

# THE GUEST

*A One Act Play*

*By*

*Nan Allen*

SAMPLE

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## *SYNOPSIS*

*The family has gathered for Thanksgiving (or Christmas) dinner...the in-laws, the grandma, the crazy aunt, but who's the guy sitting on the sofa? Everybody has a theory. Some think he's a TV repairman they had called to fix the set in the den, some think he's a TV anchorman doing a story on the perfect American family, some think he's a Pulitzer Prize winning author they had once met at a fund raiser. Still Grandma's convinced he's a lawyer trying to get her to change her will. When The Guest's identity is finally revealed, the family makes a humbling discovery. A holiday message for everyone!*

*Eleven characters, four men, six women, one girl. A one-act play.*

*Running time: 30 minutes.*

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## PRODUCTION NOTES

### Cast:

**Joe**- 30-ish

**Annie**- 30-ish

**Clyde**- 50-something, Joe's dad; portly

**Sophia**- 50-something, Joe's mom; pretentious

**Jeanette**- 50-something, Annie's mom; too sweet

**Bud**- 50-something, Annie dad; laid back

**Aunt Maude**- Annie's crazy aunt

**Grandma Hazel**- Joe's grandmother, Clyde's mother; ancient

**Clara**- Grandma Hazel's personal nurse

**The Guest**- older, distinguished gentleman

**Sarah**- Joe and Annie's 8-year-old daughter

### Set:

Joe and Annie's living room. The front door is at up right. A sofa and coffee table sits at center. A love seat or chair and end table sits at down right. At down left a round hors d'oeuvre table with a few food items sits. At up left there may be a coat rack. There is a Thanksgiving wreath hanging somewhere visible.

### Props:

Broom

Food items

Plates, cups, etc.

Thanksgiving wreath

*(Scene opens as Joe enters, crosses to hors d'oeuvre table, picks up food and is about to take a bite when...Annie enters carrying a broom) (Mock tension erupts)*

ANNIE: Freeze, you turkey! Put down the chicken wing...and slowly back away!

JOE: And if I refuse?

ANNIE: I can't be responsible for my actions after that.

JOE: *(grabbing a carrot and pointing it at Annie)* Annie, don't force me to use this. I will, you know. I will! I'll take hostages. I'll eat every vegetable on this tray and you know it. Don't come another step closer.

*(tension eases)*

ANNIE: I can see the headlines now. "Hors d'oeuvre Heist Pulled Off With Loaded Carrot Stick."

*(They both laugh.)*

JOE: Everything looks really nice, honest. So...Thanksgiving-ish.

ANNIE: That's not a word.

JOE: Sure it is. Look it up. *(looking at food on table)* The food does look yummy...and don't say that's not a word...'cause I know it is.

ANNIE: Just leave the yummy food alone, okay? The guests'll be here in a few minutes.

JOE: Okay. *(pops a bite of food in his mouth after Annie turns her back)* Hey, hon. I appreciate your doing this... having everybody over for the holiday. I know it's hard enough being around my parents, much less trying to play hostess to my mom. Ya know, she's sometimes such a perfectionist...

ANNIE: *(sarcastically)* Oh really? I hadn't noticed for the last ten years...three months...and 19 days.

JOE: Well, I just want you to know how much I appreciate your going to all the trouble. *(starts to "pick" at the food on the tray.)*

ANNIE: Joe...am I gonna have to kill you to keep you out of the food?

JOE: Probably...boy, this dip is so good.

*(Knock at the door)*

ANNIE: And speaking of dips...

JOE: Hey, that may be your parents, you know.

ANNIE: Exactly.

*(Annie crosses to door, opens it) (It's Clyde and Sophia)*

CLYDE: Howdy...howdy.

SOPHIA: *(looking at wreath on door)* Hello. Nice wreath, Ann dear. I think it's better to go understated at such a holiday as Thanksgiving. You don't want to bring out your good stuff until Christmas.

ANNIE: Oh, look, Joe. It's your parents.

JOE: Hi, Mom, Hi, Dad.

CLYDE: Howdy...howdy. *(spots the food table)* Oh look, Sophia. Dip!

ANNIE: Help yourself, Daddy Clyde.

CLYDE: Don't mind if I do. *(crosses to table)*

JOE: Here, let me take your coat, Mom. Have a seat on the couch.

*(Sophia checks for dust and straightens the pillows)*

SOPHIA: Are we the first ones, here, Joey?

JOE: Why yes, you are.

CLYDE: We're always the first. Gives Sophia time to do her dust inspection before everybody else arrives.

SOPHIA: Clyde, just eat your dip.

ANNIE: My parents called a few minutes ago. They're on their way.

SOPHIA: Oh, good. It'll be marvelous seeing Jeanette and Bud again.

*(knock on the door)*

ANNIE: That must be them now.

*(Annie crosses to door, opens it. It's Jeanette, Bud and Aunt Maude)*

JEANETTE: Hi, Annie, honey.

BUD: Something smells awfully good.

SARAH: Mr. Crutchfield's wife, Lilly, died last spring. You remember when it was, Dad. That time you were mad 'cause of all the cars that were parked on the street.

THE GUEST: I'm sorry 'bout that. Had some old friends come by and pay their respects.

ANNIE: Why didn't you tell us that you'd invited Miser...what is it, Crutchfield?

SARAH: He's got no family close by and he's all alone for the first time. I didn't think you'd mind.

*(Everybody kind of mumbles an apology)*

SARAH: Mr. Crutchfield's retired now, but he used to be an engineer...an industrial engineer. He invented a machine that makes an assembly line more efficient and cost effective.

JOE: How do you know so much about him, Sarah?

SARAH: Mr. Crutchfield's my friend. We talk a lot sitting on his front porch.

JOE: I never saw...

SARAH: It's usually on Saturdays, you know, when you're playing golf. Mr. Crutchfield plays golf, too. Don't you, Mr. Crutchfield?

THE GUEST: Yes, I do.

SARAH: In fact, Mr. Crutchfield was once on the pro golf tour...but that was a long time ago.

THE GUEST: Yes. A long time ago. I'm really sorry I crashed your family to-do here. Sarah really wanted me to come. Since Lilly died, little Sarah here has been so sweet. She's like a little granddaughter.

SARAH: Mr. Crutchfield, these are my grandmothers. Grandma Sophia's the one who yelled at you when your pine tree dripped sap on her new Cadillac.

THE GUEST: Oh yes. Happy Thanksgiving.

SARAH: These are my grandpas. My Grandpa Clyde is the one who chopped down your pine tree because it dripped sap on Grandma's Cadillac.

CLYDE: Uh...howdy...howdy.

SARAH: My Grandpa Bud's the one who rigged up a cable line from your box so he could watch the Super Bowl over here, Mr. Crutchfield.

BUD: Sarah, honey...that was supposed to be our secret.

SARAH: And this is my great-grandmother, Grandma Hazel. I don't think you know her.

THE GUEST: Oh yes. I do. Don't you remember me, Miss Hazel? My wife shared a room with you down at the hospital. You were there when Lilly died. We tried to get you to take her fruit basket and flowers...but I guess you didn't want them. Maybe you were asleep. You didn't say anything.

GRANDMA: Fruit isn't good for my condition. I...uh...have you met Aunt Maude? She's on Annie's side of the family.

THE GUEST: Actually, we've just been introduced.

AUNT MAUDE: So, our secret's out, huh, Doc?

SARAH: Mom...Dad. I'm sorry I didn't ask if I could invite Mr. Crutchfield today. But you always said that there's always enough food to go around...and lots of leftovers, too.

JOE: Sarah, honey. Looks like Mr. Crutchfield's already tasted our leftovers.

THE GUEST: Huh?

JOE: Mr. Crutchfield, I apologize. We've been terrible neighbors, I know.

ANNIE: We didn't even know your name...or that you wife had died.

THE GUEST: Well, everybody's so busy these days...

JEANETTE: That's no excuse. How much time does it take to just say "hello" anyway? We've just considered "family" to be our relatives. That's wrong. Family can be anybody you want it to be. I feel just awful.

SARAH: Grandma, I didn't mean to make anybody feel awful. Did I do a bad thing inviting Mr. Crutchfield?

JOE: No. You did a good thing, honey.

*(uncomfortable silence)*

CLYDE: I...uh...can get some pine saplings down at the nursery and before you know it, you'll have a nice grove of them again.

BUD: Yeah, well, this was supposed to be a surprise, but I was gonna get Annie and Joe a satellite dish for Christmas anyway. So, I'll come and unplug from your cable line after lunch.

JEANETTE: Come on, Mr. Crutchfield. Let's go in the dining room. Dinner's probably ready.

SOPHIA: Oh, yes. My daughter-in-law's a great cook.

*(Jeanette, Sophia, and Sarah start to escort Mr. Crutchfield to the kitchen,)*

CLYDE: Come on, Mama. Let's make sure you get first dibs on the white meat.

GRANDMA: Well, I don't care. Another plate of that dip would satisfy me.

*(Clyde, Grandma, Clara exit)*

ANNIE: Aunt Maude, are you coming?

AUNT MAUDE: Who are you?

LIGHTS DOWN!!