



Happy Holidays!!!

It's my favorite time of year! Yes, I know, it's everyone's favorite. And why not? People are generally in a good mood. There are Christmas carols in the air. Treats you only get once a year. You see friends you don't see as often as you'd like. Twinkly lights are everywhere. What's not to love?

I admit I am slightly insane when it comes to Christmas decorating. I'm doing my version of Christmas lite this year. I realize it might not look like Christmas lite but for



me, it is. I only have decorations in the living room, dining room and hallway. Oh sure, there might be a few Santas scattered here and there . . . ho, ho, ho!!!

One of the things I love most about this time of year are traditions that are unique to every family. Even though my kids are grown—we'll still watch the
best ever
Christmas
movie—Muppets



Christmas Carol—together. And we'll watch It's a Wonderful Life. We'll have a special meatless Christmas Eve dinner that's evolved through the years—potato pancakes made by my husband, shrimp, pierogis and tomato soup. I have no idea how this developed. I have Manheim Steamroller Christmas music playing throughout the house and in my car. And on Christmas morning we'll have kielbasa and mimosas (an adult tradition). I'll have at least one stress related meltdown and that too is a tradition. But the mimosas help.

I love Christmas movies (I will have A Christmas Story—or as we call it around here—The Boy Who Shoots His Eye Out) on TV all day on Christmas Day. And I love Christmas stories. I love writing them and reading them. My latest—Same Time, Next Christmas (e-edition) is on sale right now. Yay!!! You can read Chapter One on my website.

<http://tinyurl.com/jk6vrum>

As I said last month—this is the season of memories.

I have wonderful memories of magical, perfect Christmases from my childhood. Where the decorations were perfect and the tree was perfect and the holiday treats were perfect and everyone received the perfect gift and everything was, well, perfect. I want my family to have those same sorts of memories. But my memories must be clouded by the passage of time. My childhood Christmases couldn't possibly have been perfect. Real life is not perfect.

And, you know, when I try to remember specific memories about those years, I can only really remember one. I grew up in the Air Force and one year, my dad was away. A few days before Christmas, my mom said she had a special present for me and I should go look by the tree. So I went into the living room and there was my dad. I remember how he hugged me and how his uniform was all cold from being outside and how he smelled of frosty air and love. And that was the best Christmas present I ever got. It was perfect. And so is the memory.

I have finally learned that it doesn't really matter if everything is perfect. If the tree falls down. If dinner is three hours late. If you have a small fire . . .

This year I'm trying to let go of my expectations about perfection and just enjoy the season. Maybe I have finally accepted that the magic of Christmas has nothing to do with perfect. As long as you are with the people you love, whether in person or only in spirit, Christmas will always be perfect.

Best Wishes & thank you all for a fabulous year!!!!

Victoria