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“For All”

by
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- What** A group of shepherds who witnessed the angel’s announcement of Christ’s birth are offered counseling after supposedly being traumatized by the whole event. Themes: Christmas, Comedy, Ensemble, COVID friendly, Shepherds, Messiah, Christ’s birth
- Who** Counselor
Shepherd 1 (Shep 1)
Shepherd 2 (Shep 2)
Shepherd 3 (Shep 3)
Shepherd 4 (Shep 4)
*All roles can be played by male or female from teen to adult ages.
- When** Shortly after the birth of Christ
- Costumes and Props** 5 chairs (if doing live stage)
Counselor is dressed in business casual.
Shepherds are dressed as shepherds.
- Why** Luke 2: 8-14
- How** Performance options
Zoom/virtual: We see all cast in their individual ‘boxes’.
Live stage: Cast are seated in a semi-circle of chairs, CS, facing audience, all distanced.
- Stage direction key: *(NOTE: stage directions are always from the audience’s viewpoint, looking toward the stage. Downstage refers to the front of the stage. Upstage refers to the back of the stage)*
SL= Stage left
CS= Center stage
- Time** Approximately 5 minutes

*At curtain, **Shep 1**, **Shep 2**, and **Shep 3** are talking to each other. **Shep 4** is staying to themselves. **Counselor** enters (If live: enters SL and sits).*

Counselor: Hello everyone, welcome to your counseling services, the Employee Assistance Program, or EAP. Now, I understand your union has asked—

Shep 1: *(interrupting)* Mandated.

Counselor: Encouraged you to come to us regarding the, um, incident.

Shep 2: *(mocking)* Incident.

Shep 3: Right.

Shep 4: *(unsure)* Well—

Counselor: Tell me more, then.

Shep 1: *(to **Counselor**)* Look, you seem like a nice person and all, but none of us really wants to be here. Needs to be here. *(to others)* Am I right? *(**Shep 2** and **Shep 3** nod in agreement; **Shep 4** does nothing)* The union is just covering its backside by sending us here. They can then say that they provided us with *(does air quotes)* "help" if we crack up later.

Shep 3: *(combative)* Crack up?! Maybe you'll crack up.

Shep 2: *(to **Shep 3**)* You're the one who was wetting their pants when that—

Shep 3: *(defending)* What? No way! My shift was ending and I needed to go and then this thing comes blasting out of the sky—

Shep 1: *(false bravado)* I wasn't scared at all.

Shep 2: Ha! You were crying like a lamb!

Shep 1: I got allergies, OK?!

*All start arguing about who was/wasn't scared, etc. All except **Shep 4**, who says nothing.*

Counselor: Whoa!! *(all stop, then cross their arms and look away)* This is not how we do this. You'll get your turn to share what happened. Now. Let's open up the floor. One at a time. Who wants to go first? *(all still looking away, then)*

Shep 4: *(long comical throat clearing)*

Counselor: *(to **Shep 4**)* You have something to say?

Shep 1: Oh, man, here we go. (*Shep 2 and Shep 3 agree. To Counselor, referring to Shep 4*) This is why we're really here.

Shep 4: (*defensive*) I'm sorry, but I want to talk about it.

Counselor: That's why I'm really here.

Shep 1: (*defeated*) Fine. (*trying to talk aside to Counselor*) They've got something up their craw but won't spill the beans to us. Hope you got lots of time.

Shep 4: You guys never listen. (*to Counselor*) Now, um, it's just...well, not sure how to start.

Shep 1: (*big snoring noises*)

Counselor: (*to Shep 4*) You're doing fine. Please continue.

Shep 4: These other guys don't seem to be bothered by it, but I can't sleep. I keep seeing it in my mind's eye.

Shep 1: (*sarcastic*) So, how does it make you feel?

Counselor: (*ignoring Shep 1*). Please go on.

Shep 4: Like they said, our shift was ending and we were hanging around, tending our flocks by night and all. 'Cause it was night. And the shift was ending.

Shep 1: Tick tick tick.

Counselor: Anyway.

Shep 4: Anyway. (*getting dramatic, using their arms to illustrate*) All of a sudden, the, the sky just lights up! And then, this, this incredible, uh, being appears. And it, um, he, er, she, well, it said it was an angel. I'll stick with that. And then, in this unearthly voice this angel starts talking to us!

Shep 1: Us? It was talking to me, hello? I was the supervising shepherd that night. The angel dude knew that. It was giving me eye contact.

The rest dispute that, saying it gave them all eye contact, etc. all talking at once, arguing.

Counselor: Stop! (*they do. To Shep 4*) Please, you still have the floor.

Shep 4: Well, basically, it said (*trying to remember*) Do not be afraid. I've got good news. Great joy (*hesitates, then*) for all people. A Savior. A child.

Born to you. Right down the road. Then, then about a bi-zillion other angels appeared and they were singing, and flying around, and the sky was even brighter. I...I can't remember exactly what the other angels were saying, maybe "Glory to God" or something, anyway, and then it built to this big climax, and...poof. Gone. All gone! In a flash!

Counselor: Wow. You, all of you, must have been terrified!

Shep 1, Shep 2, and Shep 3 all start denying it, trying to be brave. But then, their body language slowly acknowledges that it was terrifying. Shriveling up in their seats, etc.

Shep 2: *(tiny voice)* Mommie.

They all then start to recover to their original affect.

Shep 4: Yes, it's still bothering me.

Counselor: Being terrified is a normal reaction to abnormal circumstances. And—

Shep 4: No, you misunderstand me.

Counselor: I'm sorry?

Shep 4: This will sound weird, but I think the angel wasn't looking too closely when they spoke. I think when it said, "For all people", they must have meant for everyone else. *(pause)* But not me.

Counselor: Interesting. Why would you doubt?

Shep 4: You don't know me. I've, I've never amounted to anything. I've always been a loser. I'm afraid of my own shadow. These other guys sometimes have to cover for me.

Shep 1: *(looking at others)* Who?!

Shep 2 and Shep 3 avoid his gaze.

Shep 4: For example, a wolf came by one night and I went to hit it with my staff, but smacked myself in the head instead. Luckily the others ran it off. *(pause)* I try to be good, I try to be better. So, when the angel said, "For all people" ...well...just no way. You know?

Counselor: *(ponders)* Hmmm. Well, from what we know of God's messengers, they're not known to be great liars. They've got a pretty solid track record of honesty.

Shep 4: But—

Counselor: I know it's hard. But from what you've all told me and what I've heard from others, what the angel said sounds genuine. Sincere. Real.

Shep 4: *(emotional)* It can't be.

Counselor: A Savior. Born to you. To all. *(long pause)* No lie.

Shep 1: *(quieter now, to Shep 4)* Yo. Um, for what's it's worth. You didn't come to the stable with the rest of us. See what we saw. You know us. We're not, uh, easily impressed. But it was...he was...um, special. We could tell. What the angel said was true. A child. And much more. *(pause)* And I...we...weren't afraid anymore. You know?

Long pause.

Counselor: *(to Shep 1)* Thank you. *(looking at their watch)* I'm sorry everyone, but our time is up. I think we've made some progress. Now, the union only paid for one short session, but if you need more— *(voice trails off)*.

All look at Shep 4.

Shep 4: Maybe. I think I'll be OK.

Counselor: Good. *(to Shep 4)* I wish you great joy. *(to the rest)* And to all of you.

Counselor exits SL *(or exits the Zoom meeting)*. **Shep 2** and **Shep 3** then all slowly exit SL, too *(or exit Zoom)*

Shep 1 and Shep 4 remain.

Shep 1: *We're, uh, going out. I want to try that new fig burger. Want to join?*

Shep 4: *No, I'm good. But thank you.*

Shep 1: *OK, well, um, if you need to talk, and all... (voice trails off, then they exit)*

Shep 4: *(pauses, then is seen trying to remember something, then)*
"Glory...glory to God in the highest heaven, and peace on earth
(pauses) to those whom God is pleased. *(reflecting)*. Whom God is pleased. *(long pause, revelation in their face, then quiet)* Joy.

Lights out.