



A CAROL'S CHRISTMAS
BY
KEITH BADHAM

Extract

A SMITH SCRIPT

**This script is protected by copyright laws.
No performance of this script -IN ANY MEDIA – may be undertaken
without payment of the appropriate fee and obtaining a licence.
For further information, please contact SMITH SCRIPTS at
info@smithscripts.co.uk**

“A Carol’s Christmas”

A play in 2 acts

By Keith Badham

A Carol's Christmas

Copyright 2019 by Keith Badham

CHARACTERS

Carol Fowler	Mother, Ex-Wife, Teaching Assistant (40-s 50's)
Richard Fowler	Her Father (70's)
Donna Stanley	Her Daughter (20's)
Sally Hook	Her Best Friend (40's – 50s)
Chrissy Pine	Her Sister (40s – 50s)
Nick Pine	Her Brother in Law (40s – 50s)
Stewart Pine	Her Nephew (20s)
Gavin Stanley	Her Ex-Husband (60s)
Jack Jones	Her Neighbour (60s – 70s)
Dave Smith	Her Neighbour's Carer (50s)
Irene Rowland	Her WI Friend (60's)
Liz Wyman	Her WI Friend (60's)
Dianne Jameson	Her WI Friend (60's)
Susan Prior	Her WI Friend (60s)

SETTING

Carol's House.

TIME

Christmas Eve & Christmas Day. Modern Day

ACT I

SCENE 1

(Carol's Lounge. A tired looking lounge, with mismatched furniture that has seen better days. There are Christmas decorations partly put up. Donna is decorating the tree unenthusiastically.)

CAROL

Why don't you try smiling love? You might enjoy it

DONNA

It just looks.....crap

CAROL

(patiently)

Well, perhaps if you just put your phone down for five minutes and concentrated you might get more done

DONNA

(Not really listening)

Yeah. Ok

CAROL

Well I'm glad we managed to sort that out. I'll just be over here self-harming if you need me ok?.

DONNA

(Still looking at phone)

OK

(Carol gets up on step ladder to start fixing decorations. There is a knock at the door.)

CAROL

Can you get that love?

(No reaction)

CAROL

Donna! Donna! Can you get that....

(Donna's phone rings. She answers it)

DONNA

Alright? NO WAY!! WITH STEVE?

(Donna looks up at her Mum, Then speaks on the phone quietly)

DONNA

Hang on. I'm going somewhere PRIVATE

(She exits)

CAROL

(climbing down)

It's OK....I'll get it Donna. No need to trouble yourself, I mean it's only Christmas bloody eve *(Opens door)*

(Richard Enters)

RICHARD

Hello Darling. Mind your language please poppet. *(He hands his hat and coat to Carol)*. You've not finished decorating yet dear.

CAROL

Oh, you noticed that did you? I have no idea what I've been doing with myself all morning. Anyway, what are you doing here at this time Dad? I thought we'd agreed that you'd come at lunchtime?

RICHARD

The Library is shut. I'm particularly perturbed about this, as I had distinctly asked the young lady who is clearly masquerading as an efficient librarian to clarify the opening times to me only last week. She spoke with clarity and confidence when she answered my query as to the opening times today with the reply "Yeah. All day. Like Normal". So imagine my ire on finding that it was shut? To compound my frustration, I am unable to return this volume of Dylan Thomas poetry, and will not have anything to read over the festive period, unless of course, Father Christmas believes me to have been a good boy. Anyway, am I not welcome at my own daughter's house?

CAROL

Yes of course you are, it's just that I'm a bit behind schedule, so you will have to amuse yourself for a while if that's ok?

RICHARD

That's all I've been doing since your Mother died my dear

CAROL

I know Dad. It's a difficult time of year for us all, but we need to put a brave face on don't we, for everyone else's sake

RICHARD

If we must dear. If we must. Where's my delightful Granddaughter?

CAROL

Oh, in her room, chatting to her friend about the Kardashians or something equally vital

RICHARD

The Kardashians? Is that a pop group...A Cartoon.... a medical complaint?

CAROL

I'm not really sure what it is to be honest Dad, probably all three. If she likes it though, I suspect it's not meant for us

DONNA

If she likes what?

RICHARD

Ahh, here she is, the light of my life. We were talking about the delight called the "Kardashians" dear. I am not familiar with their work, perhaps you can explain their oeuvre to me

DONNA

Don't I get a hug Gramps?

RICHARD

You know I don't care for unnecessary physical contact dear, it makes me nauseous....And please stop calling me Gramps. It makes me sound like a racehorse

DONNA

Please yourself. Let's have a picture Gramps?

(Donna takes a selfie with Richard)

RICHARD

What do you actually do with all of these photographs?

DONNA

Selfies Gramps. It's for Insta! *(Her phone rings again. Her face lights up and she runs off excitedly)*

RICHARD

I genuinely have no idea what she just said Carol. What has happened to us that we need to record every single step of our lives? It never used to be like that you know. Anyway. Nature calls. (*Exits*)

CAROL

(Back up the ladder wrestling with decorations) I'll put the kettle on in a minute Dad. Oh, he's gone. (*There is a knock at the door*) Oh for crying out loud....can someone get that? Anyone? Donna? Oh why do I bother? Dad? (*She climbs back down as there is another knock*)

DONNA

(*Offstage*)

There's someone at the door Mum

CAROL

Oh..Is there?? (*Opening the door as she speaks*) That's fine, you stay where you are...I wasn't doing anything for F.....Oh it's you!

SALLY

(*Entering holding a number of shopping bags and wearing a Christmas hat*)
That's such a lovely welcome. Seasons greetings to you my treasured friend

CAROL

I'm sorry Sal. It's carnage here before it's even started

(*Donna enters*)

DONNA

Oh it's you! (*She exits*)

SALLY

It's the warm welcome I come here for.

CAROL

Oh ignore her. She's waiting for her Father to arrive

SALLY

Oh Deep joy!

CAROL

OhDon't start, you know I have to invite him

SALLY

And is he bringing Lycra Laura? Or is she busy practicing her trout pout today?

CAROL

She's gone to her family for Christmas, Gav's taking Donna there on Boxing Day. Now did you get everything on the list?

SALLY

I think so...Oh..everything except crackers

CAROL

Crackers for Cheese or Crackers with crappy plastic toys and Dad jokes?

SALLY

Cheese

CAROL

Bugger. Oh, sod it, it doesn't matter. It will all be wrong when Chrissy gets here anyway

SALLY

You do have a choice you know?

CAROL

(Unpacking) Mmm? A Choice?

SALLY

A Choice. You could always just....Not invite any of them

CAROL

Oh I can't do that. It's the first time without....You know?

SALLY

I do, but, love you as I do, you are not your Mother.

CAROL

Oh don't worry, I'm fully aware of that. I receive crystal clear reminders of it on a daily basis from all of my family.

SALLY

How's Dad?

CAROL

He's here already. "Call of Nature". He may not materialize until New Year.

SALLY

I meant...How is he?

CAROL

He seems to be putting a brave face on it, but who can tell? He won't speak to anyone about it. I'm at a bit of a loss Sal.

SALLY

It's only been six months

CAROL

I know, but he seems to be....Well just existing.

SALLY

He'll be OK. He's got a lovely supportive family

CAROL

Well I wish he'd go and stay with them then!

SALLY

Oh Stop it....You know what I mean....*(Richard enters)* Oh Look! Here's my favourite man

RICHARD

Sally! How delightful to see you.

SALLY

Finally someone is pleased to see me! How are you Richard? Still not going to make my year and give me a hug?

RICHARD

No.

SALLY

Well we can't have you getting frisky can we

RICHARD

Such vulgarity. Now. Is there anything I can do to help Carol?

CAROL

You could peel the veg if you like?

RICHARD

Could this day even get any more thrilling Sally? Right you are, I shall arm myself with a peeler and try not to cause myself any lasting and permanent damage

SALLY

Please don't Richard. Now, talking of possible injury and destruction, I must go and check in at home

CAROL

Is Pete on duty today?

SALLY

No....We get a few hours this evening, but he's then on duty till Boxing Day

CAROL

But I thought you said he was home?

SALLY

He was. They changed it yesterday. Because we haven't got kids he stepped up to the plate.

CAROL

Oh he's a good man, but that means you are by yourself tomorrow!

SALLY

That's fine. I'm not a great one for Christmas. A bottle of Malbec and a soppy film and I'll be happy

CAROL

Nonsense! You can come to us! We've got plenty in...Come this evening too

SALLY

No, it's fine, I don't want to be any trouble!

CAROL

Trouble? You'd be my savior!!! Someone sane to talk to. No arguments. I Insist!....Please!!!

SALLY

Well....If you're sure

CAROL

Never been more certain!

SALLY

Well....If you're absolutely sure...I just don't want to add to the burden

CAROL

No burden at all....Like I said, think of it as providing me with a support network...Don't forget...Chrissy is coming...

SALLY

Are you trying to get me to change my mind?

CAROL

I can't choose my sister you know? And I promise to keep an eye on "Him"

SALLY

I can look after myself....Don't underestimate the life changing damage I can cause with just a steely glare and these nutcrackers!

CAROL

Terrifying!

SALLY

Right. I'll see you later then if that's ok?

CAROL

Alright Sal. Thanks for getting the shopping in....Now let's see if I can get these decorations done before I give up and just insert the tree somewhere unmentionable.

SALLY

Now who's terrifying? See you later

(Sally Exits. Carol climbs ladder. Donna enters)

DONNA

Has she gone?

CAROL

Sally? Yes. Why do you ask?

DONNA

She's just always round here that's all.

CAROL

And that is a problem?

DONNA

I just feel like you talk to her more than me

CAROL

Well perhaps if you put your phone down for five minutes we could talk? Go on....I dare you

DONNA

What?

CAROL

Put your phone over here on the table and don't look at it for five minutes. I bet you can't.

DONNA

That's stupid. Course I can

CAROL

Prove it. We can have a nice chat

DONNA

But you've got stuff to do.

CAROL

I thought you wanted to talk?

DONNA

What about?

CAROL

You said that I talk to Sally more than I talk to you....Here's your chance. Unless you'd prefer to help Granddad in the Kitchen

DONNA

What? OK....Yeah....I will

CAROL

Before you go love. Where were the old tree decorations? You know the ones you said, and I think I've got the right quote "The ones from the last century that looked and smelled like death"

DONNA

Erm...In one of those boxes. You're not going to put any of them up are you? (*Her phone rings*) I've got to go

CAROL

Who is it? A boy

DONNA

Shut up Mum (*She exits*)

CAROL

"Shut up Mum" (*She slaps her own hand. Climbing down from the ladder she starts to sort through the boxes and finds the one she's looking for*)

Oh look. (*She smiles as she starts sorting through some obviously sentimental decorations*). What's this? (*She picks up an envelope that has her name written on it*) Mum? (*She moves to the bedroom, sits on the bed, opens up the envelope and starts to read. This can be done by the actor playing Carol, or by an audio voiceover*)

“Dear Carol

I hope this is not too much of a surprise. The fact that you are reading this means that by now, I am gone. I hope it was quick, and I didn't cause you all too much stress. I'm sure your Father is a dead loss, and I know the burden will be left with you, and for that I am truly sorry. I'm also sorry that you will be reading this at Christmas. Knowing you as I do, I guess it will be Christmas Eve, and you will be sitting in complete chaos wondering what that silly old cow was thinking writing you a letter and hiding it in the decorations. Well, I've known that I wouldn't see another Christmas for a while. How quickly it took hold, I don't know, but that doesn't matter now. I just know that you will be the one having to pick up the pieces, in particular at this time of year. I don't know if there's anything after you go. If there's an afterlife, and if there is, Well, I will try and make a sign, to let you know I'm watching, but even as I am writing this, I can hear you laughing at me and telling me it's all nonsense. Anyway, what I do know is that you will be struggling, and I wanted you to know that it's all going to be OK. You're a good girl, and you've got a good heart. That's all life is about isn't it? Donna will probably still be a stropmy cow, but don't dismiss her will you? Her pain is real, just like yours was. I dismissed your moods as just being rebellious, not knowing that you had genuine problems. Try and find some time with her over the holidays. Remember I'm watching.....

(There is a knock at the door.)

Oh Christ...Can someone get that? Don.....

(She puts the letter back in the envelope. Exits the bedroom and opens the door. Enter Chrissy, Nick and Stewart)

CHRISSEY

You alright sweetheart? Merry Christmas (*She air kisses*)

CAROL

You're early...Not that it's not nice to see you

NICK

Hello gorgeous...Blimey. What's up with you? You look like you've seen a Ghost (*He laughs*)

STEWART

Hello Auntie Carol. Merry Christmas

CAROL

Oh please drop the Auntie...It makes me sound like I'm 80 love! Merry Christmas, please do come in, make yourself at home...Oh you've grown again Stewart!

STEWART

I'm 21 Auntie! I stopped growing some time ago.

CAROL

Look at you, little heartbreaker! (*Shouting*) DONNA! Donna, the family are here...Oh she's on the phone again, are you surgically attached to the phone all day like my little girl Stewart

NICK

Oh you can't get any sense out of him Caz....Up all hours, probably on some porno site knowing him!

STEWART

Stop it Dad! I'm not like that!

NICK

All lads are like that are your age aren't they? Looking at Jughub or whatever it is these days, course in my day we had to make do with magazines....

CHRISSY

Don't be vulgar Nicholas (*He stops talking immediately*). Now, we've brought a few contributions for the festivities, they are in the car. Nick, you go out and get them

CAROL

You didn't need to do that Chris, we've got plenty in

CHRISSY

Yes of course you have dear, but I have some very specific tastes as you know. Nicholas?

NICK

What?

CHRISSY

The car dearest.

NICK

Oh...Yeah. Come on then Stupot...lets go and get the booze mate

STEWART

Stop calling me that!

NICK

Oh stop whining, you'll never pull a bird with all that whining...Come on

(Nick and Stewart exit.)

CHRISSEY

Well this is nice isn't it? *(She sits)* When is Dad getting here?

(Richard Enters wearing an apron)

RICHARD

About 15 minutes ago darling

CHRISSEY

(She rushes to hug him. He looks awkward)

Oh Daddy...How are you

RICHARD

(Extricating himself) I'm as well as can be expected dear.

CHRISSEY

Has she got you working already *(Indicating the apron)*

RICHARD

Yes! She's an absolute slave driver you know...Where are the boys?

CHRISSEY

They are just bringing in some things from the car

(enter Donna)

There's my princess! Merry Christmas darling!!!

(Hugging Donna Extravagantly)

DONNA

(Indicating over Chrissy's Shoulder that she thinks Chrissy has been drinking)

Hello Auntie Chrissy...Merry Christmas!

CHRISSEY

It's Chrissy dear...Don't make me old and frumpy like your Mum *(She laughs. Carol smiles through tight lips)*

(enter Nick and Stewart laden with bags and Boxes)

NICK

Now the party can get started Carol....

STEWART

(Sarcastically) Woohoo

DONNA

Alright Stew

STEWART

Alright Donna

RICHARD

It's a great relief to me that the art of conversation is not dead. Shall we get these things through into the kitchen Nicholas?

NICK

Yes Rich, then we can crack open a beer, I'm parched

RICHARD

Yes. It's a little early for me. Oh, and I prefer Richard

NICK

Right you are Rich

(They exit to the kitchen)

DONNA

(to Stewart) XBOX?

STEWART

Alright

(They exit)

CAROL

Now come on Sis. You can give me a hand with these decorations

CHRISSY

I'm sure a little drinky will help...

CAROL

I'm sure it will...Come on...lets see what mess the boys are making

End of Scene 1

