

## **BLOOD MATCH**

A play in one act

Characters - Abel – *A young man of twenty-three years*  
- Olivia – *Abel's twin sister*

*The scene is a conventional living / dining area in a modest home. There are two doorway openings, one on each side. It is over-decorated for Christmas, with Christmas cards all around. At the rear of the stage is the living room area, with a Christmas tree at the back. There are various shelves and tables on which there are a nativity scene and North Pole figures.*

*In the living area there are two easy chairs. At the front of the stage is a small dining table with two chairs at each end. It is covered with a Christmas table cloth, with squares like an old fashioned Christmas window, in which there are candles and wreaths repeated in each alternate square.*

*It is Christmas afternoon.*

*As long as it doesn't take away from the conversation, music from the Nutcracker or some such could play softly in the background, as if from an off-stage TV. It could swell at appropriate moments for effect.*

*As the lights come up, Abel and Olivia are sitting in the two easy chairs looking very bored. They milk the boredom moment, fidgeting and glancing back and forth at each other several times before starting to speak.*

ABEL: Well, Olivia, here we are again. *(He gets up and looks through the opening on his side of the stage.)* Another fascinating family Christmas afternoon. Dad's snoring as usual in front of the TV. *(He motions toward the other opening off-stage.)* Mom's standing guard - on turkey-basting duty in the kitchen. *(He remains standing, facing the audience, as if looking out a window.)* And it's snowing too hard to leave the house.

OLIVIA: So what does my clever twin bro' Abel suggest we do to amuse ourselves?

ABEL: It's your turn to think of something for a change. For the past few Christmases when I've come up with the bright ideas, you've never been interested.

OLIVIA: You always wanted to play alpha-boy games, so you could keep me prisoner in the closet.

ABEL: I thought you enjoyed it.

OLIVIA: We could try on our new Christmas clothes instead.

ABEL: No girlie dress-up show for me. I'm a fraternal twin. *(He points to the pile under the Christmas tree.)* And I will never allow that man-eating necktie to coil itself around my throat.

OLIVIA: *(Rising and looking around.)* Then how's about a macho game of chess, Bro'?

ABEL: Great idea, Sis. I'd love to crush you in a battle of wits. But alas, I took my chess set with me when I moved out.

OLIVIA: No problem! This room is crammed full of funky chess pieces, begging to be slaughtered.

ABEL: Like – the folks in yonder nativity scene?

OLIVIA: Exactly. You wanna be The Bethlehem Buddies or the North Pole Gang? It'll be a fight to the finish. With the true meaning of Christmas on the line.

ABEL: What a jackpot! I'll take Santa's side.

*They begin raiding the room for their chessmen.*

OLIVIA: (*Singing.*) Onward Christian soldiers, marching as to war, with the cross of Jesus, going on before...

ABEL: Olivia. Cease that noise immediately. You know I detest your singing. Especially Jesus tunes. Even if it is his birthday.

OLIVIA: (*Ignores his warning.*) Christ the royal master, leads against the foe. Forward into battle, see his banners go...

ABEL: What are we using for a chessboard?

OLIVIA: (*Gazing around, she looks at the tablecloth. Pointing.*) There?

ABEL: I get it. Candle squares for white, and wreath squares for black.

OLIVIA: Good call.

*They both go to the table with their chess pieces.*

ABEL: So, what has my crusader sis come up with?

OLIVIA: (*Showing the pieces as she names them.*) Naturally, I've got Joseph and Mary as my king and queen. And a couple of angels for bishops. My knights are cows, and the wise men riding their camels are my castles. And all these sweet adoring shepherds are my pawns. See them kneeling in awe, praying to be sacrificed? Poor things. (*She starts to arrange them on the tablecloth.*) What have you got?

ABEL: Here's Santa and his killer queen, Mrs. Claus. Flanked by a pair of tubby snowmen for bishops, reindeer for knights, and sparkly Christmas trees for castles. And in front of them are my pixie-pawns.

OLIVIA: Those little elves look so cute – and stupid. Like they deserve to die. I plan to kill them – one by one.

ABEL: What stakes are we playing for?

OLIVIA: Loser shovels the snow?

ABEL: How 'bout – whoever forfeits a man from the back row has to tell a secret?

OLIVIA: Oooh. Sweet. But I'm warning you Brother Abel, you're going to be confessing your guts out.

ABEL: Nothing compared to the beans you'll be spilling, Sister Olivia Loose-lips. Prepare to witness the fall of Christianity and the triumph of the friends of Rudolph!

OLIVIA: In your dreams, Infidel. I have Jesus on my side, you know. So I start.

*They commence the game, making a few quick moves. They continue to manipulate their pieces as the dialogue proceeds.*

ABEL: Aha! I've drawn first blood. Elves one. Shepherds zero.

OLIVIA: A deliberate and noble sacrifice. Everything's going according to my master plan. And now it's time to call on some heavy artillery. The mighty Virgin Mary. She's coming out swinging, so watch out!

ABEL: Your beloved Madonna will soon be in full retreat at the sight of my snowman bishop. Take that!

OLIVIA: I'll just move my Virgin Queen over here, to a candle square where your bishop will never threaten her, and destroy one of your cowardly elfin pawns in the bargain.

ABEL: Ready or not Sis! I'm sending my reindeer knight prancing over to break your wise-man-on-a-camel's neck. Kapow! So now I've taken out one of your castle strongholds, you've gotta tell me a secret. Something I don't already know.

OLIVIA: You big meany. What should I tell you? I guess... I'm going to get married next year.

ABEL: What??? Who? Where? When?... Fibber! You're just making it up.

OLIVIA: Not exactly. When we were six, Alice Wells and I promised each other, that by the time we were twenty five, we'd both be nurses, and married with at least one baby. It was our blood-sister pact.

ABEL: So what's the big deal? You can't live your life based on a commitment you made when you still believed in Santa Claus. And I know you haven't even seen what's-her-name in almost twenty years.

OLIVIA: Alice moved away after grade two, but I didn't forget. A promise is a promise... I've never told anyone else about it. And now I'm a paramedic, I figure that counts as far as becoming a nurse. So if I'm going to have a baby by the time I'm twenty-five, I'd better find a father next year, when I turn twenty-four. Somehow having a long-standing pledge like that to cling to makes me feel lucky that it could truly happen.

ABEL: That's still a pretty flaky secret. You'd better have a juicier one ready for when I make my next kill.

OLIVIA: But now it's your turn, Buster. I'm using my avenging angel bishop-of-death to slay your evil murdering reindeer. So it's time for you to unveil your deepest, darkest thoughts. Lay them on!

ABEL: OK. I saw your boobs one day when you were catching some rays.

OLIVIA: What? You little snoop. (*She slaps his face lightly.*)

ABEL: It wasn't like I was stalking you. Mom and Dad were at work, and Sammy and I were heading out to a movie. But I forgot my wallet. When we came back to pick it up, you were in the backyard, and I guess you thought you had the place to yourself. We were in my bedroom upstairs, and Sammy noticed you first. I could tell something was up, because his eyes were the size of saucers. He waved me over to the window, and we both knelt down, so you couldn't see us. You were lying on your stomach on that old chaise lounge we used to have. And you'd undone your straps. Then all of a sudden you sat up to take a drink. And there they were. Full frontal mammaries! Sammy started moaning so loud I thought for sure you were going to hear. I finally managed to put my hand over his mouth and pull him out of there. But I don't think he ever got over it. He still reminds me about that afternoon every so often.

OLIVIA: I can understand Sammy's behaviour. The oversexed weasel. But Abel – I'm your sister!

ABEL: I know, but I was sixteen. And I was curious. And you were out there. I only saw you once. Did you sunbathe like that often?

OLIVIA: Once too often, apparently.

ABEL: Would you have preferred I hadn't told you?

OLIVIA: Maybe. So did you enjoy the show?

ABEL: I must admit I can't recall anything about the film that afternoon.

OLIVIA: Not that...

ABEL: Oh. Oh!! Well, I remember I had sweet dreams for weeks afterwards.

OLIVIA: Yeah. I had to listen to your adolescent grunts and groans down the hall every night.

ABEL: I'm sure I heard you singing along sometimes. (*He pinches her cheek.*) Inspiration can make marvelous music.

OLIVIA: (*Fending him off.*) You win the medal for depravity beyond the call of duty. Pervert. I wish I'd never told you about Alice Wells. Let's get back to the game. It's your move.

*They make a few more moves and exchange a few pawns in silence.*

ABEL: Here comes my Christmas tree castle! And there goes your Bishop Gabriel! Up in holy smoke. So give us another confession, Sis!

OLIVIA: My life's too ordinary. I don't have secrets.

ABEL: Hey, don't pout. Just 'cause I caught you red-breasted. Let's see. Did you ever see me naked?

OLIVIA: No.

ABEL: Shucks. Did you want to?

OLIVIA: Time to move on, 'Bro.

ABEL: All right. How about... what frightens you? Something you're too scared to admit. To anyone. Except of course your devoted twin brother. I've taken Psychology 101, so your inner horrors are safe with me.

OLIVIA: Squirrels...make me uncomfortable. And giving blood.

ABEL: I've known about the squirrels since we were kids. And I always thought that was weird. But giving blood? You're a paramedic. You mop up other folks' blood all day long. But you can't donate your own? That's super-weird.

OLIVIA: I'm not squeamish about other people losing their blood. Just about me losing mine.

ABEL: Have you ever gone to a blood clinic? Did you faint? Fess up!

OLIVIA: There was one time. Remember a couple of years ago, when Mom had a bleeding ulcer and she needed a blood transfusion? I asked at the hospital if I could give her my blood, to ensure everything would be perfectly safe. I would have done it too, for Mom. I even had them prick my finger, to find out my blood type. But they told me she was O negative, and mine was O positive, which of course isn't a match. So I managed to get out of it gracefully.

ABEL: My noble vein-glorious sister.

OLIVIA: (*Returning to the game.*) By the way, my lowly bovine knight has just put your great King Claus into check. So mooove him out.

ABEL: Curses! I can see a cunning Christian coup unfolding before me. (*He moves his king.*)

OLIVIA: You got it, Bro'. I've been planning this queen versus queen maneuver from the beginning. And now – for the love of Jesus – my Blessed Virgin swoops. Bringing death to Mrs. Claus! Off with her head!

ABEL: There'll be no more Christmas cupcakes for little Jesus! Serves him right.

OLIVIA: God's will be done.

ABEL: It's a tragic moment for the friends of Rudolph. But we'll rally our North Pole troops and overcome.

OLIVIA: And this time, 'Bro, don't tell me something you discovered from spying on me. I want a proper secret about yourself. One that's worthy of a dead dwarf dowager. And you'd better not try to get away with some bogus terror – like a dread of Santa Claus or leprechaun-phobia.

ABEL: Actually, I do find leprechauns tricky and disturbing, although admittedly not life-threatening. And at the moment they're out of season. But when you mentioned blood, it reminded me that my type is AB. Which caused a shiver to run down my spine. People like me with that rare combination of antigens are supposed to avoid beef, pork and chicken in their diet. But I love steaks and burgers and ribs and wings. Which means I'll probably die young and flabby, albeit happy. So there you go, Sis. This time my disclosure is totally pertinent to my personal plight. You've got to agree that premature death is something I should be seriously petrified of, especially as I'm actively pursuing my early demise with an insatiable appetite. And to increase my psychological angst, I'll likely face an eternal tongue-lashing from Jesus for willfully squandering my time on earth, once my precious few days have frittered themselves away to an untimely end.

OLIVIA: Abel, it's obvious your carnivorous diet has already screwed you up, starting with your brain. You must've caught mad cow disease from all those extra-rare cheeseburgers you've been chowing down on. You silly lunatic. There is no way your blood type can possibly be AB.

ABEL: You're wrong on that, Sis. Unlike you, I don't lack the courage to donate blood. I gave oodles of it on numerous occasions when I was away at college. And I proudly carry a bona fide card to prove it. (*He stands and produces his wallet.*) Behold! AB – etched in premium plastic.

OLIVIA: But... But...

ABEL: What's your problem?

OLIVIA: Abel – for a person to have AB type blood, it means the A was inherited from one parent, and the B came from the other. There are several viable combinations, but both parents have to have either an A or B antigen in their blood, or they could be AB like you, with both.

ABEL: So?

OLIVIA: (*She stands up.*) Mom's blood is type O. She has no A or B antigens. So it's impossible for her to produce an AB baby, no matter who the father is.

ABEL: Wow. That's heavy. How can you be so sure?

OLIVIA: It's elementary medical knowledge. I had to study it to be a paramedic.

ABEL: But why are you so positive Mom is type O?

OLIVIA: I saw her chart when she was in the hospital. I read the labels on the blood bag they gave her for her transfusion. O negative. No question.

ABEL: You're just kidding, right? You're still mad about me and Sammy ogling your tits. And you're pulling my chain until I apologize. (*He gets down on his knees.*) OK I'm sorry. For Christ's sake, even.

OLIVIA: Lookit, Abel. For once, I'm just as baffled and confused as you are.

ABEL: (*Standing up.*) But you're saying that Mom – isn't my Mom.

OLIVIA: Based on your different blood types, she can't be.

ABEL: What about Dad?

OLIVIA: Do you know his blood type?

ABEL: No.

OLIVIA: Neither do I. But it's irrelevant.

ABEL: Maybe we're both adopted. Or abducted.

OLIVIA: Abducted's too creepy. Titillating maybe. But still creepy.

ABEL: Yeah, adopted's better.

OLIVIA: But you've got Dad's eyes. And his nose, whether you want it or not.

ABEL: And you've got Mom's cheekbones and... curves.

OLIVIA: HAVE YOU SEEN HER TITS TOO?

ABEL: NO! But we're twins. Or... aren't we?

OLIVIA: Both of us were born on March 19 of the same year. That much we know.

ABEL: Our birth certificates must be legit. D'you think Dad might have had two kids with two different women, both born on the same day? You with Mom, and me with somebody else?

OLIVIA: Can you see Dad doing something like that?

ABEL: No.

OLIVIA: And can you see Mom forgiving Dad for sleeping around with another woman, the very same week she conceived me, and then somehow accepting you – his bastard kid - into the family?

ABEL: No. Although I always thought I was sort of a metaphorical bastard. But never a literal one.

OLIVIA: Sorry Pal. I guess we have to think this through some more.

ABEL: All right. But if I have to give up a parent, you should have to lose one too. Fair is fair.

OLIVIA: Abel! We aren't trading off Mom for Dad as if we're playing a genealogical chess game.

ABEL: I know. I know. But from everything we've discussed so far, that's the direction it's taking. Listen. Tell me if I'm wrong. Based on close family resemblances, we've inferred that the chance that either of us is randomly adopted is slim or nil. But it's also highly improbable that Dad could have fathered us both. Which implies that Dad's my Dad. The "eyes" – and the "nose" – are with me there. And Mom's still your Mom. Bless her cheeks. Golly jeepers – what a hullabaloo from a simple blood test.

OLIVIA: Shush for a minute. (*Pacing and thinking.*) The most likely conclusion must be quite simple. I'm supposing that at some point both Dad and Mom were in separate relationships with other people, and we were born during that period. For some reason those relationships ended when we were very young, so we have no recollection of them. Then Mom and Dad decided to get hitched up with each other, taking us along. There's nothing extraordinary about any of that.

ABEL: The only odd part is that by coincidence, both our birthdays fell on the same date.

OLIVIA: So I guess they chose to raise us like twins.

ABEL: But we're actually step-twins.

OLIVIA: I reckon you could put it that way, Bro'.

ABEL: Which makes us pretty unique. If we'd been born on two different dates - even one day apart...

OLIVIA: Then we'd have known all along we weren't blood siblings. And we'd have been spared this crash course in relativity.

ABEL: In hindsight, the only clue we ever had was that Mom and Dad weren't married till some time after we were born. That much we were aware of.

OLIVIA: Of course, but that fact didn't mean anything on its own.

ABEL: Not till this moment. I actually thought it was kind of cool. Like Mom and Dad were rebels, refusing to submit to society's matrimonial pressures, until they made the choice honestly, and on their terms. Somehow their decision to legitimize our family after the fact seemed to strengthen their commitment to us.

OLIVIA: But in reality - knowing Mom and Dad - before their marriage they must have been waiting impatiently for society's bureaucracy to complete the outstanding paperwork left over from their previous lives, so they could become a lawful couple as quickly as possible.

ABEL: Who'd'a thunk. But here's a conundrum. If you're Mom's kid, why don't you have a different last name on your birth certificate?

OLIVIA: Mom and Dad must have done whatever was legally necessary to change my original surname to Dad's.

ABEL: They were nothing if not thorough. I wonder why they never told us.

OLIVIA: Now we can ask them that.



ABEL: And a whole lot more. This is awfully sudden. I still can't believe I have another Mother. And you have your own Dad.

OLIVIA: Me neither. But I hope our other parents are alive and well.

ABEL: Maybe we'll meet them some day. That would be exciting.

OLIVIA: We'd better verify what we've been speculating about first, before making those plans.

ABEL: The turkey's beginning to smell quite scrumptious, isn't it? That's one of the few meats my AB blood type diet condones. So there'll be second helpings for me tonight.

OLIVIA: (*Turning back to the chess game.*) Let's finish off our game before dinner. Mom's going to want to set the table soon. And in case you've forgotten, I just snuffed your queen. So you're not getting off the hook while I have the advantage. We're going to wage this Yuletide offensive to the bitter end.

*They continue to play in silence.*

ABEL: Mom always liked you best.

OLIVIA: And Dad always stuck up for you.

ABEL: Check. My Christmas tree castles have you surrounded on all sides. You're in a veritable forest of oppression. It's time to face your doom.

OLIVIA: Oh my goodness! No! Hmmm.

*Olivia makes a move, and Abel makes another.*

ABEL: Checkmate, Sis!

OLIVIA: (*Toppling her figure of Joseph.*) Down goes Saint Joseph. The world's original deputy dad. Poor unsung soul. As a freshly designated step-daughter, I'm taking his demise rather personally.

ABEL: Ho Ho Ho! Saint Nicholas rules! And the freaks shall inherit the earth. It's been quite an afternoon, hasn't it?

OLIVIA: Maybe it would have been better if I'd let you lock me in the broom closet after all, the way you used to.

ABEL: There's still time! But before I do, tell me your final drop-dead secret. And make it your best.

OLIVIA: (*Looking directly at Abel.*) I love you, Abel.

ABEL: (*Looking directly back at Olivia.*) You've always been my secret love, Olivia.

OLIVIA: My pact with Alice Wells...

ABEL: Live your dream. (*Kneeling, taking her hand.*) Make it our dream.

(*They kiss passionately across the chess board, knocking some of the pieces on the floor. After a few moments they break apart, and look at each other, amazed at what they've just done.*)

OLIVIA: Holy Christmas! Inspiration really does make marvelous music.

ABEL: Isn't life bloody awesome?

*They pick up the chess pieces from the table, and begin putting them back around the room.*

OLIVIA: (*Calling out.*) Hey Mom! Hey Dad! Come into the living room.

ABEL: Olivia and I have an announcement!

OLIVIA: Yes – It's a Christmas surprise!

ABEL: We're getting married next year!

OLIVIA: To each other!

ABEL: And then the year after...

OLIVIA: We're having a baby!

ABEL: You're going to be grandparents!

OLIVIA & ABEL: (*Together.*) Merry Christmas Mom! Merry Christmas Dad! We love you! (*They blow each other a kiss.*)

*Cut to black.*

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