

Help! I'm Stuck in a Church Christmas Play!

*By Andrew M. Frodahl
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DEDICATION

To every church drama team putting in the long hours and dedicating their time and effort into producing a Christmas show for Jesus. Always keep Him in the spotlight and all the work will bear fruit.

STORY OF THE PLAY

Karen Silver was one of the most sought-after actresses on Broadway. Her star was rising even as she was labeled a self-entitled, demanding, and difficult actress. But something dreadful happened at the opening of her new Broadway play. The director fires Karen on the spot, telling her, "You'll never work in this town again!"

That's when Karen has a chance encounter with a mysterious man who offers her an opportunity to regain her dignity. She only needs to take a role in a church Christmas play in Virginia.

Despite her adamant refusal, Karen Silver miraculously finds herself on the set of the most clichéd church Christmas play ever. But she doesn't know anything about the play! She is trapped without lines or blocking, and she can't escape until she finishes it.

Amid confusion and unexpected action, things certainly don't go as scripted, but as the church cast ultimately delivers a message of kindness and love, lives are changed, especially Karen's.

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

(5 m, 5 w, 3 flexible)

KAREN SILVER: *(Female)* A once successful Broadway actress. She plays Carol in the Rock Springs Church Christmas play.

BOOTLESS BIRKETT: *(Flex)* A messenger from God who becomes Karen's new acting agent, even though Karen didn't want his/her help.

LUKE SHEPHERD: *(Male)* Is the husband of Carol in the play.

ALICE BUNDY: *(Female)* 79 years old; is married to Preston who plays her husband on stage.

PRESTON BUNDY: *(Male)* 85 years old; is married to Alice who plays his wife on stage.

MARCIE SPELLING: *(Female)* The director of the play.

RUTH KLUTCH: *(Female)* The stage manager of the play.

SPENCER KING: *(Flex)* Plays the role of the ticket agent for Evergreen Airlines.

DAKOTA BULLIT: *(Flex)* Plays the role of the security guard for Evergreen Airlines. Real name is Casey.

MARIANNE CARPENTER: *(Female)* Plays the role of the very pregnant wife of Joey Carpenter. She is waiting for Joey's flight to come back so they can spend Christmas together.

JOEY CARPENTER: *(Male)* Plays the role of a woodworker married to Marianne. He is trying to get home to Portland, Maine for Christmas.

BILLY AUGUSTUS: *(Male)* Plays Billy the baggage guy in the play.

TOMMY EDISON: *(Male)* The young spotlight operator.

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SET BREAKDOWN

Scene 1 – Takes place in Central Park, New York City. A park bench is DSC. Optional streetlamp, trash can, and trees.

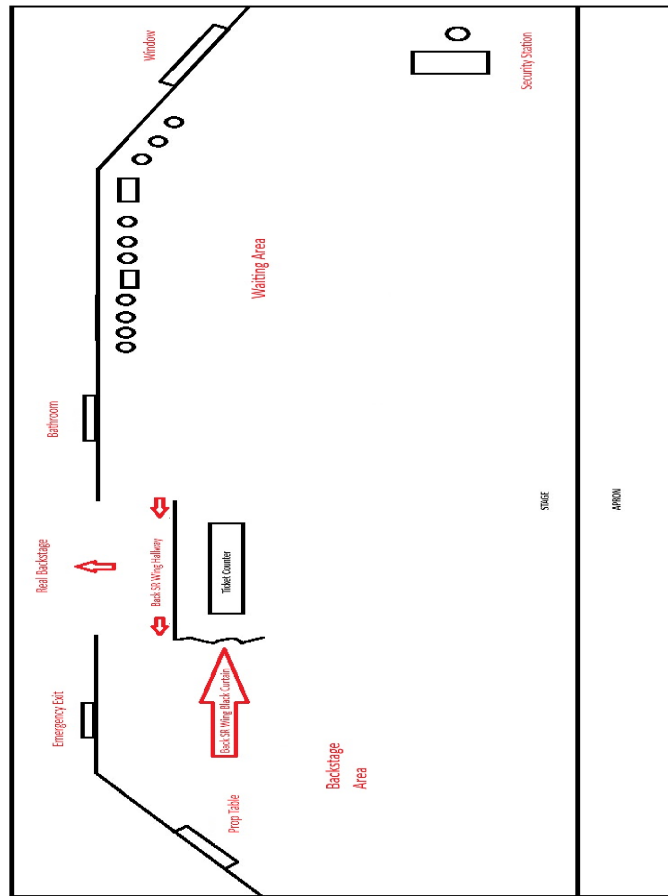
Scenes 2,3,4,5 – Take place on the church stage of Rock Springs Church. Far SR serves as the backstage area of the play. An emergency door is USR and a prop table DSR. You may add stools/chairs, costume racks in the backstage area. Painting the back wall black would help the area more closely resemble a theatre backstage. CS is a ticket counter for Evergreen Airlines. The wall behind the counter may be painted with flight information. US of the ticket counter wall is an exit/entry hallway for the actors. The ticket counter serves as a boundary line between onstage and backstage. A black wing curtain hangs off the ticket counter wall SR side dividing the backstage area with onstage airport set. This serves as the SR backstage wing curtain. UC is a door for the bathroom. SL is the waiting area with about 8-10 chairs with small tables to hold magazines and coffee cups. Far USL is a window facing the tarmac. The window can either open UP or swing outward allowing Ruth to peek inside. DSL is the security station.

Please see the end of the script for props list and costume suggestions.

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SET SKETCH



SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

- Scene 1: Central Park – New York City
- Scene 2: Rock Springs Church – Airport Stage
- Scene 3: Rock Springs Church - Backstage
- Scene 4: Rock Springs Church – Airport Stage/Backstage
- Scene 5: Rock Springs Church – Stage Apron – Curtain Call

Scene 1

(AT RISE: A park bench in Central Park, New York City. Nighttime. KAREN SILVER is walking towards a park bench, pulling a rolling luggage bag and on her phone. BOOTLESS BIRKETT is sleeping on the bench covered in newspapers. His feet are sticking out, no shoes, just hole-filled socks.)

KAREN: *(On phone.)* What do you mean it's over? Harley, we've been together since I graduated from Tisch School of the Arts nearly twenty years ago. You were amazed by my portrayal of Honey in Edward Albee's, "Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf." You said I was spellbinding, and I didn't find my light, the lights found me! Remember? You signed me to a contract on the spot! *(Beat.)* So, one mishap and the agency is dropping me just like that? Is it my age? I'll dye my hair. Harley, I'll get the neck lifted! Is it the spare tire? I'll do more cardio. Whatever it takes! Please, Harley, I beg you, I need the work. It's my life! The stage is my home – I've lost everything! I was kicked out of my apartment this afternoon – the rent was overdue. And now, I'm wandering around Central Park, like a homeless woman. And it's nearly Christmas, oh, this city can be so unforgiving.

BOOTLESS: *(Waking.)* Lady, can you keep it down? Some of us actually live here!

KAREN: *(Doesn't see or hear BOOTLESS. Still on PHONE.)* You owe me a second chance! Harley! I'm Karen Silver and you're Harley Gold. Remember? We're the dynamic duo – Silver & Gold! ...Don't hang up. I was made for that part, and you know it! ...Nothing you can do? You're my agent; it's your job! ...What do you mean, not anymore? ...Banned from the theatre district? For life? For one incident on stage? I was framed! Poisoned, most likely by that twenty-something understudy, Bailey Gable. She was envious of my talent from the start... Oh, I'm sorry. You have something more important to do than talk to the very star that made you a household name? Well, you go back to your dinner party. If you think this is the last the stage will see of Karen Silver, you're mistaken!

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KAREN: *(Cont'd.)* You will regret abandoning me... Merry Christmas? Oh, fade to black, Harley Gold. When you wake up in the morning and hear on the news that the famed actress Karen Silver was found frozen to death in Central Park, you'll be to blame!

(KAREN hangs up and throws her phone into the woods. She sits down on the bench next to BOOTLESS' feet.)

KAREN: *(Cont'd. Crying.)* My life is over! I've lost everything. Opportunity will never knock again.

(BOOTLESS knocks on the bench with his fist three times. KAREN looks up.)

KAREN: *(Cont'd.)* Is someone there?

BOOTLESS: Yeah, opportunity.

KAREN: *(Jumps to her feet and hides behind her bag of luggage.)* AHHHHH!!! I have a taser and I've also been trained in stage combat.

BOOTLESS: Will you *please* stop screaming? People are trying to sleep around here.

KAREN: If it's money you want, I assure you, I have little. I know my attire is that of a high fashioned New Yorker with impeccable taste, but I recently lost just about everything.

BOOTLESS: *(Rises.)* I'm not a thief. Nor a killer. My name is Bootless Birkett. Pleasure to meet you, Karen Silver.

KAREN: How do you know my name?

BOOTLESS: *(Grabs the newspaper he was using as a blanket.)* Well, for one thing, I heard you screaming into your phone, but, you *are* pretty famous. You're on the front page of the *Times*. *(Reads from newspaper.)* Broadway star, Karen Silver, loses her cookies *(Makes an ugly face and shakes his head.)* all over the patrons sitting in the front row on the opening night performance of "A Streetcar Named Unwanted."

(KAREN snatches the paper from BOOTLESS.)

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KAREN: It's a terrible lie and I was poisoned. A conspiracy, I tell you! I think someone laced my Glacier Water. And I think I know who: that Bailey Gable!

BOOTLESS: Why don't you take a seat here in my office and relax for a minute?

KAREN: Office? *(Points.)* Is that pigeon...pooh?

BOOTLESS: *(Takes his gloved hand and wipes the pigeon debris from the seat.)* There. All better now. Please, sit. Sit.

(KAREN reluctantly sits on the edge of the park bench. BOOTLESS sits down next to her.)

BOOTLESS: You may not realize it, but you are about to be blessed.

KAREN: Blessed? I've been kicked off the stage, thrown out of my luxurious apartment on 6th Avenue and I have about enough change to buy a cheap coffee. And to top it all off, I'm in the middle of the woods at night, freezing to death, and talking to a homeless man with no shoes. And he thinks a park bench is his office.

BOOTLESS: Who says an office has to be in a building? Besides, who are you to judge me, you're homeless! Does that somehow make you less valuable because you don't have a roof over your head? Who needs a roof when you have a view like this! *(Points to the sky and gazes at the stars.)* Isn't God amazing?! He knows each star by name. And there's a lot of them.

KAREN: I didn't mean to insult you. But, as far as God goes, I've had little use for Him. He seems to enjoy watching me suffer.

BOOTLESS: He doesn't enjoy it. Far from it.

KAREN: You act like you know Him.

BOOTLESS: I do.

KAREN: No, I mean like *personally* know Him.

BOOTLESS: I do. He's my boss.

KAREN: Okay, I think I'm going to find a vacant bench somewhere else.

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BOOTLESS: The park at night can be dangerous. Your best bet is to stay here. Besides, if you leave, you will miss out on the opportunity of a lifetime.

KAREN: I'm going to go see if the shelters on the West Side have any vacancies. *(Gets to her feet and grabs her luggage.)*

BOOTLESS: Wait, you need an agent, right?

KAREN: You were eavesdropping on my private conversation?

BOOTLESS: Well, you were having it in my office. I just so happen to be a talent agent.

KAREN: *(Looks BOOTLESS up and down and frowns.)* Of all the crazy things that have happened to me today, that statement takes the cake.

BOOTLESS: No, it's true. Here's my card.

(BOOTLESS pulls a card out from his tattered suit and hands it to KAREN, who reads it.)

KAREN: *(Reading.)* Bootless Birkett, talent agent for Jacob's Ladder Talent Agency.

BOOTLESS: There's no better ladder to climb than one built by God Himself!

KAREN: You want me to believe you're an actual agent?

BOOTLESS: We all must choose what we believe in, Karen. But I promise you, I have better contacts and connections than your previous agent, Harley Gold.

KAREN: How do you know he was my agent?

BOOTLESS: I know a lot about you, Karen. Now push your pride aside and listen to me. If you want to get back on the stage, I have the perfect gig for you. A lead role. And it starts immediately.

KAREN: *(Sits back down on the bench.)* The lead?

BOOTLESS: Yes, and it's a new work.

KAREN: Is it on Broadway?

BOOTLESS: It's a bit off.

KAREN: How far off? *(Beat.)* How far OFF?

BOOTLESS: Richmond, Virginia.

KAREN: RICHMOND!

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BOOTLESS: They have a vibrant theatre district.

KAREN: I'm not doing a play in Richmond! *(Beat.)* Which theatre is it?

BOOTLESS: Rock Springs Church.

KAREN: A church?

BOOTLESS: Yes, one with an emerging drama ministry.

KAREN: NO! I'd rather freeze to death.

BOOTLESS: They are willing to pay for someone of your pedigree.

KAREN: *(Beat.)* How much?

BOOTLESS: Fifty dollars a performance.

KAREN: This has got to be some kind of joke. Fifty dollars?!

BOOTLESS: Generous I know, but they are also willing to provide you with room and board and all travel expenses to get you there.

KAREN: I'm a member of the Actors' Equity. These conditions are subpar at best.

BOOTLESS: To be called an actor, don't you have to, ya know, act?

KAREN: I don't care for your attitude, Mr. Brisket.

BOOTLESS: It's Birkett.

KAREN: A church Christmas play? You realize how demeaning such a proposal is to me? To someone with my skill set? I've been trained at the prestigious Tisch School of the Arts. Church Christmas plays are the most corny, stereotypical, trite pieces of overused clichés and unimaginative plots. No doubt there will be some sort of pregnant woman about to give birth, with no room for her at some inn nestled in a small New England town, and a couple of thieves scheming to rob her, and somehow there will be a missing nativity set and a detective gets hired to find it. But by the end, everyone comes together in a tidy little package when the pregnant woman gives birth to a cabbage patch doll. They all become overwhelmed with the holiday spirit where everyone sings "Away in a Manger" in a key not found on any musical scale! Oh, and church actors, always break the fourth wall! So unprofessional. A pet peeve of mine.

End of Freeview

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