

CHRISTMAS COOKIES

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Sheila / Michelle



At rise: a large living room in a nice suburb. The space is decorated for Christmas, the decorations nearing the point of excess. This is a house kept by a woman with too much time on her hands. A makeshift bar is set up in the room. MICHELLE moves about, arranging things, setting table decorations, turning lamps on or off, the last minute fuss before guests arrive. SHEILA does the same, but only to appease MICHELLE. Eventually, SHEILA gives up and sits.

SHEILA

Michelle? Everything's done.

MICHELLE

I feel like I'm forgetting something. I'm sick to my stomach.

SHEILA

You always feel like that before a party.

MICHELLE

I do?

SHEILA

Yes. Everyone does.

MICHELLE

They do?

SHEILA

Yes.

MICHELLE

(pause) There's no ice in the bucket!

SHEILA

I'll get it. *(exits)*

MICHELLE

This is my home. This is my party. (*a significant breath*) This is **my** home.

MICHELLE deliberately knocks a wine glass over as SHEILA re-enters with filled ice bucket.

Didn't break!

SHEILA

Good. Are those new? When did you get them?

MICHELLE

I don't know.

SHEILA

What?

MICHELLE

They were in the cabinet.

SHEILA

Who put them there?

MICHELLE

Ken must have.

SHEILA

Ken bought glasses?

MICHELLE

I know, right? Maybe they were a Christmas gift from a client.

SHEILA

That seems likely.

MICHELLE

It does?

SHEILA

Yes.

MICHELLE

Good.

SHEILA

(*after a pause*) Do you want a drink?

MICHELLE

I think I do.

SHEILA

Sometimes it helps to have one before your guests arrive.

MICHELLE

I just feel so nervous.

SHEILA

You have to relax, but don't try to relax, then you'll just worry about how much you're not relaxing. Just sit down and have a drink with me. Repeat after me—People love my parties and tonight's will be another great success.

MICHELLE

(laughing) People love my parties and tonight's will be another great success. *(pause)* Thank you.

SHEILA

It's silly to be so stressed—not that many people are coming, right?

MICHELLE

Ten or so, I think. It's going to be under-attended this year. I can't help that, Sheila. Some people had weddings. Do you believe that? Who gets married this close to Christmas?

SHEILA

They probably got a deal on the hall. It is a Friday.

MICHELLE

Probably. *(Pause)* I'm going to say something.

SHEILA

Okay. Did you just say you're going to say something because you're scared to say the thing and now that you've said that, you're locked into saying the real thing?

MICHELLE

Yes I did.

SHEILA

I thought so.

MICHELLE

I am secretly afraid that people lied about having other things to go to.

----END----

---Start---

SHEILA
You've moved out?

MICHELLE
Yes.

SHEILA
When?

MICHELLE
About a month ago.

SHEILA
(*A statement*) You're throwing a party in a house in which you no longer reside.

MICHELLE
I did reside here when I sent out the invitations.

SHEILA
Okay. Does Ken know you're here, with all these people?

MICHELLE
No. I didn't figure there was any reason to tell him. He'd be out of town. You certainly won't tell him.

SHEILA
What if he'd had the locks changed or something?

MICHELLE
He did.

SHEILA
What?!?!

MICHELLE
We got in a big fight and I said, "I'm leaving!" I slept at my sister's and when I came back the next day, my key didn't work. But he forgot to change the garage door code. I don't think he knows how to do that.

SHEILA
You broke into this house?!?!

MICHELLE

I hardly think it's breaking in if you know the code.

SHEILA

I think I disagree.

MICHELLE

There's no point in arguing about it now. It's underway. Why don't you call the ladies in and we'll start sorting cookies?

SHEILA

(A moment, then opens door and calls out) We're going to start sorting cookies in a minute. Are you coming in? *(A muffled response)* Okay! *(To MICHELLE)* They said give them a minute and a half.

MICHELLE

Okay. Actually, that's good. That gives us enough time to throw Fran's cookies out.

SHEILA

You can't really do that.

MICHELLE

Why not? She'll never know.

SHEILA

When she doesn't have a dozen of her own, she'll get a little suspicious.

MICHELLE

Good thinking. Save a dozen to give back to her. *(A look from SHEILA)* I'm not passing out these cookies, Sheila. I have enough working against me right now--I don't need to make people sick on top of it. I made two kinds of cookies. We'll pass the chocolate centered things off as Fran's. Pretend I gave her the recipe. She made them and they're great!

SHEILA

Fine. It's your party.

MICHELLE

You bet it is. *(She pulls 12 cookies from Fran's box.)*

SHEILA

What if she goes to throw something out when she comes back? She'll see them in there.

MICHELLE

No, she won't. We'll throw them in the yard. The squirrels can eat them. There won't be any evidence.