

A TREE-MENDOUS CHRISTMAS

by Michael Vigilant



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From the pine to the divine in three scenes

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“For there is hope for a tree, if it be cut down, that it will sprout again,
and that the tender branch thereof will not cease.” Job 14:7

SYNOPSIS: Young Katie is sent to Uncle Ted’s Christmas Tree Lot to pick out a special tree for the Children’s Village, where she lives. The rich and comically self-centered Mrs. Willis B. Snobbingham is at the same lot at the same time to pick out the most beautiful tree for her holiday country club gala. Katie and Mrs. Snobbingham want the same tree—and this particular Imperial Pine literally has an opinion as to where he wants to go! After Katie pulls a fast little trick to get her way, beliefs collide and lessons are learned on the way to a spectacular finish that gets to the root of what makes Christmas so special.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(3 female, 1 male, 6 either; extras)

TREE 1 (m/f) Looking for a home where he’ll be
dressed in lots of lights and tons of tinsel.
(13 lines)

TREE 2 (m/f) Looking for a home with no pets.
(12 lines)

IMPERIAL PINE (m/f) A beautiful tree with lots of growing up
to do. *(80 lines)*

KATIE (f) A preteen future tree surgeon who knows
the real meaning of Christmas. Only
Katie can hear the trees talk. *(94 lines)*

MRS. DAVIS (f) The kindly supervisor of the
Snobbingham County Children’s Village.
(40 lines)

MRS. SNOBBINGHAM (f) A modern-day Scrooge. *(25 lines)*

UNCLE TED (m) Owner of Uncle Ted’s Christmas Tree
Lot. A good guy. *(31 lines)*

KID 1 (m/f) *(10 lines)*

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KID 2 (m/f)(8 lines)

KID 3 (m/f)(8 lines)

EXTRAS:

Shoppers at Uncle Ted's Christmas Tree Lot. Additional children may be used for the kids from the Snobbingham County Children's Village.

PRODUCTION NOTES

SET: The action takes place in two locations: Uncle Ted's Christmas Tree Lot (scene 1) and the Snobbingham County Children's Village (scenes 2 and 3). You may divide the stage in two, or stagehands may transform the tree lot into the Children's Village. For scene 1, you will need a sign saying, "Uncle Ted's Tree Lot," additional trees (artificial) on the lot, and (optional) Christmas tree lights and snow piles. For scenes 2 and 3, you will need some simple furniture for the Children's Village (couch, chair, and coffee table).

COSTUMES

TREE 1, 2, and IMPERIAL PINE: Green Christmas tree dress that widens toward the hem. Arms are free. Angles are layered down the Imperial Pine, with Velcro attached to the point (\\\\\\\\; for attaching the ornaments). Costumes should include a green pointed hat for Imperial Pine (like a party hat), with a Christmas angel attached to the point at the top. Brown boots for footwear. Imperial Pine is taller, wider and grander than the other two trees. One tree is short and stocky and the other can hide one arm in the tree outfit.

MRS. SNOBBINGHAM—Fur coat, fur hat, designer boots, fancy jewelry, and handbag. She needs to look obnoxiously rich. She'll need a fancy outfit for the visit to Uncle Ted's and a second fancy outfit for the following day at the Children's Village.

KATIE and MRS. DAVIS—Casual winter wear, such as a coat, scarf, knit hat, winter boots, and gloves. Any extras actors functioning as tree shoppers may wear similar attire. For the Children's Village scene, Katie and Mrs. Davis may wear sweaters and slacks/jeans.

UNCLE TED—Baseball cap, workman's style coat, flannel shirt, blue jeans, and work boots.

KID 1, 2, & 3—Pajamas. Casual clothes.

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MUSIC

“O Christmas Tree,” “Deck the Halls,” and “Silent Night.” (*Sheet music is not included.*)

SOUND EFFECTS

- ☐ doorbell
- ☐ pounding on door
- ☐ sounds of wood cracking/roots moving through floor into basement.
(For this sound, the actor stomps floor and grinds each foot as roots/root sounds move through the floor.)

PROPS

- ☐ reserved signs and price tags (Trees)
- ☐ marker (Uncle Ted)
- ☐ homemade Christmas ornaments (including a cardboard angel)
- ☐ strings of popcorn.

SCRIPTURE

All Scripture is based on the King James Version.

SCENE 1

AT START: *The time is the present. The place is Uncle Ted's Christmas Tree Lot. "O Christmas Tree" plays in the background. TREES 1, 2, and 3 are at Center Stage. In the middle, with a "Reserved" sign attached, is IMPERIAL PINE. IMPERIAL PINE is the most beautiful tree on the lot. The IMPERIAL PINE is flanked on each side by TREE 1 and TREE 2. Both have imperfections. CUSTOMERS dressed in winter wear are milling about. Music ends as dialogue begins.*

TREE 1: Whoa! Look at all of these people. What a turnout!

TREE 2: Well, it's the opening day of Uncle Ted's Christmas Tree Lot. Everyone knows that he imports the finest trees in the county. After all, look at us!

TREE 1: Oh, we are a couple of specimens, aren't we?

TREE 2: Hey, who do you think will buy you?

TREE 1: Oh, I hope to go to a nice family with a bunch of kids. I want them to dress me up with tons of tinsel, lots of lights, and plenty of candy canes. I look really good in candy canes! And you?

TREE 2: Any place where they don't have pets. I don't want cats pawing at my ornaments or dogs mistaking me for a fire hydrant. Know what I mean?

TREE 1: I hear you, pal.

TREE 2: Anyway, I'm sure we'll both go somewhere nice.

IMPERIAL PINE: Ha! Gimme a break.

TREE 1: Oh, his majesty speaks!

TREE 2: I wonder what Mr. Imperial Pine has to say. The world hangs upon each word you speak, your highness.

IMPERIAL PINE: *(To TREE 1, mockingly.)* A nice place with kids. *(To TREE 2.)* Any place where they don't have pets. Sheesh! How ambitious.

TREE 2: Well, where do you think you're going?

IMPERIAL PINE: As you can see, I've been reserved.

TREE 1: Reserved? Reserved by whom?

IMPERIAL PINE: Mrs. Willis B. Snobbingham herself.

TREE 1: You mean, the Mrs. Willis B. Snobbingham? The owner of the Snobbingham County Shopping Mall?

IMPERIAL PINE: Yes.

TREE 2: The Mrs. Willis B. Snobbingham, owner of the incredibly posh Snobbingham County Country Club?

IMPERIAL PINE: One and the same.

TREE 1: You mean, Mrs. Willis B. Snobbingham—owner of practically—everything?

IMPERIAL PINE: You're three for three.

TREE 1: Wow!

IMPERIAL PINE: It appears that I have been selected to be the Christmas tree for the annual Snobbingham Country Club Holiday Gala. Everyone knows that it's the grandest, most anticipated social event of the year. A tree could not receive a higher honor. But then, if I do say so myself, I *am* a sight to see.

TREE 2: You are clearly your own biggest fan.

TREE 1: Hey, why didn't we get selected?

TREE 2: Yeah, what's wrong with us?

IMPERIAL PINE: Don't be ridiculous. (*To TREE 1.*) You're obviously too small. I mean, you'd look like a juniper bush in any place with a cathedral ceiling. (*To TREE 2.*) And you're too—shall we say, for lack of a better word—incomplete. Your branches are not even symmetrical. You'd need a branch transplant or something. Obviously, neither of you fit the image of a place like the Snobbingham Country Club—playground for the rich and beautiful. Face it—you're just not from the right side of the forest.

TREE 1: Well, what makes you so perfect?

TREE 2: Yeah, what makes you such a hotshot?

IMPERIAL PINE: Really? Just look at this head of needles—long and thick, with not one out of place. Look at my bark—not a knot to be seen. And my trunk—well, I think my trunk speaks for itself.

TREE 1: I have to admit, he does have a rather nice build. (*Aside.*) Showoff.

IMPERIAL PINE: Of course I do. After all, I am an Imperial Pine. Royal sap runs through these limbs.

TREE 2: Hey! Here come some customers!

IMPERIAL PINE: (*To himself.*) Prepare to be admired.

KATIE enters.

KATIE: Come on, Mrs. Davis. Come on!

MRS. DAVIS: *(From Offstage.)* I'll catch up in a minute, Katie. You go ahead.

KATIE: Hey, nice trees. *(To TREE 1.)* Oh, what a lovely Northern Pine. *(To TREE 2.)* What an adorable Red Cedar. *(To IMPERIAL PINE.)* Oh, wow. What an exquisite Imperial Pine!

IMPERIAL PINE: Why, thank you. *(To TREES 1 and 2.)* This ragamuffin obviously has some taste.

KATIE: What did you just call me?

IMPERIAL PINE: 'Scuse me?

KATIE: Did you just call me a name?

IMPERIAL PINE: You heard that? How did you hear that?

KATIE: Oh, my. I've been talking to plants and trees all of my life, and not one of them has ever talked back. But I'm no ragamuffin—whatever that is.

MRS. DAVIS enters.

MRS. DAVIS: Well, Katie, have you picked a tree? The kids back at the Children's Village are depending on you to pick a good one.

KATIE: *(Pointing to IMPERIAL PINE.)* I want this one!

MRS. DAVIS: But Katie, this tree is reserved. *(Looking at the price tag.)* Besides, the price is way over our budget.

IMPERIAL PINE: I am not affordable. Run along, little girl.

KATIE: But I'll break my piggy bank for it!

MRS. DAVIS: I think you'd need a few piggy banks, dear.

IMPERIAL PINE: Take one of these other trees and be on your way.

KATIE: I'll do the dishes every night for a year!

MRS. DAVIS: I'm sorry, dear.

KATIE: My whole life!

MRS. DAVIS: Katie, somebody else already owns this tree. There's nothing we can do about it. *(Looking at TREE 1.)* How about this one?

KATIE: It's nice, but—

MRS. DAVIS: Fits our budget, too.

KATIE: But—

MRS. SNOBBINGHAM and UNCLE TED enter. She is loud, overbearing, and used to having her own way. UNCLE TED is a good guy trying to satisfy a tough customer.

MRS. SNOBBINGHAM: This had better be one superior tree. You can't let me down. I don't like to be let down.

UNCLE TED: Oh, it is, Mrs. Snobbingham. It is.

MRS. SNOBBINGHAM: I just couldn't bear it if someone had a better tree than mine. I have a reputation to uphold.

UNCLE TED: I know, Mrs. Snobbingham.

MRS. SNOBBINGHAM: I have an obligation to the country club membership!

UNCLE TED: Yes, Mrs. Snobbingham.

MRS. SNOBBINGHAM: I must simply have the best or I shall die!

UNCLE TED: We couldn't let that happen, Mrs. Snobbingham.

MRS. SNOBBINGHAM: (*Gazing at IMPERIAL PINE in stunned disbelief.*) Oh, my! Oh, my—oh, my—oh, my. It's even more beautiful than you described! Ted, you have outdone yourself. You must've known this tree would be perfect for me. You're such a lovely man when you do what I want.

UNCLE TED: Only the best for you, Mrs. Snobbingham.

MRS. SNOBBINGHAM: Let me take it all in. (*Circling IMPERIAL PINE.*) Yes, yes, I can see you now, standing majestically in the main hall of the Snobbingham County Country Club, decked from top to bottom with gold, silver, and platinum ornaments.

IMPERIAL PINE: All right! Tell me more!

MRS. SNOBBINGHAM: Decorated with yard upon yard of gourmet popcorn strings, the kernels of which would be popped exclusively by my very own personal popcorn chef.

IMPERIAL PINE: Gourmet popcorn? I like that!

KATIE: She has a popcorn chef?

MRS. DAVIS: Shhhh!

MRS. SNOBBINGHAM: And finally, I see this beautiful tree topped off with my world-famous family heirloom—the stunningly beautiful, never-to-be-duplicated, diamond-studded Snobbingham Christmas angel.

IMPERIAL PINE: Take me home, baby. I'm yours!

MRS. SNOBBINGHAM: Yes, the time you spend with me will help to make our Christmas gala the best that we've ever had—until, of course, next year. (*To UNCLE TED.*) When can you have the tree delivered?

UNCLE TED: ASAP, Mrs. Snobbingham.

MRS. SNOBBINGHAM: Just make it snappy. Yesterday is already too late. I'm busier than everyone else in the world. I must get going. (*Waves.*) Toodles!

MRS. SNOBBINGHAM exits.

UNCLE TED: (*Wearily.*) Ah, yes. Toodles. (*Turning attention to MRS. DAVIS and KATIE.*) Well, Mrs. Davis and Katie... (*To KATIE.*) how's our future little tree surgeon doing today?

KATIE: (*With a pout.*) Fine, thank you.

UNCLE TED: Find anything you like?

MRS. DAVIS: (*Pointing to TREE 1.*) I think we'll take that one, Uncle Ted.

UNCLE TED: Ah, yes; a beautiful Red Cedar.

KATIE: It's a Northern Pine.

UNCLE TED: So it is. A good choice. Here, let me put a reserved sign on it. (*Writing on sign.*) Snobbingham Country Children's Village. There we go. It's all yours. If you'd like, I can have it delivered this afternoon.

MRS. DAVIS: Wonderful! The children will be so excited. They're working on the decorations now. (*To KATIE.*) Say thanks to Uncle Ted.

KATIE: Thank you, Uncle Ted.

MRS. DAVIS: We'd best be running along. We're not as busy as Mrs. Snobbingham, but there's still quite a bit to do.

KATIE: May I look at the trees for one more minute? Please? You know, trees and I have a special bond. I plan on devoting my whole professional life to things with roots. Please? All of these trees are only here once a year.

MRS. DAVIS: Well, all right, dear, but only for a minute.

KATIE: That's all I need.

MRS. DAVIS: OK. I'll meet you back at the car.

UNCLE TED: Looks like some customers could use some help over there. *(To MRS. DAVIS and KATIE.)* Merry Christmas, ladies!

KATIE: Merry Christmas, Uncle Ted.

MRS. DAVIS: Merry Christmas, Uncle Ted. Thank you. *(To KATIE.)*
Now remember, just a minute, dear. We've got lots to do.

UNCLE TED and MRS. DAVIS exit in opposite directions. As they leave KATIE'S sight, she begins humming "Deck the Halls." With a mischievous look on her face, she looks around to make sure she's unnoticed and proceeds to switch the "reserved" signs with TREE 1 and IMPERIAL PINE.

IMPERIAL PINE: Hey! What are you doing? Why are you switching the signs?

KATIE: I've got a plan.

IMPERIAL PINE: If you switch the signs, that tree will go to the Snobbingham County Country Club and I'll go to the Children's Village!

TREE 1: This is great!

IMPERIAL PINE: This is tragic!

TREE 2: Serves you right, Your Highness!

KATIE: The Children's Village is a great place. If you give it a chance, I think you'll like it.

IMPERIAL PINE: If you live there, I certainly will not.

KATIE: I've never known a tree that could talk before. We could have some great conversations. We'll get to know each other better.

IMPERIAL PINE: Talk is cheap! What about my gold, silver, and platinum ornaments?

KATIE: Don't worry. We've got ornaments.

IMPERIAL PINE: What about my strands of gourmet popcorn made by Mrs. Snobbingham's personal popcorn chef?

KATIE: We've got some good microwave stuff we could string.

IMPERIAL PINE: What about the world-famous, never-to-be-duplicated, diamond-studded Snobbingham Christmas angel?

KATIE: We'll get you an angel.

MRS. DAVIS: *(From Offstage.)* Katie! Come along!

KATIE: *(To IMPERIAL PINE.)* Toodles!

IMPERIAL PINE: Come back here! I don't want to go to the Children's Village! Come back here right now, young lady! You can't do this to me!

KATIE: *(As she exits.)* Oh, yes I can.

IMPERIAL PINE: I won't ever call you a ragamuffin again.

KATIE: Coming, Mrs. Davis! *(To IMPERIAL PINE.)* See you this afternoon!

"Deck the Halls" plays as lights fade and Katie exits, TREE 1 and TREE 2 laugh heartily at IMPERIAL PINE'S despair.

SCENE 2

AT START: *It's later that evening in the family room of the Snobbingham County Children's Village. MRS. DAVIS supervises as KIDS, led by KATIE, decorate IMPERIAL PINE with a variety of homemade ornaments, much to the tree's dismay. "Deck the Halls" plays in the background until dialogue begins.*

IMPERIAL PINE: *(As KIDS decorate the tree.)* Help! Help! This can't be happening. Help! Don't put that there! Take that off! Help! Stop torturing me! This is no way to treat royalty. What did I do to deserve this?

MRS. DAVIS: Good job, children! Good job! Now for the finishing touch, let's put our angel on top.

KATIE: *(As she puts a cardboard angel on the top of the tree.)* Ta-dah! Merry Christmas, everyone!

IMPERIAL PINE: A cardboard angel? How gauche! *(As KIDS applaud.)* This is a nightmare!

MRS. DAVIS: Oh! Look at the time. It's way past bedtime. All right, children, let's go brush our teeth.

ALL KIDS: Awwww!

MRS. DAVIS: Remember, Santa is watching! I'll come tuck you in shortly. Get along...

KIDS exit.

KATIE: *(To MRS. DAVIS.)* The tree looks beautiful. *(Looking directly at IMPERIAL PINE.)* I don't care what anybody says.

MRS. DAVIS: I can't believe that Mrs. Snobbingham would donate such a wonderful gift to us.

IMPERIAL PINE: Donate? I've been tree-napped! *(Shouting in different directions.)* Help! Help! Save me!

KATIE: I guess she caught the Christmas spirit. If it can happen to Scrooge, it could happen to anybody.

MRS. DAVIS: *(Unconvinced.)* I guess so. I suppose we should just be grateful. *(Changing thought.)* I'm going to check on the kids. Would you please straighten up a little around here?

KATIE: Of course.

MRS. DAVIS exits. KATIE begins to pick up.

IMPERIAL PINE: And you call yourself a future tree surgeon. You ought to be ashamed of yourself, defacing a beautiful piece of work like me.

KATIE: You've never looked lovelier.

IMPERIAL PINE: Lovely?! I look like I've been toilet-papered! I should be at the country club, adorned in the finest ornaments—having my picture taken with society's finest. I should be fawned over and revered! Instead, I'm the laughing stock of the tree farm. I'll never live this down.

KATIE: You just don't get it, do you?

IMPERIAL PINE: Get what? What's not to get? You've ruined my life.

KATIE: Christmas! After all, you are supposed to be a Christmas tree. You should know what Christmas is all about. But apparently you don't. You don't know the first thing about it.

IMPERIAL PINE: I do too.

KATIE: All right, then suppose you tell me.

IMPERIAL PINE: Well, it's about getting presents. Lots and lots of presents. The more presents you get, the merrier the Christmas. It's about getting out of work or school and goofing off. It's about eating and eating and eating while going to party after party after party. Most of all, it's about treating your Christmas tree in the style for which he has been raised. And I was planted to one day grace the

halls of a country club! And if you haven't noticed, this place is not a country club!

KATIE: Wow. Talk about beauty and no brains.

IMPERIAL PINE: Say what?

KATIE: You don't have a clue what Christmas is all about.

IMPERIAL PINE: I don't? Well, then, suppose you enlighten me.

KATIE: Christmas isn't about getting, it's about giving. It's about putting someone else's needs ahead of your own.

IMPERIAL PINE: You've got to be kidding. What a strange concept.

KATIE: It's not strange. That's why I made the switch with the "reserved" cards. I wanted the kids here to have the most beautiful Christmas tree that they'll ever see.

IMPERIAL PINE: Flattery will get you nowhere. Well, almost nowhere. Tell me more.

KATIE: It's Mrs. Snobbingham and her friends who are totally out of touch with the Christmas spirit. They don't care about you. In fact, they're just using you.

IMPERIAL PINE: Using me? Get serious.

KATIE: You're just another big, beautiful tree in a long line of big, beautiful trees to star at the Snobbingham Holiday Gala. Next year, she'll find an even bigger, more beautiful tree than you.

IMPERIAL PINE: Impossible!

KATIE: And when she's done, you'll be turned into a woodpile--

IMPERIAL PINE: Bite your tongue!

KATIE: Or thrown into a chipper.

IMPERIAL PINE: I'm not listening!

KATIE: At least here you're appreciated. The kids and I will never, ever forget you. I mean, look at these ornaments. We've never worked so hard to make them special—just for you.

IMPERIAL PINE: Just for me? You really made these just for me? Gosh, the only thing anyone has given me before is water and fertilizer.

KATIE: You bet your branches. And if the kids could hear all of your ungrateful remarks, they'd be really hurt.

IMPERIAL PINE: Well, I guess these decorations are kind of cute—in a discount store kind of way.

KATIE: They might not have a lot to give. But they put all of their time and care into these ornaments. You've got a lot to learn.

IMPERIAL PINE: Tell me—not that I care or anything, but when did all of this giving instead of getting get started?

KATIE: Well, it began a long time ago with the birth of Jesus on the first Christmas Day.

IMPERIAL PINE: Jesus? Jesus? I think I've heard that name before.

KATIE: He's the Son of God.

IMPERIAL PINE: God?

KATIE: God is the father of the whole universe. He made the earth, the stars, the oceans, the animals—the trees like you and people like me.

IMPERIAL PINE: Wait a minute. Are you telling me that God is my Father?

KATIE: In a manner of speaking, yes. If it wasn't for God, you wouldn't be here. I wouldn't be here. Nothing would be here.

IMPERIAL PINE: Gee, ever since I was knee-high to a pinecone, I've wondered who my father was.

KATIE: Me, too.

IMPERIAL PINE: You mean you don't know who your parents are either?

KATIE: No, I don't. I've lived here my whole life. Mrs. Davis and the kids here are my family.

IMPERIAL PINE: But if God is the father of the whole universe, including trees and people—that means we must be related. We're like long-lost relatives!

KATIE: That's an interesting way to look at things.

IMPERIAL PINE: Tell me about Jesus, God, and Christmas. I love family stories.

KATIE: Well, God sent Jesus down to earth at a time when people were very selfish and cruel to one another.

IMPERIAL PINE: Were they like Mrs. Snobbingham and her friends?

KATIE: I would say they probably had a few things in common.

IMPERIAL PINE: Go on.

KATIE: Jesus came to teach everyone how to love others. He healed the sick, cared for the poor, gave hope to the sad, and showed us a way of life that would get us to heaven. He is our Savior.

IMPERIAL PINE: Gee. I didn't know there could be anyone like that.

KATIE: There will only be one Jesus. That is why his birthday is the biggest holiday ever!

IMPERIAL PINE: So, let me get this straight. If someone believes in Jesus and tries to live the way that he lived, they'll be celebrating what Christmas is all about.

KATIE: That's right.

IMPERIAL PINE: And if they follow the words of Jesus all year 'round, then they'll get to go to heaven?

KATIE: You're on the right track.

IMPERIAL PINE: Great! I have one more question.

KATIE: Yes?

IMPERIAL PINE: What's heaven?

KATIE: It's the most beautiful and peaceful place you can imagine. If you trust Jesus as your Savior, you can live there forever.

IMPERIAL PINE: Do you think there are trees in heaven?

KATIE: I wouldn't be a bit surprised.

IMPERIAL PINE: Do you think Jesus can help me get there?

KATIE: We could try.

IMPERIAL PINE: You know, I think I'm going to like it here after all—sis.

KATIE: You're making me proud to be a tree hugger.

KATIE and IMPERIAL PINE hug. Suddenly, there is a pounding on the door.

MRS. SNOBBINGHAM: *(From Offstage.)* Let me in! I know you're in there!

UNCLE TED: *(From Offstage.)* Anybody home?

MRS. SNOBBINGHAM: *(From Offstage.)* Let me in or I'll pay someone to break down the door!

UNCLE TED: *(From Offstage.)* Mrs. Davis—you home?

Pounding on the door continues, then MRS. DAVIS rushes in.

MRS. DAVIS: What's going on?

KATIE: Beats me.

MRS. DAVIS opens the door. MRS. SNOBBINGHAM and UNCLE TED ENTER.

MRS. SNOBBINGHAM: Hah! There it is—my beautiful tree. (*Looking at tree decorations with disdain.*) What have they done to you?

UNCLE TED: I'm sorry, Mrs. Davis. There must have been some kind of mix-up.

MRS. SNOBBINGHAM: Mix-up, schmix-up! I want my tree disinfected, decontaminated, and delivered to my country club at once!

UNCLE TED: Mrs. Snobbingham, it's a little late. We know where the tree is now. How about we take care of this first thing tomorrow?

KATIE: Mrs. Davis, don't let them take our tree.

MRS. DAVIS: Apparently it's not ours to keep, dear.

UNCLE TED: I'm sorry, Katie. Somehow the delivery cards got mixed up. Your tree went to the country club and Mrs. Snobbingham's tree came here.

MRS. DAVIS: You wouldn't know how that could happen, do you, Miss Katie?

KATIE: Maybe the wind did it?

MRS. DAVIS: I'll talk to you later.

UNCLE TED: I'll be back first thing in the morning, Mrs. Davis.

MRS. SNOBBINGHAM: And get that litter off of my tree before I get here! (*To UNCLE TED.*) Come along. I must get home and get my beauty rest.

KATIE: You're going to need a lot of sleep.

MRS. SNOBBINGHAM: What's that?

KATIE: Nothing, ma'am.

MRS. SNOBBINGHAM: Humpf!

Door slams as MRS. SNOBBINGHAM exits.

MRS. DAVIS: Katie, did you switch those delivery cards?

KATIE: The devil made me do it.

MRS. DAVIS: Katie—the truth.

KATIE: I did. I wanted to do something nice for the kids. I'm sorry. But I'm kinda sorry in a way that if I had to do it all over again—I would.

MRS. DAVIS: I think you might be doing a lot of extra dishes after all, young lady. And I think you're going to have some apologizing to do. Look what you just put poor Uncle Ted through.

KATIE: I shouldn't have put Uncle Ted on the spot.

MRS. DAVIS: Come on. You've had a big day. It's time for bed. We'll talk more about good decision making tomorrow.

KATIE: First, could I say good-bye to my—I mean, Mrs. Snobbingham's—tree?

MRS. DAVIS: All right. Be sure to turn out the lights. Good night, love.

KATIE: Good night, Mrs. Davis.

MRS. DAVIS exits.

KATIE: *(To IMPERIAL PINE.)* I don't want you to go.

IMPERIAL PINE: I can hardly believe I'm saying this, but I don't want to leave.

KATIE: Really? But what about the gold and silver ornaments, garlands of gourmet popcorn, and the diamond-studded, never-to-be-duplicated Snobbingham Christmas angel?

IMPERIAL PINE: I like the one I'm wearing just fine. I believe that I've turned over a new leaf—so to speak. I'm glad we got to know each other better.

KATIE: We need a new plan.

IMPERIAL PINE: Say, why don't you talk to the Father and ask him if I can stay?

KATIE: What a great idea! I'll say a prayer.

IMPERIAL PINE: A what?

KATIE: Just watch. *(KATIE kneels, collects her thoughts, then begins.)*

Dear God, I know that I was wrong to switch the signs on the trees. For that I am kinda, sorta, truly sorry. I will wash as many dishes as necessary to be forgiven. But somehow, we've got to keep this tree. As a matter of fact, you can tell Santa that I'll give up my Doctor Green's Junior Tree Surgery Kit if this beautiful tree can stay here.

IMPERIAL PINE: You'd do that for me? Give up a present that you've always wanted?

KATIE: Of course.

IMPERIAL PINE: Wow. Can I add something to your prayer?

KATIE: Sure.

IMPERIAL PINE: Father, I would really like to put down roots here—at least for the Christmas season. 'Cause after tonight, for the first time, I really feel tall, green, *(Looking over his decorations.)* and handsome.

KATIE: Amen.

IMPERIAL PINE: Amen.

MRS. DAVIS: *(From Offstage.)* Katie! Bedtime!

KATIE: See you tomorrow.

IMPERIAL PINE: Sleep tight.

Lights fade as "Silent Night" plays in the background.

SCENE 3

AT START: *It is the next morning. KATIE and the CHILDREN are seated around the IMPERIAL PINE. Everyone looks dejected as MRS. DAVIS speaks.*

MRS. DAVIS: So you see, kids, the tree we ordered went someplace else, and this tree was delivered here by mistake.

KID 1: Is our new tree bigger than this one?

MRS. DAVIS: Oh, it's big all right.

KID 2: Is it taller?

MRS. DAVIS: Well, not quite, but close.

KID 3: Is it more beautiful?

MRS. DAVIS: Oh, I think you'll really like it.

KID 2: There's something suspicious going on around here.

KID 1: I think we're getting gypped!

Doorbell rings.

MRS. DAVIS: I'd better get the door.

KATIE: Don't worry. We'll decorate our new tree better than any other tree in the whole world, except maybe one.

KID 3: But I don't want another tree.

KID 2: I want this one.

KATIE: *(Sighs.)* Me too.

IMPERIAL PINE: I'm not done yet.

MRS. DAVIS and UNCLE TED enter.



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P.O. Box 248 - Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52406

Toll Free: 844-841-6387 - Fax 319-368-8011

customerservice@christianpub.com