



Sons of Norway
HERITAGE PROGRAMS



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CHRISTMAS MEMORIES
A Lodge Play

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Christmas Memories

Narrator: At this time of the year, I'm sure all of us have our special memories of the holiday season. Tonight we are going to eavesdrop on one family's nostalgic reminiscences. I'm sure many of you will be able to look back and recognize some of these situations as having happened in your own families. And now—it is early Christmas Eve and we invite you to sit back and enjoy a conversation between mama and papa.

(Mama and papa walk in and sit down in their rockers.)

Mama: Oh, I'm so glad we have this time to sit down and get off our feet before the children and grandchildren come. You know, papa, it's not like it was years back when all the children were home and could help out.

Papa: Yes, but it sure is a lot quieter—and not all that begging to open those Christmas presents a little bit earlier each year.

Mama: But papa, you were the one we caught shaking the boxes when you thought no one was looking.

(Person representing papa in younger days—comes in and shakes presents under the Christmas tree and smells them—lifts them up and inspects them.)

Papa: It's fun to think back on the wonderful Christmases we had as children.

Mama: You know, as children we never had a lot of candy and sweets and I can remember how thrilled I was when our family would go to Tante Malla and Onkel Jacob's house and their buffet would be brimming over with fancy chocolates, marzipan, nuts and that glazed fruit that we only saw at that time of the year. And then there were plates of wonderful homemade cookies—we had *krumkaker*, *mandelkaker*, *fattigmann* and *hjortetakk*. Oh, how we loved it all, and that was the one time of the year when the children were allowed to have all they wished. My brother and I had some pretty bad stomach aches after that but we never dared tell our parents.

Papa: I'll never forget when my tante Annemor and her sister, tante Bertina, would come to visit on *lillejulaften*, and my brothers and I would run and hide in the closet because they would invariably pinch our cheeks and pat us on the head and exclaim, "Oh my, how you've grown!!!"

(The two aunts come in carrying presents which they will open, tante Annemor with armfuls of toys and tante Bertina with a pair of long underwear. They walk around and tweak a few cheeks of the people in the audience.)

Papa: But when it came to opening the presents they brought, we always knew that tante Annemor would bring us something we had hoped for, while tante Bertina could be counted on to give us underwear.

Mama: You know, one of the traditions of our own little family that I still love so much is on Christmas Eve when we have the rice pudding (or *riskrem*), and hide the almond in one of the portions. You know they say if you are the one to get the almond, it will bring you good luck for the rest of the year. And it's such fun—how we tuck it in the corner of our cheek until everyone is finished with the pudding and we all try to guess who has it.

Papa: Yeah, but I remember one Christmas, Mama, when you were a bit mischievous and hid an almond in every portion. You laughed as we all looked so smug, thinking we each were the lucky ones that year.

Mama: How about the year I left the almond out completely, and everyone was convinced that someone was doing a spectacular job of hiding it? Of course, my favorite time was two years ago when our grandson, Philip, got the almond and won the prize which is always a marzipan pig—I'll never forget how horrified and disappointed he was at his first taste of marzipan.

Papa: Mama, do you remember the year when our neighbors, the O'Briens, had no place to go for Christmas Eve and no family visiting them—I felt sorry for them and invited them to have dinner with us, forgetting that we were having *lutefisk*. When Paddy O'Brien walked in the door and smelled the fish cooking—he gave me the strangest look. I don't think they appreciated our traditional Norwegian meal. That was 17 years ago and it's the last time they ever mentioned that they had no place to go for Christmas Eve.

(Paddy O'Brien and his wife walk in as the previous dialogue is going on and Paddy sniffs the air and makes a horrible face. They walk around the room a bit and then leave politely holding their noses.)

Mama: I'm so happy that cousin Erik and cousin Harry have agreed to sing some songs for us this evening. It's so lovely when everyone gathers around the piano and we listen to the old familiar tunes.

(Cousins Erik and Harry entertain and others gather around the piano.)

Mama: Well, I suppose we should start thinking about finishing the preparations. Papa, did you remember to ask your brother to bring some of his homemade *rullepølse* again this year? He makes the best of anyone I know. And he always prepares the herring like no one else can. Aren't we lucky to have all these traditions from our Norwegian background?

Papa: Mama, what's that I hear?

(Jingle bells sound in the distance.)

Mama: Oh, it's the carolers—let's listen.

(Carolers come in, dressed in sweaters, caps and scarves, several of them holding bells.)

(Singers march around the room and through the audience, singing Norwegian and American Christmas carols.)

(Santa arrives after the carolers and distributes little gifts to children in the audience.)

Mama & Papa: *(Both stand—holding hands and arms around each other.)*
What a lovely way to start the holidays!

(They exchange a kiss and walk out arm-in-arm.)