

**Running Away for Christmas**

A ten-minute play

by

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**[EXCERPT]**

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SETTING: A hotel room in Las Vegas.

AT RISE: We hear a knock on a door. A man, HERB, mid sixties, comes out. He is wearing a hotel bathrobe and drying his hair with a hotel towel.

HERB

Hold on!

(He goes to the door and opens it. RON, 35 and TONY, 32 stand there.)

HERB (CONT'D)

Damn. I thought you were room service.

RON

Nice to see you too, Pop.

HERB

They brought the caviar, forgot the damn champagne!  
(looks at them expectantly as  
if they're hiding the  
champagne)

HERB (CONT'D)

Oh, well, you're here, you might as well come in.

(THEY enter.)

HERB (CONT'D)

So, how'd you manage to track me down?

RON

It took some doing. You didn't make it easy.

HERB

I didn't intend to.

TONY

What the hell are you doing, Pop?

HERB

What does it look like? Putting in a little time at the tables. Catching a show or two.

RON

Right. You sneak away to Vegas on Christmas Eve...

HERB

I didn't sneak. I drove.

RON  
 You don't tell anyone. We just all sit there like fools at the family party saying: So where's Pop? Anyone know where Pop is? And no one does.

TONY  
 Yeah. You went AOL.

HERB  
 I think you mean AWOL.

TONY  
 Whatever.

RON  
 We just want to know what this is all about, Pop. We're not here to break your balls.

HERB  
 I'm so relieved.

RON  
 I'm just saying...

TONY  
 You don't just up and leave for no good reason.

HERB  
 Oh I had a good reason.

RON  
 Okay, then, you mind sharing it with us?

HERB  
 You wouldn't understand.

TONY  
 How do you know?

HERB  
 (looks his sons over, then:)  
 Hey, ya want something to eat?  
 (he lifts the lid on a feast of  
 hors d'oeuvres on his room  
 service tray)

RON  
 There's plenty of food waiting back at the house, Pop.

HERB  
 Well then you don't mind if I...  
 (he digs in)  
 Mmm, delicious.

(The two sons look at each other.)

RON

Look, enough. Why don't you just pack your things and come home with us. Everyone's waiting.

HERB

(looks at his watch)

Oh, I doubt they're waiting. In fact, by now, they've probably ravaged half the food. And I'm sure my brother is telling Trudy it's time to go cause he's always the first one out the door, and she's pretending she can't hear him, like she always does when she doesn't want to do something. And your kids,

(to Ron)

Well, your kids have had at least two screaming fights and your wife is saying "You're killing me!" Liz, of course, is complaining about the latest jerk she's been seeing, and Andy still can't find a job. Phil is getting too drunk again and telling everyone how much he just LOOOVVVEs them and Andrew and Rhonda are fighting over politics like they do every year, not getting it through their thick skulls that they will never ever convince the other of a goddamn thing.

TONY

Yeah. That all sounds about right.

(Ron looks at him, like: you're not *helping!*)

RON

Look, Pop. Has something happened? I mean, I noticed you were acting a little strange at Thanksgiving...

HERB

Nothing happened.

RON

It was the loan, wasn't it?

TONY

Hold on a minute! This has nothing to do with--

RON

I told you you shouldn't keep tapping Dad like that. When are you going to stop treating him like a perpetual money tree.

TONY

What the hell are you talking about. It's your twins. You let them run completely wild. They'd drive anyone around the bend.