

# **The Prodigals**

(a one-act religious drama)

By

Michael W. Kramer

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## Characters:

Neighbor (Narrator) (male or female)  
Father (Wise, loving, and forgiving)  
Jerome, the older son (in his 30s, reliable, logical)  
Miranda, the younger daughter (in her 20s, carefree, adventurous)  
Friend #1 (female about Miranda's age)  
Friend #2 (male or female) (can be double cast with Friend #1)

Setting: Somewhere in the present

## Synopsis:

In this modern version of the prodigal son, a neighbor serves as a narrator/commentator on the events as a father gives in to his daughter's request for her inheritance. When she returns from her promiscuous lifestyle with her money all gone, her brother becomes the unforgiving caretaker of the rest of his father's inheritance. The father waits patiently for both of his prodigals to live under grace while the neighbor thinks he should throw them both out.

Sample Dialogue from the beginning of:

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Neighbor:

I never really understood my neighbor. I mean, I knew he was being set up for a fall, a big fall. But I didn't say anything at the time. I didn't think he really needed my advice. And besides, I really think he knew it was coming, too. He seems to be able to see into the future, so he probably knew. But somehow, it never got to him. Somehow he maintained his character, his grace through it all. I was angrier than he was just watching it happen to him. Now since most of you know part of the story, at least the first part of it, we're going to just hit the highlights, or lowlights as it were, and then move on to the part you don't know. Here's part that you all know.

(Miranda dressed in the suggestive clothes of the day, holding a legal document, calls disrespectfully to her father who is off stage.)

Miranda:

Father, I need to talk to you.

(Father enters)

Father:

What is it, Miranda?

Miranda:

I've been thinking about it and, like, I don't like it.

Father:

Don't like what?

Miranda:

Your will. I mean, I want you to change it.

Father:

My will is perfectly fair. It divides everything up equally between you and Jerome. How can you not like that?

Miranda:

Like, that's not it. I'm happy with the 50-50 split.

Father:

Then what's the problem?

Miranda:

I have to wait until you die to get anything.

Father:

That's usually how it works. It's called inheritance because you inherit it when someone dies.

Miranda:

Like, what good is that? You might live for an eternity for all I know and I'll be an old lady before I inherit anything. Like, what good will that do me? I'll be too old to enjoy it. I don't like it. I want you to change your will. I want my part now while I'm young and can enjoy it.

Father:

Now? What will you do it?

Miranda:

Like buy things and travel; you know, see the world.

Father:

I can buy you anything you want and I've been around the whole world. So I can show you around wherever you want to go. Paris? Rome? The Far East?

Miranda:

Nice thought, Father, but like, I don't think so. I'm old enough to go alone. And besides, I think you'd cramp my style. I need to test my wings, like, see what I can do on my own.

Father:

How about I just give you something now, say \$20,000, and then you get the rest at the normal time, when I die.

Miranda:

20K? Like that won't even buy me the new car I want, let alone allow me to travel the world. That will never do. No, I want it all. Now. I think you owe it to me.

Neighbor:

I know. You're thinking, wasn't it two sons in the original version? You're forgetting that the story is a parable, a metaphor, an analogy. Everything is figurative. So the son was just figuratively a son. So it could have been a daughter and in this version she is a daughter whom he loved very much. And those of you who are fathers know how it goes when your daughter asks for something. It's hard to say no and so even if you didn't know the story, you would know where this was going. Miranda kept asking and begging and it didn't take long and she wore him down and he revised the will. However, in his infinite wisdom, instead of giving her all the money, he put her half of the inheritance in a trust fund so she would get something every year for the rest of her life. He knew that would be better for her. Of course, that wasn't good enough for her. She thought she knew better.

Miranda:

(As in the previous segment) Father, I need to talk to you.

Father:

What is it, Miranda?

Miranda:

Like, what were you thinking? A trust fund?

Father:

That way you'll get something every year for the rest of your life, even after I'm gone.

Miranda:

Don't you trust me? Like, I can manage money. I'm a big girl now. I don't need you taking care of me.

Father:

There are lots of temptations out there, ways to run through money. I'm just protecting you from all of that.

Miranda:

Controlling me, you mean. Like either you give me freedom to do what I want with my money or you might as well keep it yourself.

Father:

I'm not controlling you. You get to decide what to do with the money each year. You can do whatever you want with it. It's your choice.

Miranda:

Well, if it's my choice, then I choose to be able to control all of it myself. Now.

Father:

It will be better in the long run if you receive it a little at a time instead of all at once.

Miranda:

This is really all about you having power over me, isn't it? You have all the power and I have none. I want the power and I want it now.

Neighbor:

It doesn't take a genius to see where this was going either. Of course, he eventually gave in and Miranda took control of everything, all of the money, just like she wanted. She left town almost immediately without a thank you or even a goodbye. I could see that it broke his heart when she left. Oh, I suppose he could have forced her to stay. He had the power to do so. But he gave her freedom to choose and she chose poorly. Now, you probably think you know the next part of the story, but the version you're heard doesn't do justice to what really happened next. Partying and wasting money were just figurative language for what really happened. You probably imagine

plenty of alcohol and maybe even some drugs, and of course, there were those things, but that's not the whole story. Miranda became famous for her one night stands and her experimentation with "alternative lifestyles." I'd give you more details, but after all, we are in a church service. We don't want an R rating. But you get the picture. She was the life of the party spending money hand over fist, enjoying every minute of being free and out of the control of her father. Then one day something rather unexpected happened.