

THE PERFECT CHRISTMAS

By Cheryl A. Harrison

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THE PERFECT CHRISTMAS

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Story of Play

Susie is coming home from college and Bill from the Air Force so Marsha Givens wants this Christmas to be perfect, to enjoy with just she and husband John and the kids. That's why Marsha has un-invited the lonely neighbor, who usually spends the holiday with them; told the minister they won't attend Christmas service; and not made any arrangements for John's parents to visit. Now, if it would only snow, Marsha would have her perfect Christmas.

But everything goes haywire when Grandma and Grandpa (without his hearing aid!) decide to visit and Susie and Bill each bring extra guests! What's worse, Bill only met this "friend" at the airport and the young man has never even been to church!

What seems to be chaos turns into a warm and wonderful Christmas as Grandpa helps the young man find Jesus and Susie's friend and the neighbor are made to feel a part of this crazy but truly Christian family. As everyone leaves for Christmas Eve service, it starts to snow and Marsha realizes her prayers have been answered for a perfect Christmas.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(4M, 5W)

JOHN GIVENS: Good Christian man.

MARSHA GIVENS: John's wife. Good, but feeling a little selfish this year.

BILL GIVENS: Their son, in the Air Force.

SUSIE GIVENS: Their daughter, a college student.

JENNY STEWART: Friend of Susie.

JOSEPH BILLINGS: Friend of Bill.

ETHEL GIVENS: John's mother.

FRED GIVENS: John's father, hard of hearing.

MAGGY WILSON: Lonely neighbor.

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Scene 1: Three days before Christmas.

Scene 2: Two days before Christmas.

Scene 3: Christmas Eve.

PROPS/COSTUMES

Coats for everyone. Bill should wear uniform, if possible. In Scene 3, all should have dressier clothes for church service. Dust cloth for Marsha. Suitcases for Susie, Jenny, Bill, Joseph, Fred and Ethel. Purses for ladies, especially Marsha who must find hers in final scene. Hearing aid and gum for Fred.

SETTING

Modern day living room, decorated warmly for Christmas. Two exits, one SR leads outside and the other SL leads to kitchen and upstairs bedrooms. One window, USC. CS is a sofa flanked on each side by comfortable arm chairs. A table behind the sofa or SL holds a dish of candy and phone. A coat rack is USR. Additional furnishings and a Christmas tree can be added to set at director's discretion.

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Scene 1

(AT RISE: It is three days before Christmas. MARSHA is working busily around the house. Doorbells rings. Enter neighbor, MAGGY WILSON, from SR.)

MARSHA: *(Cheerfully.)* Oh hello, Maggy. Do come in. It must be freezing out there. *(MAGGY comes in and takes off coat while MARSHA looks outside and begins to talk to herself.)* Hmm. Still no snow! *(SHE closes the door and moves DS.)*

MAGGY: Did you say something to me?

MARSHA: Oh no, I was just checking the weather ... looking for snow. It's Christmas you know. Would you like some coffee?

MAGGY: No thanks, I can't stay long. Now tell me the real reason you are so concerned with the weather.

MARSHA: Well, if you really must know, I was checking for snow because I want this Christmas to be absolutely perfect and it just wouldn't be Christmas without snow, now would it?

MAGGY: No, I guess not. But why are you so anxious for a perfect Christmas this year? You always have a lovely Christmas with your family and church and all.

MARSHA: Yes that's true. We always have a very lovely Christmas but this year lovely will not do. It has to be perfect. You see Bill will be home from the Air Force and Susie will be home from college. They haven't both been home in such a long time.

MAGGY: That sounds just wonderful! I don't know how it could be any more perfect than that. And I just can't wait to see Bill and Susie, too. You know they seem almost like my own kids. I just can't wait to see them.

MARSHA: Oh yes and you will ... *(Pause.)* ... but not on Christmas, not this year. Now I know you always come here for Christmas but ... oh you do understand don't you? I just want my family here this year. I'm not planning on going anywhere or having any company ... just a day all to ourselves!

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MAGGY: (*Obviously hurt.*) Yes, Marsha, of course I understand. I wouldn't think of intruding. I'll see the children at church anyway. That will just have to do.

MARSHA: Not on Christmas Eve! I'm planning a big dinner at home and I thought we'd skip the service this year. No one will miss us.

MAGGY: Of course we will miss you! You can't be serious, Marsha. You know how important that service is and John always sings "O Holy Night."

MARSHA: Not this year! Come on, Maggy, don't look at me like that. We're always being preached to about how important family is. I'm sure God understands and approves ... yes, I'm sure God approves. He would want me to put my family first.

MAGGY: Even before Him?

MARSHA: It's not like we won't be praying and singing Christmas songs. We'll do all that and have a wonderful time sharing together as a family.

(*PHONE rings.*)

MARSHA: Excuse me, Maggy while I get that ... (*Answers phone.*) Hello ... Oh hello, Rev. Jones. Oh, I see ... no, I am sorry, but we won't be there this year. Yes, I am quite sure ... but surely you can find someone else to sing. Well, I am truly sorry but John will not be able to, not this year anyway, maybe next year. No that won't be necessary. Yes, that's fine. OK ... good-bye Rev. Jones and Merry Christmas. (*SHE hangs up and sees JOHN who has entered from SR and heard the conversation.*)

JOHN: (*Hanging up coat.*) Hi, Maggy. (*SHE responds.*) Marsha, what was that phone call all about?

MARSHA: That was Rev. Jones checking to see if you could sing for the Christmas Eve service but I told him that we weren't coming this year.

JOHN: You told him we weren't coming, but why?

MARSHA: Now John, I believe we had discussed this, haven't we?

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JOHN: No, Marsha, I don't believe so. But I believe we certainly should.

MAGGY: *(Realizing the potential conflict.)* I guess I better be going now. It looks like you two have something to discuss. *(Gets up to get HER coat.)*

MARSHA: Don't be silly, Maggy, you don't have to leave.

MAGGY: Yes, I think I really should be going. I still have some last minute shopping to do and I want to get to the stores before they become too crowded. Bye, John. I'll talk to you later, Marsha. I do hope you will change your mind about the service.

MARSHA: Don't count on it, Maggy. You better bundle up now, it's cold out there.

MAGGY: OK, bye. *(SHE exits SR.)*

JOHN: All right now ... what is going on here?

MARSHA: *(A little hesitant.)* Well now, John, you know that Bill and Susie will both be home and I just wanted to spend a private Christmas at home with them and you. Just us! No hustle, no big crowd, no sharing ourselves with anyone but each other ... our very own family. It will be so perfect, John.

JOHN: No time even for the Christmas Eve service? Bill and Susie both look forward to that service. We all do, or at least that's what I used to think. Do you really think we can't find the time to go to the service?

MARSHA: Not this year! Look, I'm planning a super nice dinner for us on Christmas Eve. You can sing for us. Oh John, we haven't missed one of those services in years, surely it won't hurt to miss just this one.

JOHN: I'm sorry, Marsha, but I don't agree. That service is part of our family and our Christmas. Christmas is a time for sharing with others. A time for reaching out to the world just like God did when He sent His Son to us as a tiny baby. That is why we have Christmas, you know.

MARSHA: *(Defensively, picking up HER dust cloth.)* Of course I know all that, John. But I want this to be special for just us this year.

JOHN: Christmas is always special, Marsha. You can't just ignore God and other people. That would be selfish.

End of Freeview

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