

Turn up the Christmas cheer: don't just leave the dancing for the office party. Make the most of the chance to listen to upbeat, if a little cheesy, Christmas music throughout the festive season and really work up a sweat cleaning the house, cooking and putting up the tree!

Christmas Hospital

January came in with a biting touch and a grey mantle that year. Nurse Jenny Drury thought as she huddled further down into her practical new winter coat and quickened her step back to the hospital.

The new coat was warm which the first consideration, but she wasn't very happy about. Money wasn't too plentiful, in Jenny's case, for a warm and snappy wardrobe. Other nurses such as Angela and Pat spent all their money on clothes and make-up and visits to the hairdressers, and both of them could ask for help from home if they ran short... But Jenny couldn't do that. There was a large family of young ones at home.

A large happy family, she added in her mind and swallowed hard and fought down the homesickness that threatened to much at this time a year

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Jenny wasn't going home for Christmas.

She forgot for moment the pleasure of this coat and that had been bought to bolster op her ego. And make here look rather special so the next time she passed David Redmayne in the street, he wouldn't just be casually friendly, but would stop and linger as if seeing her for the first time, and will be stunned by her appearance, and never look at another girl again.

The shop Jenny was passing had a mirror in the side of the window. She looked critically ay herself in it, and approached more slowly. It didn't help. She saw a girl who looked exactly as her elder brother, Jim always saw her: a nice brown girl Brown because her hair and



Make a Christmas list: plan what meals you will be making in advance and what ingredients you need, write a list and stick to it - don't be tempted to add in extras when you get to the shops.

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dark lashed eyes were that color, and her healthy-glowing skin had a very slight tinge, even after summer had gone, and brown because she couldn't drop the habit of choosing new clothes in that shade., which was hardly the colour to attract that handsome young man, David Redmayne, who was R.S.O. at the Shaclestock's hospital. A friendly and popular young man, the very dream of every young unattached nurse to the special girl in his life

Jenny left the mirrored shop window behind and battled against the knife-like wind that shot round the corner to meet her and as she bent her head and half-closed her eyes against it, she thought despairingly that she should have settled for the warm red coat the assistant in the department store had tried to persuade you to buy. But it had made her look like a robin, Jenny thought, and not at all glamorous like the staff nurse on the cardiac ward, who wore sky blue in all seasons and was really fabulous with her natural blonde hair and wide tip-tilted blue eyes. The red coat wouldn't have let Jenny look glamorous like Angela, either, who could wear white with cool success, and make all then whistle on her ward even when she appeared in ordinary old uniform on a sharp frosty morning.

Not glamorous like Pat, either, who favored green, all shades of green, because she had auburn and played up to that color. Jenny sighed, pushed determinately the question of lack of cash and glamour firmly into the background and thought of the children on her ward, and of the things they could make with the crepe paper she had bought, and the foil she had begged, borrowed and saved throughout the past year.

She was so engrossed in her thoughts that she hardly noticed David Redmayne cross the road, waving to her as he sprinted among the traffic to reach her side.

"Jenny, you were daydreaming!" he told her with mock severity. "Saw you while you were in the bookshop."

"I was thinking of the children," she admitted, but she wouldn't let herself meet his eyes because it wouldn't do to let him see how he affected her. Such wild excitement for meeting him, yet to him she was just another friendly nurse

"Me too, he agreed, and plunged into the external discussion about the Christmas play. "We must somehow get a hold of a crook for the leading shepherd. Anderson's too big and clumsy to make do with a cardboard crook. Besides, we must have the proper things. The kids love it. I wish we'd get more money to play around with.

"Money, yes," she sighed. The hospital wasn't too badly equipped, but at the same time it wasn't a streamlined modern hospital. Neither the one thing, nor the other, and so it just missed qualifying for the extras that would have been nice but could have been done without. As for instance, proper things for the Christmas play.

The day-nurses had made crowns for the three kings in their off duty hours. They had used gold paper off chocolates, and scarlet and green tinsel shapes stuffed with cotton wool for the "jewels" and very effective too. The night nurses had sewn the djellabahs for the shepherd's from deckchair striped cotton, and robes for the kings from cast-off curtains from home. But they still needed a convincing looking casket and goblet for the "gifts" and the crook.

"I asked how much one would cost," David was saying "At a pinch, I could buy it myself, but it will be so super-looking and it will show up everything else. I don't know". "What do you think Jenny?"

"I was wondering if we could make a crook with a long cane and a wax modeling-clay head, that's if Bobby Anderson doesn't knock it out of shape at the crucial moment."

Christmas Coffee Break Basket



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"Medical students!" David said with resignation. "Still, it's an idea." And then the great bulk of the hospital building appeared, and that delectable conversation was over. David left her to go in the nurse's entrance and didn't suggest any further meetings either for discussions of for anything else. He just waved cheerily and said goodbye, as he would have to any other nurse...

She watched him go. His height dwarfed that of other men, and in her eyes he was perfect. She liked his voice best of all-deep, pleasant, well modulated. She had heard it said that he had a pleasant tenor voice and had sung in the choir at home. She collected and treasured those odd scraps of information about him, but he never told him any himself. They only met by accident in the street and walked together back to the hospital, and on those occasions they talked shop.

Not a lot on which to base the whole of one's love, devotion, and loyalty, she told herself scathingly. He wasn't even aware of her as a person. Just a pair of ears to listen willingly when he wanted to discuss the social activities of the hospital, and the children in Jenny's ward [on whom he doubted] when there wasn't another

willing pair of ears handy, she told herself.

Jenny pulled a face. And that wasn't often, in all conscience. If the blue-eyed staff-nurse on Cardiac wasn't laying in wait to claim his attention, then Hilary Sadler-the youngish and very well-groomed Almoner-would be about and make a beeline for him. David appeared to like them both-all the younger women in the hospital. Jennifer brightened as she recalled that he didn't appear to show any preference for any particular one of them, there might just be hope that one day he would notice her...

