

SINGLE CHRISTMAS

by Charlie Jones and Ruth Jones

GENRE: Drama

SYNOPSIS: To show how easy it is to allow anger and resentment to build up; to demonstrate reconciliation and forgiveness.

DIRECTOR'S TIP: These women are really hurting. Work with your actors on inner monologue. Part of the emotional pull for the audience is in the dramatic irony: we know something that Kristen doesn't, namely that she really does want to make amends with her mother. If Kristen is played as completely bitter throughout, the audience won't identify with or care for her. Yes, she's bitter, but she's kidding herself into thinking everything is fine. It's the exterior "fine" Kristen that we first meet. And though Mother doesn't have much stage time, we need to see the change in her from the mother of Kristen's childhood to the changed woman she is today. She is honestly trying to grow and change and needs her daughter to give her another chance.

TIME: Under 5 minutes

CAST BREAKDOWN: 2

TOPIC: Communication, Anger

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: Ephesians 4:31-32, James 1:19-21

CHURCH YEAR SEASON: Any

SUGGESTED USE: Christmas Season

CHARACTERS:

Kristen-Early 30s; she has a lot of unresolved anger and resentment toward her mother; is lying to herself when she says she's content to spend Christmas alone
Mother-Earnestly wants to make amends with her daughter

PROPS: 1) Christmas package, wrapped with a bow
2) Cordless phone

COSTUMES: Both women are in contemporary dress, appropriate to character. Kristen is dressed casually.

SOUND: Two wireless mics

LIGHTING: General stage

SETTING: Bare stage. We are at Kristen's house, but "flash back" to her childhood home. There is no need for an elaborate set.

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KRISTEN ENTERS, fixing a bow on a package she is carrying. She is singing.

Kristen: “Deck the halls with boughs of holly, fa la la la la, la la la la. ‘Tis the season to be jolly, fa la la la la, la la la la ...” Merry Christmas! I was at the coffee machine at work and Sally Adams-you know Sally Adams-she of course holds down a full-time job, raises three “adorable” children, has a dog that looks like Lassie, an immaculate house, serves three-course meals every night, and she’s one of those people who wonders what to do with her spare time. So anyway, Sally was talking about Christmas and out of the clear blue, she looks me straight in the eye and says, “What does Christmas mean to you, Kristen?” I felt like I was back in Sunday school. I said, “Christmas is peace on earth and goodwill to all men, right Sally?”

But I got to thinking about it. And you know what I think Christmas really is? I think Christmas is just a lot of hype by a lot of people to make a lot of money. I don’t see what all the fuss is about. There’s too much fanfare; too much bustle and bother. And it is so corny; families act like they just have to get together-“I’ll Be Home for Christmas” and all that. Parents throw presents at their kids mainly because they feel guilty about ignoring them the rest of the year.

Not for me. I want solitude, peace and quiet. That’s just the way I am. No, really. I like being by myself. It sure beats eating too much Christmas dinner, spending all that money on gifts and the flight home, sitting around the living room all day talking. *(Pause)* Here’s what I do: Christmas day, I sleep late. I pop a Budget Gourmet in the microwave. And I open my present from me. No muss, no fuss. Just me and my cat. And my cat doesn’t expect anything out of the ordinary from me on Christmas Day. *(Pause)*

There were just too many expectations. I can remember when I was a kid on Christmas morning: “I like my presents, Mama. I do! Don’t cry ... I’m not ungrateful. Look, I’m playing with ‘em ... I’m sorry. I know I don’t deserve what I get. I’m trying to make you happy, Mama.” *(Pause)* I always felt like I had to please everyone else. So Christmas alone is just fine by me. My family doesn’t miss me. My mother and I had quite an argument five years ago, and I haven’t been home since. And, uh, they haven’t invited me. So, it makes it real easy ...

(MOTHER ENTERS to play in this memory sequence. KRISTEN turns to her.) “Mama, I told you I like the blouse.”

Mother: You said you didn’t like the color.

Kristen: No, I didn’t. I just said it’s not a color I would have picked.

Mother: Well, that’s saying the same thing.

Kristen: I’m sorry I said anything.