

*I'm Dreaming of a
Wyght Christmas*



A Christmas Memory of Shane Hodgins:
Agricola of Wyght's Home for Young People

Sara Francis

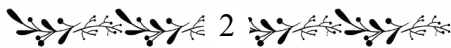


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Shane slammed the side door when he came back from his run. The snow was only flurries when he left, and he didn't think he was gone for very long. The ground was covered in a frosty white blanket, and icicles dripped from the trees. The light snow turned to a freezing blizzard as it blew harshly against the sides of the mansion.

"I'm just happy it isn't rain," he said taking off his sneakers. Shane preferred anything over water especially when it attacked from the sky. Thankfully, he was getting a better grip on his Aquaphobia. He could at least gulp down water to stay hydrated.

As he went into the kitchen for a snack, he heard his sister, Aymie, squealing. In a flash, he was in the hallway by her side. "What's wrong?!" he asked in a panic.

"Christmas is soon!" she cried. "It's snowing outside and no one has put any decorations up!"

"Seriously?" he said annoyed.

She shot him a look of disappointment. "Yes. Seriously.



This season is important and wonderful for everyone!”

“Not for traffic,” he replied jokingly.

She was about to correct him but stopped herself.

“Well, you’re not wrong. But I need your help with the decorating? I’m so behind on gifts it’s not even funny.”

“There are about 100 other people in this mansion,” Shane protested. “Why not get them?”

“Because you’re my brother and I say so,” she replied with a smirk. “Besides, Mr. Wyght is usually the one either decorating the place himself or telling the kids to do it. I think, to say thank you, we should take the initiative and give him the best Christmas ever.”

As Aymie was leaving him to his work, Shane called to her jestingly, “Am I supposed to learn the true meaning of Christmas when this is over?”

Ignoring him, his sister went to finish her own Christmas preparations.

“I’m going to take that as a yes,” he said sighing as he went to find the decorations. After taking them all out a hidden broom closet he decided to get started...after some procrastination. He went for that snack he wanted, played some video games, attempted to do some homework, and then he took a nap on the couch in the entertainment room.

He woke up an hour and a half later to the annoying sound of jingle bells. Coming to his senses he realized he had not done anything. Dashing upstairs he found two little girls rummaging through the boxes he rudely left in the hallway. Two of Shannon’s six sisters had found the



Christmas lights and bells and proceeded to wrap each other in them.

“Girls, what are you doing?” Shane asked crossing his arms.

They both looked up at him and said nothing.

Addressing the older one, he said, “Lucy, you are eight years old now. I thought you would know better than wrapping your five-year-old sister in dangerous things.”

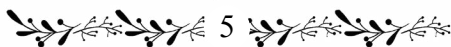
Staring at him with big brown eyes, Lucy continued to have Rebecca spin in circles as she held the strand of lights. When she finished, she kept her eyes on Shane as she walked backward to the nearest wall and plugged the lights in.

Rebecca laughed adorably as she watched herself light up. “Merry Christmas, Clarius!” Her brown hair bounced as she hopped up and down in excitement. Her dark eyes sparkled in the bright light.

Shane couldn’t keep a straight face. He loved all the Hollinger girls and could never stay mad at them for long, even when they called him that ridiculous pet name. It was given to him when he first met the girls. They didn’t know his name so that’s the name the little ones gave him. “Same to you, but I do have to get back to work.”

“By working do you mean napping?” Lucy asked going through another box.

“You got me there,” he confessed, “but if I don’t get this done my sister is not going to be happy.” Untangling Rebecca, Shane chuckled saying, “Besides, I don’t know





if you two are going to show me the true meaning of Christmas.”

“Let us help, please!” Rebecca begged. “We will make it special for everyone!”

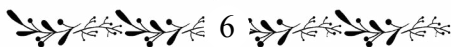
Not able to say no, he agreed and the three of them got to work.

As they put the decorations up, they sang their hearts out to familiar Christmas songs that played on the radio. Shane felt good to sing with them again. He would always walk around the mansion singing and playing his guitar, but it wasn't the same. When Shane lived with the girls and their parents, he would sing and perform with the Hollinger girls and Johanna. Mrs. Hollinger was a music teacher so she had her own little orchestra at home. They would have so much fun together and occasionally would perform live at small venues such as coffee shops.

Thinking back on those days, Shane began to feel nostalgic. He missed it so much. He felt like he had a family, and he could live a somewhat normal life. Unfortunately, that was ripped from him once again, and the ones he cared for suffered the consequences.

As if reading his mind, Rebecca came over to him and hugged his leg. “I miss mommy and daddy too,” she whispered. “Shannon says we have to be strong and keep a smile.”

Bending over, he scooped her up and held the girl in his arms. “She is right. We still have each other and things will turn out okay in the end.”





“It will be okay when you help me hang up this weird green ball,” Lucy yelled as she hopped up and down trying to hang the decoration in the doorframe leading into the entertainment room.

With Rebecca still in his arms, he went over to Lucy and helped her. He took a closer look, laughed, and explained to Lucy what it was. “This ‘weird green ball’ is mistletoe. Well, fake mistletoe anyway.”

“Ew!” Lucy exclaimed, disgusted. “Take it down! Take it down!” She jumped repeatedly in an attempt to knock it out of the doorway.

“Why is it nasty?” Rebecca asked innocently. “It looks pretty and doesn’t smell bad.”

“When people are under the plant they have to kiss!” Lucy shouted as she ran away from Shane. “Boys are gross,” she said from behind the couch.

“What?” he said smiling. “I am not that gross.”

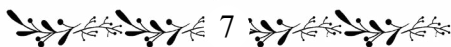
Giggling, Rebecca grabbed Shane’s face and kissed him on the cheek.

Totally taken aback, Shane started laughing hysterically. “Love you too, Rebecca.”

“Aw, that’s so cute!” a familiar voice said behind him. Aymie and Johanna had been watching them from the hallway and recorded that whole scene on their phones.

“How long have you been standing there?” Shane asked, his face turning red.

“Look he’s blushing,” Aymie said as she put her hands on her face. “How adorable.”





“I bet he wishes it was a different Hollinger sister,” Johanna teased, elbowing Aymie.

“Quiet, Johanna,” Shane chided.

“Oh please, you’ve made it so obvious,” she replied rolling her eyes. “You know your ‘secret’ is safe with us. But we are showing Shannon this video of Rebecca kissing you whether you like it or not.”

“Okay, whatever,” Shane sighed. “What do you want?”

“We wanted to tell you the decorations look good and we are going to show Mr. Wyght,” Aymie explained. “We were going to tell him without you and take the credit, but we thought that wasn’t in the Christmas spirit.”

“I would’ve done it anyway if Aymie didn’t stop me,” Johanna confessed.

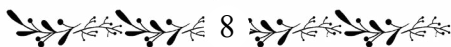
“Hey, these two helped me so the three of us should get credit,” Shane said smirking. “Right, girls?”

“Yeah!” Rebecca shouted.

Coming out from behind the couch, Lucy disagreed. “Nah, I think just me.”

Not too long later, they showed Mr. Wyght around the mansion’s first floor. Rebecca and Lucy narrated the entire tour, explaining to him which parts they decorated and the ones that Shane did. They took credit for most of it, however. Whatever Mr. Wyght said was crooked, they blamed on Shane.

“This was a very nice thing you all did,” Mr. Wyght said smiling. “I have to ask you, where did you find these decorations?”





“They were in an old broom closet,” Shane explained. “Aymie didn’t really clarify where to look for them, so I just grabbed the first ones I found.”

Mr. Wyght ran his hand along the banister covered in the beautiful garland. “These decorations haven’t been used in years. I buy the dollar store stuff now. It’s cheaper and I can just throw it out when we are done.”

“I was wondering why it all felt different,” Aymie said looking around. “Why don’t you use these ones?”

“Because these were Mrs. Wyght’s,” he explained with sorrow. “They were too much of a reminder around the holidays so I got the secular commercial garbage.”

Shane felt terrible. “I am sorry, I had no idea.”

“No, no, don’t be sorry,” the old man reassured smiling. “I think it’s good to take them out again. This Christmas, we should remember the happy memories. Now is the perfect time to spread the joy of this life we were given, right?” Patting Shane’s shoulder, Mr. Wyght thanked them again and went back to his office.

Shane smiled. “I agree, Stanley Wyght,” he whispered.



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