



Ron Hill

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HARMONY HOLIDAYS

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HARMONY HOLIDAYS was first performed at the Genoa Civic Theatre, Genoa, OH, on Jan. 6-15, 2023: Denise Lowry, Pete Lowry, directors; Joel Mann, lights and sound; Denise Lowry, Chelsea Scott, and Tyler Scott, set construction; Steve Salander, stage manager; and Denise Lowry, costumes.

ADDIE: Kimberly Boos

MAUD: Becky Buffington

GRACE: Anita Kupka

LEAH: Jackie Rutledge

RUSSELL: Kevin Harrison

MARILYN: Brenda Clough

RIA: Leah Reno

HOWARD: Chad Cook

HARMONY HOLIDAYS

HOLIDAY COMEDY. In this side-splitting holiday comedy, the ladies of Harmony Church are back and they're using their "smiley voices" as they hang holiday decorations and prepare for the upcoming Christmas pageant. But behind-the-scenes drama erupts when Maud discovers Pastor Bob has named Addie as the head of Christmas festivities, and rumors run rampant that Maud is dating Russell, the church janitor. Meanwhile, Addie, who is obsessed with glue guns and glitter and suffers from "verbal diarrhea," can't find anyone to play Joseph, Mary, baby Jesus, and the three wise men. And a kid who is allergic to wool insists on playing a sheep. It's going to take a Christmas miracle to pull off this Christmas pageant!

Performance Time: Approximately 75 minutes.

For more church lady hilarity, check out *The Ladies of Harmony* and *Harmony Romances* by Ron Hill.

CHARACTERS

(2 M, 6 F, 1 boy, 1 girl, opt. extras)

ADDIE: Sweet, lovable church lady who tends to say things without thinking; loves glue guns and glitter; female.

MAUD: Cranky church lady who heads the funeral committee at Harmony Church; dating Russell but refuses to admit it; female.

RUSSELL: Church janitor whose social graces are not the best but tends to be charming in spite of himself; male.

GRACE: Church lady who isn't afraid to say what she thinks and suffers from a weak bladder; female.

LEAH: Church lady and long-time spinster who recently married Howard; female.

HOWARD: Married to Leah but forgets to put the toilet seat up; male.

RIA ("Ree-ah"): 20s, a pregnant woman in need of help; wears a large coat that hides her pregnancy; female.

MARILYN: Married to Pastor Bob; female.

KYLE: Boy who is allergic to wool, but insists on playing a sheep in the Christmas pageant; male.

TIFFANY: Girl who plays an angel in the Christmas pageant; female.

CHILD 1-4 (opt.): Children performing in the Christmas pageant; voices only; flexible.

SETTING

Harmony Church's fellowship hall, located in the basement of the church.

SET

Fellowship hall. Several steps representing a stairway lead to the church's fellowship hall, which is located in the basement of the church. There is a partially assembled Christmas tree against one wall. Christmas decorations and craft materials are strewn about on tables and chairs. There is a storage room and bathroom offstage.

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

ACT I: Harmony Church's fellowship hall, mid-morning.

Intermission (opt.)

ACT II

Scene 1: Harmony Church's fellowship hall, early December, a few weeks later.

Scene 2: Harmony Church's fellowship hall, the night the Christmas pageant.

PROPS

Christmas tree	Coat, for Maud
Coat, for Addie	Coat, for Marilyn
Boxes of assorted Christmas decorations	Boxes of assorted Christmas ornaments
Shopping bag	Cell phone, for Grace
Coat, for Grace	Cookies
Assorted bottles of glitter	Christmas wreath
Glue	Cup of McDonald's coffee
Massive ball of tangled Christmas tree lights	Sheets of paper
Untangled Christmas tree lights	Cell phone, for Addie
Coat, for Leah	Cell phone, for Leah
Shopping bag filled with craft supplies and decorations	Beard and robe, for Wise Man costume
Coffee cups	Baby doll
Black trash bag filled with threadbare female clothing, hairbrush, toothpaste, toothbrush, cheap perfume	Engagement ring, for Ria
Bucket	Assorted costume pieces for pageant (wigs, beards, robes, etc.)
Assorted cleaning supplies	Full Joseph costume including a beard, for Maud
	Props for pageant
	Pageant costumes, for Leah and Marilyn

SOUND EFFECTS

Sounds of people gathering

Sounds of scurrying as children rush off

Sounds of children returning

Chorus of children making assorted animal noises

**“...GLITTER IS THE HERPES
OF THE ART WORLD.
It’s all OVER THE PLACE
and SHOWS UP
WHEN YOU LEAST EXPECT IT.”**

—GRACE

ACT I

(AT RISE: *Harmony Church, fellowship hall, November, mid-morning. There is a partially assembled Christmas tree against one wall. Christmas decorations and craft materials are strewn about on tables and chairs. Addie's coat is on a chair. Addie is fussing with boxes of decorations and singing her version of "Jingle Bells."*)

ADDIE: (*With gusto, sings.*)

"Jingle bells, jingle bells,
Jingle all the way.

Oh! What fun it is—" (*Spoken.*) Oh, shoot! I need that other box of stuff. (*Starts to exit to the storage room offstage, sings.*)

"Jingle bells, jingle bells—" (*Exits.*)

(*Maud enters and stands at the top of the stairs that lead into the basement fellowship hall. Maud surveys the disarray.*)

MAUD: (*Shaking her head.*) I only thought I disliked the holidays. This one should prove to be the real clincher.

(*Singing, Addie enters from the storage area offstage. She is carrying a box and doesn't notice Maud.*)

ADDIE: (*Sings.*)

"Bells on Bob's tail ring,
Making spearmint brides,

Oh, what fun—" (*Notices Maud.*) Oh, good morning, Maud.
Did someone die?

MAUD: Why do you ask me that every time you see me?

ADDIE: Well, you're head of the funeral committee.

MAUD: I'm a lot of things, but I'm *not* a harbinger of death.

ADDIE: Then no one has died?

MAUD: Not yet, but give me a minute. (*Places her coat on a chair or hangs it on a hook.*) The line is “making spirits bright,” not “making spearmint brides.” What’s with that?

ADDIE: Oh, I know the right words, but when my daughter was little she thought they were singing “spearmint brides” so that’s what she sang. I thought it was cute and have sung it that way all these years.

MAUD: Humph. I guess you had to be there.

ADDIE: It’s sort of like the kids singing... (*To the tune of “The Old Rugged Cross,” sings.*) ...“On a hill far away, stood an old Chevrolet—”

MAUD: I get your drift. Personally, I think you were a [Baptist] for too many years. [*Or insert another religion.*]

ADDIE: Thank you.

(*Maud looks at Addie and shakes her head.*)

MAUD: Well, since you’re the one in charge, where do you want me to start?

ADDIE: Well, let’s see. The branches on the tree need to be fluffed. Would you mind doing that?

MAUD: Fluffed?

ADDIE: Oh, you know, so it looks nice and full...poufy.

MAUD: Fluffed and poufy. Got it. (*Begins fussing with the tree in a rough manner.*)

ADDIE: Gently, Maud, gently. Just because you’re in a bad mood this morning is no reason to take it out on the poor tree.

MAUD: (*Twisting and pulling branches on the tree as though she’s trying to kill it.*) Who said I’m in a bad mood?

ADDIE: I do. I might not be the sharpest knife in the drawer, but I know a bad mood when I see it. Did you and Russell have an argument?

MAUD: Russell has nothing to do with it. Besides, we don’t argue. He does his thing, and I do mine. End of discussion.

ADDIE: Have you thought about what you'll get him for Christmas?

MAUD: I said, "End of discussion."

ADDIE: Oh, I know. That discussion ended. *(Slight pause.)*
This is a whole new one.

MAUD: *(To herself more than Addie.)* Why do I even try? I haven't given it any thought. In the first place, why would I get something for Russell?

ADDIE: You guys have been dating several months, that's why. I bet he'll get something for you.

MAUD: Dating?! We went to Leah and Howard's wedding and dinner a couple of times. That's not exactly dating.

ADDIE: What about the movies?

MAUD: Twice...maybe three times, but still—

ADDIE: A normal person would call that dating.

MAUD: I'm as normal as you are. *(Realizes.)* Let me re-phrase that.

ADDIE: Well, if you and Russell aren't arguing and are still dating, I can't figure out what has you in such a snit this morning. If you won't talk about it—

MAUD: Oh, I'll talk about it, but you aren't going to like it.

ADDIE: Try me.

MAUD: Why did Pastor Bob ask you to be in charge of the pageant and decorating? I've done it for years with a great deal of success.

ADDIE: Pastor Bob didn't ask me. I asked him if I could do it this year, and he said yes.

MAUD: You asked him? Why?

ADDIE: He said he asked you if you were going to do it this year, and you didn't give him an answer.

MAUD: He only asked me once, and I said I'd think about it.

ADDIE: Apparently, he took that as a "no."

MAUD: But I've always done it.

ADDIE: And have you enjoyed doing it?

MAUD: I hate it. I think it's a bunch of unnecessary hassle, but that's beside the point.

ADDIE: No, Maud, that is the point. Each year, I've watched you get crankier and crankier...like the Grinch in drag. I thought I was doing you a favor. I didn't mean to hurt your feelings.

MAUD: "The Grinch in drag"? You certainly have a way with words.

ADDIE: You do all the funeral dinners, and there's been about one every month this past year. That's a lot of work.

MAUD: And they have all been very successful.

ADDIE: Except for Clarence Bowers.

(Grace enters, carrying a shopping bag. She is wearing a coat.)

GRACE: What about Clarence Bowers? We don't have to bury that old stinker again, do we?

ADDIE: Good morning, Grace.

GRACE: Hello, Addie. Morning, Maud. What's all this about Clarence Bowers?

MAUD: It isn't about Clarence Bowers, may he rest in peace. It's about the holiday pageant and decorations.

GRACE: Oh, good. *(Removes her coat and throws it over a chair or hangs it on a hook. Puts down her shopping bag.)* At least we won't have to worry about running out of food. What a fiasco that was.

MAUD: We know, Grace, we know. Give it a rest.

ADDIE: Maud's upset that I asked Pastor Bob if I could be in charge of the pageant and decorations this year.

GRACE: *(Incredulously.)* And he agreed to it?

MAUD: He did.

GRACE: *(To Addie.)* Has he ever seen you with a hot glue gun and glitter?

MAUD: This could get ugly.

ADDIE: It's going to be just fine. I've planned everything.

MAUD: That's what worries me.

GRACE: Just go with the flow, Maud. If it doesn't work out, there's always next year.

MAUD: I guess you're right. It might be rather nice to sit back, relax, and not be in charge.

GRACE: You don't really believe that, do you?

MAUD: Not for a minute.

(Addie is busy removing things from boxes and looking through the bag Grace carried on.)

GRACE: Hey, is the coffee ready? I could use a cup. It's colder than a well digger's butt in Montana this morning.

MAUD: Honestly, Grace, your language could stand some improvement.

GRACE: What? "Montana" isn't a dirty word.

MAUD: I was talking about—

ADDIE: *(Flustered.)* But...but...

MAUD: Yes, Addie?

ADDIE: *(Disappointed.)* But, Grace, you forgot the glitter.

GRACE: I didn't forget it. *(Obviously making up the story as she tells it.)* Some men from the EPA showed up at my door this morning and told me to drop it and no one would get hurt.

MAUD: Oh, Grace, don't get her started. It's too early.

ADDIE: *(To Grace.)* Really? Why don't they go after the terrorists instead of a little old lady with a bag of glitter?

GRACE: To them there isn't any difference. Besides, glitter is the herpes of the art world. It's all over the place and shows up when you least expect it.

ADDIE: Well, that's just too bad! I'll use what I have, but it isn't going to be enough. A person can't make holiday decorations without glitter.

MAUD: We have enough decorations. Do we have to make more?

ADDIE: Of course, we have to make more...something new and fresh. Where's the glue gun?

(Note: During the following, Addie is serious but Maud and Grace are having a difficult time containing their laughter.)

GRACE: Well, Addie, the EPA—

ADDIE: (*Horried.*) Not the glue gun, too!

GRACE: 'Fraid so. Seems they heard about the time you glued your electric skillet to the kitchen counter.

ADDIE: That was an accident.

GRACE: Well, they don't want any more of those accidents. They're bad for the environment.

MAUD: (*To Addie.*) Did you ever get it loose?

ADDIE: Of course. I gave it a sharp whack with the rolling pin, and it popped right off. It only took out a small piece of the countertop.

MAUD: Were you able to fix it?

ADDIE: Oh, sure. The leg of the skillet is as good as new.

GRACE: She means the counter, Addie. Were you able to fix that?

ADDIE: That was easy. I just removed the piece of Formica from the skillet leg with a sharp knife and super glued it back in place. (*Pause.*) I never did find out who was on the phone.

MAUD: The phone? How does a phone figure in all this?

ADDIE: Well, I was holding the piece in place, and the phone rang. I thought maybe it was Maud and someone had died. Anyhow, I tried to answer it, and my finger was glued to the counter.

GRACE: Boy, with my bladder problem, that could have been a disaster. (*Starts to exit to the offstage restroom.*) It was probably those guys from the EPA. (*Exits.*)

ADDIE: Oh, to heck with those guys. I brought some glitter and Elmer's glue. We can make do with that.

(*Maud finishes fluffing the tree and steps back to admire her handiwork.*)

MAUD: (*To others, indicating tree.*) How does it look?

ADDIE: It looks wonderful, Maud. (*Adjusts a few branches to her liking.*) Very nice.

MAUD: These artificial trees are a great invention. You can bend the branches any which way, and there's no watering, no pine needles to clean up. Live trees are such a mess.

ADDIE: I miss the smell of a real tree. Smells and aromas are a big part of the holidays. They really set the mood for me.

(Grace enters from the restroom.)

GRACE: Hey, the tree looks great. Where are the lights? Maud and I can put those on, if that's okay with you, Addie.

ADDIE: That's fine. Now, let's see...I know they're around here someplace. *(Rifles through some boxes.)* Here they are.

(Addie hands Grace a massive ball of tangled lights. Grace and Maud look at the tangled lights and shake their heads.)

GRACE: Next year, we replace this relic of a tree with one of those pre-lit numbers. These things are a real pain in the... *(Realizes.)* ...anatomy.

MAUD: Thank you, Grace. *(Puts the tangled lights in another box. Finds some lights that are untangled.)*

GRACE: It wasn't easy, but you're welcome.

ADDIE: Remember in the '70s when those aluminum trees were all the rage?

(Note: During the following, Maud and Grace place the lights on the tree while Addie fusses with other things.)

MAUD: You couldn't even put lights on them.

GRACE: Everyone had an oscillating color wheel. Every living room in America looked like a disco bar. Talk about garish.

MAUD: I never had one. To me, they were just plain ugly.

ADDIE: I had one, but I didn't have one of those color wheel things, so I strung it with lights.

GRACE: Addie! That was dangerous. I'm surprised you lived to see another Christmas.

MAUD: *(To Addie.)* You're lucky you weren't zapped into eternity.

ADDIE: It was perfectly safe and looked so pretty. Oh sure, if you touched it you got a tingle, but at least the cat didn't try to climb it. After that first time, poor Tabby wouldn't even go in the living room.

(Leah enters at the top of the stairs. She is wearing a coat and is carrying a shopping bag filled with craft supplies and decorations.)

LEAH: Hi, everyone. I'm sorry I'm late. Today has been a hectic one. *(Removes her coat and throws it over a chair or hangs it. Puts her bag down.)*

GRACE: You aren't late, Leah. We're just getting a good start.

MAUD: Maybe you can help us with these lights while we tell you about the time Addie electrocuted her cat.

LEAH: What?!

GRACE: Just kidding. Addie was just being Addie.

LEAH: That explains everything. *(Rummages around in the shopping bag and pulls out some glitter.)* I picked up some more glitter at Walmart in case we didn't have enough.

GRACE: Oh, herpes!

ADDIE: *(To Leah.)* Did those men from the EPA see you? They didn't follow you, did they?

LEAH: Herpes? The EPA? An electrocuted cat? This is why I don't like to be late and arrive in the middle of things. It takes so long to catch up.

(Maud gets a cup of coffee.)

MAUD: Welcome to the ladies of Harmony. *(Raises her cup to toast.)*

LEAH: After all these years, I should be used to it, but this day hasn't been a good one so far.

GRACE: What's the problem? Do you want to talk about it?

MAUD: *(To Leah.)* We're more than willing to listen.

LEAH: I really don't care to talk about it. *(Slight pause and then proceeds to talk about it.)* It's just that...well, I mean Howard—

GRACE: He isn't ill, is he?

ADDIE: *(To Leah.)* It's those liver spots, isn't it? I knew this would happen.

LEAH: It's not the liver spots. Howard is, well, just being Howard, I guess.

MAUD: You guys have only been married a couple of months, and you were single a long time. It's going to take some adjustments.

(Grace gets a cup of coffee and hands it to Leah.)

GRACE: *(To Leah.)* Give it some time. Everything will work out in the end. At least, you aren't alone. You have someone to grow old with.

LEAH: You're probably right, but at this point, growing old alone doesn't sound too bad. Maybe I rushed into marriage. Maybe I should have given myself more time.

ADDIE: You didn't have that much time. You were desperate.

MAUD: *(Admonishingly.)* Addie! For crying out loud!

LEAH: No, Addie's right, though "desperate" might be a little strong. I thought, or wanted to think, that I was young again. Howard and I should have taken some time to get reacquainted before rushing into marriage.

GRACE: Maybe this younger generation has the right idea. They live together first, have children, and then if everything looks good, they tie the knot. With any luck, their son can be the best man.

MAUD: They call living together, "cohabitation." We used to call it, "shacking up." Same difference.

LEAH: Howard is helpless around the house. He's the reason I got such a late start today. I had to fix his breakfast, clean up the kitchen before leaving, and then count all his medicines and put them in that irritating pill box. I don't know how the man survived all those years as a widower.

(Note: During the following, Grace, Maud, and Leah are arrange the lights and/or put them on the tree. Addie is cutting out stars to apply glitter to.)

ADDIE: He probably ate at McDonald's and wasn't taking so much medicine. It was just one Egg McMuffin after another and then another pill. For lunch, it was a Big Mac and another pill. It got to be too much, so he married you. You probably saved his life.

LEAH: Well, maybe, but—

MAUD: I think Addie's right. Oh, not about the McDonald's stuff, but saving Howard's life. You found each other when you both needed someone. Count your blessings.

ADDIE: *(To Leah.)* So what if he doesn't put the toilet seat down. That's really not a big deal.

LEAH: It's worse than that...he doesn't put it *up!*

MAUD: That's disgusting!

LEAH: I don't know if it's his eyes or his aim, but something is definitely off.

ADDIE: For Christmas, why don't you get him some night-vision goggles?

GRACE: Night-vision goggles? What are you talking about?

ADDIE: Well, if the bathroom is dark, he can't see the John. With night-vision goggles, he can see in the dark

GRACE: He could also turn on the light.

MAUD: *(To Leah.)* Forget the goggles. Nagging is free. Just keep harping until he gets the hang of it.

GRACE: "Until he gets the *hang* of it"? Geez, Maud.

MAUD: You know what I mean, Grace. He has to *shake* the habit.

(Maud, Addie, and Leah try to stifle their laughter. Grace makes a speedy exit to the restroom offstage.)

ADDIE: Bend a little, Leah, be flexible. And I mean that in the nicest possible way. Give it some time and everything will be fine.

LEAH: Thank you, ladies. I'm feeling better about the situation. I'm certainly lucky to have friends like you. What does a person do without friends?

ADDIE: They crochet a lot or knit scarves. Sometimes, they hoard things. Have you seen that show where —

MAUD: Addie, that was a rhetorical question. She isn't expecting an answer.

ADDIE: Well, when I ask a question, I expect an answer, even if it's "mind your own business."

(Russell, the janitor, enters at the top of the stairs. He is carrying a black trash bag filled with stuff.)

RUSSELL: *(Calls.)* Morning, ladies. How you all doing this crisp morning? *(Addie, Maud, and Leah adlib greetings to Russell, "Fine," "Great," "It's frigid," etc. Maud smooths her hair and clothes in an attempt to look as nice as possible for Russell. Grace enters. Holding up the trash bag.)* Say, this doesn't belong to any of you, does it?

LEAH: What is it?

ADDIE: *(To Russell.)* Where did you get it?

GRACE: *(To Russell.)* If it's more glitter, I'm gonna scream.

RUSSELL: I was coming across the parking lot and saw it in the bushes beside the church.

MAUD: It's probably just trash. People litter all the time. Just throw it away.

RUSSELL: Seems like more than garbage to me, Maud. *(For the following, he holds up each item and then returns it to the trash bag.)* There're clothes in here...maybe a little threadbare, but clean. And there's a hairbrush, some

toothpaste, a toothbrush, and some [Dollar Store] perfume.
[Or insert the name of another suitable store.]

LEAH: I think it belongs to some homeless person.

ADDIE: *(To Russell.)* Did you see a shopping cart in the area?

MAUD: Not all homeless people have a shopping cart, Addie.

GRACE: Just the rich ones.

MAUD: And, besides, there aren't any homeless people in this town.

GRACE: Of course, we have homeless people. The problem is they're also invisible. We choose not to see them.

RUSSELL: Well, I'll just put it in the storage room. Maybe someone will come around and claim it. *(Exits to storage room.)*

ADDIE: *(To Russell, calls.)* I've got a big mess in there, Russell! I need to see where you put it.

(Addie exits to the storage room. Leah takes over cutting out stars.)

LEAH: I'm so ashamed of myself.

GRACE: What brought that on?

LEAH: Here I am complaining about Howard and his little quirks when there are so many people in worse straits. I just never thought about it.

MAUD: We can't shoulder all the woes of humanity. The world goes on.

GRACE: The world might go on, but I have my doubts about these lights. Give me a hand, girls, and let's see what we got. *(Note: Be sure the strings of lights are not so tangled that they can't be ready to hang on the tree. The ladies begin placing the lights on the tree and adlib, "Those are too close," "Hide that cord," "We need some more over here," etc.)* There, that ought to do it. *(Steps back to admire the tree.)* And now, the moment of truth... *(Plugs in the lights, and to everyone's surprise, they work.)* Hallelujah!

LEAH: *(Beaming, clapping her hands.)* We did a good job. It's lovely.

MAUD: It looks like a million other Christmas trees.

LEAH: Well, it won't when we get it finished. We'll hang these glittery stars, and they'll catch the light, and some candy canes, and ornaments.

(Russell and Addie enter from the storage room. Russell is carrying a bucket and cleaning supplies.)

RUSSELL: Well, I guess I'd better get upstairs and start earning my wages. *(Heads toward the stairs, stops, and turns to Maud.)* You have any plans for dinner tonight?

MAUD: *(Self-consciously knowing the ladies are listening to every word.)* Well, I was thinking I'd...of course, I could...I mean, I might—

GRACE: Oh, for crying out loud! Stop with the hemming and hawing. Give the man an answer!

RUSSELL: Maud?

MAUD: Yes, Russell, I'd like that very much.

GRACE: Finally!

RUSSELL: *(To Maud.)* Great! I'll pick you up around six. Thanks, Grace. *(Notices the tree.)* Nice job. *(Exits up the stairs.)*

GRACE: *(To Maud.)* We all know you're going out with Russell. What's the big deal? Why do you keep the poor man dangling?

ADDIE: Another date! This is exciting! Oh, Maud, I'm so happy for you!

MAUD: Nonsense! It isn't a date. We're just going to dinner.

GRACE: Just what do you consider a "date"? A romp in the—

MAUD: *(Admonishingly.)* Grace!

LEAH: Russell is a real catch...now that he's joined AA. Does he take as much medication as Howard?

MAUD: How would I know what medication Russell takes or how much? What difference does that make?

ADDIE: You could ask questions...or look in his medicine cabinet. That's what I do.

GRACE: *(To Maud.)* Medicine can affect a man's performance, if you know what I mean.

MAUD: I know what you mean, and I find it disgusting. If we don't get back to decorating, I'm going home. *(Grabs her coat.)*

ADDIE: Use your smiley voices.

MAUD: *(Angrily.)* This is my smiley voice!

LEAH: Don't go, Maud. We still have a lot to do. All we've done so far is cut out a few stars and get the lights on the tree.

MAUD: Well, I'll stay... *(Puts her coat down.)* ...but only if we can stay focused on the job at hand. Every time we get together, we tend to go off on crazy tangents. It drives me nuts.

ADDIE: *(Looking at the Christmas tree, realizes.)* Oh, balls! Balls! Balls!

MAUD: That's it. I'm out of here.

ADDIE: I forgot to get the balls out for the tree. I know right where they are. *(Exits to storage room.)*

GRACE: *(To Leah and Maud.)* Quick! While she's gone, hide the glitter. We'll tell her the EPA came in and took it.

LEAH: We need the glitter, Grace. And stop with that EPA stuff. Addie can't possibly believe that outrageous story.

GRACE: So far, so good.

(Pastor Bob's wife, Marilyn, enters and descends the stairs. She removes her coat and throws it over a chair.)

MARILYN: Morning, everyone. Sorry to be late. I got sidetracked this morning. How's it going?

LEAH: Not too bad. We have some stars cut out and ready for glitter.

GRACE: *(To Marilyn.)* We have the lights on the tree. I'm always glad when that's done.

MAUD: *(To Marilyn.)* It's a mess. Things that should take ten minutes wind up taking an hour. We'll probably be here all day.

MARILYN: Where's Addie? I thought she was in charge.
(Addie enters, carrying boxes of ornaments for the tree. To Addie.)
Oh, there you are.

ADDIE: Good morning, Marilyn. Thanks for coming.

MARILYN: No problem. What do you want me to do? *(Gets a cup of coffee.)*

ADDIE: I thought you and Grace could hang these ornaments while Leah and I put some glitter on the stars.

MAUD: And what should I do...just stand around and look pretty?

ADDIE: Oh, Maud, you can't do that. *(Realizes.)* I mean...what I meant to say was you can help with the tree or the glitter, whatever you want to do.

MAUD: I'd like to hang... *(Pause. Looks at Addie.)*
...ornaments. I don't want anything to do with illegal glitter.

ADDIE: Right. If anyone is going to be arrested for using glitter, it should be Leah and me.

MARILYN: Arrested? For glitter?

GRACE: It's a long story. Try not to be late to our next get-together.

MARILYN: Hey, Maud, I saw Russell when I came in. How are you two doing?

MAUD: Fine, I guess.

ADDIE: *(To Marilyn.)* We already covered that topic. They're going to dinner tonight.

MARILYN: Another date? That's great.

ADDIE: Oh, it's not a date. They're just going to dinner.

MARILYN: That sounds like a date to me.

ADDIE: Well, it isn't...not according to Maud.

MAUD: Addie, you are in charge of decorations, not the entire conversation. I can speak for myself. *(To Marilyn.)*
Russell and I both have to eat, so we might as well eat

together, but it is not a date. I don't want to rush into something and have regrets like Leah.

LEAH: Who said I have regrets?

MAUD: You did. You said you wished you had taken more time to get to know Howard rather than rush into marriage.

LEAH: That doesn't mean I regret it.

MARILYN: Let me think about this. Regrets don't mean regretting, and a date doesn't mean dating. Man, I have to learn not to be late.

ADDIE: Howard hangs out at McDonald's, takes a lot of medicine, and doesn't put up the toilet seat. Now you're up to speed.

GRACE: Except for the EPA, the glitter, and the hot-wired cat.

[END OF FREEVIEW]