

A photograph of a Christmas tree decorated with lights and ornaments. The tree is the central focus, with warm white lights and colorful ornaments (red, green, blue, yellow) scattered throughout. The background is a textured, light-colored wall. The overall lighting is warm and festive.

**MERRY**  
**Wait! What Just Happened?**

by Deb Meyer

MERRY - WAIT - WHAT JUST HAPPENED?

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A Holiday Short

by

Deb Meyer

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1618 Esker Trail  
Columbus, WI, 53925  
[djmeyer8350@gmail.com](mailto:djmeyer8350@gmail.com)

Cast of Characters

<u>JAMIE</u>	A teenage girl.
<u>ANDREW</u>	A teenage boy.
<u>KATHY</u>	Woman.
<u>PHIL</u>	Male.

Scene

Living room, decorated for Christmas.

Time

Evening. Present day.

AT RISE: *Cue Christmas music. JAMIE is sitting on a couch. She's scrolling through pages on her tablet. The doorbell rings, and the music fades.*

JAMIE

*(Yells)* Got it.

*ANDREW enters, looks around, noticing all the decorations. They walk around, and eventually end up sitting together on the couch.*

ANDREW

Wow. You weren't kidding when you said your mom was into Christmas.

JAMIE

Just wait. It gets better.

ANDREW

Are you ready for your present?

JAMIE

It's not time.

ANDREW

It's close enough. Close your eyes.

JAMIE

Seriously?

ANDREW

Just, close 'em.

JAMIE

*(Closes her eyes)* I love Christmas.

ANDREW

Okay, hold out your hands.

*He places an envelope with a big red bow in her hands. She opens her eyes.*

JAMIE

It's a puppy!

ANDREW

Or?

*She opens the envelope.*

JAMIE

Movie tickets! For, tomorrow night.

ANDREW

That's right. You, me, surround sound, and all the buttery popcorn we can eat. Will Aquaman find the Lost Kingdom?

*PHIL enters, humming The 12 Days of Christmas and carrying a pile of wrapped gifts. He stoops down and sets them under the tree.*

PHIL

Hi, Andrew. Merry Christmas.

ANDREW

Hey, Mr. Redman.

JAMIE

I don't know what to say.

PHIL

Good job, Andrew. That's a first. What'd you get honey?

JAMIE

It's, tickets...for tomorrow night.

ANDREW

Center row. Center seats. It took me two hours to get them.

PHIL

Impressive.

*KATHY enters, wearing excessive Christmas attire, singing, and dancing with a large red plate of fresh cookies.*

KATHY

Eight maids a-milking. Seven swans a-swimming. Six geese a-laying. Five gol---den rings, *(she turns to Andrew)* Cookie?

ANDREW

Sure, thanks. *(He takes a bite)* Wow, they're still warm.

KATHY

Old family recipe. Massive amounts of butter and sugar, with a dash of holiday cheer.

*She offers a cookie to JAMIE and PHIL. He takes one, Jamie doesn't.*

ANDREW

Well, they taste great. *(pause)* So, Jamie? Is it a date?

*KATHY and PHIL begin arranging the gifts under the tree. KATHY keeps singing softly.*

JAMIE

But, these tickets, they're for tomorrow night.

ANDREW

Yeah? Is that a problem?

JAMIE

Kind of. Tomorrow's Christmas Eve.

ANDREW

So?

JAMIE

So, our family always goes to the Christmas Eve candlelight service together.

ANDREW

So, you don't want to go to the movie?

JAMIE

I do want to go. Could we maybe go the day after Christmas?

KATHY

You're more than welcome to join us, Andrew.

PHIL

Absolutely.

JAMIE

I'm sure the movie will still be playing the day after Christmas.

ANDREW

I'm sure it will. But the tickets are for *tomorrow* night.

JAMIE

It's just that, my little sister, Lily, plays the littlest angel this year.

ANDREW

You know, it's getting late. I'd better go.

JAMIE

But you just got here. I didn't get to give you your present. Mom? Dad?

PHIL

Right. Come on, Kath.

KATHY

Have another cookie, Andrew.

*JAMIE, PHIL and KATHY exit.  
ANDREW walks around looking at  
all the decorations. After a  
few moments JAMIE enters with  
a gift for ANDREW.*

JAMIE

I think you'll really like it. I've been saving for months. It just came yesterday.

ANDREW

Did I miss something here? Cuz, it seems like you just blew me off, for a church service.

JAMIE

It's not just a church service. It's Christmas Eve, and my little sister's an angel. This is important to-

ANDREW

And clearly, I'm not.

JAMIE

I didn't say that.

ANDREW

You didn't have to. I've got to go. Just hang on to my gift, until you figure out who, or what, is more important, me, or your family's traditions.

*ANDREW exits opposite the direction the parents went.  
KATHY and PHIL re-enter with a few more gifts to put under the tree.*

KATHY

Where's Andrew?

JAMIE

He left. He said I should hang on to his gift, until I decide what's more important, him, or our family traditions.

KATHY

I'm sorry Jamie.

PHIL

He'll be back. He was just disappointed.

JAMIE

Maybe I could skip the service this year. I mean, does it really matter if I miss the drippy candles and-

KATHY

Lily?

JAMIE

Yeah, thanks for the guilt trip. Don't you guys have something to do? More presents to wrap?

PHIL

I think we need to talk this through.

JAMIE

No. No, we don't.

KATHY

Come on Phil, let's go. She needs space, and I do need your help wrapping the rest of the gifts.

PHIL

Fine, as long as you skip the glitter bows. I hate those things. I end up shedding glitter for weeks.

*They exit. JAMIE picks up a cookie, drops into a chair, looks at the tickets for a few*



*minutes, then tucks them  
back into the envelope.*

JAMIE

Great. Now what do I do?

*JAMIE picks up a TV  
remote and points it at  
the TV.*

JAMIE

I need a diversion. Let's see. White Christmas?  
Too sappy. The Santa Claus? Too predictable.  
Ralphie and a leg lamp? No. The Grinch Who Stole  
Christmas? Perfect.

*She starts watching and  
reacting to the movie.  
Eventually she slumps  
over falling asleep.  
Lights fade and flicker  
during the transition.  
Remove all evidence of  
the holidays. PHIL  
enters carrying two  
glasses of sparkling  
water or soda with ice.  
He's wearing a black  
sportscoat and  
sunglasses. JAMIE tosses  
and turns, mumbling in  
her sleep.*

PHIL

Hey, hey, Jamie, wake up.

JAMIE

Huh? Wow, I guess I was tired.

*JAMIE looks at her  
watch.*

Huh? This can't be right.

PHIL

Hmm?

*JAMIE gets up and looks around.*

JAMIE

*(Shocked)* Dad! Why are you dressed like that? And, where's the tree?! Dad, where's the Christmas tree? The cookies? The presents? Dad!

PHIL

What?

*KATHY enters, dressed in a cocktail dress, carrying a pizza box and napkins. She sets the pizza box and napkins down and grabs the remote.*

KATHY

Here we go. Time for pizza and Bond. James Bond.

JAMIE

Mom. Dad. What's going on?

KATHY

We're going to watch a 24-hour Bond special. We thought it would be fun to dress up. Oh, darn, I think we missed Dr. No. I don't remember what's next. Maybe Goldfinger.

PHIL

Sounds great. I hope that pizza isn't shaken or stirred.

*KATHY and PHIL laugh and clink their beverage glasses together.*

JAMIE

No. No! This is all wrong. No Goldfinger. No Thunderball. No diamonds. No creepy bald guy with a cat. Mom!

What? KATHY

Where's the Christmas Tree? JAMIE

The what? KATHY

The *Christmas* tree! JAMIE

*She walks over to where  
it was.*

It was right here. And the cookies. The cookies were right here.

I'm pretty sure we've never had a tree in our house. You must have been dreaming. KATHY

No. Our Christmas tree was this tall (*she gestures*) covered in sparkling little white lights and standing right here. And the cookies were on your big red platter, right here. And the presents. What happened to all the presents? JAMIE

Cookies? We don't eat cookies. You know sugar causes shingles. And why would anyone put presents under a tree, in a house? KATHY

Wow. That was some wild dream you must have had. PHIL

It wasn't a dream. JAMIE

Oh, shoot. I forgot the breadsticks. Oh well. Next time. KATHY

*KATHY holds the box  
open for PHIL and he  
takes a piece.*

It smells great. Thanks Kath. PHIL

JAMIE

Mom. Dad. What's going on? It's Christmas Eve. What happened to all the decorations? What's with the Bond, Pizza, craziness? Is Lily, sick?

PHIL

Lily's at Carter's for a sleepover.

JAMIE

What? Aren't we going to the Christmas Eve candlelight service at church?

KATHY

What's a Christmas Eve?

PHIL

What's a church? Let's start with, Live and Let Die.

KATHY

Oh, that's a good one. I think it was filmed in the Bahamas.

PHIL

Actually, I think it was shot in Jamaica.

JAMIE

Okay, stop. *(She takes a deep breath)* Just stop. This is wrong. All wrong. Mom, what day is it?

KATHY

I don't know. I think it's December 24.

JAMIE

Exactly. Dad, what time is it?

PHIL

*(Looks at his watch)* Almost 6:30, why? Is there something else you wanted to watch?

JAMIE

No. Think. What do we do every year, on December 24 at 6:30?

KATHY

I don't know.

PHIL

Yeah, who keeps track of stuff like that?

JAMIE

Is this a joke? Seriously! Did I enter a third dimension here? Some kind of strange, creepy, time-space-portal-thing?

*JAMIE walks up close to her mother, looks her in the eye and begins singing the*

*children's song, Jesus  
Loves Me This I know.*

"Jesus loves me this I know."

PHIL

She has a new boyfriend. That explains it.

KATHY

Jamie. Another one?

JAMIE

"For the Bible tells me so."

KATHY

I liked what's-his-name, who was here last week.  
What's a Bible?

JAMIE

"Little ones to him belong."

PHIL

Hang on! He has kids? How old is this guy?

JAMIE

*(Sighs)* "They are weak, but he is strong."

PHIL

Strong huh? Free weights? Still, I'm not crazy  
about you seeing a guy with kids.

JAMIE

Mom, are you telling me, you've never heard of  
Jesus?

KATHY

The name doesn't ring a bell, but you've had so  
many boyfriends. Do you remember meeting him,  
Phil?

PHIL

No. But I'm not as involved with her friends as  
you are.

JAMIE

He's more than a friend! He's, he's-*(She starts to  
hyperventilate)*

KATHY

Jamie what's wrong with you?

JAMIE

*(She takes some deep breaths)* What's wrong? What's  
wrong? It's Christmas Eve. We should be going to  
church, to watch Lily run around, yelling "Glory  
to God in the highest" and fly like an angel.

KATHY

What did you have for lunch?

JAMIE

What? Come on. Mom. Jesus was born 2,000 years ago in a stable, in Bethlehem. You know, "Oh little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie. "

PHIL

Beth la what?

KATHY

Your friend was born in a barn?

JAMIE

Mom. Dad. God sent his Son, Jesus, who was born in a manger, to save all of mankind from their sin. That's the Christmas story!

KATHY

Really Jamie, I'm quite sure that if God had sent someone to the earth, He would have set up much better accommodations.

PHIL

Anyway, why would God send anyone here?

KATHY

The world's a mess.

JAMIE

Exactly!

KATHY

Okay, so which god sent him?

PHIL

Right. There's all kinds of gods these days. Corporate gods, mechanical gods, stone gods.

KATHY

Intel driven gods. AI gods. I heard of a god in Albuquerque, who heals cows by burning lavender incense in their barn and covering them in chocolate sprinkles.

JAMIE

*(Shocked)* What?!

PHIL

Oh, it's ok, honey. They're organic and locally sourced.

JAMIE

No. It's wrong. This is all wrong! It's Christmas Eve. The night we celebrate the birth of Christ. The angels singing. The shepherds in the fields by night. No room at the inn. The star in the east. Gold, frankincense and myrrh. Silent Night, Holy Night. All is calm. All is bright. Mom! Eight maids a-milking, seven swans a-swimming, six geese a-laying, five gol--den rings.

*JAMIE hyperventilates  
then passes out,  
landing on a chair.*

KATHY

Oh my goodness. Now what do we do?

PHIL

Tuck a pillow under her head and pass the pizza.

KATHY

Are you sure?

PHIL

Yeah. She probably dreamed the whole thing up.  
She'll be fine in the morning.

*KATHY tucks a pillow  
under her head, covers  
her up with a small  
blanket. KATHY and PHIL  
sit on the couch.*

KATHY

Imagine putting a tree in our house.

PHIL

*(Laughs)* Or, angels, shepherds, and a Savior born  
in a barn. You've got to wonder, where she comes  
up with this stuff.

The End - Fade to Black