

Secret Santa

Enter NOELLE, JOVIE, and HOLLY down the aisle. All are carrying Christmas gifts.

NOELLE: (over shoulder) Don't worry, Mom! We promise there will be absolutely no tears at the gift exchange this year! Right, guys?

HOLLY: Positively no crying!

JOVIE: I am so excited for the Cousins Secret Santa!

HOLLY: Actually, Jovie — the name Santa Claus is derived from the original Dutch name "Sinterklaas." So to be accurate —

JOVIE: We should call it a Secret Sinterklaas exchange? I don't think so.

NOELLE: Oh, hush you two! Put your gifts under the tree. I think the rest of the cousins are here!

IVY: (runs down aisle) Hi cousins!! Ready for the best gift exchange ever? This is my year! I can feel it...(whispers) I have an ace up my sleeve.

HOLLY: You have a what up your sleeve? Let me see! (Shakes coat sleeve)

IVY: No no no! I mean that I bought the best gift ever. I went waayyy over the five dollar limit.

NOELLE: Ivy, that's against the rules!

IVY: Oh, pish posh! Remember the Golden Rule? Do unto others as you would have them do unto you!

RUDY: (walks down aisle carrying an enormous wrapped gift) Ivy, this thing weighs a TON. I can't believe I got stuck carrying YOUR gift. (throws it down at the base of the tree)

IVY: Rudy! Careful with that!

RUDY: Now, where do I sit? Let's get this over with.

HOLLY: Rudy, you can't stay! No boys allowed!

RUDY: You think I wanted to come, Holly? Clarice got sick and Mom made me take her place.

JOVIE: Well, did you at least bring a gift?

RUDY: What do I look like? Of course I did. (pulls a sad plastic bag out of his hoodie pocket and throws it at the tree) And not to brag, but I came in under budget.

NOELLE: I don't even want to know.

CAROL: (runs down the aisle with GINGER and BELLE) Hey cousins! Sorry we're late! It was all Ginger's fault.

GINGER: Humbug! Carol was the one who HAD to repaint her fingernails for the fiftieth time.

BELLE: But YOU waited till the last minute to wrap your gift. It's both of your fault.

GINGER: Thanks a lot, Belle.

CAROL: We would have been here on time, but Buddy and Douglas were having a snowball fight in the driveway and we barely escaped with our lives!

RUDY: A snowball fight? Where? (gets up to leave, but NOELLE grabs his arm)

NOELLE: You're not going anywhere! The 2025 Cousins Secret Santa will now begin!

IVY: Hey, Ginger — that's a very nicely decorated gift. I wonder who it's for...

GINGER: Not this time, Ivy! We're not supposed to tell!

JOVIE: (bangs gavel) Order in the court! Er, living room. Whatever. Will the youngest cousin please choose the first gift?

CAROL: Where did you get a gavel?

IVY: Me! Me! Pick me!

NOELLE: Ivy, not yet! Belle gets to go first.

BELLE: Oh I couldn't go first...(runs to tree and picks up a gift. Unwraps it quickly to find a brand new pack of markers. She shrieks) New markers! My old ones were dried out. At last I can write the rainbow again! Oh, I am so happy! Who did this?

JOVIE: Nobody tell her! Wait till the end to reveal yourselves. Now, Holly, it's your turn!

HOLLY: (selects her gift and tears it open) A new magnifying glass! It's stupendous! It's colossal! I think I feel my lachrymal glands welling up (sniffs).

GINGER: Eww...

JOVIE: Carol, you're next!

CAROL: (marches over to the tree and selects her gift) I really hope it's not an eggbeater, like I got last year. That was HILARIOUS (glares at BELLE) (BELLE and GINGER turn toward each other and giggle) Oh, wow! Oh, wow! Oh, wow!

ALL: What is it??

CAROL: (holds up a box labeled "Oh Wows") It's my favorite candy! OH WOWs! How did you know??

HOLLY: I've never even heard of such a thing. Let me see that ingredient list (reads, her mouth agape in horror) Carol! You can't eat these!

BELLE: Why not? What's wrong with them?

GINGER and **BELLE** (leaning over HOLLY's shoulder): What's Red Dye number 40?

HOLLY: It's liquid DEATH.

CAROL: Then I'll die of happiness. (she snatches back the box and eats a candy)

JOVIE: My turn! My turn! (skips over to the tree and opens a gift) Awwww! It's a tiny plush bear for my American Girl doll! Look at his widdle tiny feet! I LOVE HIM.

GIRLS: Awwwwww!

RUDY: Wow, this is really precious. I'm so glad I'm missing a snowball fight for this.

(Suddenly, the cousins are assaulted by flying snowballs. The girls shriek. RUDY and NOELLE scrunch up wrapping paper and cock their wrists, ready to fight back. BUDDY and DOUGLAS sneak in front of the stage, snowballs in hand) Buddy! Douglas! Show yourselves!

NOELLE: Yeah! Prepare for death! (they wait a beat. BUDDY and DOUGLAS sneak behind the tree, still in view to the audience, but not to the characters) Forget it, Rudy. They're gone.

Cowards. (both toss rolled-up gift wrap and sit down) Let's continue, ladies. Who's next?

GINGER: Me! Me! (marches over to the tree and pulls out a HUGE package) Whoa. (Unwraps it to find a gigantic plush bear) WOW!

JOVIE: It's spectacular.

NOELLE: It's magnificent.

BELLE: It's extraordinary.

CAROL: It's extravagant.

HOLLY: It's a monstrosity.

IVY: It's from ME! Isn't it amazing, Ginger? I shouldn't have, right?

GINGER: It's amazing! I love him! The greatest teddy bear to ever exist — the MVP of plush! I'm going to name him Josh Allen Junior! (hugs the bear) But — Ivy (hushed) — I thought there was a five dollar limit!

IVY: Oh, please! Christmas comes but once a year! Do unto others as you would have them do unto you, right? (runs over to the tree and picks up her gift) And isn't Christmas the time for good cheer and figgy pudding?

CAROL: If you want to be sick. (takes a handful of candy out of the box and eats it)

IVY: (picks up gifts, searching for hers) Which one is for me...which one...aha! (Picks up a large, ornately wrapped gift)

BELLE: Wait, Ivy! That's for Noelle!

RUDY: Hang on, hang on — (steps toward tree and picks up the plastic bag) heads up! (throws it at IVY)

IVY: Seriously?? You?? This?? This is MY gift??

GIRLS: Open it already! (IVY frowns and shakes her head)

RUDY: HA! She knows what it is. That's why she doesn't want to open it. She was with me when I bought it!

IVY: Real funny, Rudy! I didn't think it was for ME!

GIRLS: WHAT IS IT, Ivy?? (IVY glares at RUDY, and reveals the gift. A hideous gift — the ugliest figurine in the world. The girls scream in horror)

RUDY: (clutches his stomach, laughing) Do unto others, huh, sis? (runs to edge of stage and cups his hand around his mouth) Douglas! Buddy! Get in here! You've got to see this.

(DOUGLAS and BUDDY run in)

NOELLE: Oh, Rudy! Why don't you just leave?

RUDY: No way! Guys, look at the beautiful gift I got for Ivy! A Bargain Barn special!

DOUGLAS: (high-pitched voice, mocking the girls) It's spectacular! It's magnificent!

BUDDY: (high-pitched voice) It's extraordinary! It's extravagant!

DOUGLAS and BUDDY: It's a MONSTROSITY!

JOVIE: Boys, you're not helping!

IVY: I spent two months worth of allowance on Josh Allen Junior! All I wanted was a nice gift in return. Is that so bad? Do unto others as you would have them do unto you!

HOLLY: You keep using that verse. I do not think it means what you think it means.

DOUGLAS: Yeah, Ivy. She's right. That verse is *not* about Christmas presents.

BUDDY: Yeah! (hesitates, as all look at him) What he said!

CAROL: Hang on, boys. Maybe Ivy isn't wrong. I've heard that if you're nice, then nice things will happen to you. Isn't that all Jesus was saying in that verse?

GINGER: Yeah! Jesus was really nice! (pets the bear lovingly)

BELLE: And maybe if we were all nice to each other, the world would be a much better place!

BOYS: Awwwww!

GIRLS: (losing temper, all start quarreling at once, throwing wrapping paper balls) Hey! You weren't even invited! Get lost! Go jump in a snow bank!

JOVIE: (bangs gavel) Order! Order in the court! Take your seats, or I'll have the bailiff throw you in the slammer!

CAROL: Why does she have a gavel?

NOELLE: You heard the lady! Judge Jovie is now in session. So sit down and listen up! Because we're about to school you miscreants on the meaning of love! (the kids sheepishly take their seats) That's better.

JOVIE: First of all, you're all giving Ivy a super hard time, but she did something really kind. She wanted to give Ginger a nice Christmas gift, and she saved up her money so she could do that. She treated Ginger like she wanted to be treated. Rudy, on the other hand — we'll leave that for the time being.

NOELLE: But we don't do good to people so we get good stuff back. That's not love. That's like...business.

GINGER: Eww. Business. Boring.

ALL: (nodding and looking at each other, agreeing at once) That's true. Business is boring. I hate business.

HOLLY: Permission to speak, Your Honor?

NOELLE: We're not actually in court, Holly. You don't have to —

JOVIE: Permission granted.

HOLLY: Are you implying that love gives without expecting anything back?

JOVIE: Yes...(waves gavel encouragingly) and...?

BELLE: Ooh ooh! Oh wow! Oh wow!

CAROL: (CAROL offers her a candy) Oh Wow?

BELLE: No! I mean, oh wow! I think I get it! God was really kind to us by sending Jesus, even though He was treated really badly by people. He did unto us, even though...we didn't...unto Him!

CAROL: Oh...WOW!

ALL: (groaning)

CAROL: No, really! Wow! *THAT's* love! That's what it means! And if we want to love people, like really love them, the way Jesus does, we need to do unto others, even if they don't...unto us. Right?

IVY: That actually makes sense.

ALL: (nodding in agreement) Yeah, it sorta does.

IVY: So, Jesus meant that you should give your cousin a gigantic plushie just because you think she'd like it, and NOT because you're expecting, like, maybe, an iPad or something.

ALL: *An iPad?!*

IVY: OR SOMETHING! I'm sorry, everyone. I'm sorry I had such a rotten attitude.

ALL: It's okay.

RUDY: And I'm sorry I bought you that lousy present.

IVY: Forget it.

GINGER: We can return Josh Allen Junior to the store, Ivy. Maybe you could get your money back. I'm not *that* attached to him yet (hugs the bear close).

IVY: No way! I want you to keep him.

DOUGLAS: And I'll take that figurine, if you don't mind, Ivy.

BUDDY: Why, Douglas? So you can have nightmares?

DOUGLAS: It'll make a great gift for Dad.

BUDDY: *Ohohoho* (devilish laugh). Excellent.

IVY: Be my guest.

JOVIE: (bangs gavel) Court is adjourned. And if I'm not mistaken, it's Rudy's turn to open a present.

NOELLE: Ohhh you're going to love the unicorn sticker book I bought for you! (rubs hands with glee)

RUDY: Oh, joy. I think I might cry.

ALL: Awwwwwww! (Lights down. End of scene.)