

# Believing in a Finley Christmas

*by*  
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### **DEDICATION**

*This play is dedicated to a great mentor and friend, my pastor, Tim Shaw. Thanks for the years of support and allowing my work to reach the stage.*

### **STORY OF THE PLAY**

Heather Finley is bringing home her fiancé, Kevin, to meet her devout Christian family. There is only one problem: Kevin is an atheist! Meanwhile, Heather's bickering grandfathers, Jeremiah and Roosevelt, are returning from a failed expedition to find Noah's Ark. After the death of their beloved wives, they sought tangible proof that God is real. Needless to say, when the Grandfathers and the rest of the family, including Mom, Dad, and underachieving brother Cameron, meet the somewhat condescending fiancé, firecrackers start exploding! It doesn't help when the pastor's wife thinks she overhears the two elderly men talking about a dead body, or their hilarious Sherpa guide is discovered hiding in their travel trunk. And what about their plan to kidnap Kevin? Experience the challenges and humor the Finley family faces this Christmas as they come together to overcome grief, reclaim their faith, and learn to act and love each other as true Christians.

**Cast of Characters**

*(6 m, 3 w, 2 flexible, extras.)*

**JEREMIAH FINLEY:** A 70-year old Pentecostal man dealing with a crisis of faith since his wife's death. He is James Finley's father.

**ROOSEVELT GRINDLE:** A 70-year old Baptist man, also dealing with a crisis of faith since his wife also passed away. He is Sarah Finley's father.

**JAMES FINLEY:** The father of the Finley clan. He is a principal at a local elementary school.

**SARAH FINLEY:** The mother of the Finley clan. She is the glue that holds the family together. She not only keeps her father and father-in-law in line, but her kids and husband. She hasn't had her whole family home for Christmas in years.

**HEATHER FINLEY:** A grad student in pharmacy. She is dating Kevin Turner. Heather has yet to introduce him to her family because he is an atheist.

**CAMERON FINLEY:** *(Could be female.)* A 22-year-old underachiever who works as a janitor at his father's school. Has always lived in his sister Heather's shadow.

**DR. KEVIN TURNER:** Heather's boyfriend/fiancé. A college professor who is a devout atheist.

**ROLAND:** A Turkish Sherpa who is hired by Roosevelt and Jeremiah to carry their supplies up Mount Ararat in seeking Noah's Ark.

**MARCIA BRIMMER:** Sarah Finley's best friend and the pastor's wife. *(May double as waitress.)*

**PASTOR HENRY BRIMMER:** James and Sarah's pastor and Marcia's husband. *(May double as the waiter.)*

**WAITER / WAITRESS:** A sarcastic server who is tired of waiting on people.

**SETTING:** Current day.

## **STAGE SET**

The main set is the Finley home in Maine. The living room has a front door at USR, a sofa CS, a large dining room table and chairs DSL. Other living room furniture and accessories, including a lamp which is knocked over, are attractively arranged. USL is a stairwell going up to the second floor or down to the basement. At SL is a doorway leading to the kitchen.

Several other simple sets can be suggested more than realized. They include:

**The Mount Ararat base camp:** A tent surrounded by fake boulders and snow. The DS side of the tent is open facing the audience. Since it is night, lanterns provide lighting.

**A fancy restaurant in New Jersey:** Three tables are in a triangular formation.

**Roosevelt's basement bedroom:** A large bed is CS. The travel trunk from the Mount Ararat trip will be placed in a DS corner.

**A park bench next to the church's nativity scene:** The Grandfather, James, Cameron and Roland will portray the wise men, shepherds, and a sheep. The other nativity figures are wooden or plastic.

## **SYNOPSIS OF SCENES**

**Scene 1:** Mount Ararat base camp one night shortly before Christmas.

**Scene 2:** A fancy restaurant in New Jersey.

**Scene 3:** The next evening at the Finley home in Maine.

**Scene 4:** The next morning at the Finley home.

**Scene 5:** That evening at dinner at home.

### **Act II**

**Scene 1:** Later that night in Roosevelt's bedroom.

**Scene 2:** The next afternoon in the living room.

**Scene 3:** That night in the dark living room.

**Scene 4:** The next morning, Christmas Eve day.

**Scene 5:** That night, Christmas Eve, a park bench next to the church nativity scene.

**ACT I**  
**Scene 1**

*(AT RISE: Inside a tent at the base camp. It is night. Lanterns provide lighting. JEREMIAH FINLEY and ROOSEVELT GRINDLE are looking over maps and a large piece of frozen wood. ROLAND is cutting a hole in the top of the tent. At the table is a mannequin, supposedly Phillip, their geologist and guide. "He" is frozen and is holding a map. The THREE OTHER MEN are oblivious.)*

**ROOSEVELT:** I am positive that this here is gopher wood.

**JEREMIAH:** And may I ask how does a former high school football coach know anything about wood?

**ROOSEVELT:** Simple, Noah was a Baptist, and any good Baptist would have used gopher wood.

**JEREMIAH:** Oh, so because you're Baptist it makes you an expert in wood?

**ROOSEVELT:** I wouldn't have used the word expert because I am humble, but since you said it and I didn't.

**ROLAND:** Excuse me, American seniors, but do you really think a gopher can be made out of wood?

**JEREMIAH:** Seniors?

**ROOSEVELT:** Roland, what are you doing to our tent!

**ROLAND:** Installing a window in the roof for you.

**ROOSEVELT:** A window in the roof?

**ROLAND:** They are all the rage back in my village, Mr. Grindle. A window in the roof so you can watch the stars at night or glimpse the sun as it rises right from the comfort of your bed. Remarkable.

**JEREMIAH:** They're called skylights, Roland. And I would appreciate it if you left the tent as the manufacturers intended. We are thousands of miles up a mountain battling high winds, frigid temps, and the last thing we want is a hole in our tent!

*(FX: SNOW comes flying into the now cutout hole.)*

**ROOSEVELT:** Brrruuu!

**JEREMIAH:** Oh, that's really refreshing. Right down my neck.

**ROLAND:** I am going to get some firewood. It's kind of chilly in here. Or is it just me?

**ROOSEVELT:** That would be helpful.

**JEREMIAH:** Now, I am new to this region of the world, however, I did climb up here with enough gear to kill a mountain goat and his two cousins, and I did not carry any firewood. And I know Roosevelt didn't carry any up because his bones are frail.

**ROOSEVELT:** Frail? You better take that back, you pew jumper, before I test this timber's density on your forehead!

**JEREMIAH:** All you carried up was that magnifying glass and your extra set of teeth ...oh, and your Depends.

**ROOSEVELT:** Well, you never know when nature will call. And I don't see too many rest areas on any of those peaks out there.

**ROLAND:** Mr. Finley and Mr. Grindle, let's be civil please. All this arguing is eating up the air up here. There is a short supply.

**JEREMIAH:** My point is where are you going to find this firewood? We didn't carry any up and I didn't see any vegetation on the climb.

**ROLAND:** Mr. Finley, you're a funny man. There are no vegetables growing at these altitudes. Besides, carrots or broccoli are both very hard to ignite. I know, I have tried. They don't burn well.

**ROOSEVELT:** Blessed are the light-minded.

*(ROLAND leans in to talk to "Phillip." He puts his hand on the mannequin's shoulder.)*

**ROLAND:** Boss, these two guys who hired us think vegetables grow up here. Heh! Heh! Wow, boss, you feel a tad chilly! Don't worry, keep studying the map. Roland will get you warm.

## **End of Freeview**

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