

**LISA:** Ed would have been able to handle torrential rains or a hurricane, but anything under sixty degrees is foreign to him.

**BILL:** That's the glamorous life of a big-time weatherman, I guess.

**LISA:** Glamorous? He's got twenty-five-year-olds with more seniority. He was out during Hurricane Betty hanging onto a lamppost to keep from being blown into the Atlantic.

**BILL:** (To ED.) Was it bad?

**ED:** Nothing I couldn't handle.

**LISA:** He lost his socks and his underwear!

**ED:** But I held on to that tree and kept my shirt.

**LISA:** Chris, let's go take your temp, sweetie.

**CHRIS:** Do I have to, Mom?

**LISA:** You don't want to get sick, do you?

**CHRIS:** No.

**LISA:** All right then.

**BILL:** If you want, the kitchen is right through there. Do you need a thermometer?

**LISA:** No, I always carry one when we travel.

*LISA and CHRIS exit to kitchen.*

**ED:** Lisa is a little paranoid about Chris getting sick. When she was one, she kept picking up things at daycare. We're pretty sure one of the other kids lived at the CDC, 'cause Chris caught things even the doctor had never heard of!

**BILL:** Happened to my kids, too.

**ED:** Chris is a real trooper, though. Lisa takes her temp the old-fashioned way, if you know what I mean.

**BILL:** Really? I didn't even know they made those anymore.

**ED:** Apparently, they do. She bought one on eBay. Six bucks.

**BILL:** I hope it was new!

**ED:** I never had the courage to ask...

*JACK enters.*

**BILL:** Jack! Come here! Jack, this is your Uncle from Florida! Your cousin, Chris, is in the kitchen with your aunt, Lisa. That blue one there is Nick.

**NICK:** I hate this dump, Dad! When can we leave?

**JACK:** Nice to meet you.

**NICK:** Don't be juvenile!

**BILL:** Nick nearly won that reality show last year; "Out-of-Control Teens." He's famous!

**JACK:** Oh.

**NICK:** I would have won but this other kid strangled a bunny. I mean, how can you compete with that?

**BILL:** At least you can say to yourself that you're better than that. You didn't need to kill a bunny.

**NICK:** I couldn't. It was the only bunny around; and apparently six squirrels aren't as 'out-of-control' as one stupid bunny!

**ED:** Don't worry, Nickie. You'll get 'em in season two!

**NICK:** (To JACK.) I'm taking a puppy this time...Mom said Chris couldn't go with.

**ED:** Look at you, Jack! I mean, we've seen the pictures your mom sent in Christmas letters the past few years, but we couldn't tell how tall you are!

**JACK:** I think Dad always sends the card to you, Uncle Ed.

**BILL:** Yeah, well, you see Abby still has moments when she has trouble forgetting the past. It's like reverse amnesia.

**ED:** (Beat.) Maybe we shouldn't have come.

**BILL:** No! No, don't worry about it. Abby will just have to get over the, you know, *betrayal*. (Beat.) That's her word, not mine.

**ED:** She did *shoot* me, Bill.

**BILL:** Birdshot. Lucky for you the sporting goods store was out of slugs.

**ED:** Does she still hate Lisa?

**BILL:** Well, hate is a pretty strong word. (Beat.) But, yeah, I'd say she still does. (To NICK.) Anyway, once you've warmed up a little, I'll have Jack show you upstairs. Here in Minnesota, we learn early on that heat rises, so upstairs will be the warmest spot in the house.

**ED:** Where is everybody?

**BILL:** The girls went to church to practice for the Christmas Pageant. They'll be back in a bit.

**JACK:** Grandpa's using the upstairs bathroom. He said this one's broke.

**ED:** How's Dad doing?

**BILL:** I don't know. I heard him talking to himself last night...I really think he's losing it. And... (*BILL glances at JACK.*) ...well, we'll talk later.

**NICK:** How come you don't have stockings on the fireplace?

**BILL:** Well, we're wearing our socks right now. Tomorrow night, on Christmas Eve, we'll hang up the stockings for Santa.

**NICK:** You only own one pair of socks?

**BILL:** I own four pairs of socks, and I'm wearing every one of them. I'm hoping to save up enough money to put some insulation in this spring, but that isn't helping us this winter, now, is it?

*LISA and CHRIS enter from kitchen.*

**ED:** How is she?

**LISA:** No fever. She might have some hypothermia, though. She was ninety-eight point one.

**BILL:** I'm sure she'll be fine.

**NICK:** It's too cold here. I want to go home.

**ED:** We're here for a few days, Nick.

**LISA:** You can make it for a few days, can't you? We can get that lizard you wanted when we get home.

**NICK:** It's an iguana, Mom. I told you that!

**LISA:** Iguana.

**NICK:** It smells bad.

**LISA:** Well, maybe a chameleon, then...

**NICK:** No! It smells in here!

**CHRIS:** (*To BILL as she pulls a beer can out of the tree.*) Did you know that the water in your tree stand is frozen? Is that why you keep beer in your tree?

**BILL:** Jack, would you show your cousins up to the guest room, please? Take their suitcases!

**JACK:** Okay. Come on, guys, I'll show you the dog we found that froze solid in October. Diane named him 'Stiffy'.

**CHRIS:** Cool! Come on, Nick!

**NICK:** How do you stand living here? There's nothing to do.

**JACK:** There's plenty to do. We could put a leash on Stiffy and take him for a walk. Or we can go ice fishing. Or go sledding. We have all kinds of options.

**NICK:** Like what?

**JACK:** I have extra skates you can borrow. Do you want to play hockey?

**NICK:** No. I've never played hockey before. I play soccer.

**JACK:** Hockey is like soccer... with sticks.

*JACK leads NICK and CHRIS upstairs with their luggage.*

**ED:** Frozen dog?

**BILL:** We had a fast freeze back in September, poor thing. There was a deer, too. We'll make sausage and deer steaks for Christmas dinner if you want.

**ED:** That's nice of you, Bill, but...

**LISA:** I'm allergic.

**BILL:** To venison?

**LISA:** Yes. Venison...badger...squirrel...beaver...rabbit...muskrat. Pretty much any mammal that doesn't live in a barn.

**BILL:** Oh, okay. Sorry to hear that

**ED:** Not to change the subject, but thanks for having us.

**LISA:** Yes! Thanks for inviting us. It's great to have snow on the ground for Christmas.

**BILL:** Glad to have you. It's really nice to finally get to meet your kids. They're so... (*Struggles to find something that isn't insulting.*) ...like Ed!

**ED:** Yeah? I guess so, a little. So...it's been a long time.

**BILL:** It sure has. Missed you at the wedding.

**LISA:** We thought maybe it would be in poor taste to come to the wedding. You know, after that incident at the trial.

**ED:** If the bailiff hadn't tackled her, I think Abby would have throttled poor Lisa.

**LISA:** She'd have *tried*! I was a cheerleader, you know. I could high-kick with the best of them...she wouldn't have known what hit her.

**ED:** Abby always acted without thinking. I mean, it was only a few weeks later that...

**BILL:** That you missed our wedding?

**LISA:** Well, it *was* a whirlwind romance. Three weeks?

**BILL:** We had known each other for years.

**ED:** Yeah. She was your sister-in-law, wasn't she?

**BILL:** Is that supposed to be funny? What's wrong? Are you jealous?

**ED:** Jealous? You can't be serious! She was mine before she was yours!

**BILL:** Until she finally came to her senses when I told her about Lisa!

**ED:** *You* told her about Lisa?

**BILL:** That's not the point! She divorced you.

**ED:** You sabotaged me?

**LISA:** Ed, you told me *you* divorced *her*!

**ED:** *(To BILL.)* You wanted Abby for yourself!

**BILL:** What do you care? You didn't love her!

**ED:** Of course I did!

**LISA:** *(To ED.)* You lied to me!

**ED:** *(To BILL.)* You betrayed me!

**BILL:** You betrayed Abby!

**LISA:** *(To ED.)* *ABBY* divorced *you*?

**ED:** I told you that.

**BILL:** So, yeah, I was there after you broke her heart.

**LISA:** *(To ED.)* No, you didn't!

**ED:** Yeah, Bill, she was real broken-hearted. She married you a month to the day after the divorce was final!

**BILL:** And that hit you right in your ego, didn't it? I finally had something you couldn't have.

**ED:** Couldn't? I had her, Bill. She was mine. I could still have her if I wanted, and you know it!

**LISA:** Why didn't you tell me she divorced you?

**ED:** I thought I told you. What does it matter? I got the divorce, didn't I?

**BILL:** If it wasn't for me, you'd have kept Abby as your wife and Lisa as your mistress!

**LISA:** Is that true? You didn't want to marry me?

**ED:** Don't be silly.

**LISA:** You *said* that you wanted to marry me! You *said* that you were going to divorce your wife!

**BILL:** Did he say that when you had your clothes on?

**ED:** Excuse me?

**LISA:** How dare you say that! Who do you think you are?

**BILL:** Oh, don't get all holier than thou, Lisa! You cheated with a married man!

**LISA:** Let's not make this all about me!

**ED:** Oh, I see, Lisa! When it's about me, you're ready to pile on; but when *your* name comes up, suddenly we're not making this about you!

**BILL:** It's not as if you really thought he was going to divorce Abby, anyway. You sent the pictures to her, didn't you?

**ED:** You sent Abby pictures of us?

**LISA:** How did you know it was me?

**BILL:** I didn't until now. But, who else would have benefited from having Abby see pictures of you two together?

**ED:** *You* sent the pictures of us in the cabin?

**LISA:** Yeah...but I felt *really* bad after she shot you!

**ED:** Well, I should hope so!

**LISA:** That's why I never told you.

**ED:** You were all about the truth from me, but you have your own little secrets, don't you?

**LISA:** Let's not go into this here, Ed. It's not the time or the place.

**ED:** Don't tell me what to do! You always think I'm in the wrong!

**LISA:** Generally, you are.

**ED:** I am so glad I'm divorcing you!

**LISA:** You're wrong again, Ed! I'm divorcing you!

**ED:** Not quickly enough!

**BILL:** Wait. You're getting divorced?

**ED:** *(Pause.)* Yeah. After the New Year.

**BILL:** Have you told anyone else?

**ED:** Of course not.

**LISA:** We'll tell the family after the holidays.

**BILL:** Did he cheat on you, too?

**ED:** *(Pause.)* No. She cheated on me. His name is Oliver Funke, if you can believe it.

**LISA:** Ed!

**BILL:** Whoa! Oliver Funke, huh? How does that feel; your spouse leaving you for someone else? Is he younger than you, Ed?

**LISA:** That isn't any of your business!

**ED:** *(To BILL.)* I'd rather not talk about it.

**BILL:** So, would you call that more a 'Karma's a bitch' thing, or 'What comes around, goes around'?

**ED:** What part of 'drop it' do you not understand?

*JACK enters.*

**JACK:** Am I interrupting anything?

**BILL/ED/LISA:** No!

**JACK:** Oh...good.

**BILL:** So, like I was saying, Ed, we can go fishing tomorrow.

**ED:** How can we fish? The lake is frozen.

**BILL:** We're going ice fishing!

**ED:** Can't your *refrigerator* make ice?

**BILL:** You fish for fish! You just need to do it *through* the ice.

**LISA:** Aren't we going to the Christmas Pageant tomorrow?

**BILL:** Tomorrow night. We'll have time for some ice-fishing.

**ED:** Maybe we should take Lisa along, too. I'm not sure how she and Abby would get along.

**LISA:** I'm not ice fishing! It's cold enough in the house.

**BILL:** All the kids will be here. You'll be fine.

**ED:** Sure you will. You were a cheerleader, remember?

*LISA gives ED a look.*

**BILL:** (To ED.) Anyway, Abby set you two up on the pull-out couch in the basement. Jack, would you take their stuff downstairs and show them where they're staying?

**JACK:** Sure, Dad.

*JACK goes to the closet and puts on his coat, gloves, hat and a scarf.*

**BILL:** I wish we had room for you upstairs...

**ED:** Are we going outside to get to the basement?

**BILL:** No. It just gets cold down there sometimes.

**LISA:** How cold?

**BILL:** Last year I fell asleep down there while watching a football game. My breath frosted in the air and shattered. Cut my face up pretty bad.

**LISA:** (Chuckling.) You're kidding!

**BILL:** No. I'm not.

**ED:** Maybe we should stay at the hotel.

**BILL:** We haven't had a hotel in town since last year. We had a storm that dumped thirty-seven inches of snow; the whole place collapsed.

**LISA:** That's horrible!

**BILL:** Good insulation, though.

**ED:** Can I borrow some gloves and hats for Lisa and me?

**BILL:** Already put them downstairs, next to the Sterno cans.

**ED:** Sterno?

**BILL:** Use it if you need it. Don't be a hero.

**JACK:** Follow me!

**ED:** (Carrying suitcases, speaking to JACK.) We're going to freeze to death down there.

**BILL:** You'll be fine! Just keep your clothes on, snuggle close together and make sure you cover your ears, toes and fingertips while you sleep.

**LISA:** Are you sure we'll be all right?

**BILL:** Of course! Oh, don't mention the deer that's hanging in the closet. Abby didn't want it in the garage and I had to hang it somewhere that it wouldn't thaw.

*ED and LISA follow JACK into the basement. BILL checks thermostat, adjusts it. VIC and RUTH enter.*

**VIC:** I thought I heard you come back. Where's Ed?

**BILL:** Jack took him and Lisa downstairs.

**VIC:** Good. I thought Abby might have shot him again.

**BILL:** Not funny, Dad.

**VIC:** It's funny. You're just too close to it.

**BILL:** Maybe.

**RUTH:** Poke the bear, dear. Good idea.

**VIC:** Will the girls be back soon?

**BILL:** It'll be a bit; they're going to stop at the store for some groceries. We needed a few things with Ed and Lisa coming.

**VIC:** Seems like you need quite a bit around here. Are you guys doing all right?

**BILL:** Sure. Just a tough spell. We had to have the roof fixed this past fall, and it took most of our savings. Then with the early winter...

**VIC:** Sure, I understand. It happens to everybody sometimes.  
(Pause.) You know if you need a little...

**BILL:** Thanks, Dad. We'll be fine. Abby is thinking of looking for a job...

**VIC:** I didn't know she could type.

**BILL:** There's more for women to do than that, Dad.

**VIC:** Does she iron?

**RUTH:** Honestly, Vic.

**BILL:** Forget it.

**VIC:** Already have. Bill, why is it so cold in here?

**BILL:** It's winter.

**VIC:** It's winter outside. Why is it winter in here?

**BILL:** (Pause.) Well, Dad, I had the money set aside for insulation, but by the time I replaced the house windows and the car's transmission, it was gone. The furnace just can't keep up.

**RUTH:** Why didn't you insulate first?

**VIC:** You probably should've done the insulation first.

**BILL:** I know. Abby tells me...relentlessly. It's my fault. I'm aware of it.  
Can we talk about something else?

**VIC:** Sure. (*Long, uncomfortable pause.*) I was sure excited to come up and see the kids! Only seeing you guys at Christmas is pretty tough.

**BILL:** There are houses for sale in Minnesota.

**VIC:** Nope. I couldn't afford to heat one.

**BILL:** You should have been a comedian.

**VIC:** Maybe I'll take it up as a second career.

*ED, LISA and JACK return from the basement.*

**ED:** Hi.

**VIC:** Ed. Lisa. How's it going?

**ED:** Good, good.

**LISA:** Good.

**VIC:** Good.

**BILL:** Yeah.

**RUTH:** Sure.

**VIC:** Bill has you set up in the basement, then, huh?

**ED:** Yeah. A lot of room down there.

**LISA:** It might take weeks for someone to find our bodies.

**ED:** (*Shrugs.*) It's pretty cold down there. Thought I saw a penguin hiding in the closet...I checked it twice. Turns out it's just an old, stuffed toy.

**BILL:** Sorry about that.

**ED:** You're doing what you can.

**BILL:** What's that supposed to mean?

**ED:** Nothing. Really! I appreciate you inviting us and putting us up for the holiday.

**LISA:** We should have stayed at a hotel.

**BILL:** Don't be silly.

**ED:** There *is* no hotel.

**BILL:** Everything will be fine. We have room for everyone. Abby put in a turkey for dinner, and we'll have a nice, big old family meal. Just like mom made last year.

**RUTH:** Every year.

**VIC:** Same thing every year.

**ED:** Why fix it if it ain't broke, right?

**LISA:** Where is Abby?

**BILL:** She and Diane are out picking up some Pepsi and snacks for the kids...it'll be fun.

**VIC:** That's what Custer said on the way to Little Bighorn. "We'll have some beer; shoot some buffalo, kill some Indians...it'll be fun!"

*ABBY and DIANE enter from outside carrying groceries.*

**DIANE:** We're back!

**BILL:** How'd it go?

**ABBY:** Fine at the store. We just about hit Nelson on the way up the road...he's out hunting with that big military rifle he likes so much.

**BILL:** He pretends the ducks and the deer are insurgents.

**ABBY:** Bill, could you grab the Pepsi off the front porch? I couldn't carry it all. *(To ED.)* So, you made it.

**ED:** Hit some weather over Kentucky and we had a four-hour delay at O'Hare, but otherwise nothing to complain about.

**RUTH:** If you only spent four hours in O'Hare, you did well.

**BILL:** *(Falsely cheerful.)* Abby, look who's here. You remember Ed, don't you?

**ABBY:** *(Glaring at BILL.)* Yes. I recall Ed, Bill. I was married to him, remember?

**BILL:** Oh, right. And this is Ed's wi—this is Ed's *new* wi—this - *(Beat.)* And you remember Lisa?

*A MOSTLY MINNESOTA CHRISTMAS*

*Thank you for reading this free excerpt from A MOSTLY MINNESOTA CHRISTMAS by Brian Mitchell For performance rights and/or a complete copy of the script, please contact us at:*

**Heuer Publishing LLC**

**P.O. Box 248 • Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52406**

**Toll Free: 1-800-950-7529 • Fax (319) 368-8011**

**HITPLAYS.COM**

*Perusal Only  
Do Not Copy*