

The Christmas Coffee

Ann Pugh



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THE CHRISTMAS COFFEE

By Ann Pugh

This 15-minute comedy is easily staged in a theatre or recreation room. See the list of simple props found in the Production Notes. The comedy can appropriately precede a coffee hour. Suggestions for a Reader's Theatre performance are in the Production Notes.

CAST

RUBY: Committee Chair, impatient perfectionist and egocentric head honcho.

SANDRA: Committee Member, loyal, sensitive, and easily intimidated.

LUCY: Committee Member, more of a joiner than a worker, vain, never intimidated.

HIP-HOP RAPPER: M or F.

SANTA: Optional, wears traditional costume with a bag of goodies over his shoulder.

Setting:

The Day Room in a Senior Center.

Time:

A Morning in Late December.

Pre-curtain music: Christmas music establishes the mood for the annual free "Christmas Coffee." The music should seem to come from an unseen lobby, where guests are gathering to await the opening of the doors into the Day Room.

The Day Room is just off the imaginary lobby, which would be out in the audience area. Imaginary double-doors downstage center open into the Day Room, but the imaginary doors are now closed. Offstage left leads to a kitchen, a parking lot, etc.

At rise the Day Room is empty except for three card tables with decks of playing cards, plus four metal chairs holding a cardboard box and three brown paper grocery sacks with props.

(RUBY enters hurriedly from left, followed closely by SANDRA and LUCY. Each wears a reindeer antler headdress, but is otherwise tastefully dressed for the morning coffee. RUBY is in Christmas-red, practical SANDRA is in Christmas-green. LUCY, the most fashionable, is in white with jewelry. Each has a purse and a container holding small props. Music fades as dialogue begins.)

RUBY: *(breathless)* Whew! That's it. The last load! *(sets box #1 and purse on chair)* Traffic was horrible! We have to be ready in twenty minutes!

SANDRA: *(cheerfully, sets box #2 and purse on chair)* I hope I remembered to lock my car.

LUCY: *(unhappily sets a boutique store shopping bag on card table and fusses with antler headdress)* Ruby, would you kindly tell me just why I have to wear these tacky reindeer antlers! *(disgusted)* It's ruined my hair-do!

RUBY: Our antlers are a tradition now because they were so popular at our Christmas Coffee last year. Remember the Living and Lifestyle photographer from *The Post* ran my picture on the front page and--

LUCY: *(interrupting)* I wasn't here last December. *(smugly)* I was on a cruise to Hawaii with my daughter, remember?

SANDRA: *(enthusiastically, to RUBY, while clearing tables of cards)* I remember! Lucy's daughter won the trip in the Elk's Club lottery!

LUCY: *(pointedly, correcting SANDRA)* Lion's Club lottery.

SANDRA: *(apologetically)* I always forget which is which. Anyhow, Lucy showed our bridge club those cute shots of her in a grass skirt and that...uh, pretty...thing of orchids...*(embarrassed)* I forgot what it's called.

RUBY: *(impatiently)* It's a lei, Sandra. You should try taking ginkgo for your memory.

SANDRA: Does it help?

RUBY: Let's hope. Now, back to these antlers. The photographer from *The Post* is Mary Blain's niece, and she told Mary she'll definitely be here today.

SANDRA: (*gasping, excitedly*) Really? For sure?

RUBY: (*nods*) Mary says her niece is doing a Feature Story about reindeers.

SANDRA: (*delighted*) We're in her story! My grandkids will think "Wow! How co-ool"!

LUCY: I think how stupid! My hair will look all--

RUBY: (*interrupting, impatiently*) Enough! I have to open those lobby doors (*indicating down center*) in exactly eighteen minutes and introduce the Madrigal Secular Voice Choir.

SANDRA: Those young boys are so cute in their long red robes with those tall (*gesturing*) pleated collars.

RUBY: (*with superior air*) It's called a ruff. A Renaissance ruff. (*beat*) Girls, you can move these chairs over out of the way. (*SANDRA and LUCY begin moving the chairs downstage left and right*) The choir will enter from (*indicating stage right*) the dressing room and form a semi-circle behind our serving table. Their performance has to begin on time.

SANDRA: Uh huh. The invitation said they'll sing at 10:30. Eleanor in the office did a lovely job with the invitations.

RUBY: No, Eleanor did a miserable job!

SANDRA: (*blankly*) Oh?

RUBY: (*super critical*) She used the cheapest copy paper! Ordinary font! Black ink! The woman has no class! I had to re-do them. I chose a dignified font, and in color. (*smugly*) Our red and green color-scheme, naturally.

SANDRA: They turned out beautiful.

RUBY: (*correcting*) Beautifully. (*beat*) Thank you.

LUCY: I bet she's ticked off! Eleanor can be a bitch! (*shrugs at SANDRA's gasp of disapproval*)

RUBY: (*shrugs*) I can't be bothered about Eleanor. She's only a secretary. I always say when you want something done right, do it yourself. (*checks boxes and bags*) Now, I trust you girls brought everything I assigned you.

LUCY: (*offhand*) I'm sure I did. (*concentrating on flecking dust from clothing and using purse mirror to primp makeup and hair*)

SANDRA: (*somewhat worried*) Golly, Ruby, I hope I did, but lately I can't seem to remember where I put things. I'll try those pills you suggested.

RUBY: (*interrupting impatiently*) At least you remembered to wear green. It's important that our color scheme be coordinated in every way. Everything has to be precisely perfect. (*moves table #1 to precisely center stage*) There! Now, let's link the tables together.

(*SANDRA obediently moves table #2 upstage of table #1*)

RUBY: No, Sandra! Not like that! Don't you remember the tables have to go (*indicating a line parallel to footlights*) across the room?

SANDRA: Sorry, (*moves table #2 left of table #1*) I guess I forgot.

RUBY: Yes, (*moves table #3 to right of table #1*) so it seems. There! (*proudly admiring the table placement*) Now, when we open the double-doors (*indicating imaginary double-doors downstage center*) and I step out to welcome the guests, they'll have a magnificent view of our elegant table surrounded by the choir.

LUCY: (*moves downstage, listening to guests out in the lobby*) Sounds like a big crowd.

(*RUBY whips a colorful red and/or green table cloth or sheet from SANDRA's box # 2*)

RUBY: You did iron this, didn't you? (*flips cloth open, inspects it*)

SANDRA: Yes, I did.

RUBY: Steam press? (*spreading cloth on table with SANDRA's help*)

SANDRA: Yes, ma'am.

(LUCY has approached the double-doors and reaches for doorknob at the very instant that RUBY happens to glance her way)

RUBY: *(firmly, a command)* Lucy, don't you open those doors!

LUCY: I only wanted to take a peak and--

SANDRA: *(shocked)* Lucy Jennings, I can't believe you'd say that!

LUCY: *(confused)* Say what?

SANDRA: *(in embarrassed semi-whisper)* Take a leak? That's so unlike you!

LUCY: *(exasperated)* I said I wanted to take a peek. Why would you think I would say that?

SANDRA: I'm so sorry, dear, but I assumed you wanted to go out through the lobby to get to the rest room. Forgive me.

LUCY: *(ticked off)* You need a hearing aid! I said take a —

SANDRA: What?

LUCY: Exactly.

RUBY: *(interrupts, adjusting cloth so downstage side reaches floor)* You don't need to peak. I can tell you the lobby is filling up fast.

SANDRA: They certainly start arriving early.

RUBY: Our annual Christmas Coffee brings them a half-hour early.

LUCY: How many do you think?

RUBY: Well, you remember last year we had-- No, you weren't here last year.

END OF FREEVIEW

You'll want to read and perform this show!