

## **FESTIVITIES**

### **Synopsis**

Leslie Grant, a Broadway actress, and Mark Goldenbaum, a New York lawyer, are engaged to be married. Both have children: Jonah, Mark's son by his ex-wife, is a freshman at Vassar, and Leslie's two daughters, eighteen-year-old Holly and nine-year-old Ivy, are--like her first husband, who died just a year ago--African-American. Leslie has renovated the beautiful Upper West Side brownstone that has been in her family for generations and moved back in with Mark, and the pair is eagerly and a bit nervously anticipating the arrival of the kids and their first holiday season together as a family.

Celebrating the holidays as a new family could be challenging enough, but in this group, which is half Jewish and part black, everyone has their own ideas and their own agendas. Mark's father, Abe, a veteran character actor, is kvetching because the only acting job he could get over the holidays is playing Santa Claus at a New Jersey shopping mall--and who ever heard of a Jewish Santa? Holly misses her dad and doesn't want to celebrate Christmas at all, so Jonah tries to get her to try Hanukkah or even Kwanzaa. And Ivy still believes in Santa Claus. Leslie is planning a traditional New York Christmas Eve like the ones she remembers from her childhood in this very house. When she tries to persuade a reluctant Abe to play Santa at home for Ivy, tensions mount.

The comic and touching efforts of this nontraditional family to revive old holiday traditions and make some new ones of their own form the substance of this charming family comedy, a ready-made new holiday classic for all audiences.