

# **Within These Walls**

A Play

By

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## CAST OF CHARACTERS

- LARS            Man, 20s – 30s.  
A young man living in his deceased father's house.
- ALICE            Woman, 20s – 30s.  
Childhood sweetheart of Lars.
- EVE              Girl, 13 – 15.  
A youth missionary for an unspecified Christian religion.
- ARTHUR         Man, 60s – 70s.  
Former friend of Lars's father.
- MOTHER         Woman's voice.  
Mother of Lars.

## SCENE ONE

*It's Christmas Eve. A square wooden table dominates centre stage. Three chairs are placed around the table, one on each side and one at the back. On the table are three empty wine glasses. Mounted to the wall above the table, is a plaque with reindeer antlers. A household phone is attached to a wall. A wooden toy-rifle leans against another wall. There's a CD player on the floor at the front of the stage. LARS is sat at the table, playing with one of the empty glasses.*

*There's a knock at the door.*

*He hesitates and stares at the plaque for a second, then answers.*

*When he opens the door, a gust of snow and wind from the storm rushes in.*

**ALICE**        Seven o'clock?

**LARS**        I didn't think you'd come.

*LARS hugs her.*

*ALICE is holding a bottle of wine.*

**ALICE**        I had nothing better to do.

**LARS**        On Christmas Eve?

**ALICE**        Yeah.

*They sit down on opposite sides of the table.*

**LARS**        Uhm, music?

**ALICE**        Sure.

*LARS goes to put on music, then sits back down.*

Why did you invite me?

**LARS**        Because I know you.

**ALICE**        You don't know anyone else?

**LARS**        I know you, my sister, my mother and... yeah.

*(beat)*

**ALICE**        Where are they?

**LARS**        My sister's not coming. She... we haven't seen her since she got married. They have a family and stuff.

*(pause)*

**ALICE**        Mhm.

**LARS**        Mother is on her way.

**ALICE** Haven't seen her in ages. How's she holding up with everything that's happened?

**LARS** She's okay. She's *really* well actually. I see her once a month. She's a rock. She's my rock and –

**ALICE** The only person you know.

**LARS** Well, my sister –

**ALICE** Your sister's not coming.

*(pause)*

**LARS** Would you like a drink?

**ALICE** I have my own.

*She opens the bottle and fills both their glasses.  
She points to the plaque.*

I'm guessing your fathers. A deer?

**LARS** Reindeer actually.

**ALICE** They're illegal to hunt.

*LARS takes a large swig of his drink.*

**LARS** They are?

**ALICE** Yeah, they're property of the indigenous people. D'you think he knew?

**LARS** It's his last so... I'd suspect, yes.

**ALICE** Why would he do that?

**LARS** Because he knew he wouldn't get caught.

*LARS downs the rest of his drink. ALICE watches.  
She fills his glass again.*

I think the food's ready. I'll bring it out.

*LARS exits.*

**ALICE** I'll help.

*ALICE follows him.  
She exits.*

## SCENE TWO

*There's a cake on the table. They are sat again.*

**ALICE** When is she coming?

**LARS** On the phone, she said she'd be here in a bit.

**ALICE** Hm.

**LARS** You can eat if you'd like.

**ALICE** No. We'll wait for her.

*(beat)*

**LARS** Are you angry with me?

**ALICE** No? Why would I be?

**LARS** You seem a bit annoyed.

**ALICE** It was my decision to come here.

*(beat)*

**LARS** Why? Why did you come?

**ALICE** Do you remember when we were little? We used to walk across the lawn, holding hands, practicing for our wedding day?

**LARS** Yes.

**ALICE** When evening came, we would run inside the house, through this very room, and into the cupboard by the kitchen. We'd lock the door behind us, sit in the dark and stare into each other's eyes, and play the game we called 'catch the other with a kiss.' Do you remember?

**LARS** Yes.

**ALICE** I would talk your mother into letting me spend the night, because I was a sweet girl who'd never dare disrespect the household by breaking morals under her sacred roof and –

**LARS** That's why you're here?

**ALICE** No.

**LARS** Why then?

**ALICE** Do you want me to leave?

**LARS** No.

**ALICE** Why's your mother taking so long?

**LARS** You can call her if you want.

**ALICE** I'm good.

**LARS** Are you?

*(pause)*

**ALICE** I wanted to see what would happen.

**LARS** Between us?

**ALICE** Good God, no. I don't care for the past.

*ALICE starts humming a jazz tune while inspecting her hands. LARS listens.*

*He gets up and turns on the jazz tune she's humming.*

*ALICE starts laughing.*

*LARS starts laughing.*

*ALICE gets up and starts dancing.*

*LARS gets up and dances with her.*

*They dance together. It's wholesome.*

You can lead?

**LARS** You can dance?

*ALICE laughs.*

**ALICE** It's not my first time dancing in this room.

*(beat)*

**LARS** We never danced, did we?

*ALICE chuckles.*

**ALICE** No, not with you. I danced with your father because you didn't want to.  
Remember?

*LARS pulls away.*

What? You said dancing was stupid. I wanted to dance, but you refused so –

**LARS** I know. I remember.

*LARS changes the music.*

**ALICE** What's wrong?

*Radio pop starts playing instead.*

You're good at leading.

**LARS** Thanks, but I need to use the bathroom.

*There's a knock at the door.*

*ALICE goes to answer.*  
*LARS follows.*

### SCENE THREE

*A girl wrapped in a woollen scarf is standing outside with a paper folder in her arms. She speaks loudly over the noise.*

**EVE** Good evening and Happy Christmas! How are you today? I'm in the neighbourhood this evening to share a message of hope and salvation. Have you ever wondered about the true meaning of life, death and the love of Jesus Christ? I would love to share some thoughts with you!

*ALICE grabs EVE by her jacket and drags her inside.*

**ALICE** Sorry, it's just so grim out there, and loud.

**EVE** Oh. I was saying –

*She clears her throat.*

Good evening and Happy Christmas! How are you today? I'm in the neighbourhood this evening, to share a message of –

**ALICE** We heard you.

**LARS** Door to door on Christmas Eve? It's a fucking hurricane out there.

*ALICE punches LARS in the arm.*

**ALICE** Sorry.

**EVE** Oh, don't worry, I volunteered for missions today. Christmas Eve is the perfect day.

**ALICE** I see.

*ALICE searches LARS for an opinion.*

*(empathic)* I don't think we're the right people. We're awaiting company, so I suggest you continue to the next house, okay? Sounds good?

*ALICE looks back at LARS.*

**EVE** Ma'am, if I could just talk for a second? It won't be long I promise.

**LARS** I'm going to the bathroom.

*LARS exits.*

**EVE** Please? I promise the truth of God is very almighty.

**ALICE** Oh, alright then. Take a seat.

*EVE sits down and opens her folder on the table.*

*She removes her jacket and scarf. ALICE sits opposite her.*

**ALICE** Tell me about your god.