

Family Secrets

Being yourself is never easy.

by James Hutchison

Also available from www.jameshutchison.ca

What the Dickens! *Even Scrooge got a second chance.*

When Marty Fisher gets caught kissing his stage manager Samantha and the actor playing Scrooge shows up drunk Marty has to scramble to save the opening night production of a Christmas Carol and his engagement to his fiancée Tami.

Two Act Comedy, 6M, 3W, Multiple Sets, 120 minutes

A Christmas Carol – Two versions available -

When Scrooge's nephew Fred finds some letters Scrooge had written to his sister Fan a long time ago the past is unlocked, and Scrooge learns how his fear of poverty and pursuit of wealth have cost him a chance for love and genuine happiness.

CAST OF 10+ - Two Act Drama, 6M, 4W, Multiple Sets, 120 minutes

CAST OF 25+ - Two Act Drama, 15M, 10W, Multiple Sets, 120 minutes

Under the Mistletoe *Not every romantic evening goes as planned.*

Two couples in their late fifties, one long time friends and the other having just met, try to navigate the tricky road of love, sex and desire while spending a romantic night in the Christmas Themed Suites at the Prairie Dog Inn.

Two Act Romantic Comedy 1M, 1W or 2M, 2W Single Set, 120 minutes

Heart of Stone: A Jessica Quinn Mystery *Trusting the wrong person can be deadly.*

When Jessica Quinn uncovers the truth about her father's killer and the truth behind a woman claiming to be the long-lost daughter of her client Mary McConnell more than one person ends up dead.

Two Act Mystery, 7M, 3W, Multiple Sets, 120 minutes

Stories from Langford *Every town has its secrets.*

Six characters from Langford tell stories from their lives: stories about, jealousy, revenge, love and forgiveness.

Two Act Drama, 1M, 1W, Simple settings, 120 Minutes

Death and the Psychiatrist *Even Death Could Use a Friend*

Feeling depressed about having a job where no one likes him Death goes into therapy with Dr. Thompson in order to help him cope with his guilt.

One Act Comedy, 3M, or 2M, 1W, Single Set, 50 Minutes

Plus, other One Acts and 10 Minute Plays including The Blood of a Thousand Chickens, 500 bucks and a pack of smokes, and Elvis is Dead.

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Family Secrets – Being yourself is never easy – was performed online in the Alternative Theatre Company’s BelieveAbility Festival on May 18th, 2020. The cast included Janel Koloski as Amy, Paul Thomas Ryan as Dad, Russ Cusick as Parson Brown, Sheree V. Campbell as Miranda, and Florence Pape as Grandma. The production was directed by David Malinsky and produced by Celine Havard.

The Playwright

James Hutchison writes comedies, dramas, and mysteries. He also interviews other playwrights, actors, and directors about the business and creative aspects of theatre, film, and television. You can read his interviews on his blog and download his plays at www.jameshutchison.ca.

Family Secrets – Being yourself is never easy.

A Comedy in Ten Minutes

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CAST of CHARACTERS

Grandma	Amy's great grandmother
Dad	Amy's dad
Amy	A young woman in her late twenties.
Miranda	Amy's friend.
Parson Brown	One of the leaders of Dad's Church

SETTING

Amy's father's Home

TIME

Bright sunny summer day.

STORY OF THE PLAY

Amy's father suspects that Amy is about to announce to the family that she's gay and that's okay with him, but when Amy tells him she's straight and an atheist he has trouble accepting the truth.

For Bin

Family Secrets

SCENE: DAD's HOUSE

Setting: A typical middle-class family home with a few religious items such as a cross on the wall.

At Rise: GRANDMA is carrying some things to take outside for the BBQ. DAD is wearing a BBQ apron and carries a spatula.

DAD

Where is she? If we wait any longer the burgers will burn.

GRANDMA

Forget about the burgers. The most important thing is we support Amy's decision to come out.

DAD

She actually said she was coming out.

GRANDMA

She said she had something important to tell us. What else could it be?

DAD

It would explain why she hasn't married yet.

GRANDMA

Maybe. Come on. I'll help you with hamburgers.

GRANDMA and DAD exit as AMY and MIRANDA walk up to the front door.

AMY

I don't think I can do this.

MIRANDA

Of course, you can. That's why I'm here.

AMY

You don't understand my family takes their faith seriously. Last year my dad went on a pilgrimage to the Holy land.

MIRANDA

But he loves you, right?

AMY knocks on the door.

AMY

He loves Amy the good Christian daughter. I'm not so sure he'll love Amy the atheist.

MIRANDA

You want to keep living a lie.

AMY

No, of course not, but I don't think I'd have the courage to tell them if you weren't here.

AMY and MIRANDA hug as her GRANDMOTHER enters stage and opens the door. AMY and MIRANDA break their embrace.

GRANDMA

Oh Amy, you're here.

AMY

Hi Grandma. Sorry we're late.

GRANDMA

That's okay. And you must be Amy's friend, Miranda.

MIRANDA

That's right. Thanks so much for having me.

MOM

No problem. No problem at all. (Shouting.) Phil, Amy's here and she brought her friend Miranda with her.

DAD enters along with the PARSON.

DAD

Hello princess. Hello Miranda.

Hello.

MIRANDA

DAD gives MIRANDA a big hug.

DAD (Making a show of it.)

I just want to say welcome to the family, Miranda. How long have you and Amy been together?

MIRANDA

Well, we've been friends for about three years, I guess. We met through work.

DAD

And she caught your eye, did she?

MIRANDA

I guess you could put it that way.

AMY

You okay, dad?

DAD

Oh, sure fine, fine. Amy have you met Parson Brown from the United Colours Pentecostal Holy Redeemer Mother of God Evangelical Church of Christ?

AMY

No, I haven't had the pleasure.

PASTOR

We're a very progressive Church.

DAD

We decided it was important that we attend a Church that is more in line with our beliefs.

AMY

That's great, Dad. I'm happy for you.

PASTOR

We ordain women, now.

AMY

Do you? Well welcome to the 20th century.

GRANDMA

Why just last week Parson Amelia Merriweather was preaching about acceptance and love.

AMY

That's a good message.

GRANDMA

Because there's nothing more important than love, right Miranda.

MIRANDA

I suppose not.

DAD

Amy's Great Grandmother is eighty-three years of age Miranda. And next week, God willing, she'll be eighty-four.

GRANDMA

We're going to have a big party and invite everyone. You're invited too Miranda. After all, we want you to feel like part of the family. You and Amy could spend the night if you wanted and sleep in the same bed.

MIRANDA

Could we. Oh. Well, thanks for the invite, but I don't think Amy and I need to sleep over.

GRANDMA

Well, the offer stands, just so you know.

PASTOR

So, Amy, I understand you were an alter girl when you were younger.

AMY

I was. When we were Catholic. But then we joined the United Church for a while and then after that we belonged to a Baptist Church for a bit and the last I remember we had joined the Unitarians.

PASTOR

Well, I want you to know that the United Colours Pentecostal Holy Redeemer Mother of God Evangelical Church of Christ is a welcoming and safe place for all. Not every church is.

AMY

I'm happy to hear that. Because you're right – not every church is.

PASTOR

Your father was telling me that you had thought of becoming a preacher yourself at one time.

AMY

Yeah, that's true – like when I was five or six years of age I saw a Billy Graham Crusade on TV and I thought that looked like a cool job, but you know I'm quite happy working in marketing and promotions for Save the Planet. We're an international organization focused on planting trees.

PASTOR

Well, just so you know the United Colours Pentecostal Holy Redeemer Mother of God Evangelical Church of Christ not only ordains women, but since the start of the year we also ordain members of the gay community as well.

GRANDMA

Lots of people are gay now days.

DAD

Yes, grandma.

GRANDMA

Anderson Cooper is gay.

DAD

Yes, he is.

GRANDMA

So is Ricky Martin.

DAD

Alright grandma, I think we can stop naming gay celebrities and go eat. But before we go out on the deck and chow down why don't we say grace. Amy, would you do the honours?

AMY

Oh, ah, I didn't really prepare anything. Um. Look. I just want...I just want... (*She looks at MIRANDA.*)

MIRANDA

It's okay. Go ahead. Tell them.

AMY

Listen, I've got something I really need to tell you, and I'm just afraid you might be upset.

DAD

It's alright princess. I think we know what it is.

GRANDMA

Neil Patrick Harris is gay.

DAD

Yes, grandma we know.

AMY

Okay, I just want you to know that this isn't easy for me to tell you, but I'm...*(AMY hesitates.)*

DAD & the PARSON

Gay.

AMY

Gay?

GRANDMA

Ellen DeGeneres is gay.

DAD (Very happy)

Yes, Grandma we know that, and now Amy is gay too. So, when's the wedding?

AMY

What wedding?

GRANDMA

Between you and Miranda.

AMY

Hold on a second we're not getting married.

MIRANDA (Joking)

She hasn't even asked me.

DAD

No? Oh. Well, it's legal now, and I think I would prefer that my daughter be in a committed and loving relationship rather than living in sin.

AMY

Look, Dad, I'm not gay.

GRANDMA

Are you bi?

PASTOR

It's quite all right if you're Bi Amy. Originally the gay members of our Church were opposed to the Bi Community, but that was a long time ago. We've progressed since then.

AMY

Listen I'm not gay or bi. I'm straight okay. I'm a straight woman. Always have been. Always will be. Not that there's anything wrong with being gay, but I'm not gay.

DAD

Whoa, hold on there a second princess. You seem a little homophobic. You might want to tone that down a bit.

GRANDMA

Amy, we love you. And you could never say or do anything that would make us feel different.

MIRANDA

I told you.

AMY

Alright then. Grandma. Dad. Brace yourselves. I'm an atheist.

DAD

A what?

AMY

An atheist.

DAD

Oh my God. My daughter is an atheist.

PASTOR (*Drops to his knees and starts praying.*)

Our father in heaven please help this family in their time of need. A member of your flock has lost her way and needs your guidance to bring her back under your grace.

DAD

How can you not believe in God? Didn't your mother and I – God rest her soul – teach you better than that?

AMY

I'm sorry Dad, I haven't believed in God since I stopped believing in the Tooth Fairy. I just didn't know how to tell you.

DAD

Dear Lord, forgive my daughter. She knows not what he speaks.

PASTOR

Amen!

DAD

You need to read your bible.

AMY

I've read my bible. I've been to Church. I've seen the Ten Commandments, but that doesn't mean I believe any of it.

DAD

Dear Lord, forgive my daughter. She knows not what she speaks.

PASTOR

Amen!

DAD

We're talking about your immortal soul here. Do you want to end up in hell?

AMY

I think heaven or hell is what we make of this earth and our lives. I don't believe there's such a thing as eternal damnation.

DAD

Dear Lord, forgive my daughter. She knows not what he speaks.

PASTOR

Amen!

DAD

How could you do this to your family? How do you think your grandma feels about all this?

AMY

I don't know. Why don't we ask her? Grandma how do you feel about this?

GRANDMA

Well, your grandfather was an atheist. Maybe that's where Amy gets it from.

AMY

Grandpa was an atheist?

DAD

I don't believe it.

GRANDMA

He was a nonbeliever, and I was a believer with doubts. In fact, I still have my doubts, but your grandfather respected my beliefs, and I respected his, and we had quite a happy marriage.

DAD

Grandpa was an atheist. No way.

GRANDMA

So was your cousin Noah.

DAD

They never said anything.

GRANDMA

Can you blame them? Look at how you're treating Amy just because she had the courage to come forward and let you know what she really believes?

DAD

Why couldn't you have been gay?

AMY

I'm sorry, Dad. It's just I wanted you to know. I still love you, but I don't believe the same things you do, and I was tired of keeping it a secret.

DAD

And I suppose Miranda is one of your atheist friends.

MIRANDA

I'm Jewish actually. Amy just needed a little back up and I was happy to help.

DAD

Well, I don't know what to make of all this.

PASTOR

Hold on a second. I think, I do. God is testing you.

DAD

Testing me? Of course! That must be it. Ha, ha, ha. This is a test. Okay, I can get through this. Wait a minute. Can we still celebrate Christmas?

AMY

Of course, we can. I never said I stopped believing in Santa.

DAD

Well, thank God for that. Shall we go and grab some burgers.

GRANDMA

Absolutely, lets go and enjoy this beautiful day.

PASTOR

And I'll say grace.

AMY

Amen.

THE END