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"Finding Joy at Gate 12"

By
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What A family of four stuck in an airport on Christmas Eve faces flight delays, dead devices, and the unwelcome news that the joy-sucking Aunt Carol will be at Christmas. Tensions flare until they're reminded that joy isn't found in perfect circumstances, but in Christ - even in chaos, peace can be found.

Themes: Christmas, Marriage, Holidays, Joy, Love, Relationships

Who Mom
Dad
Sam (Preteen/Teenage Son)
Jess (Preteen/Teenage Daughter)
Gate Agent (offstage voice, over the mic)

When Present day - Christmas Eve

Costumes Casual travel outfits

Props Chairs (regular chairs to represent airport chairs)
Backpacks / Bags / Carry on suitcases / Neck pillow
Phone(s) / handheld game console / device chargers

Why 1 Peter 1:8, Philippians 4:4, Psalm 118:24, Nehemiah 8:10

How This scene can be set with four chairs to represent the airport terminal. Simple props like a backpack, phone, or neck pillow are helpful, but pantomime works just as well. Keep delivery natural, leaning on sharp, realistic family banter rather than exaggerated acting. Focus on building tension through Mom's stress, the kids' sarcasm, and Dad's calm humor, then shift smoothly into the quieter moment of perspective before the final comedic button. Adjust genders/ages of kids as needed - siblings can annoy each other at any age!

Time 5 minutes

Four chairs represent an airport terminal. **Mom** and **Jess**, sit in these chairs with various bags/suitcases/devices surrounding them. **Sam** is sprawled out on the floor, playing a game on his phone or a handheld gaming device. **Mom's** stressed and the kids are bored to the max.

Announcement over the loud speaker:

Gate Agent: Flight 733 to Chicago is delayed another hour.

The **Family** groans.

Sam: We should just go home.

Mom: We're *not* going home.

Jess: If we bail now I could still catch a ride with Michelle up to her family's cabin.

Mom: You are *not* spending Christmas with another family!

Sam: I think it's just Michelle's brother she's interested in spending time with.

Jess throws a neck pillow at **Sam** and it hits his gaming console.

Sam: You made me die!

Mom explodes with stress.

Mom: Stop fighting!! It's Christmas Eve!! We're going to be here a while so can you please just chill out?!

Sam: Jeez Mom, *now* who needs to chill?

Jess: Seriously. (*condescending*) Practice that deep breathing you're always pushing on me.

Mom takes a beat. Then, a deep breath.

Dad comes back with frazzled energy. **Mom** perks up.

Mom: Please tell me you have good news.

Dad: I do! I finally found a working outlet.

The kids perk up, phones in hand.

Jess / Sam: WHERE?!

Dad: Occupied. By a guy charging his electric toothbrush. But I'll keep an eye out for another!

False hope. **The kids** sink back down.

Mom: What about the flight?

Dad: That part's just bad news. No other flights. No reroutes. We're stuck.

Jess / Sam: Ughhhhhhhhhh (or some other dramatic groan - ad lib as desired.)

Mom tries to lighten the mood with an inspirational speech.

Mom: Look, the airport is a miserable place. The lights are blinding, a salad costs seventeen dollars, and it smells like feet and warm cheese in this corner. But once we get through the chaos of today, we'll wake up to Nana's cinnamon buns, and a fresh layer of snow, and we can put on matching pajamas and watch Christmas movies all day...

Mom's getting lost in her own dreamland. **She** glances at her phone and it snaps her out of it.

Mom: Oh no!

Mom's panic startles **Dad** and he jumps into a fight stance. Looks around. Where's the danger?

Dad: What?!

Mom: Aunt Carol is coming to Christmas.

Jess: I thought Aunt Carol and Nana weren't speaking?

Mom: I guess they made up.

Dad: Well that's nice.

Mom: No, Ken, it's not. You know the happy place I just described with the snow and the cinnamon buns? It will *no longer be* a happy place if Carol's there.

Sam: We can't have cinnamon buns if Aunt Carol comes?

Mom's speech should build, both in intensity and volume. Like a runaway train.

Mom: Not in peace. Carol will critique the cinnamon to sugar ratio. Nana will get defensive. Then Carol will pull out their mother's old recipe to compare, and they'll end up fighting over who really should've inherited their mother's pearl necklace!

Dad: Woah, honey. Don't get ahead of yourself. We don't know that any of that will happen.

Mom: Oh it'll happen, Ken. You know how I know? Because it always does. Every time she comes around. Carol is a negative, opinionated cloud of unhappiness that sucks up the joy and poisons the air around her.

Sam: Plus, her breath stinks.

Mom: Sam! Her breath does not... okay, well it kind of stinks, but that's not the reason we don't want her around. It's the joy-sucking thing.

Dad puts his arm around **Mom** and ushers her to an empty seat, they sit down next to each other. **The kids** are still nearby but not a part of this conversation.

Dad's advice here should feel like a gentle perspective shift, not a sermon.

Dad: Honey, I know you wanted this Christmas to feel... magical. Work's been nuts, the kids' schedules have been nonstop, and you just wanted one holiday that wasn't chaos.

Mom: Exactly. Just one moment that felt like rest. Like peace. I wanted snow and cinnamon buns and... joy. Is that too much to ask?

Dad: No. But you know as well as I do, true joy doesn't come from snow, or pajamas, or even cinnamon buns. Those things are *great*. They bring us so much happiness. *(beat)* But our joy, and that deep peace in our heart comes from the Lord.

Mom knows **Dad's** right, but she's still frustrated.

Mom: Yeah.

Dad: And I can think of another important Christmas that wasn't very peaceful.

Mom: The year your dad took up the accordion?

Dad: That one too. But I was thinking about the *first* Christmas. Not a lot of comfort there. Just a drafty stable, two exhausted parents, and a baby in a feeding trough. It wasn't perfect, but it was *everything*.

Mom cracks a smile.

Dad: So if that first Christmas could hold unspeakable joy, maybe this one can too. Even if it's messy. Even if Aunt Carol comes in hot.

Mom: She does run hot.

Dad: And look at our kids. When's the last time they've been trapped with us for this long?

Mom considers the sweetness that had been overshadowed by her worry.

Mom: It has been a while. *(beat - then her excitement builds)* Let's drag them out of bed for some family hikes each morning. Get some fresh, Carol-free air. Force the kids to talk to us. Ooh, no phones!

Dad: That's a good idea. Control what we can, let go of what we can't.

Mom: Exactly.

The kids reenter the conversation.

Jess: I'm starving, can we get some food?

Mom walks over to sit in between her two kids.

Mom: Sure. How bout cinnamon buns?

Sam: Whatever.

The kids are oblivious, but this is a sweet moment for **Mom** and **Dad**. **They** smile at each other, making the most of the situation.

After a sweet beat, another announcement on the loud speaker...

Gate Agent: Attention... Flight 733 to Chicago has been delayed another two hours.

Kids: Ughhhh!

Mom puts her arms around the kids and squeezes them tight.

Lights out.