

# LAST LIGHT

## By Megan Orr

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## CHARACTERS

(2M, 4W, 2 Optional Extras in Introduction)

*(In order of appearance)*

KEVIN (DAD) CAMPBELL	50 years old; Amy's father; works for UPS; received two weeks notice on Monday that he would be laid off just after the holidays; spends the rest of his time taking care of his sick wife
CARRIE CAMPBELL	16 years old; junior in public high school; Amy's younger sister; very materialistic, self-centered, and superficial
AMY CAMPBELL	25 years old; missionary to a tiny village in the mountains outside of Tamazunchale, Mexico; has just returned home to Plymouth, IN on her first furlough after two years on the field
SARA WHITTAKER	25 years old; Amy's best friend; works at the coffee shop downtown; began dating Chad Morris a few months ago; they began hanging out after Amy left
CHAD MORRIS	27 years old; Amy's former best guy friend; works as a mechanic at Duke of Oil; he and Amy had been on the verge of a relationship when Amy felt called to the mission field; he had promised that he'd always be there waiting for her when she returned
MARSHA (MOM) CAMPBELL	49 years old; Amy's mother; formerly a Christian school teacher (3 <sup>rd</sup> grade) diagnosed with MS a little over a year ago; health has been deteriorating ever since

**Time:** December 24, 2004

**Setting:** The Campbell house in Plymouth, IN

## THE SET

### Set instructions

*Scene 1* takes place in the Campbell living room. A couch stage right of center is angled toward stage left. Stage left of the couch is an armchair. Stage right of the couch is an end table with a lamp on top. A coffee table with magazines sits in front of the couch. Other common living room furniture may be added to the scene. The Christmas tree that DAD is putting up is located downstage left. The entrance into the living room from outside is stage right and stage left exits into the kitchen, which leads to the rest of the house.

*Scene 2* takes place in the local coffee shop. Round tables with chairs are scattered across the stage. A curved, L-shaped counter is located upstage right of center. Three or four tall, cafe chairs sit in front of the counter. The Christmas tree from the Campbell's living room can stay in its same location (downstage left) for this scene as well. The entrance into the coffee shop is downstage right.

*Scene 3* takes place in the Campbell living room. (*Same set as Scene 1*)

### Lighting instructions

Scene 1—normal indoor lighting

Scene 2—dimmer lighting, as in most coffee shops

Scene 3—dimkest lighting of the three scenes; a single spotlight is needed for the end of this scene

### Prop List

#### For Dad

Christmas tree  
String of white lights

#### For Carrie

Magazine

#### For Amy

Old coat, hat, mittens  
Beat-up suitcase  
Coffee mug  
One Christmas light bulb

**For Sara**

Cleaning rag  
Empty mugs  
Coffee machine or coffee carafe

**For Mom**

Bible

**For Miser (optional)**

Bag of gold

**Costume Suggestion List**

**Dad Campbell**

Khaki pants, red or green sweater, loafers; glasses (optional)

**Carrie Campbell**

Jeans, trendy shirt and shoes

**Amy Campbell**

Modest skirt and shirt, button-down sweater, casual shoes

**Sara Whittaker**

Black pants, white blouse, half-apron, black shoes

**Chad Morris**

Grease-stained mechanics uniform, work boots

**Mom Campbell**

Pajamas, robe, and slippers

**Miser**

Business suit (optional)

**NARRATOR INTRODUCTION TO *LAST LIGHT* (OPTIONAL)**

***Single spot rises on narrator at stage right.***

NARRATOR: Most Christmas stories usually contain the same basic elements. There are the Christmas carolers . . .

*(Lights rise on group of CAROLERS stage left who immediately burst into an exuberant rendition of “We Wish You a Merry Christmas.” They sing the chorus through once before the NARRATOR interrupts them.)*

Uh, thank you. I think that will be quite enough.

*(Light on CAROLERS fades.)*

And then you have the grumpy old miser alone in his office on Christmas Eve, counting out his treasure . . .

*(Lights rise on MISER stage left who is counting out gold.)*

MISER: One thousand nine hundred and seventy eight, one thousand nine hundred and seventy nine, one thousand—

NARRATOR: *(Interrupting)* Excuse me, sir?

MISER: What do you want?

NARRATOR: Well, I was wondering, sir, if you might be willing to give that money to charity.

MISER: What are you, crazy? Now get out of my office!

*(Lights on MISER fade.)*

NARRATOR : See? I told you he was grumpy.

MISER: *(Threateningly; Offstage)* I could sue you for slander!

NARRATOR: Yeah. . . Right. And one final thing that you usually find in Christmas stories are things that fly—flying reindeer, flying ghosts of Christmas Past . . . But we don't have any of those to show you tonight, because . . . well . . . [Principal's Name] said we couldn't afford the insurance. The Christmas story that you are about to see tonight, however, is different from most Christmas stories. There are no carolers or flying reindeer or *(thankfully)* no grumpy old misers, but it is still very much a Christmas story. This Christmas story is about a girl named Amy . . .

*(Lights fade on NARRATOR and rise on center stage. Last Light begins.)*

**LAST LIGHT**  
**One-Act Christmas Play**

by  
Megan Orr

**SCENE 1**

**SET:** Campbell living room, decorated for the holidays.

*Lights rise. DAD is struggling to wrap the Christmas tree in white lights. The lights are plugged in and he is trying to throw one last loop around the top of the tree. CARRIE is sitting on the couch, half-heartedly flipping through a teen magazine and occasionally looking up to critique her father's handiwork.*

DAD: *(Struggling with tree)* Now why can't this . . . dumb tree . . . stay still??

CARRIE: You know you're wasting your time with those lights, Dad. The end of that strand doesn't work. It'll knock the rest of the lights out.

DAD: *(Succeeds in looping the lights around the tree)* There! *(takes a step back to survey his work)* I don't know, Carrie. These lights seem to be working just fine right now.

CARRIE: *(With a half-hearted shrug)* You'll see.

*(CARRIE flips a page in her magazine. DAD returns to adjusting the lights in the branches. CARRIE suddenly gasps and jumps up.)*

CARRIE: Oh, wow! Dad! Look at this outfit! I have so got to have it! It would be perfect for Amber's New Year's Eve party! Look at it, Dad. *(Shoves the magazine under her father's nose)*

DAD: You want to wear *that* to a party? In winter?

CARRIE: Yeah! Isn't it cute?

DAD: That wasn't exactly the first word to come to mind.

CARRIE: *(Whedding)* Please can I have it, Daddy? It can be one of my Christmas presents.

DAD: Honey, at that price, it would be your only Christmas present. I told you, we need to cut back this year.

CARRIE: Well . . . yeah. Cutting back on food, or decorations, or charity, or something. But not on *Christmas* presents?!

DAD: Sorry, sweetheart.

CARRIE: *(stomps back to the couch; with a shocked, indignant huff)* I can *not* believe this.

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(DAD maneuvers himself behind the tree to tug on the lights. A section of the lights on the front of the tree droops down and the lights flicker out.)

DAD: Huh. That's funny. They were working a second ago.

CARRIE: (*Sullenly; flopping down on the couch*) Told you so.

(AMY enters suddenly from stage right. She is wearing a winter coat, hat, and mittens and is carrying a beat-up suitcase.)

AMY: (*Taking off her mittens with a grin*) You might want to check the end of the strand. One of the lights may have fallen out.

DAD: (*Looking up in surprise*) Amy! You're here!

(DAD pushes lights back into place on the tree and crosses to AMY.)

AMY: Surprise! I got an earlier flight. I hope that's okay?

DAD: (*Giving AMY a quick hug*) Of course! I just didn't expect to see you until we picked you up from the airport. And I was hoping to have the tree up by then.

AMY: (*Taking off her hat and coat*) It's okay, Dad. The tree looks great. In fact, everything looks great.

CARRIE: That's just because you've been in Timbuktu for the last two years.

AMY: Tamazunchale.

CARRIE: Whatever.

AMY: (*Teasingly*) Well, I missed you too, Carrie.

CARRIE: Amy, you have *got* to talk some sense into Dad. He thinks that just because he was fired, the rest of us don't get any presents this Christmas.

AMY: What? Dad—

CARRIE: Yeah, I know! Isn't it terrible?

AMY: (*To CARRIE*) No! That's not what I— (*To DAD*) Dad, you were fired? Why?

DAD: It's not that big of a deal, Amy. I'll find another job.

AMY: But, Dad, why?

DAD: I had to take some extra sick days over the last few months. So the company just decided that it wasn't profitable for them to keep me.

AMY: Sick days? Have you been sick?

CARRIE: Duh, Amy. He's been taking care of Mom. Where have you been? (*Sarcastically*) Oh, that's right. Timbuktu.

AMY: (*Absently*) Tamazunchale. (*To DAD*) What is she talking about, taking care of Mom? Is Mom sick?

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CARRIE: (*jumps up; exasperated*) For crying out loud, Amy, don't you know anything? Maybe it's about time you came out of the mountains and started caring about your family again. (*grabs her magazine and exits the living room stage left in a huff*)

AMY: (*To DAD*) What in the world's gotten into her?

DAD: Don't take it personally, Amy. Things have been kind of rough lately.

AMY: So I see. And how come nobody wrote to tell me any of this?

DAD: I told them not to. There was nothing you could have done and I didn't want you to worry.

AMY: What's wrong with Mom?

DAD: (*Putting a hand on AMY's shoulder*) Why don't you have a seat?

(*DAD tries to guide AMY to the couch, but AMY insistently stays rooted to her spot.*)

AMY: It's serious, isn't it?

DAD: (*Gently*) Have a seat.

(*AMY reluctantly sits on the couch. DAD sits next to her.*)

I'm not going to lie to you, Amy. It is serious. Your mom's been diagnosed with MS.

AMY: (*Softly; in shock*) MS?

DAD: It wasn't so bad at first. She was in a lot of pain, but she was still herself. But lately . . .

AMY: What?

DAD: Well . . . the other day, Carrie went in to give her her mail. And . . . your mother didn't even recognize her.

(*There is a long pause.*)

AMY: Dad, how long have you guys known about this?

DAD: (*Exhaling deeply*) We found out a few months after you left.

AMY: (*Rising*) You've known for over a year? You've known for over a year and you didn't tell me?

DAD: Amy, I told you, we didn't want you to worry.

(*AMY turns away from DAD for a moment. Then she turns back.*)

AMY: Can I see her?

DAD: (*Grimacing*) Uh, I . . . don't think that's a good idea. Today hasn't been one of her good days.

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AMY: (*Under her breath*) Yeah, well . . . it hasn't been the greatest for me, either. (*To DAD*) I'm . . . going out.

DAD: Out? Out where?

AMY: I don't know, just . . . out. To . . . see a few friends, I guess.

DAD: You going to be okay?

AMY: Sure. I'll be fine. (*In a daze, wanders toward the door, stage right*)

DAD: (*Calling out after her*) It'll be all right, honey. You don't have to worry about a thing. You just enjoy your holiday.

AMY: Yeah. . . . Right.

(*AMY exits stage right. Lights fade.*)

**End of Scene.**

## SCENE 2

**SET:** The coffee shop downtown; nearly closing time.

**Lights rise.** SARA, wearing a half-apron over her black pants, is busy wiping down the counter, collecting empty mugs as she goes. AMY enters in outdoor wear downstage right. SARA, her back to AMY, doesn't see her right away.

AMY: Hi, Sara.

(*SARA jumps, as though startled. She turns quickly. AMY walks in a bit further, looking around with interest.*)

Wow! You guys expanded. It looks good in here.

SARA: (*Slowly*) Amy?

AMY: (*Taking off her hat and mittens*) Yeah. You . . . sound surprised.

SARA: Well, yeah, I'm surprised! What are you doing here? Aren't you supposed to be in Mexico?

AMY: I'm home on furlough. Didn't you get my letter?

SARA: (*Slightly guilty*) Your . . . letter?

AMY: Yeah. I must have sent you, like, twenty this year. Didn't you get them?

SARA: (*Guiltily*) Oh, right! Your letters! Yeah . . . I got them. I guess I . . . just forgot you were coming home.

AMY: (*Pauses, disappointed*) Oh.

SARA: You know how things get sometimes, Amy. We've just been so busy.

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AMY: We?

SARA: (*Quickly*) Uh, yeah. You know, the coffee shop. Ever since Ed bought that old pool hall next door and added on to the place, we've been swamped.

AMY: (*Takes a seat at the counter*) I can imagine! I remember how busy this place was before, and now it must be . . .

SARA: (*Emphatically*) Insane.

AMY: I bet! Wow. Things sure do change fast, don't they?

(*SARA's gaze shifts down and she again begins to slowly wipe the counter.*)

SARA: Yeah, I . . . I guess they do.

AMY: I mean, I've only been gone two years, and I come back and now our town's got a Super Wal-Mart, another shoe store, a new hair salon . . .

SARA: (*Wryly*) And enough tanning beds for every woman in town.

AMY: Yeah, that too. It's just hard to believe so much has changed. It . . . kind of makes you wonder if *anything* stays the same.

(*There is an awkward pause as AMY's face darkens. SARA nervously clears her throat.*)

SARA: Would you . . . like some coffee? We've gotten a few new flavors since you left.

AMY: Oh, I . . . no thanks. I . . . left my purse at home.

SARA: That's okay. It's on me. I think you'll like the peppermint.

AMY: All right then.

(*SARA turns her back to AMY and begins pouring coffee.*)

So, is there . . . anything new with you?

SARA: (*Guiltily; over her shoulder*) New? Like what?

AMY: Oh, I don't know. Anything, I guess. We haven't talked in so long! Are you still taking classes at the community college?

(*SARA turns back to the counter, a coffee mug in her hand. She sets it down in front of AMY.*)

SARA: (*Relieved*) Oh! That. No, I . . . I stopped. Just got too busy, I guess.

AMY: That's too bad. You really seemed to like photography. And you were good at it.

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SARA: Yeah, it was fun, but . . . I don't know. I guess you just realize some things are more important than others.

AMY: *(Takes a sip of coffee)* You know, it's funny. When I was in Mexico, I didn't really miss the things I thought I would. Like this coffee. I mean, I used to live on this stuff when we were in college, remember?

SARA: Seven thirty every morning. Like clockwork.

AMY: Exactly! But in Mexico, I didn't even miss it. And I thought for sure I'd be homesick the entire time, but . . . well, I didn't really miss Plymouth, either. Or even my family, for that matter! Oh, I missed them a little, but not like I thought I would. It's really strange, and I know you're going to laugh at me when I tell you, but . . . do you know what I missed the most?

SARA: *(Wryly)* Running water?

AMY: *(Laughing)* No, not even that. I missed talking to Chad.

SARA: Chad? Chad Morris?

AMY: Yeah. Remember all those nights we'd just hang out here at the shop and talk? All three of us? Those were some great times. How is he? Have you seen him lately?

SARA: Well . . . yeah, I've seen him. He comes in almost every night around closing. He should be here any minute actually.

*(SARA cranes her neck to look downstage right.)*

AMY: Really? . . . Is he . . . ? Do you know if he ever started seeing anyone?

SARA: *(Nervously licks her lips and goes back to wiping the counter)* Well . . . actually, Amy, I . . . I think he is. In fact, I'm pretty sure he is.

AMY: *(Trying to hide her disappointment)* Oh. Who is she?

SARA: That . . . you'll have to ask him. Here he comes now.

*(SARA nods toward downstage right. AMY whirls around just as CHAD walks through the door. He is wearing a grease-stained mechanics uniform. He "shuts" the door behind him and turns toward the counter with a grin.)*

CHAD: Hey, Sara. You'll never guess—

*(CHAD's smile fades as he sees AMY. She stands.)*

Amy.

AMY: Hi, Chad!

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*(CHAD shoots a nervous glance from AMY to SARA and back to AMY.)*

CHAD: Amy, what are you doing here? I thought you were in Mexico.

AMY: I was, but I'm home on furlough. That seems to be surprising a lot of people today.

CHAD: Have . . . you been here long?

AMY: *(Teasing)* Long enough for Sara to spill your little secret, if that's what you're wondering.

*(CHAD looks over at SARA startled.)*

CHAD: You told her we were dating?!

AMY: What??

SARA: *(Softly)* No . . . I didn't. . . . You just did.

*(AMY crosses stage left until both CHAD and SARA are on her right.)*

AMY: Wait a minute. You two are dating? Each other?

SARA: It's not what you're thinking, Amy. We only started dating a few months ago.

AMY: But, Sara, when I left, you told me you weren't interested in Chad. You . . . said he was just a good friend.

SARA: *(Unties her apron and puts it on the counter)* I know, but . . . well, I guess it's kind of like what you said. A lot changes in two years. You were in Mexico, so Chad and I just started hanging out together more, and . . . it just sort of happened.

AMY: *(Softly; still in shock)* I cannot believe this.

CHAD: It's my fault, Amy, not Sara's. I was the one who asked her out.

*(SARA rounds the counter and crosses to AMY.)*

SARA: Please don't be mad. We really weren't trying to hurt you.

AMY: *(Taking a deep breath)* I know. I'm sorry, I . . . It's . . . been a hard day. I guess I'm just learning how much I hate change. *(Softly; looking away)* It's almost enough to make me wish I'd never left. *(Smiling weakly at SARA)* Thanks for the coffee, Sara. *(Sets her coffee mug on the counter; turning to CHAD)* Chad, it's . . . been good to see you.

CHAD: *(Slowly)* You, too, Amy.

*(AMY crosses to downstage right.)*

SARA: *(Hesitantly)* Amy? We're going Christmas caroling with the church tonight, if you want to come with us.

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AMY: *(Puts on hat and mittens; with a sad smile)* No, thanks. I . . . I think I'm just going to go home.

SARA: Well, then, I guess, if we don't see you before tomorrow . . . have a merry Christmas.

AMY: You too.

*(AMY exits downstage right, SARA and CHAD side-by-side, looking after her, concerned. Lights fade.)*

**End of Scene.**

### SCENE 3

**SET:** Campbell living room, decorated for the holidays.

**Lights rise. The room is dim when AMY enters, stage right. She crosses slowly to the lamp on the end table and turns it on. Lights brighten a bit. MOM is sitting in the armchair, an open Bible in her lap. AMY freezes when she sees her. MOM looks up at AMY, a small smile on her face and a friendly, but distant look in her eyes.**

AMY: Mom?

*(AMY moves toward MOM quickly, pulling off her hat and mittens.)*

Mom, it's me, Amy! I'm home!

*(MOM continues to stare at AMY, friendly but without recognition. AMY stops short beside the end of the couch.)*

Wait a minute. . . . You don't recognize me, do you? *(Letting out a disappointed breath)* I forgot.

*(AMY shrugs off her coat and throws it over the couch, dropping her hat and mittens on the floor. She looks over at MOM.)*

So what are you doing out here in the dark all by yourself? Shouldn't you be in bed?

*(MOM looks at her, still without recognition, and then looks down at the Bible in her lap. AMY takes a seat on the end of the couch nearest MOM.)*

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