

## CHRISTMAS DINNER

CAST – GRAN – Grumpy – intolerant – old-fashioned  
PEGGY – Mother hen, peacemaker  
SUSAN – Daughter  
ROY – Her boyfriend  
MISS JONES – Her next door. Spinsterish

(Table centre stage – Peggy behind it – chair to left with Gran sat on it reading the paper – pots, pans and veg on table – Peggy busy preparing

PEGGY – Mother do you think you could possibly put that paper down and give me a hand. There's still a lot to do you know

GRAN – Oh do I have to? You know how I hate peeling veg. It's a big fuss over nothing if you ask me. It's the same every year. You spend all Christmas Eve getting everything ready just so we can stuff ourselves rigid all day.

PEGGY – I don't see you refusing anything. Who ate nearly all 4 dozen mince pies and nearly as many sausage rolls last year?

GRAN – I was doing you a favour. I didn't want them to go to waste.

PEGGY – Oh I see and here was the rest of us thinking you were just being a pig

GRAN – Oh charming. That's not very nice saying that about your poor old mother (Peggy rolls her eyes) Anyway you know I'm not keen on turkey so I have to fill up on something. I'd much rather have a nice plate of fish and chips.

PEGGY – Mother we have this every year. How many more times. We are not having fish and chips for our Christmas dinner. It wouldn't be right. Besides we've got the boys and their families coming. What would they think if they saw a bit pile of battered cod instead of a turkey in the middle of the table?

GRAN – I shouldn't think the kids would notice. I've never seen such a greedy lot. They eat anything and everything

PEGGY – Must run in the family

GRAN – What?

PEGGY Nothing

GRAN – Who's coming then?

PEGGY – Well there's Craig and Julie and their 3 and David and Anna and their 4 so that's 11 coming and you, me, Susan and Roy so that's 15 altogether. That's why there is a lot to do

GRAN – It’s ridiculous. Why those boys of yours had to have so many children I don’t know and when our Susan starts breeding there’ll be even more of us. (hand on forehead) If God spares me of course

PEGGY – I don’t mind. I love to see them all at Christmas tucking into my Christmas dinner

GRAN – Who’s Roy?

PEGGY – What?

GRAN – You said Susan and Roy. Who’s Roy?

PEGGY – You know very well who Roy is. He’s our Susan’s boyfriend

GRAN – Oh is she still going out with that daft lump. I thought she might have gone off him by now. I thought boyfriends were supposed to take you out. He never takes her anywhere. They just sit on the sofa in our front room gazing at each other. It’s not right

PEGGY – They’re saving up. Between you and me I think there might be an announcement tomorrow.

GRAN – What sort of announcement? You don’t think she’s pregnant do you?

PEGGY (exasperated) No Mother I don’t. I think they might be getting engaged

**GRAN - Oh good. Then they can get married and we can reclaim our sofa**

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PEGGY – You’re such an old romantic (Gran pulls a face)

GRAN – What time are they getting here tomorrow. Not too early I hope. Those kids are very unruly. They wear me out

PEGGY - I do hope you’re not going to moan all Christmas Mother. You do make it hard work. They should all be here by 12o’clock just in time for sherry and mince pies

GRAN – Make sure you keep that sherry away from that Julie. She was as drunk as a skunk by the Queen’s speech last year. Our Craig needs to keep his eye on her and I suppose the baby will cry all night

PEGGY – Oh Mother. Anyway he isn’t a baby any more. He’s nearly 2

GRAN – That’s even worse. He’ll be mobile. I prefer them when they sit still

PEGGY – Mother will you be quiet and help me peel all these vegetables. I’ve still got to air the beds and get the sleeping bags down from the attic for the children

SUSAN – (entering with Roy) Hello everyone. Brr it's freezing out there. I'm glad you've got that oven going Mum

PEGGY – Yes the first batch of mince pies are in, they should be done soon. I think I'll cook the ham this afternoon. There's never any room in the oven on Christmas morning

GRAN – All this fuss. When I was little before the war we didn't go to all this fuss. Just an extra roast potato with your dinner and a mince pie with a cup of tea later on and then when the war came along. Well you were grateful for what you got

ROY – Which war was that then (Susan giggles and nudges him in the ribs)

GRAN – (giving him a dirty look) Cheeky bugger. What do you mean by that? What did he mean by that Peggy?

PEGGY – Oh he was only having a joke Mother. You were only having a joke weren't you Roy?

ROY – Eh? Oh yes. Sorry .....Mrs.....er Gran

GRAN – Don't you Gran me you cheeky b.....

PEGGY – Mother shut up. Susan go and get the sausages out of the freezer will you?. 4 dozen should be enough (Susan exits)

GRAN – 4 dozen sausages. I've never heard the like. What's for tea Peggy? Can we have fish and chips?.

PEGGY – No. I haven't got time to fry fish and cut up chips. I've got a nice casserole out of the freezer. We'll have that with some nice crusty bread. Will you be staying for your tea Roy?

ROY – Oh er ....thank you. I don't mind if I do

GRAN – I bet you don't. Does your Mother recognise you when you do go home. It can't be that often. You're always here taking up room on our sofa

PEGGY – Mother will you be quiet. Take no notice of her Roy. Her bark's worse than her bite (sound of doorbell – shouts off) Susan get the door will you.

SUSAN – (off) O.K. (enters with Miss Jones and a carrier bag full of sausages)

PEGGY – (looks round) Oh hello Miss Jones. How are you today?

GRAN – She'll be wanting to borrow something I'll be bound

MISS JONES – I'm very well thank you. My what a lovely smell

PEGGY – Oh that'll be my mince pies. Susan go and get them out of the oven will you. The next lot to go in are on the side (Susan exits)

MISS J. – Oh mince pies my favourite

GRAN – You can't have one. They'll be too hot. Health and safety. You might burn yourself

PEGGY – Oh Mother. I'm sure Miss Jones has her own mince pies

MISS J. – Oh yes. Of course

GRAN – What can we do for you or did you just call to eye up our mince pies?

MISS J. (gives a nervous laugh) Oh no. I wondered if perhaps you could spare a cup of sugar? I seem to have run out and the shops will be so crowded at this time on Christmas Eve.

PEGGY – Oh of course we can (shouts off) Susan put some sugar in a cup for Miss Jones will you?

SUSAN (off) O.K.

Miss J. Thank you. Very kind of you I'm sure. I suppose all your family are coming for Christmas dinner tomorrow? (Susan comes in with cup which she gives to Miss J.)

GRAN – They'll be 15 of us tomorrow. What are you doing? Not that that's an invitation to come here mind

PEGGY – MOTHER

MISS J. – (flustered) Oh no. I'm sure I wasn't ..... of course I have had several invitations but I decided just to have a quiet Christmas this year....

GRAN – What on your own. You don't need to be on your own. You can feed some of ours

PEGGY – (warningly) Mother

MISS J. – Well I won't be entirely on my own. I do have my little Hector you know

GRAN – Your little what?

MISS J. – Hector. My little doggy. I suppose you'll be having a turkey?

GRAN – Oh yes. It's a wonder it didn't grab you on the way in, it's that big and a ham and 4 dozen sausages and mince pies and a dirty great Christmas pudding

PEGGY – (drops what she’s doing) NUTS!!!!!!!!!!

GRAN – Now Peggy there’s no need for that

PEGGY – No I’ve just remembered I haven’t bought any nuts and our Craig loves them

GRAN – Tell him to bring his own. I can’t be doing with nuts. They get under my teeth. I hope you’ve got some nice chocolates withn soft centres

ROY – Would you like me to pop down to Sainsburys and get some?

PEGGY – Oh would you Roy? That’s very kind of you there’s a fiver under the clock. Take that

ROY – Oh no I’m buying. Think of them as my contribution to the Christmas dinner

GRAN – ‘Bout time you started paying your way. Whilst you’re there get Miss Jones a bag of sugar

MISS J - . Oh no. honestly...

PEGGY- Mother I shalln’t tell you again. Behave yourself. Right off you go Roy. Susan don’t you go. I need you to keep your eye on the mince pies. When this last lot are done you can put the ham in.

SUSAN - Alright Mum

PEGGY – Sit down Miss Jones. Gran will make you a nice cup of tea in a minute (Gran throws her a look of total amazement)

GRAN – Eh?

MISS J. Oh no. I won’t intrude any longer. I must get home and start preparing my own Christmas feast

GRAN – Are you having a turkey

MISS J. – Er no. it’s hardly worth it for one

GRAN – What about your little Hector. Wouldn’t he like a chew on a turkey leg?

PEGGY – Mother...

MISS J. Oh no. He’s quite happy with his little doggy bics.

GRAN – What are you having if you’re not having turkey?

MISS J - I er... I thought I'd have a change this year. I've got a nice piece of cod and some new potatoes

PEGGY – STUFFING

GRAN – Peggy! Language. What's got into you this afternoon?

PEGGY – I've just remembered I've not made the stuffing. Oh they'll just have to have packet stuff.

GRAN – They won't notice the difference, they eat that quick. You go to all this trouble and wear yourself out and it's gone in 10 minutes

PEGGY – (to Susan) Could you set the table in the dining room later Susan for 15. There's 2 dozen crackers on the sideboard. Make sure everyone gets one. Perhaps you'd like to take one home Miss Jones. We've got plenty.

MISS J. – Oh.....no..I couldn't really. It's very kind I'm sure....Well perhaps....

GRAN – Don't be daft Peggy. What good is it giving her a cracker? She's no-one to hold the other end.

PEGGY – Mother really

GRAN – I'm just saying. Perhaps Hector could hold it in his teeth

ROY – (entering with a big bag) Here I am. I've got every kind of nut I could find and some dates and dried fruit. Oh and a box of soft centres for you Gran

GRAN – Oh that's nice of you. I've always said you're a nice boy haven't I Peggy?

PEGGY – That's not quite how I remember it but still. It was very good of you Roy

GRAN- He'll make our Susan a lovely husband one day

PEGGY – Mother hush

ROY – Well while we're on the subject (takes Susan's hand) Is it alright if Susan and I announce our engagement tomorrow after lunch?

PEGGY – Oh of course it is (Miss J. looks excited and wipes away a tear)

MISS J. – How lovely

GRAN – Are you sure about this Roy. I always thought you were gay

ROY – Gay me? I'm not even happy, but I do want to marry Susan

GRAN – The sooner the better. It'll be nice to get back in our front room won't it Peggy?

ROY – We thought we might have a June wedding . We’re already looking round for a flat

GRAN – I know what we’ll give you for a wedding present. You can have the sofa out of the front room. It’s knackered anyway you’ve spent so long sat on it and worse I shouldn’t wonder

PEGGY – MOTHER. Take no notice of her you two. I think we can come up with something better than that. Right that’s the veg. done. The mince pies are done. The ham’s in the oven. Go and put the kettle on Susan(Susan exits) I think it’s time for a nice cuppa

GRAN – About time too. I’m parched

MISS J. – I really must be going, it’s time for Hector’s tea (takes her leaves. Susan comes back in)

SUSAN – Mum I’ve just had some text messages from the boys. They won’t be coming until Boxing Day. Craig and his lot have all got funny tummies and David and his lot are full of colds. They’re ever so sorry but they’ll ring in the morning

GRAN – Typical. After all our hard work Peggy

PEGGY – Oh dear. Oh dear. Still I suppose it can’t be helped and it’s only one day when all said and done. Everything will keep for another day after all

GRAN – You k now what this means don’t you Peggy

PEGGY – No what?

GRAN – You won’t be cooking turkey tomorrow. We could have fish and chips

PEGGY – Oh Mother really. Susan and Roy won’t want fish and chips for Christmas dinner

ROY – Oh we don’t mind honestly

GRAN – See. They’re all loved up anyway. They won’t care what they eat

PEGGY – Oh all right (laughing) I give in. fish and chips for 4. We’ll have it here in the kitchen

GRAN – You k now what our Peggy, as it’s the season of good will why don’t you send Susan round to her-next-door and see if she wants to join us

PEGGY – What a lovely idea. Go on Susan and ask her (Susan exits)

GRAN – (shouts after her) Tell her to bring that bit of cod she was going to poach (sees Peggy’s look) Well it’ll only go to waste and tell her to leave that dog at home. It’s bad enough feeding all them kids without the neighbours’ dogs. I don’t want people thinking I’ve gone soft in my old age.

PEGGY (exits and re-enters with a bag of potatoes) Right Mother seeing as this was your idea (puts the bag down in front of her) you can prepare the chips while I have a nice cup of tea! (sits down) I've done enough for one day!