

Shepherds and Kings

By Karen Jones

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DEDICATION

Dedicated to the glory of God and in honor of the elders of Stevens Creek United Methodist Church who through the years have shown the light of our Lord through love, faith and dedication.

STORY OF THE PLAY

It's Christmas and city slicker Gerald King is trying to find a way to bring his family closer together. They have drifted apart due to their daily routines: Gerald with his job; Alice, her meetings; and the kids – well, they're teenagers (say no more). They have embarked on a trip to the mountains to get their very own Christmas tree. However, they get lost and have to be rescued by the Shepherds, an extended mountain family.

The Shepherds mistake them as being down on their luck and welcome them into their home and their hearts. As relationships develop, the Kings and the Shepherds examine the Christmas story and discovered a new perspective on the familiar scripture: a hidden truth that shows the Christ Child in a new light for both the Shepherds and the Kings.

30 - 40 minutes long.

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

(Cast of 11: 5 m, 6 w.)

GERALD KING: Father. Typical man. Trying to regain the spirit of Christmas.

ALICE KING: Mother. Straight forward. Speaks her mind.

JENNY KING: Teenage daughter.

JACOB KING: Teenage son.

BUFORD SHEPHERD: Father. Good-hearted mountain man. Likes to hunt.

VELMA SHEPHERD: Mother. Out-spoken but soft-hearted wife to Buford

MAISY SHEPHERD: Teenage daughter, helpful.

JAKE SHEPHERD: Teenage son, helpful.

GRANDPA RUFUS: Buford's father. Patriarch of the family.

GRANNY ESTHER: Buford's mother. Stubborn, hard-of-hearing.

AUNT TRUCIE: Granny's old-maid sister. Independent, no-nonsense type.

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SETTING

Scene 1: Outdoor scene. Trees.

Scenes 2 and 3: The Shepherds' cabin with a fireplace and simple furnishings including two rocking chairs, a table with various other chairs, and a bench situated next to the front door at SR. A small, simply-decorated Christmas tree stands in a corner.

PROPS

Axe or hatchet for Gerald
Key fob for Gerald
Smart phone for Jenny
Cut pine tree
iPod with ear buds for Jacob
Gun for Buford
Rotary dial telephone
Bible on mantel
Christmas packages for Aunt Trudy
Bib overalls in gift bag for Aunt Trudy
Quilt
Basket of food

COSTUMES

Gerald and Alice: Pants, shirts, and winter coats that are now torn and muddy
Jenny: Layered tops / holey jeans, coat
Jacob: Baggy pants and hoody
Jake, Buford and Grandpa: Flannel shirts, jeans, coats
Velma, Granny, Maisy, Aunt Trucie: Country dresses and boots; also apron for Velma, and coats for Granny and Aunt Trucie.

SOUND EFFECTS

Gunshot
Pots and pans banging

Scene 1

(AT RISE: Outdoors. Trees scattered across the stage. The KING FAMILY enters from SR with GERALD in the lead. He has a small hatchet strapped to his belt and is holding a key fob that he keeps pausing and pointing in different directions. JENNY is looking down, fiddling with her smart phone. JACOB is dragging a fresh-cut pine. He has an earbud in one ear and jiving to his tunes. ALICE, evidently annoyed, is bringing up the rear. All are cold, tired, dirty, and disheveled.)

ALICE: *(Exasperated.)* I told you this was a bad idea. But no, you had to drag us out here in the middle of nowhere to “get our own tree.” *(Makes little quote marks with her fingers.)* And now look at us -- we’re lost, cold, tired, and our clothes are half torn off by those brambles you keep leading us through. And this “magnificent tree” is half bald from dragging it clear across the state.

GERALD: We are not lost. And as for the tree, we can put the bald side against the wall. And if you would remember, I told you to wear old clothes.

ALICE: We don’t really have any “old” clothes.

JENNY: We do now.

ALICE: I don’t see why we just couldn’t put up our regular tree. No mess, no bother. And it’s even pre-lit.

GERALD: Now Alice, we decided that we were going to try to get back to the way Christmas used to be. What with my job, your committees, and the kids and their tech toys, we’re drifting apart. *(Motions to the kids. JENNY is still messing with her smart phone and JACOB is playing air guitar with the tree.)* Just look at them. They don’t even know we’re around most of the time. We need to make some changes, and what better time than Christmas.

ALICE: So this tree is supposed to do that?

GERALD: Not entirely, but it is a start. Dad used to bring me up here to get our tree. Those were some of the best memories. Hopefully, by the end of the season, we’ll be closer as a family and have our own memories.

ALICE: Memories, huh? Like the lost Donner party?

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GERALD: Told you, we are not lost. The car is right over that ridge.

ALICE: You said that three ridges ago.

JACOB: Hey, can we take a break? This tree is getting heavy and I'm getting sticky with all this gunk coming off of it.

GERALD: That's resin, son. It'll clean off.

JACOB: Are you sure? My glove won't come loose. *(Tries to shake the tree loose.)*

JENNY: *(Looks up from her phone.)* Are we anywhere close to getting out of here? I'm supposed to be meeting Gary at the mall later.

ALICE: We're trying, dear. But your father has gotten us lost.

GERALD: *(Keeps turning around, lifting the key fob up and pointing it in all directions.)* We are *not* lost.

ALICE: Jenny, honey, have you been able to get a signal yet? Maybe we can call for help.

GERALD: We *don't* need help.

JENNY: *(Annoyed.)* That would be a big fat *NO*. We are in a complete dead zone. Much like my social life is going to be if I don't get out of these mountains pretty soon.

ALICE: Gerald, I'm beginning to worry. You need to do something. It's getting dark.

GERALD: I'm trying, dear. But I think my batteries are getting low. *(HE studies the fob before lifting it and trying again.)*

ALICE: *(Panicking.)* Oh no. We **are** the Donner party.

(SFX: The sound of a gun blast comes from off stage. ALICE and JENNY give short screams as they stamp around panicked. GERALD ducks down and grabs his hatchet. JACOB tries to shield himself behind his tree.)

JENNY: *(Squeals.)* Dad, someone's shooting at us.

GERALD: Now don't panic. I'm sure it's just a hunter. We **are** in the mountains you know.

JACOB: *(Peeks from behind the tree.)* Maybe they can help us, Dad. Why don't you go see?

ALICE: Yes, Gerald. Go see.

GERALD: For the last time, we don't need help.

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(BUFORD and JAKE enter from SL. Buford is carrying a shotgun.)

BUFORD: Are you folks alright? Sure didn't mean to scare you.

GERALD: *(Gets to his feet, embarrassed. Tucks the hatchet back in his belt.)* Oh, you didn't scare us. Just startled us a bit. We weren't aware anyone was around.

JAKE: Ain't any wonder with all that racket you was a 'making.

BUFORD: That'll be enough, Jake. These folks didn't mean no harm. Reckon they got as much right to be out a 'hunting as we do.

JACOB: Actually, we're not exactly hunting. Well, we are. But it's only for a Christmas tree.

JENNY: Yeah, but now we're lost.

GERALD: We are *not* lost. *(Turns to BUFORD.)* They are exaggerating. I've got everything under control. See.

(HE demonstrates by pointing the key fob in the air and clicking it in several different directions. BUFORD and JAKE look at Gerald's little demonstration and then at each other.)

BUFORD: Jake, you best go pick up that turkey and git it back to your Ma. I'll just stay here and see if I can help these good folks. *(Hands JAKE the gun.)*

JAKE: Sure thing, Pa.

BUFORD: Tell your Ma not to expect me none too soon. This might take a while.

GERALD: Well, that's very generous of you, but...

ALICE: But nothing, Gerald. This harebrained scheme of yours has gone far enough. It will be dark soon and I don't relish the idea of tramping around in the dark. If Mr ____ ? *(She slows to a stop.)*

BUFORD: Shepherd, ma'am. Buford Shepherd. And this here is my boy, Jake.

(JAKE gives a nod in acknowledgement.)

End of Freeview

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