

A Tiny Miracle with a Fiber-Optic Unicorn

A somewhat nostalgic, sentimental comedy in two acts

By Don Zolidis

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Cast of Characters

PRESENT-DAY LOUIS, 30s. A rather-normal looking adult.

LOUIS, 13, a rather normal-looking 13 year old boy. That is to say, awkward.

KELLY, 17, Louis' older sister. Big big big unbelievably big hair.

GEORGE, early 40s. A big jokester. Maybe a beer belly..

EMILY, early 40s. Pretty. Nice. A good Mother. Probably wears jeans that are a little out of style, but the kind of person who will clean before a cleaning lady arrives.

CAROLYN, 13, a little weird. Pretty. The object of Louis' affection.

GRANDMA JACOBS, 70ish. Mother of EMILY. In between her sixtieth and seventieth year Grandma Jacobs starting swearing like a sailor. Walks with a cane. Speaks rather loudly.

GRANDMA SKOLOWSKI, 70ish. Mother of GEORGE. More than slightly demented. Remembers the old country. Never lived there. Has acquired a mysterious British accent from watching Masterpiece Theatre.

Setting: Brookfield, Wisconsin, a suburb of Milwaukee. December 19-25, 1986.

Act One

(The JACOBS home. A modest ranch-style home in a modest ranch-style neighborhood of a modest ranch-style suburb. Built in the 1970s. Still recovering.)

(Please be creative with the set. It must function as the house, but also needs to have room for various other locations. Most of these could be delineated with light, but the look of the show should always be somewhat soft.)

(At rise, PRESENT LOUIS is sitting on the edge of the stage, outside of the world of the play. He is dressed nicely and looks respectable. He watches as LOUIS, a boy of about thirteen, darts into the living room to check his hair. Christmas music plays.)

EMILY *(off-stage)*

I thought we were leaving!

LOUIS

Just a minute!

(LOUIS goes to a closet and pulls out a rather disgusting-looking jean jacket.)

KELLY *(off-stage)*

Louis! Let's go!

LOUIS

I'm coming!

(He checks his hair again. He tries to wet it and takes a comb from his back pocket.)

KELLY *(off-stage)*

I'm going to murder you if we're late!

EMILY *(off-stage)*

Don't say that Kelly!

KELLY *(off-stage)*

I'm going to maim you if we're late!

PRESENT LOUIS

Let's freeze this for a moment.

(LOUIS freezes)

That's me. December 19th, 1986. About six forty-five p.m. I'm on my way to church. In about two minutes my mother is going to disapprove of everything I've done to get ready. The big question of the day was whether or not to feather my hair. I'm torturing myself

internally over it. Michael J. Fox did it. Jason Bateman did it. Michael Jackson... well, at this point in time he was still kinda cool.

(PRESENT LOUIS walks around the set.)

We're in Brookfield, Wisconsin. A pretty ordinary place. I'm thirteen years old. And this is going to be the worst week of my life. And also the best.

(KELLY, 17, enters, sporting big hair. LOUIS unfreezes)

KELLY

Oh my god, what are you doing?

LOUIS

I'm fixing my hair.

(KELLY snorts)

KELLY

Whatever.

LOUIS

Does it look cool?

KELLY

Yeah Louis you look really cool. You're such a reject. Come on.

(They freeze.)

PRESENT LOUIS

1986 was the epicenter of big hair. There was always a faint aroma of aquanet in the air, we inhaled the stuff daily, and my sister Kelly, she was the living, breathing, beating heart of the frizzy-haired earthquake. She was personally responsible for a hole in the ozone layer the size of eastern Connecticut. I used to think that you could trap a gerbil in her bangs.

KELLY

Here.

(KELLY produces a can of hair spray and sprays down LOUIS' head.)

LOUIS

Ah! Stop it I'm going to get cancer!

KELLY

You are not, shut up. I'm trying to help you.

(EMILY enters.)

EMILY

What are you doing to him?

KELLY

He's feathering his hair.

EMILY

You are not feathering your hair before we go to church. Where's your coat?

LOUIS

I'm wearing my jacket.

EMILY

You're not wearing that to church.

LOUIS

Why not?

EMILY

Louis, Jesus loves you, but he does not love you in that jacket.

LOUIS

It's not cold out.

EMILY

It's minus seven degrees outside.

LOUIS

I don't like my coat.

KELLY

God you are immature Louis.

(imitating him in a whine)

'I don't like my winter coat.' You're such a baby.

LOUIS

Shut up.

KELLY

You shut up.

LOUIS

You shut up.

KELLY

No you shut up first. How bout this?

(she sprays him with hair spray.)

EMILY

Kelly. Not helping. Go sit in the car.

I'm gonna take my car to church.

KELLY

Get in the car.

EMILY

Fine. If I'm late to rehearsal, you're dead.

KELLY

Bite me.

LOUIS

What was that?

KELLY

KELLY GO SIT IN THE CAR!

EMILY

I didn't do anything! GOD!
(She leaves.)

KELLY

Mom, can I please just wear my jean jacket?

LOUIS

Why do you want to wear your jacket, sweetheart? Are you trying to impress a girl?

EMILY

No.

LOUIS

(A light shines on CAROLYN, 13, looking resplendent in church attire.)

PRESENT LOUIS

One of the conditions of being thirteen is that you are continuously lying. I hadn't told my mother the truth about anything in three months. Of course there was a girl.

EMILY

Let me tell you something about the people who go to church, okay pudding?

LOUIS

Don't call me that.

EMILY

I can't even call you that any more? You used to like that.

LOUIS

When I was five.

EMILY

I carried you in my stomach for nine months, I changed five thousand diapers, and I can't call you pudding if I want to?

LOUIS

No.

EMILY

Do you understand what pregnancy does to a woman?

LOUIS

Mom. Fine.

EMILY

That's all I ask. Let me explain about the people who go to church. They're very judgmental. They see a child sit in a pew wearing a jean jacket and you know what goes through their minds? Oh that poor boy—his father doesn't have a job. I mean it's bad enough they look at Kelly and see that contraption pasted to her forehead. Okay?

LOUIS

Fine. I'll wear the stupid coat.
(He switches coats.)

EMILY

That's all I ask, pudding.
(They leave.)

PRESENT LOUIS

The girl.

(Lights shine on CAROLYN. Perhaps a breeze fans her. Something like Peter Cetera's "The Glory of Love" plays.)

Carolyn Warren was the hottest girl in the eighth grade gifted and talented class. Okay, she was the only hot girl in the eighth grade gifted and talented class. And I loved her. A mad, consuming, devouring, stomach-churning love. I dreamt about her. I drew very poor sketches of her in my free time. I would write 'I love Carolyn Warren' on every conceivable surface I could find. Except I was so clever I would write each letter on top of each other making the whole indecipherable. Carolyn Warren was my secret goddess.

(KELLY enters with LOUIS in tow.)

KELLY

Okay let's get started. Sorry I'm late I had to wait for retardo over there.

PRESENT LOUIS

Due to a trick of fate, Kelly was the leader of our church youth group. I don't know how this happened, I don't know who put her in charge; I think maybe she was the only high school kid to come around our church. And our activity for December was to put on the nativity play; Kelly was going to be the director. Carolyn was going to be Mary. Therefore I wanted to be Joseph.

(KELLY addresses CAROLYN, LOUIS, and a group of imaginary kids.)

KELLY

Okay. I don't want to be here. You don't want to be here. But we're supposed to be honoring the birth of Jesus so we're going to get through this thing. Louis. You are going to be an ass.

LOUIS

What?

KELLY

Shut up. That's what they're called. Get used to it. You live in the manger with the other animals. Now we're supposed to use the Jensen baby for the baby Jesus because they just had a baby but I think their baby is gross. It looks like it got caught in the washing machine, it's got like permanent upturned nostrils. Baby Jesus did not look like that. Plus it smells. Ugh.

LOUIS

Hey Kelly can I be Joseph?

KELLY

Raise your hand if you want to speak.

(LOUIS raises his hand.)

What?

LOUIS

Can I be Joseph?

KELLY

No. You're an ass.

(she addresses the group again.)

All right people let's get to work! Baby Jesus isn't going to birth himself! Hey! Hey Micah! Are you an idiot?! The wise men do not do that!

(she storms off-stage. LOUIS sees CAROLYN going over her script.)

CAROLYN

Hey Louis.

LOUIS

Hi.

CAROLYN

Sucks that you're an ass.

LOUIS

It's fine. I've got less lines, you know? Just sort of a braying.

CAROLYN

Well you should practice. Baaah.

LOUIS

That's a sheep.

CAROLYN

What does a donkey do?

LOUIS

They bray. Like... braaaaay.

CAROLYN

That's pretty good.

LOUIS

You're awesome by the way. In the play.

CAROLYN

Oh. Thanks.

LOUIS

Like really... you know like... I bet you're gonna be like a professional actress.

CAROLYN

Thanks.

(They've run out of things to say.)

Is that your coat?

(LOUIS is stabbed through the heart.)

LOUIS

Yeah... I uh... my grandmother... she's demented and she just gives me things sometimes.

CAROLYN

Huh. I should go work on my lines.

LOUIS

Wait um... I got you a Christmas present.

CAROLYN

Really? That's sweet.

LOUIS

I don't have it on me. Maybe I could um... give it to you sometime.

CAROLYN

Okay. See ya.

(she leaves. LOUIS watches.)

PRESENT LOUIS

Of course I didn't have a present for her. I had five days to get it, and I had to figure out how to deliver it without getting a ride from my Dad. But life was pretty good. Which brings me to the subject of... my Dad.

(GEORGE appears.)

He wasn't an orthodox father.

GEORGE

Yes, the monsters are coming to get you. They think you look tasty. And they're living in your closet. Go back to sleep. Oh by the way, I may have used some glow-in-the-dark paint to paint some eyes on your walls. But don't worry about that.

PRESENT LOUIS

He wasn't a mean man, just... continually amused.

GEORGE

You will get a little brother when your Daddy apologizes to Mommy for the Jell-o incident. But that's all I'm gonna say about that.

*(if you would like to read this entire play, please email me at don@donzolidis.com
Scripts are currently free; performances are \$75.)*