

My Lonely, LOVELY Christmas

*I wanted to be
with my family at
Christmas, not with
someone I didn't know.*

By Lauren Hanson

I sighed as I stared out the window at the freshly fallen snow, envisioning my siblings and myself building a larger-than-life snowman, laughing and tackling it to the ground moments later. But it was just wishful thinking this year—my family was not here for Christmas. My dad had to work, and my siblings, who were all older than me and married, were spending the holiday with their in-laws. It was just my mom and me that Christmas Eve.

My mom, ever the optimist, gave me an encouraging smile from across the room while she prepared our Christmas Eve dinner. Despite her efforts to make things feel normal without the rest of our family there, our house felt empty and lonely.





Shortly before dinner, a knock at our door signaled that our special guest had arrived. I opened the door to see a very shy, elderly widow hesitantly standing out in the cold. My mom had invited her over to join us for our Christmas Eve feast, and I could tell she felt as awkward as I did.

The normal clamor and jubilant conversation that usually filled the room during dinner was instead replaced by a mellow discussion. At one point, I looked around the room at the empty chairs and felt like crying. Just then the widow asked, “Do you miss your family?”

I nodded and looked into her eyes. Then I sensed it: *she misses her family too!*

I suddenly had an outpouring of love for this widow. She understood me. My attitude did a 180-degree turn as I realized I wasn’t alone. We shared a common bond of missing our families. This Christmas was far from normal, but sharing that moment with her brought me a new perspective—one filled with gratitude and love!

Later that evening we watched *Joy to the World* as part of our usual Christmas tradition. Sure, I had seen the film a dozen times, but this time it held new meaning for me. The Holy Ghost testified to me that the Savior, Jesus Christ, lived and died so that we might live again. Because of Him, I get to have my family forever. It didn’t matter so much that my family was not there that Christmas Eve—I had an eternity to spend with them!

I’m so grateful for the evening I shared with that sweet widow. We all feel lonely at times, but we can find joy knowing that our Savior will never abandon us and that He has provided a way for us to have everlasting happiness and to have our loved ones with us forever. **NE**

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