

AUDITION

CHRISTMAS SPECIAL | A VERY BERRETA CHRISTMAS

Written by

Brady Brown

Created by

Brady Brown

Produced by

TheVPN (<http://www.vpntv.net>)

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MAIN CAST

JOSH HUTCHERSON.....ALEX BERRETA

ALYSON STONER.....ALISHA HALL

PATRICK DEMPSEY.....MICHAEL BERRETA

AMY ADAMS.....PAULA SMITH

GUEST CAST

AMANDA PEET.....ALYSSA HALL

MARK RUFFALO.....WILL HALL

SPECIAL GUEST CAST

LAUREN GRAHAM.....MIRANDA BERRETA

FADE IN:

EXT. BERRETA HOUSEHOLD - NIGHT

CUE MUSIC: Jingle Bells - *Instrumental*

Snow, almost in sync with the holiday tune, fall overs the already covered, two-story home. The ground is nothing but a sheet of white, which matches the roof of the house.

CHRISTMAS EVE

-- passes over the screen.

CUT TO:

INT. BERRETA HOUSEHOLD - LIVING ROOM

CLOSE UP: COOKIES. Christmas trees, Santas, reindeer, candy canes, and any other holiday shape you can think of. They're iced to perfection, and the view is magnificent, until a HAND reaches over and grabs one.

PULL AWAY as ALEX BERRETA chomps down on one of the cookies, crumbs falling onto his dark brown jacket.

Behind him, a CHRISTMAS TREE stands, illuminating the entire room. Stockings hang on the shelf beside it, and a wreath hangs on the window.

MICHAEL BERRETA comes walking in, wearing one of the tackiest Christmas sweaters once can imagine. He notices his son devouring one of the sweets.

MICHAEL

Alex! You're supposed to wait until Alisha, Alyssa and Will get here!

ALEX

(mid-bite)

I was not informed of this information.

MICHAEL

Just hurry up and finish it, your mom wants everything perfect for tonight.

Alex swallows the remains, and notices his father's sweater, instantly letting out a chuckle.

ALEX

What the heck are you wearing?

MICHAEL

Your mom picked it out for me. And
I...

(paining)

Love it.

WOMAN (O.S)

What about your sweater?

From around the corner, MIRANDA BERRETA, a beautiful woman, not a bad bone in her body, comes walking in. Her luscious chocolate hair warms the room, and her smile assists the tree in brightening it.

MICHAEL

Oh, nothing! I was just telling
Alex how much I loved it.

MIRANDA

(smiling)

Michael, we've been married sixteen
years, I've gained the ability to
tell when you're lying.

Michael lets out an awkward chuckle. Miranda pats him on the shoulder as:

MIRANDA

You can go change.

MICHAEL

(excited)

Really?

(bringing it down)

I mean... Really?

Miranda laughs, and Michael runs off. She takes a seat on the couch next to her son, Alex, who is watching something on the TELEVISION in front of him.

MIRANDA

So.

ALEX

(confused)

So...?

MIRANDA

You've been friends with Alisha for
almost two years now, right?

ALEX

Uh-huh...

MIRANDA

Have you... You know... Asked her yet?

ALEX

Mom!

MIRANDA

What? I'm a parent, I have the right to ask these questions.

ALEX

We're friends, Mom. Just *friends*.

MIRANDA

Okay, Sweetie.

She pats his arms and gets up, walking back to the kitchen, which happens to be directly behind the living room.

Michael comes back in, wearing a normal, navy sweater.

MICHAEL

Better.

Miranda laughs, and Michael walks over to her, bringing her in for a kiss. It lasts for only a few BEATS, but it's obvious that they have a love that's eternal.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

By the way, I never took the tag off the sweater.

MIRANDA

(smiling)

I was just about to ask you.

Miranda walks turns her attention to the pan on the stove in front of her. She grabs a spoon and shuffles the items inside around.

MIRANDA

Alex, what time did Alisha say she'd be here?

ALEX

Should be any minute.

KNOCK, KNOCK, KNOCK.

MIRANDA
 (chuckling)
 Weird how that works, doesn't it?
 (beat)
 Michael, can you watch these?

MICHAEL
 No, no. I can't keep anything from
 burning to save the life of me.

ALEX
 I'll get the door!

Alex gets up, walks to the door, and opens it...

Revealing ALISHA, ALYSSA and WILL HALL, all bundled up in an
 array of winter clothing. All three of them shake.

ALEX
 Hey.

ALISHA
 So, can we come in, or...?

ALEX
 Oh! Yeah, sure!

The Hall's enter, their shaking slowing down to a halt. They
 throw their coats on the COAT HANGER. Alyssa and Will walk
 towards Michael and Miranda, while Alisha stays with Alex.

WILL
 Sorry we're late, guys...
 (glancing at Alyssa)
 We ran into some complications.

ALYSSA
 Sorry. It was me. *There*. I said it.

WILL
 Nobody said I was referring to you.

ALYSSA
 It was implied.

And as Will goes in for a reply:

MIRANDA
 So, um... The ham's almost done,
 and the I just need to finish off
 these carrots, and we'll be set.

ALYSSA
Thanks again for inviting us,
Miranda.

MIRANDA
(smiling)
Our pleasure.

WILL
So, ready for the games tomorrow,
Michael.

MICHAEL
Oh, yeah. My money's on the Heat.

WILL
Really? If you take into account
the fact that --

MICHAEL
Will.

WILL
(realizing)
Sorry.

CUT TO Alex and Alisha, who sit on the couch, watching
someone on the television.

ALEX
No way!

ALISHA
Yes way!

ALEX
There is no way Jessie McCaloway
and Andrew Shorts are dating.

ALISHA
She told me *yesterday*.

ALEX
But *I* broke up with Jessie three
months ago.

ALISHA
You're right. She must still be
grieving over your three week
relationship with her.

ALEX
Exactly! Thank you!

Alisha glances at the adults, and then back at Alex.

ALISHA
So, have you told your mom what you plan on doing after school?

ALEX
No. I'm afraid of how she'll react.

ALISHA
Same here. *Both* my parents want me to be a psychiatrist, but... I just don't want to.

ALEX
But... But I think I'm going to tell her tonight. If I don't hurl first.

They both turn to face their parents, as we DRIFT OVER towards them. Miranda continues to stir the contents of her pan in front of Alyssa.

Michael and Will stand beside the FIREPLACE, each holding a glass of BOURBON.

MIRANDA
So, are you and Will...

ALYSSA
I wish I knew the answer.

Miranda rubs her friend's arm.

MIRANDA
Hey, it'll get better. It always does.

ALYSSA
We just... We don't get along anymore, and we've talked about it, but... we don't want to hurt Alisha.

MIRANDA
(comforting)
I'm sure she would understand.

ALYSSA
I really hope so...

PAN OVER to the two husbands, each taking a sip from their bourbon filled glass.

WILL

I don't know, Michael... I just...
I can't do it anymore.

MICHAEL

Hey, man, you and Alyssa had that spark at one point. You should be able to get it back.

WILL

I'm pretty positive that's not going to happen.

MICHAEL

We'll be here for you if you need us, Will. Promise.

ALEX (O.S)

Hey, Mom.

SWISH PAN as Alex stands, facing his mother.

MIRANDA

Yes, Sweetie?

ALEX

Can I...talk to you?

MIRANDA

Of course.

(beat)

Alyssa, will you watch these?

Alyssa takes over the cooking as Miranda walks to the couch, taking a seat by her son.

MIRANDA (O.S)

What is it?

ALEX

Um... I was just thinking...
About...after high school.

MIRANDA

Okay.

ALEX

I, um... I...

(beat)

I want to be an actor.

MIRANDA
 (smiling)
 Of course you do. You always have.

ALEX
 No, but... I want to move to Los Angeles after I graduate.

MIRANDA
 (taken slightly back)
 Oh.

ALEX
 Yeah...
 (beat)
 You're not...upset, are you?

MIRANDA
 Upset? Alex, why on earth would I be upset?

Alex shrugs.

MIRANDA (CONT'D)
 Look, I don't have all the answers. I can't tell you where you're going to end up five years from now, or even tomorrow.
 (beat; smiling)
 But if you want to be an actor, then you go be an actor, because I know, from the bottom of my heart, that you're going to do outstanding at whatever you choose to do.
 (beat)
 And trust me when I tell you that your father and I will be your *biggest* fans. No matter what.

ALEX
 Thanks, Mom.

They both embrace in a hug. A loving a hug. A hug a son and mother should share. They break apart.

MIRANDA
 Now, how about we eat?

Alex smiles as his mother stands and walks back.

Alisha scoots back over to Alex, grinning.

ALISHA
That's great!

ALEX
Oh my God, I thought I was going to
throw up the entire time.

ALISHA
But she thinks it's great. That's
amazing, Alex.

ALEX
Yep.

Alex stands and walks to his mother; Alisha walks to hers.

ALISHA
Hey, Mom.

ALYSSA
Yeah, Honey?

ALISHA
Can I...talk to you and Dad later?

ALYSSA
About what?

ALISHA
School.

ALYSSA
(smiling)
Sure.

MIRANDA
Okay, everyone, if you all could
bring at least one thing to the
table, we can eat!

But Alex notices something in the living room.

ALEX
Wait! Look at the TV.

ANGLE ON: TELEVISION. It's a NEWS CAST. The headline reads
**MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN ATTEMPTS TO TELL SANTA HER "CHRISTMAS
LIST"** And it begins to show a video:

PAULA SMITH sits on "SANTA'S" lap, her legs flailing wildly,
a very long piece of paper in her hand.

PAULA
Santa!!

SANTA
Someone call security!

PAULA
What?! Why?! I've been good!

SECURITY comes and picks Paula, her legs still failing.

PAULA (CONT'D)
Hey!! SAANNNTTTTAAA!!

They drag her away, but she continues to fight.

CUT BACK TO: EVERYONE. They all stare at the screen, shocked and horrified.

MICHAEL
What in the world...is wrong with
that woman?

ALISHA
Oh my gosh...

ALEX
Off of that note! Let's eat!

Everyone grabs a bowl, plate, or something of the same matter, and walks into the DINING ROOM.

They all set them down on the table, and begin to take their seats.

FOCUS ON: CHAIR. Alyssa and Will both grab for the same one, and they glance at one another. Will sighs, lets go, and moves to the next seat. Alyssa looks down.

After they've all been seated:

MIRANDA
And, Michael, would you please say
grace?

MICHAEL
Of course.

Everyone holds hands, but we notice Alyssa and Will are reluctant to do so. They do anyway.

And as Michael begins to bless the food in front of them, we PULL AWAY as JINGLE BELLS sounds once more.

OUTSIDE. The snow continues to fall, covering the modern, Georgia household. And from the window, we notice that the Berreta's and the Hall's begin to scoop food onto their plate, all of them laughing.

And we faintly see Miranda lean over to Michael, a smile on both of their faces. Her words are prominent:

MIRANDA
Merry Christmas, Michael.

And as our Christmas tune replaces our normal one --

-- they kiss.

BLACKOUT.

END OF SPECIAL