

EMERGENCY CHRISTMAS

By Craig Howard

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EMERGENCY CHRISTMAS

-2-

DEDICATION

Dedicated to the many hard-working "actors" and "stage crew" at the Brake Church of the Brethren, Dorcas, West Virginia.

The Playwright, Craig A. Howard

STORY OF THE PLAY

It is Christmas Eve and Randy and Karen Rogers are preparing for their first Christmas at home with their infant son and the arrival of their families. It will be baby Devon's first Christmas, but it will not be the Christmas his parents had planned for him. Not only is this special day shaping up to be filled with bickering and hostility, but it will also hold an unexpected trip to the hospital. But who said Christ can't bring Christmas to an emergency room? Offset with the humor of a couple of goofy neighbors from the hills and the realization that hard times come in all kinds of packages, this family is led to their first Christ-centered Christmas in the midst of trial.

EMERGENCY CHRISTMAS

-3-

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(5 M, 5 W, 3 Flexible, 5 Children)

KAREN ROGERS: Young wife and mother who loves her family but doesn't agree with her husband's religious views.

RANDY ROGERS: Young husband and father; a new Christian who is sometimes too zealous in sharing his faith which sometimes leads to conflict with his wife.

ROYCE FINK: Next door neighbor, backwoods hillbilly and bit of a loony tune.

FRED FINK: Royce's brother, just like him.

MELISSA: Randy's widowed mother; very active in her church but tends to be a bit of a snob and hypocrite.

DELMAS: Karen's father, a retired coal miner who is overbearing, opinionated and self-centered.

SARA: Karen's mother, a quiet and loving wife and mother who is the stabilizer for Delmas and the glue that holds her family together.

JENNY: Karen's younger sister, a self-centered, spoiled teenager.

NURSE: Small part; can be played by a man or woman.

DR. MARTIN: Small part; can be played by a man or woman.

MARY: Homeless teenager they meet in the hospital.

PASTOR DAVE: Karen and Randy's pastor; a wise and understanding man.

RICK: Pastor's assistant, small part for a man or woman who can lead the young carolers.

CHILDREN: 1 to 5 carolers, minor parts.

EMERGENCY CHRISTMAS

-4-

PLAYING TIME: 45 minutes.

PROPS

Coats for all except doctor/nurse
Christmas tree lights
Book for Karen
Baby doll in blanket
Suitcases, coats for Melissa, Delmas, Sara and Jenny
Gum - Jenny
Blanket for baby
Wheelchair - Royce/Fred
Tissue for Karen
Clipboard - Nurse
Food/coffee - Delmas (As from vending machines)
Watch for doctor

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

Scene 1: Karen and Randy's living room, Christmas Eve.
Scene 2: Emergency room waiting area, later that evening.

SOUND EFFECTS

(A special SFX tape is available for this play. Call 1-800-95-CHURCH to order one with your cast set.)

Baby crying offstage, doorbell, baby crying, loud sneeze followed by baby cries, telephone rings, offstage crash.

EMERGENCY CHRISTMAS

-5-

SCENE 1

(AT RISE: It's Christmas Eve at Karen and Randy's home. RANDY is sitting on the sofa, fixing a strand of tree lights as KAREN enters.)

KAREN: *(Plops down on couch next to RANDY.)* Finally, I didn't think that baby was ever going to get to sleep. I don't know what has gotten into him the past couple of nights, but sleep is the last thing he has been interested in.

RANDY: That's one of the things babies do best.

KAREN: What, be contrary?

RANDY: No, sleep when you are awake and want to be awake when you are asleep.

KAREN: That's what I said, be contrary.

RANDY: *(Little laugh.)* I guess you're right. Speaking of contrary, when is your dad supposed to get here.

KAREN: *(In a threatening tone.)* Randy, don't start. Dad and Devon are enough to deal with without you.

RANDY: *(Drops lights, puts arm around KAREN.)* All right, you have my word, I will be on my best behavior while our parents are here. This is probably going to be a real interesting Christmas, anyway. My mom and your dad haven't had to be in the same room with one another since our wedding. It makes me wonder if this is such a good idea.

KAREN: This is Devon's first Christmas, and we are not going to be dragging him around in the cold just so we can keep those two apart. Sometimes I wonder which one is the bigger baby, Devon or our parents.

RANDY: Well, maybe your mom will have a calming effect on everyone. I know all she wants to do is spend time with her grandson, and at least once a year she works up the nerve to tell your dad to pipe down.

KAREN: Yeah, but all Dad does is laugh real loud and go on.

RANDY: Well, let's pray this time it will be different. After all, it's Christmas. *(Sound of BABY CRYING offstage.)*

EMERGENCY CHRISTMAS

-6-

KAREN: *(Big sigh.)* Oh no, what is the matter with that child? Why won't he go to sleep?

RANDY: I'll check on him. You relax for a couple of minutes. *(RANDY exits. KAREN grabs a book, lies down on the couch and starts reading.)*

KAREN: This is nice. I hope he feels the same way tonight about 2 a.m.

(After a beat RANDY enters with BABY.)

RANDY: I don't know what's wrong - his diaper is clean and he doesn't want a bottle. He is just fussy.

KAREN: Here, give him to me. Our only hope of some sleep tonight could be the rocking chair. *(Takes BABY and exits.)*

(DOORBELL rings. RANDY goes to answer door.)

RANDY: Royce, Fred, come on in. Glad to see you, neighbors. *(Enter ROYCE and FRED.)*

FRED: Hi Randy, and Merry ...

ROYCE: Christmas!

RANDY: Let me warn ... I mean, tell Karen you are here. *(Goes to hallway just as KAREN enters without the baby.)*

KAREN: Hi guys, what's up?

FRED: We were just on our way out ...

ROYCE: ... when we heard the baby cry. We thought he ...

FRED: ... might have an upset stomach.

RANDY: They heard Devon crying as they were leaving to go out and thought they would stop by to see if he was all right.

KAREN: Oh he's fine, just a little fussy, but thanks for being so concerned.

FRED: If his stomach is upset ...

ROYCE: ... we know a cure.

FRED: Honey, milk ...

ROYCE: ... and bourbon!

RANDY and KAREN: What!?

End of Freeview

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