

A Comfort Falls Christmas

by
Dave Tippett

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DEDICATION

I want to thank my wife, Jill, for her continuing encouragement (and editorial skills), dedication, and love. God has truly blessed me with a spouse who willingly puts up with the drama-king in me!

I also want to thank Pastor Thom Sneed who worked closely with me in developing this project, and then utilized his outstanding directing skills to bring it to life on stage.

STORY OF PLAY

This dramatic comedy tells the story of a Christmas in 1938 in the small town of Comfort Falls--population 603. The cream of society is getting ready for their out-of-doors holiday extravaganza at the town bandstand -- until they find out that the local church is planning a "competing" program, their annual Christmas Eve pageant, also at the bandstand on the same night! The society set, lead by the Widow Jeffries, and the church drama troupe, defended by her long-suffering son-in-law Mayor Hoshpepper, are joined by a hilarious group of eccentric townspeople, including a barbershop quartet, all trying to gain the upper hand. In the midst of it all, a young boy, his friend, and the church's pastor help both sides sort through the melee and rediscover the heart of Christmas.

CAST OF CHARACTERS
(11 m, 10 w, extras)

NARRATOR: Older man, dressed in suit and tie.
MRS. JEFFRIES: Society woman and widow. Mayor's mother-in-law, older woman, always nicely dressed.
MAYOR: 30s, continually fights with his mother-in-law.
SADIE: 30s, the Mayor's wife.
ADA: A hard-working lady, 40s, dressed in overalls.
EDNA: A friend of Ada's, just like her.
JAKE: Older man, dressed like shopkeeper.
BILLY: Teen, dressed plainly.
SAM: Older man, owner of barbershop.
CHESTER: Barber. Sam's brother, older man.
WILL: Barber. Sam's other brother, older man.
EARL: Barber. Sam's other, other brother, older man.
PASTOR: 20s, usually has a old, worn suit on.
MARGARET: 20s, dressed as garage mechanic, complete with grease marks and dirty fingernails.
BERNICE: 30s, church's drama and choir director.
WALTER: Older man, church member.
CHOIR MEMBERS: 5-6 men and women.
FLORENCE: Older woman, a socialite.
HELEN: Mid-aged woman, actress.
SARAH: Another mid-aged woman, actress.
MR. TOLIVER: 40s, Billy's father.
OLD LADY STICKLES: Older woman, townspeople.
TOWNSPEOPLE: 3-4 as audience in last scene.

PERFORMANCE TIME: *Approximately 1 hour, 20 minutes.*

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SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

ACT I

Scene 1: Jake's General Store.
Scene 2: Seeger's Barber Shop.
Scene 3: Smitty's Garage.
Scene 4: Bandstand.

ACT II

Scene 1: In the park.
Scene 2: What could have been.
Scene 3: Bandstand.
Scene 4: Mayor's house, then church, evening of Dec. 23rd.
Scene 5: Smitty's Garage.
Scene 6: Bandstand.
Scene 7: Everyone has a part to play.
Scene 8: Bandstand on Christmas Eve.

PROPS

General store items	Scripts
Chess pieces and board	Over-sized manger
Bird cage/stuffed doves	Shepherd staffs
Towels/ shaving cream	Newspaper
Boxes	Clipboards
Old tarp	Handkerchief for Bernice
2 wooden ladders	Note from Billy
Garlands of holly	2 permits

PRODUCTION NOTES FROM THE PLAYWRIGHT

In our original production, a dinner theatre format, we used teens to wait tables and asked audience members/diners to tip them, with all proceeds going to support a teen mission trip. Our church hired a local swing band to not only play during dinner, but to also be a part of the play itself. If you decide to use this option, or if you want to have your own talent form a band and play period music, please follow the WITH BAND notes. If, however, you do not wish to include a band, I have also denoted WITHOUT BAND options at specific parts of the script.

NOTE: Set description and costume notes at end of script.

ACT I
Scene 1

WITH BAND:

(AT RISE: We are introduced to the band, which plays a few numbers. As band exits, NARRATOR enters and stands DSC.)

NARRATOR: Now THAT music brings back some memories.
Memories of a different time.

WITHOUT BAND:

(AT RISE: NARRATOR enters and stands DSC.)

NARRATOR: I'd like, if you'll let me, to take you back in time.

NARRATOR: A time at the end of what we called the Great Depression. Some say it was better times. Some say worse. I'll stick with better. Or they were getting better then, that's for sure. Let's take a step back to those times ... specifically, December, 1938. It was a typically mild winter in Missouri. And there it is. *(LIGHTS come up on entire set.)* The town. My town. Oh, it's not much more than some municipal buildings, a general store, barbershop, gas station, church, and this here bandstand ... all held together by a couple of stop signs and patrolled at night by a mangy dog named 'Tater. Yep, that's it. Comfort Falls. Population 603. Oops. I'm sorry, 609 *(Aside.)* I forgot. 'Tater just had a new litter of pups. Welcome! Now, 1938 was the "light at the end of the tunnel" part of the Great Depression. And in the case of Comfort Falls, that light in the tunnel ended up being on the front of a hypothetical runaway train, hurdling down the track towards Christmas Eve.

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NARRATOR: *(Continued.)* A train filled with a collection of eccentric townfolk. All good, down-to-earth people. Well ... *some* are closer down to the earth than others, and some are, well, out in orbit, and some nuttier than fruitcakes ... but, well, good folks at heart. Now, let me introduce you to some of the inhabitants of this here 'burg.

(NARRATOR walks SR where LIGHTS come up on the general store. We see EDNA and ADA playing chess on a barrel, DSR. MAYOR, SADIE and MRS. JEFFRIES are standing at the counter, attended by JAKE. All the characters are frozen in various poses.)

NARRATOR: This is Jake's General Store. That's Mayor Harrison Hoshpepper, his wife Sadie, and Sadie's mother, the widow Jeffries. Jake, the store owner, is there behind the counter. Let's drop in and see what's goin' on.

(At this point, EVERYONE "comes to life." NARRATOR exits.)

MRS. J: *(Rummaging through some Christmas decorations.)* Sadie, I am telling you ONCE more that if we cannot find proper Christmas decorations for that cracker box of a house you force me to live in I'll just have to ... have to

MAYOR: *(With a hopeful and sarcastic tone.)* Move out?? And then jump on some steamship, traveling the seven seas, making all of mankind as miserable as possible??

ADA: *(To EDNA. Moving a chess piece.)* Check!

SADIE: Harrison! Mother, I'm sorry –

MRS. J: *(Ignoring SADIE, to MAYOR.)* Oh, wouldn't you like me to move out. *(MAYOR nods vigorously.)* Well, so sorry, Harrison, my dear. My duties as mother to my daughter here - no matter whom she married in a moment of a total breakdown of mental health - are never done. As long as my Sadie needs me to help around the house and keep you in line, I'm there for the duration. *(Smiles insincerely at HIM and turns away.)* Mister Mayor.

End of Freeview

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