

A Simple Christmas

Aim: *This short monologue is best used near the start of the Advent season to set into context the joys and challenges ahead.*

Characters : *Melanie – any aged woman*

Props/Costumes : *Everyday clothes*

Notepad and pen

Notes: *The trick to this piece is the timing of it – leisurely and conversational to begin with and then speeding up as the tension levels rise!*

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Melanie is sitting with a notebook at hand, ready to write down a list of things to do. She writes as she speaks and her speech moves from being slow and reasoned to faster with growing panic and resentment until she slams the book closed at the end.

Melanie : I love Christmas.

But this year I'm going to keep it nice and simple. No fuss, no stress, and we're going to concentrate on the real meaning of it all. I'll just put it down in a list, stick to that, and it'll all be great. The best Christmas ever.

She opens her book and begins her list

So, first on the list are the services. Keep Jesus at the centre of it all. Right, so there's Christmas morning, that'll get us off on the right foot, oh and I like the Midnight service as well. And the Christingle for the kids, oh and the crib service of course, and I did say I'd help with the nativity play. Right - so new column, make costumes for the play, and while I've got my bits and pieces out, I might try a few more decorations. Ours are a bit shabby, and it's nice to have it all looking good. Oh yes, get the tree as well. And before that I'd better do a good clean up. Can't bear it to look messy at all, and the kitchen gets so much use it'll need a really good going over.

Kitchen. Cooking. Turkey, trimmings, food for buffet, drinks, I'll need several grocery shops to get it all. And I want to make my own cake and mince pies this year. Everyone else seems to do it, so I should really. Oh, and nibbles in case the neighbours pop in. I don't want them to think I've not made any effort.

Neighbours, people, cards, better get cracking on those soon. I don't want to miss anyone out. And I need to write letters for some of them. Maybe I should include photos of the children as well. I've done that before so they'll be expecting it. I don't want to disappoint anyone.

Presents! I've forgotten to write presents down. Right so that's family, friends, everyone that bought for us last year and a few extras just in case, so embarrassing not to have something to give in return. Although I don't know why I should really, people expect so much.

And I'm going to have to face town when it's most crowded. Just when everyone's pushing and shoving, standing for hours in queues to buy a load of over-priced tat, and that's after I've spent half an hour just looking for a parking spot when I could be getting on with other things on the list, cos it'll be down to me as usual. All the buying and sending and cooking and cleaning, while everyone else seems

to be enjoying themselves. I don't get any help and look at everything I've got to do. I mean I just do Christmas for everyone else, no-one thinks about me, just expect it to all be done, better than the year before, and I'll be too exhausted to enjoy it anyway, as usual.

I hate Christmas.