

# THE BEACH HOUSE

A MULTI-ACT PLAY  
WRITTEN FOR THE DINNER THEATER  
THE FAMILY CIRCUS  
JUNE 11,12, 1993

BY  
BRUCE HENNIGAN  
COPYRIGHT, JUNE, 1993  
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

THE BEACH HOUSE  
A MULTI ACT PLAY  
WRITTEN FOR THE DINNER THEATER  
A FAMILY CIRCUS

BY BRUCE HENNIGAN  
COPYRIGHT APRIL, 1993  
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED  
Published by  
MasterPeace Media

**SUMMARY:**

This is a multi-act play written specifically to present short plays targeted at each member of the typical American family and to appeal to every kind of family. It can be split up into its separate parts and be performed separately. The unifying theme is one of a family traveling to the beach for their summer vacation.

Montana Holmes -- For children  
Don't Fight Naked -- For Teenagers  
The Perfect Family -- For Parents with children  
My Mom, The Matchmaker -- For Singles  
Life -- The Great Adventure -- For Senior Adults

**CAST:**

GRAMPS, SAM WASHINGTON (AGE 78)  
GRAM, LUCILLE WASHINGTON (AGE 75)

CHARLES JOHNSON  
LINDA JOHNSON, DAUGHTER OF SAM AND LUCILLE (CURRENTLY 35 YEARS OLD  
AND 8 1/2 MONTHS PREGNANT)

RICHARD WASHINGTON, LINDA'S BROTHER (THIRTY EIGHT AND UNMARRIED)

**CHARLES AND LINDA'S CHILDREN:**

PAM JOHNSON (15)  
PETER JOHNSON (9)  
HEATHER JOHNSON (6)

MARK -- PETER'S FRIEND  
COURTNEY -- HEATHER'S FRIEND

BO -- PAM'S FRIEND (15)  
ROCKY -- BO'S FRIEND (15)  
CINDY -- PAM'S FRIEND (15)  
ABE -- A FRIEND FROM THE CHURCH (12)

MARSHA COOLEY -- A STRANGER LINDA MET AT THE MALL  
THE STRANGER

DOCTOR MONTANA HOLMES  
ROLLO ROTUNDO  
MUMMY  
JESUS

SET:

The stage can be very simple. I chose to place a large mural behind a stark stage with an umbrella and beach scene. I chose to use large painted boxes capable of supporting human weight. These were painted primary colors and could become tables, chairs, etc. For Montana Holmes, an "Indiana Jones" look is necessary and I chose to swing down from the rafters. You may use any dramatic entrance. Rollo wears a Biblical robe and a red fez.

## PROLOGUE -- MONTANA HOLMES AND THE LOST TOMB

*(Scene opens with Peter, Heather, Mark, Courtney sitting in a “car” with Gram.)*

**HEATHER:** Gram, I'm bored.

**MARK:** Yeah, how much farther is it?

**GRAM:** Just a couple more hours. And then, we will be at the beach.

**COURTNEY:** Two more hours? Boy, this trip has been longer than my last hour in school.

**HEATHER:** I'm ready to be there. Why does it take so long to drive to Florida?

**GRAM:** It just does, dear.

**COURTNEY:** I think we should have flown in the airplane.

**PETER:** That would have cost a fortune, Courtney. Why don't you play a game.

**HEATHER:** We're tired of looking for the letters of the alphabets.

**MARK:** And if I see one more white cow, I'm going to be sick.

**GRAM:** Why don't you let me tell you a story. Let's say one from the Bible.

**MARK:** Boring!!!

**GRAM:** Mark, the Bible is not boring. Why, it is filled with adventure and suspense.

**HEATHER:** You must be talking about a different Bible, Gram. Mine has all those thees and thous.

**COURTNEY:** And begats.

**GRAM:** Well, I'll tell you a story in a way you've never heard. Have any of you ever heard of Dr. Montana Holmes, the famous Biblical archeologist?

**HEATHER:** No.

**GRAM:** Well, I want you to close your eyes, and fire up your imagination because you are about to go on one of Montana Holmes Adventures in the Bible.

*(Music swells and lights go down on the children. They reappear center stage and look around nervously.)*

**HEATHER:** Peter, where are we? I'm scared.

**PETER:** It looks like a cave to me.

**COURTNEY:** It's so dark and cold.

**MARK:** I think it's awesome!

**ROLLO:** *(Running out from behind a flat.)* Monty, Monty, where are you? *(Turns and sees the children.)* Who are you and what are you kids doing here?

**PETER:** I'm Peter and this is my sister, Heather. These are our friends, Courtney and Mark. Who are you?

**ROLLO:** Rollo Rotundo. I'm Dr. Montana Holmes' assistant. We were searching this cave for lost treasure and I lost Monty. See if you can find him. *(They look around, asking children in the audience to help. The children will spy Monty near the ceiling on a rope as he swings down, through a false rock wall and falls on the stage. He gets up and starts toward Rollo and children, falling over the back of the stage into a "pit". The audience watches as he slowly struggles back up onto the stage as if climbing out of a pit.)*

**ROLLO:** Monty, are you all right?

**MONTANA:** Yeah, Rollo. Just a cracked rib, that's all. But, I'll get over it. Where did you go, Rollo?

**ROLLO:** I found an easier way down.

**MONTANA:** Now, you tell me. I had to use my whip.  
*(He holds up a "whip" he has held in his hand since climbing out of the pit and it is, in actuality ,a large snake. The children scream and Montana looks at them quizzically and then notices the snake. He screams and throws the snake into the pit.)*

I knew that was a snake. And who are these people?

**PETER:** Fellow adventurers.

**MONTANA:** I see. Well, if you are going to help me, you need a hat. *(He retrieves four hats from backstage and gives them each a hat.)* Now, stay close to me and Rollo because these caves can be dangerous.

**PETER:** What are you looking for?

**ROLLO:** Lost treasure. Gems, diamonds, rubies....

**MONTANA:** Rollo only thinks about the riches. I'm looking for archeological data. This map shows how to find the lost throne room of Herod Antipas.

**COURTNEY:** Who is Herod Antipas?

**MARK:** He was a famous pizza maker, silly.

**MONTANA:** No. Herod was the king at the time Jesus walked the Earth. Now follow me closely.

*(They enter a room and spy something laying on a long table draped with a dark cloth. Rollo goes over and, anticipating jewels, slowly takes the cloth off. He uncovers a mummy and reacts with fear.)*

**ROLLO:** MMMMMMonty! Come here!

**MONTANA:** What is it, Rollo?

**ROLLO:** I found my mummy.

**COURTNEY:** It doesn't look like Mommy.

**PETER:** Not mommy. Mummy. A body wrapped in cloth.

**HEATHER:** A body? You mean a dead person?

**ALL KIDS:** Yuck!

**MONTANA:** It's just a mummified body, kids. It can't harm us.

**ROLLO:** Yeah, but what about that movie where the mummy stood up and walked like this. (*He walks, dragging a leg, arms up in claws.*)

**MONTANA:** It is dead, Rollo. Probably been dead for two thousand years. Now, snap out of it and help me find this other cave.

*(Montana and the kids turn away from the body. Rollo glances at it one last time and turns to follow. One of the body's hands reaches up and grabs Rollo by the tunic. Rollo becomes speechless, pulling frantically and finally finds his voice.)*

**ROLLO:** Monty! Monty! It's alive!

**MONTANA:** *Runs over and inspects the now motionless body.)* Rollo, what are you talking about? It's dead!

**ROLLO:** But, it grabbed me. Right here.

**MONTANA:** *(Lifts the mummy's hand and lets it fall limply.)* I think your imagination is overacting, Rollo. (*He turns away.*)

*(Rollo steps away from the body and starts to walk away. He turns back, curiously and leans over the body. A hand snakes out and tweaks his nose. Rollo squeals and runs to Montana.)*

**ROLLO:** Monty, it's alive, I tell you. It tweaked my nose and ....

**MONTANA:** Rollo, a two thousand year old mummy can't tweak your nose.

**ROLLO:** Look, see this bump right here. (*He points to the end of his nose.*)

**MONTANA:** Well, stop sticking your nose into places where it doesn't belong.

*(Rollo stands silently and stares over at the mummy. The mummy's hand motions for him to come over. Rollo reacts with fear, pointing questioningly to himself. The hand beckons and, shivering, he slowly advances to the mummy. As he arrives, the mummy suddenly sits up and Rollo screams in terror.)*

**ROLLO:** Monty, see he sat up. He's alive.

**MONTANA:** *(Turns and reacts with surprise. He takes out his whip.)* Get behind me, kids and I'll protect you.

*(The mummy gets up and walks toward them. From offstage we hear, "Lazarus, come forth." Montana looks around and we see Jesus enter from stage left.)*

**JESUS:** You may put your whip, away. He means you no harm.

**ROLLO:** Is that who I think it is?

**MONTANA:** Yes, Rollo. And this is no ordinary mummy. This is Lazarus, the man Jesus raised from the dead.

*(Lazarus removes his wraps and goes to embrace Jesus.)*

**LAZARUS:** Master, I heard your voice and awoke from a deep sleep.

**JESUS:** Now, all will know that I am the resurrection and the life and whoever believes in me will have life everlasting. My children, *(He addresses Montana and the children)* you have nothing to fear in death. I have already overcome it for you. Remember that I am the resurrection and the life and all power is given to me under heaven.

*(Jesus and Lazarus depart. Montana comes forward to address the children in the audience.)*

**ROLLO:** I knew that all the time. I wasn't scared.

PETER: Well, we were.

MONTANA: So, kids, as you can see, fear can be pretty strong. But, don't be afraid of the dark or afraid of the unknown. God is with you all the time. He has the power to protect. So don't forget the word for today, Power. See ya' in the Bible, kids.

*(Tips hat and runs off.)*

## ACT ONE: THE BEACH HOUSE

*(Linda, Richard, Gramps, and Gram enter the Beach House. Linda is obviously uncomfortable as she is 8 1/2 months pregnant.)*

**GRAMPS:** Well, this old beach house is still standing.

**GRAM:** I'd say it has stood the last fifty years just fine.

**RICHARD:** The two of you built this house fifty years ago?

**LINDA:** Fifty years old. *(Linda rubs her back.)* I think I know how it feels.

**GRAM:** Honey, you are 8 1/2 months pregnant.

**LINDA:** And 35 years old!

**GRAM:** I tried to talk you into staying home this summer.

**LINDA:** And miss our annual summer vacation? Not on your life! I might miss out on some excitement.

**RICHARD:** Our summers have always been exciting. Remember last year?

**GRAMPS:** How could we forget. We had to take Pam to the hospital and have her appendix removed.

**PAM:** *(Entering from outside.)* Don't remind me. It was so embarrassing.

**LINDA:** Just because that old boyfriend of yours, Malcolm, came with us.

**PAM:** Please, mother. Don't remind me of Malcolm. What a geek he was.

**LINDA:** He was **your** boyfriend. Oh, my back.

**PAM:** I still can't believe you're going to have a baby at your age.

**LINDA:** You make me sound like I'm ancient.

**RICHARD:** Remember how old Sara was when she had Isaac.

**GRAM:** Then, it would be my turn, not Linda's. Honey, I know how you feel. I had you when I was thirty seven.

**LINDA:** Yes, but you only had Richard to contend with. I have three little heathen children who can't stand to be seen with their pregnant mother at her ADVANCED age.

*(The children come in wearing their hats.)*

**LINDA:** Peter, where did you get those hats?

**PETER:** On the side of the road, Mom.

**HEATHER:** Mom, when is Daddy coming?

**LINDA:** He'll be flying in tomorrow after he finishes some last minute business.

**PAM:** I think he just wanted to make sure he missed out on all the fun!

**GRAM:** Pam, dear, you act as if you aren't going to have any fun.

**PAM:** I would if Mom would let me ask those friends of mine over.

**GRAM:** Friends?

**LINDA:** Pam's youth group is having their summer retreat just down the street and she wants a couple of the boys to come over and see her. Problem is, the youth director has rules that don't allow them to leave the building without supervision.

**GRAMPS:** What a bummer.

**LINDA:** You stay out of this, Dad. Just because you are going through your second childhood doesn't mean you should encourage my children to be disobedient. Sometimes I wonder if you're the same father that said I couldn't go out on my first date until I was 21.

**PAM:** So that's who Dad's been listening to.

**GRAMPS:** Oh, Linda, you've just got to learn to loosen up a little. Life's too short to take so seriously. Now, if you will excuse me, I'm going for a walk down the beach.

**GRAM:** Oh, dear, please be careful. Someone might ...

**GRAMPS:** Knock me in the head. Yes, I know dear. I just hope she has on one of those bikinis and knows CPR.

**GRAM:** (*Slaps him.*) Go on, you old coot. Just be careful. I'm going to the grocery store to stock up on food. We have plenty of snacks from the trip but we need some real food.

**HEATHER:** Can we go, Gram? I want to get a bucket and shovel.

**GRAM:** Sure. Linda, you just lay down and take it easy.

**LINDA:** What, and miss out on your stop at the Outlet Mall?

**GRAM:** I didn't say anything about the Outlet Mall.

**LINDA:** Since when could you drive past an Outlet Mall without stopping? Besides, I need to get me a maternity swim suit.

**PAM:** Swim suit? No. Tell me you're not going to go out there in a swimsuit.

**LINDA:** Don't worry, dear. Pretend I'm your sister.

**PAM:** I'm going to stay here until Gramps returns.

**LINDA:** Fine. Just don't let any strangers into the house. OK?

**PAM:** OK, Mom.

## ACT TWO: DON'T FIGHT NAKED

*(After the family leaves, Pam motions out window and runs to door.  
She opens it and lets her friends come in.)*

**PAM:** Come in. My mom's gone.

**BO:** Awesome place, Pam. Like, this makes the church dorm look like Alcatraz.

**ROCKY:** *(Spying the snacks scattered on the table.)* Check it out!  
Food!

**PAM:** Hey, don't eat too much. My mom would think I ate it all.

**CINDY:** So, your mom doesn't know we're here?

**PAM:** No. She didn't want me inviting you over. She knew you would have to leave the church group against the rules.

**BO:** Like, rules are made to broken, dudes. Let's pig!

**ABE:** Excuse me, but I feel very uncomfortable about this.

**ROCKY:** Who asked you, Scripture breath?

**CINDY:** Yeah, why did you tag along anyway? Shouldn't you be back at the Bible study?

**ABE:** I already know all that stuff.

**BO:** Well, it's all Biblebabble to me.

**ROCKY:** Yeah, I'd rather watch the movie. They had some awesome babes back then.

**CINDY:** Hey, watch it, you guys. You're talking about the Bible.

**BO:** What's a matter, Cindy. Got Abe's goody goody complex?

**ABE:** She is merely reflecting the proper respect one should have for the Word of God.

BO: You about to hold a revival, man? Cause if you are, this dude is checking out.

PAM: Please, let's don't fight! I invited you over because I was bored and I want to have a good time.

CINDY: Let me tell you about bored. Bible study!

ROCKY: Yeah, another thee or thou and I was going to hurl!

BO: Yeah, could you dig all that mumbo jumbo about the Devil?

ROCKY: Cool dude, isn't he?

ABE: I cannot believe you would label Satan as a cool dude.

BO: Oh, and you, on the other hand think he is real?

ABE: Of course he's real.

ROCKY: Hey, Bo, I feel a little . . . possessed. Watch my head spin around!

BO: Wait, like let me go and get my pitchfork and red tail and we'll roast some marshmallows.

PAM: Guys, cut it out. I believe in the devil, too.

CINDY: Me, too. Although I don't think he wears a red suit. He looks more like Jack Nicholson.

ABE: You are all wrong. Satan's appearance is very deceiving. He doesn't want us to think of him as mean and ugly. Actually, he would appear as an ordinary man.

BO: You mean like Cindy's date last night?

ROCKY: What a geek!

CINDY: He was very nice.

BO: Right, a good personality. Now, Cindy, when you get tired of being seen with geeks, you just go out with Bo.

PAM: I think she'd rather go out with Satan.

ABE: I wish you would stop joking about Satan. He's real, I tell you.

ROCKY: Oh, yeah. Where is he? (*He looks around.*) Satan? Where are you?

BO: I don't smell brimstone. I don't see smoke.

CINDY: Cut it out, guys. I'd just as soon leave Satan alone.

ABE: Besides, you are not prepared to fight with Satan.

BO: Fight?

ABE: Yes, you see as Christians we are engaged in a spiritual battle right now.

ROCKY: Well, bring him on. He'll never get past my double whammy Street Fighter Punch.

ABE: Weren't you listening at the Bible study? We must put on the whole armor of God.

CINDY: Armor? Wouldn't it be heavy?

PAM: Yeah, and it might mess up my hair.

BO: Wait, between Rocky and me we got Ninja training. He takes Taw Kwon Do. And I am the master of the Gameboy. (*He pulls out his gameboy and waves it in the air.*) Teenage Mutant Ninja Christians. Bring on Satan, the main dude.

ABE: I'm telling you to be careful. Don't ever invite Satan into your home. And if you did, what would you fight him with?

ROCKY: My ninchucks!

BO: My Gameboy.

CINDY: Uh, a baseball bat?

PAM: This is silly. I guess I would pray.

ABE: Then, he would eat you all up!

BO: Eat us up? Sounds like the big bad wolf! Look, Abe, I'm not afraid of any old Devil.

ROCKY: Right, dude! If old Lucifer were to come knocking at our door, I'd knock him into next week.

*(A knock at the door.)*

**CINDY:** What is that?

*(A knock comes louder)*

**ABE:** Do you smell something burning?

**PAM:** Cut it out, Abe. This isn't funny.

*(More knocking, louder now.)*

**BO:** Well, answer the door, Pam. It's your condo.

**PAM:** What happened to your deadly hands?

**ROCKY:** I think my ninchucks just melted!

*(More knocking and finally Pam tentatively opens the door. A man dressed in a red suit with a pitchfork, horns and a red cape is standing in the door. Pam hurriedly slams the door shut. Rocky hides behind Bo, who hides behind Rocky until they're both behind the couch. Cindy runs to a box and pulls out a plastic bat. Pam falls to her knees and begins to pray.)*

**PAM:** It's him! Now I lay me down to sleep, I pray the Lord my soul to keep.

**ROCKY:** Well, Biblebrain, do something!

**ABE:** Uh, I don't know what to do! I know the Bible but I've never had to use it before.

*(Gramps enters from stage opposite door.)*

**GRAMPS:** What you kids doing?

**PAM:** Gramps. Are we glad you're here. Satan is at the door and we don't know how to fight him.

**GRAMPS:** Satan?

**ABE:** Yeah, Rocky invited him in for dinner and now he wants to eat us up.

**BO:** Well, Abe here told us all about the armor of God and he's the one shivering in his boots just like the rest of us.

**GRAMPS:** The whole armor of God? Yes, that is what you need. Let's see. (*He crosses to a box of junk and removes the items noted in the following dialogue.*)

Here's my old football helmet. (*He places it on Bo's head.*) The helmet of salvation. When you are saved by the blood of Jesus Christ, He will protect your thoughts from outside influences. Like your games.

Here's a shield we used in a play once. (*He hands it to Rocky.*) The shield of faith. Rocky, if you have faith in God, not your own abilities God will protect you.

Here's an old breastplate from a church play. (*Or, an umpire's breastplate.*) Cindy, this is the breastplate of righteousness. If you strive to do what is right, and protect your heart from evil, God will cover you with His hand.

Pam, here's an old belt of your mother's. She wore it back in the seventies. But I want you to think of it as the belt of truth. Always tell the truth and you won't get caught with your pants down.

And Abe. You are already wearing the shoes of the preparation of the peace of the gospel because you have tried to tell these others about the armor of God. But, your shoelaces are untied. You are not prepared for battle. It doesn't do any good to be familiar with the gospel. You have to know it well enough to be prepared for any emergency.

And there is one last item. (*He digs in box.*)

**ABE:** The sword. I remember. (*Abe reaches into the box and pulls out a plastic sword.*)

**GRAMPS:** No. Not that kind of sword. Not an offensive weapon. You need a defensive weapon. This is the sword of the Spirit. (*He takes out a family Bible.*) Here, Abe. You take the Sword.

And, now, are we all ready?

(*The group lines up in a formation with their armor.*) You see, you should never fight the devil barehanded. You need the whole armor of God. Don't fight naked!

*(He hurls open the door and a pizza man carrying pizza boxes falls in.)*

**PIZZA MAN:** Lucifer's Pizza. Guaranteed to be sinfully hot and delicious.  
Are you all deaf? *(He glances at the teenagers and frowns.)* Is this some kind of weird party?

**PAM:** You're not the devil?

**PIZZA MAN:** Naw! They make me wear this dorky suit when I deliver. From the looks of you, I'd fit right in to this party.

**BO:** Pizza! Cowabunga, dudes, get out of my way.

*(The group disintegrates and converges on the pizzas. The pizza delivery man winks at Gramps and disappears through the open door.)*

**GRAMPS:** Hold on a minute! Bo, Rocky, Cindy, Abe. I think you had better be getting back to your church group.

**PAM:** He's right. I was wrong to invite you. We all broke the rules.

**BO:** Sure, Gramps. But not until I get one piece of pizza.

**ROCKY:** Yeah, thanks for ordering the pizza, Pam.

**PAM:** I didn't order any pizza.

**ABE:** We didn't either.

**GRAMPS:** Don't look at me! I didn't order it. I didn't even pay for it.

**PAM:** Then who did?

**ROCKY:** The devil?

**ABE:** No. Maybe somebody from God's side brought the pizza to teach us a lesson.

*(They all leave. Pam smiles and hugs her grandfather.)*

**PAM:** Thanks, Gramps. I'll never forget what you told me. Don't Fight Naked.

## ACT THREE:

### THE TWILIFE ZONE: THE PERFECT FAMILY

*(Charles and a stranger dressed in a dark suit are seated by each other on a “bus”.)*

**CHARLES:** Yeah, every summer like clockwork. My kids, my wife, and the in laws at the beach for two weeks.

**STRANGER:** Sounds interesting.

**CHARLES:** More like a nightmare. It's supposed to be my vacation. Some vacation. I end up smearing suntan lotion on my kids, listening to my loony father in law, baby-sitting while my wife and her mom go to the outlet malls, and sleep in a bed filled with sand. Happy, happy, joy, joy.

**STRANGER:** So, is that why you're flying down late.

**CHARLES:** Partly. I did have some pressing business. Unfortunately, I couldn't drag it out any longer.

**STRANGER:** Sounds like you don't enjoy being with your family.

**CHARLES:** I love my family. It's just sometimes I don't like them. My daughter is fifteen and in love with boys. And every boy seems to be a surf ninja zombie whose only ambition is to sing in a rap band. My son is nine years old and has an umbilical cord attached to his Nintendo. My young daughter thinks Eve's real name was Barbie and wants a pink Barbie Cadillac no matter what the cost. And, my wife is pregnant.

**STRANGER:** With a new child coming, you'll have your hands full.

**CHARLES:** Yeah. I don't know what got into us.

**STRANGER:** You consider this child as a mistake?

**CHARLES:** Not really. I'm just tired. Very, very tired. And I know that my "Vacation" will be nothing but work. I'll be glad to get back to the grueling grindstone of my job. It wouldn't be so bad if I had a perfect family. You know, like in those old TV shows. Submissive wife, obedient children who respect their father no matter what. Just once, I would like to feel like I was in total control of my family.

Well, here's my stop. See you later.

*(Charles gets off bus and walks up to house. Stranger crosses to opposite stage and stands on corner of stage assuming an appearance like Rod Serling. In the background, the song from the Twilight Zone is heard.)*

**STRANGER:** Charles Johnson, average harried businessman with a problem. It seems his scriptural expectations of his family are too uncompromising. His only desire is a perfect family. Well, tonight, Charles will get his wish as he steps over that nebulous boundary into the TwiLife Zone.

*(Charles pauses at the door and draws a deep breath as if steeling himself for an onslaught. He opens the door.)*

**CHARLES:** Linda, I'm here.

**LINDA:** *(Rushes out in an apron and hair in perfect shape. She is wearing a dress.)* Charles, darling, you made it. Oh how wonderful it is to see you.

*(Children rush out, all dressed in dresses and suits, hair perfectly combed.)*

**HEATHER:** Oh, father. How good to see you.

**PETER:** Yes. I have been waiting to read a book with you.

**CHARLES:** What is going on here? A book? What about your Nintendo?

**PETER:** Oh, father. Nintendo is a mindless, electronic game that leeches away my incentive. I think that reading is a much better pursuit.

**CHARLES:** (Reaches over and touches his son.) Do you feel well?

**LINDA:** Oh, they're just fine. And I feel wonderful. I'm so glad to be having your baby, dear.

**CHARLES:** (To audience.) Sounds like a dreadful song.

**LINDA:** Come to the table. Dinner is waiting.

**CHARLES:** Dinner? You mean you cooked? Every time we come on vacation you never cook.

**LINDA:** How silly, dear. Of course I cooked. I cook for you every meal.

(Charles notices the stranger and goes up to him.)

**CHARLES:** I know you. You were on the bus. What is going on here?

**STRANGER:** You said you wanted the perfect family. Notice how the wife is submissive to the husband. The children obedient and well groomed. Enjoy the rest of your life.

**CHARLES:** (Hurries to table. Notices Pam is dressed in a dress.) Pam?

**PAM:** (Kisses her father on the cheek.) Hello, father. How good it is to see you. Would you like for me to serve you?

**CHARLES:** (Peter pushes the chair up under his father who sits suddenly.) Since when do you wait on me?

**PAM:** Why, always, father. "Honor your father and mother."

**HEATHER:** We've been reading the Bible, father.

**LINDA:** Yes, and after dinner we are having a Bible study, just like we do every night.

**CHARLES:** Every night? I'm lucky to get you to read the Bible with me once a week.

**PAM:** Here's your plate, father.

**CHARLES:** You fixed my plate? Last time your mother cooked she told me to wait on myself. And then, I cleaned up the table.

LINDA: Don't be silly. That's women's work.

CHARLES: (*To audience*) Don't let Gloria Steinum hear you.

PETER: I'll help with the dishes, right after I take the trash out.

CHARLES: I don't believe what I'm hearing. You actually WANT to take the trash out?

PETER: Why, of course. It's one of my chores. How else can I earn my allowance?

CHARLES: Can we get this on video? Maybe the plane crashed and I'm in heaven.

HEATHER: Dear brother, could you pass me the butter?

PETER: Why, of course, my wonderful sister.

CHARLES: Wait a minute. You've never called you sister wonderful. The best thing you've called her is a bloated sack of nerd hair.

PETER: Father, you taught us to "Not provoke each other to wrath." Remember. Heather and I never fight. We love each other.

CHARLES: I'm feeling sick.

LINDA: Why don't you go sit in your comfortable chair. (*She helps him up and guides him over to chair. He sits and the children converge on him.*)

PETER: Father, here are your slippers. (*He puts them on his father's feet.*)

HEATHER: And, here is the evening paper.

PAM: Decaffeinated coffee just like you like it.

LINDA: And, now, we are going to go into the bedrooms and leave you alone for a while so you can unwind.

CHARLES: What? You're not going to watch television or play Nintendo?

**LINDA:** Heavens no. You are the king of this castle, dear. We must respect you.

**CHARLES:** This isn't what I had in mind.

**PAM:** Father, why are you acting so strange?

**CHARLES:** Me? Acting strange? You are the ones acting strangely. Not me. Heather, here, usually talks only about Barbie. Peter lives in the world of Nintendo. Pam talks constantly about boys. And, your mother hasn't worn a dress to the dinner table since the first week of our marriage.

**PAM:** Oh, father, I've been meaning to tell you that I have decided not to date until I turn twenty one.

**CHARLES:** That's it. I've got to find somebody. (*He hurries across the stage to the stranger.*) Look, I don't know how you did this, but it's weird.

**STRANGER:** You wanted the perfect family.

**CHARLES:** Well, they're a little too perfect. Submissive wife, obedient children, powerful father figure. I feel like I'm back in the time of Abraham. Maybe my idea of a perfect family is wrong. My perfect family is the one I've raised, the one I live with.

**STRANGER:** Perhaps your perception of what a family should be is a little too strict. The scriptures can be interpreted far too harshly. God does not expect perfection. Just faith. Remember, humans are not perfect, just forgiven.

**CHARLES:** Right. Give me my family back. The way they were.

**STRANGER:** Are you sure?

**CHARLES:** Yes. Much more of this and I'll die of sugar diabetes.

*(He returns to his chair and the family suddenly reverts.)*

**LINDA:** What am I doing in this dress?

PAM: Me, too. Yuck, coffee? I hate coffee. (*She sets it down on the coffee table.*)

PETER: Why do I have a suit on? And where's my Gameboy?

HEATHER: Dad, when are you going to get me that Barbie biking outfit?

CHARLES: (*Smiles as he relaxes into chair.*) This is more like it. Believe it or not, you just became the perfect family for a short while.

LINDA: Yes, it's coming back to me. I can't believe I cooked that seven course dinner.

PAM: Well, I'm going to get my jeans back on.

CHARLES: Wait. Peter said he was going to take out the trash, and Heather said she would stop fighting, and Pam said she wouldn't date until she was 21. There was nothing wrong with those parts of the perfect family. Why don't you stick to your promises.

*Pam, Peter, and Heather look at each other and then at Linda.*

LINDA: Well, maybe we could become the perfect family.

ALL: (*Pause for a beat as Charles smiles.*) NOT!!!

## ACT FOUR: MY MOM, THE MATCHMAKER

*(Linda comes into living room looking around.)*

**LINDA:** Richard. Richard. Are you here?

**RICHARD:** Yeah, sis. I was out on the deck catching some sun.

**LINDA:** I've got to warn you. Mother's at it again.

**RICHARD:** No! Not again. How?

**LINDA:** She met this girl at the outlet mall and she's bringing her in to meet you.

**RICHARD:** No! Mother won't be satisfied until she gets me married off.

**LINDA:** Well, you are thirty eight years old. And you know how mother is.

**RICHARD:** Yes. Old fashion. Linda, when I meet the girl I'm supposed to marry, I'll know it. Maybe I'm not even supposed to get married.

**GRAM:** *(Entering room.)* Don't be silly! Of course you are. Now, I met this nice young girl at the mall. She was selling cookies for a local church group and I told her all about you. She's right behind me and she's coming here to meet you. Look at your hair! And you smell like a coconut.

**RICHARD:** Mom, I don't want to meet . . .

*(Knock at door and a young woman enters. She is dressed rather plainly with cat eye glasses, hair pulled up in a bun, and a sweater thrown over her shoulders.)*

**MARSHA:** Hello, anybody home?

**GRAM:** Marsha, darling. You made it. I want you to meet my son, Richard Washington. Richard, this is Marsha Cooley.

*(Heather has been playing with her Barbie and Ken dolls on the floor and she makes them kiss.)*

**HEATHER:** Are you two gonna kiss?

**LINDA:** Heather, dear, why don't you come with me and Gram out to the beach and look for some shells.

**HEATHER:** But I'd rather stay here and see if they're going to kiss. You know, like the Little Mermaid? I know that kissing song if you want me to sing it.

**LINDA:** Let's go, Heather.

**HEATHER:** Ah, Mom. You're no fun!

*(They all leave and the two sit tentatively on the sofa. They both start to speak at the same time. Finally, she speaks first.)*

**MARSHA:** Look, I probably shouldn't have come. Your mother was just so insistent.

**RICHARD:** Yeah, she can be very persuasive.

**MARSHA:** I get the feeling I'm not wanted so I'll just be going...

**RICHARD:** No, don't go! I don't mean to make you feel unwanted. It's just that mother is always trying to fix me up.

**MARSHA:** Funny, but my father is just the same way. Always trying to find a nice guy for me to marry.

*(Doorbell rings. Richard goes to door and lets in the stranger dressed in a uniform.)*

**STRANGER:** Hi. A Mrs. Washington called and said you had a gas leak. Mind if I check around?

**RICHARD:** No. Go ahead. You'll find a lot of hot air around here.

**MARSHA:** So you've never been married?

**RICHARD:** Once. For two whole weeks. Big mistake. I listened to my mother and not my heart.

**MARSHA:** I came close once. But, I just couldn't see spending my life with this man I had only known for a year. After all, I have my career and I'm still young. Why be in a hurry?  
*(She takes her glasses and sweater off and lays them on the couch.)*

**RICHARD:** Exactly! Don't you just hate how everybody else in the world seems to know what's best for you besides yourself?

**MARSHA:** Especially at the church. When I graduated from high school, I felt I had to be married within two years or my life was over. In fact, my life is just beginning. Do you mind if I let my hair down. It is so hot in here.

**RICHARD:** No.

*(She allows her hair to come loose and it is apparent she is very attractive. Richard notices and scoots closer to her on the couch.)*

**RICHARD:** Pardon me for asking, but why do you dress like this? I mean, without your glasses on and with your hair down, you look like an entirely different person.

**MARSHA:** I did it again, didn't I? I get so wrapped up in what other people think I should look like, that I forget who I am. You know, all those good people with their good advice. If you listen to those kind of people long enough, you begin to believe you are a loser in life.

**RICHARD:** Right. Who are they to say what we should look like or act like? But, sometimes I get lonely. But, I have friends. And sometimes I actually meet a girl I don't feel was led my way by my mother.

**MARSHA:** Why is it that fellow Christians feel we have to be married to be complete?

**RICHARD:** Right! How do they know what's best for us? Sometimes I just want to tell them to go jump in the lake.

**MARSHA:** Go jump in the lake? I haven't heard that expression in ages.  
You are kind of nice.

**RICHARD:** And, so are you.

**STRANGER:** Well, I didn't find any gas leak. And, you two seem to be doing just fine without any outside help. Pardon me for eavesdropping. Just remember that Jesus was single, too.

**RICHARD:** Yeah. Right!

**MARSHA:** Thanks.

**STRANGER:** Think nothing of it. Goodbye.

**RICHARD:** Look, how would you like to go for a walk? Just as friends. No pressure to date, no pressure to get married, just to walk and talk.

**MARSHA:** I'd love it.

*(Gram comes in and sees them sitting close on the sofa and smiles.  
As Richard passes her he pauses.)*

**RICHARD:** Mom, that man from the gas company came by and said there was no leak. We're going for a walk.

**GRAM:** How nice. *(After they leave.)* I didn't call the gas company.

## ACT FIVE: LIFE -- THE GREAT ADVENTURE

*(Linda comes in to the table and appears to be in pain. She reacts as if she may be having labor pains. Gram comes in very worried.)*

**GRAM:** Linda, have you seen your father?

**LINDA:** Uh, no Mom. *(She hides her pain.)* Why?

**GRAM:** He left the house at 5 this afternoon to go for a walk and he hasn't come back.

**LINDA:** I'm sure he'll be back soon.

**GRAM:** But, he's been gone for three hours. That's not like him. He usually stays gone for only an hour. I'm worried.

**LINDA:** Mother, you're always worried. *(She appears distracted by her growing pain but hides it from her mother.)*

**GRAM:** Linda, this is different. You just don't know. Your father has changed so in the last few years. He is so forgetful. I have to watch after him constantly. When we go to the store, I have to show him where to turn when he drives. It's like having a child at home.

**LINDA:** He doesn't seem that forgetful to me.

**GRAM:** You're not around him all the time. I've spent a lifetime with him and I have watched him change over the last years.

**LINDA:** Well, we are **all** getting older, Mom. I'm sure once this baby comes, my life will never be the same.

**GRAM:** Honey, having this baby will be the best thing that ever happens to you.

**LINDA:** That's easy for you to say. You've forgotten what it's like.

**GRAM:** Having you so late in our life kept us younger. It made our middle age years . . .

**LINDA:** Hectic.

**GRAM:** Yes.

**LINDA:** Confusing.

**GRAM:** Yes.

**LINDA:** Maybe I'm the reason Dad is so forgetful. They say insanity is hereditary. You get it from your children.

**GRAM:** Insanity, Yes. Senility, no.

**LINDA:** Mom, Dad is not senile. At his age, he has more memories to sift through. You know like your attic.

**GRAM:** I never thought of it like that. Still, I'm worried sick. One day, you'll understand.

**LINDA:** I already understand, Mom. Charles may not be so forgetful, but there are times he is worse than one of our own children.

**GRAM:** But, he is still a good, God fearing man. You could have searched the world over and never found a better man than Richard.

**LINDA:** God brought us together, Mom. And God will take care of Dad. Just have faith.

**GRAM:** Imagine, my own daughter talking to me like I was her child. Funny how the roles reverse as you grow older.

**LINDA:** Yes, Mom, the older I get, the smarter you get. If you're really worried about Dad, I'll get Charles to go out and look for him. Pam has the care right now, but Charles could walk down the beach.

**GRAM:** Or, we could call the police.

**LINDA:** Let's don't overreact.

*(Doorbell rings. Linda painfully gets up and opens the door. A policeman is standing in the door.)*

**STRANGER:** Are you Mrs. Washington?

**LINDA:** No.

**GRAM:** Oh my goodness, the police? It's Sam, isn't it? I knew it. You've found him on the side of the road. Oh, Linda what will we do.

**LINDA:** *(Screams)* Have a baby.

**GRAM:** What?

**LINDA:** Oh, Mom, this baby is coming. And coming fast. I've been having pains for a while now but I didn't want to worry you seeing as how you were so worried about Dad.

**GRAM:** Let me get Charles. Charles? Charles?

**STRANGER:** Ma'am, I know something about delivering babies. Let's go into your bedroom while your mother calls for an ambulance.

**GRAM:** An ambulance?

**STRANGER:** Use the phone over there.

**CHARLES:** *(Runs in from outside wearing a snorkel, fins and a mask.)* I was going to go night snorkeling, Mom. What is it? Linda! You're having the baby?

**LINDA:** Even as we speak.

**CHARLES:** Where's the car?

**LINDA:** Pam took it to go get pizza.

**CHARLES:** Well, this baby isn't waiting for pizza.

**STRANGER:** Let's go into the bedroom and wait for the ambulance.

**CHARLES:** Do you want me to boil some water?

**STRANGER:** No, just come with me.

*(The children come in from outside as Gram hangs up the phone.)*

**PETER:** Gram, what's happening?

**GRAM:** Uh, your mother is having her baby.

**PETER:** Here? Gross!

**HEATHER:** I'm not sleeping in that bed.

**GRAM:** Maybe the ambulance will get here first.

**MARK:** Why does she need an ambulance. Don't you usually have babies in a taxi?

**COURTNEY:** My mom had me in an elevator. She says that is why I'm always driving her up the wall.

**GRAM:** That's nice. I need to check on your Mom. *(The children start to follow her. She stops realizing they don't need to go into the bedroom.)* On second thought, I'll stay here with you.

**HEATHER:** Gram, is Mom going to be OK?

**GRAM:** Yes, dear. Women have had babies in the comfort of their homes for years.

**HEATHER:** I just don't want anything to happen to Mom.

**GRAM:** Heather, dear, God will take care of your Mom. Don't worry. Don't worry. How silly of me to worry so. God is in charge and there is no need for any of us to worry.

**PETER:** Gram, we're just kids. It's hard for us not to worry about things sometimes.

**GRAM:** Well, did I ever tell you about the time your Mom got lost in a blizzard.

**HEATHER:** No.

**MARK:** Was it at the North Pole?

**GRAM:** No. It was in Colorado. We all decided to go skiing that winter and Pam was only two years old. Your dad and mom were at the store and started back. The snow was so thick they got lost and took a wrong turn up into the mountains. Your Gramps and I were so worried. And then, this stranger showed up out of the blue. Knocked on our hotel room door and just stood there. He had long hair and dirty clothes. Why, ice was all frozen on his mustache and beard.

He said my name, "Lucille". He said, I don't know you and you don't know me but God sent me here to give you a message. God said don't worry. Your daughter and son in law and grand baby will be just fine.

I remember looking over at your Gramps and when we looked back he was gone. The balcony outside our hotel room was empty. Just snow and ice. Not even footprints in the snow. Ten minutes didn't pass until the phone rang and the police told us they had found your mom and dad.

**HEATHER:** Who was that man, Gram?

**GRAM:** Well, I believe we all have guardian angels and Gramps and I decided that man was an angel sent from God. An angel. How strange. The gas man, the pizza man, that man your father said he talked to on the bus... I wonder?

*(Offstage we hear a baby cry.)*

**PAM:** *(Walking into room with pizza.)* Did I hear a baby crying?

**CHARLES:** *(Coming out of bedroom.)* Yes, it was your new baby brother.

**PAM:** What? Mom had the baby. This fast.

**GRAM:** They say the more kids you have, the faster they come.

**PAM:** I'm not washing the sheets. Who delivered the baby? You?

**CHARLES:** Yes. With the help of that policeman.

*(An ambulance attendant shows up at the door.)*

**AMBULANCE ATTENDANT:** Someone call for an ambulance?

**CHARLES:** Yes. Right in here. But, we were a little too fast for you.

*(They wheel Linda out, carrying baby. Gram pauses to look at him.)*

**GRAM:** How sweet. If only your father could have lived to see this.

**GRAMPS:** *(Walking through door with a towel around his waist.)* I ain't dead yet.

**GRAM:** Sam! You're alive!

**GRAMPS:** Last time I checked.

**GRAM:** I thought you were dead. That policeman.

**GRAMPS:** That policeman arrested me for skinny dipping.

**PETER:** Excellent! Can we go with you next time?

**LINDA:** Don't give my children anymore wild ideas, Dad. Especially while I'm at the hospital. Where's that nice policeman that helped me?

**AMBULANCE ATTENDANT:** What policeman?

**LINDA:** The one that was in the bedroom. He brought my father home and helped deliver the baby.

**AMBULANCE ATTENDANT:** Ma'am, I called the police dispatch unit when I first got the call and they said there was no one on this side of town to help out. I don't know who helped you, but it wasn't a policeman.

*(They all look at each other as Linda and the baby are wheeled away. Gram and Gramps sit on the sofa.)*

**GRAM:** What an evening.

**GRAMPS:** You can say that, again. The water was freezing!

**GRAM:** Oh, Sam, I was so worried about you. What has gotten into you? You're too old to go skinny dipping.

**GRAMPS:** Funny, I remember a time right after we married that we went skinny dipping right out there in the ocean.

**GRAM:** That was almost fifty years ago.

**GRAMPS:** *(He looks around at the beach house and leans back, putting his arm around Lucille.)* Fifty years. Seems like only yesterday we put the finishing touches on this house. You painted the ceiling and I hung the wallpaper.

**GRAM:** You never did get it straight!

**GRAMPS:** Well, I always believed in leaving something undone so I would always have something to do. My, my it is so quiet in here. You can actually hear the ocean waves breaking.

**GRAM:** It was so quiet back then, too. Before the children, the grandchildren. Sam, the time has flown by so fast. You turn your back for a moment and the world has passed you by.

**GRAMPS:** Now, Lucille, the world didn't pass us by. Look at all the wonderful things we've done in our life. Look at the sights we've seen, the children we've raised, the lives we've touched for the Lord.

**GRAM:** I know, Sam. Sometimes I just wish this old world would slow down just a little so we could stop and enjoy the view.

**GRAMPS:** It isn't the world that needs to stop. It's us, Lucille. We need to pause every now and then and really take a good look at God's wonderful world. I still remember the first time yo saw the ocean.

**GRAM:** *(Laughing.)* I was so embarrassed. I didn't realize it went all the way to the horizon. I though it was some big cloud bank.

**GRAMPS:** And, remember the first time you went into the water and fell down?

**GRAM:** Yes. I didn't know it was salty! You never told me.

**GRAMPS:** That's what I love about you, Lucille. That childlike innocent fascination with the world.

**GRAM:** Well, we left those childlike years way behind us. We were different, then.

**GRAMPS:** So what changed?

**GRAM:** We did. We're old, Sam.

**GRAMPS:** I may be old in body, but I refuse to get old in mind. Ain't no rules anywhere says a man of my age can't have fun.

**GRAM:** That's not what I meant. It's just that you've changed so much.

You're going through your second childhood or something. You never are serious anymore.

**GRAMPS:** Life's too short to stay serious all the time, Lucille. You gotta go out and make it worth the living. Reach out and grab the moment. Live every second. Linda taught me that. I was forty two when she was born. Thought my life was over. I had reached middle age. It was all down hill. But, she brought the child back to life within me. I can't let it die. It's just too much fun.

**GRAM:** Oh, Sam, what must you think of me and my fuddy-duddy ways. I guess you regret being married to such an old minded woman.

**GRAMPS:** Listen here, Lucille. You're still the flaxen haired woman I courted fifty five years ago. There may be a few wrinkles on the surface but there's still a fire in the hearth. You keep me balanced, keep me from going off the deep end, tell me where to turn. God put us together for a reason. Don't ever think I don't love you anymore. Every morning when I awake, I look at you lying there in the bed beside me and I thank God that he gave me this little princess who made my life worth living.

**GRAM:** Oh, Sam. You always did have a way with words. I can't wear a bikini, anymore.

**GRAMPS:** Yeah, but YOU know CPR!

**GRAM:** Sam, do you remember that man that showed up at our hotel room in Colorado that time?

**GRAMPS:** How could I forget. Funny, that policeman looked a lot like him.

**GRAM:** That's just what I was thinking. Seems just when we forget that God is in control, He does something wonderful to remind us.

**GRAMPS:** Yep, He's captain of the ship. Well, Lucille, you gotta remember that life is one great big adventure. Treat life like a ride on big sailing ship. You get on, enjoy the view, work a little, get to know the captain, and get off when you get home.

We ain't home yet, but I'll be tarred and feathered if I ain't gonna enjoy every minute until we get there. So, what do you say? Want to go for a swim?

## EPILOGUE: MONTANA HOLMES

*(Montana Holmes walks out onto stage with a bag slung over his shoulder.)*

**MONTANA:** Shakespeare wrote a famous line: "Life is but a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing." I disagree with Shakespeare. I have something I would like to share with you. *(He reaches into bag and pauses.)* And, it's not a snake. It is a very ancient and wise document. *(He removes a Bible from the bag.)* Jesus shared His view of life with us. John 10 says: I have come that they might have life, and have it more abundantly."

That's what life is all about. Living life to its fullest as God would have us do. Life is not a burden. Life is not dull and tedious. If you have Jesus in your heart, then life is the greatest adventure a human could ever experience. So, go out and make every day, every minute, every second count for God. With Jesus in your heart, your life will be one great big adventure.