



NOW SERVING FRESH DRAMA

The Christmas HotSeat

By Teri Kistler

CAST: 2 males, 2 females

Doctor: A divorced woman, clinical in her approach.

Patient One: Needs help with her holiday baking; she wears an apron.

Patient Two: Stereotypical nerd; he wears glasses and a pocket protector.

Patient Three: An older gentleman, gentle in an unsettling way.

RUN TIME: 12 minutes

PROPS

- Clipboard
- Large prescription pad
- Shopping bags
- Medical papers, card
- Paper reports

STORY

The Christmas HotSeat has been designed to aid patients in facing their Christmas stress. But when it is turned loose on the Doctor, and her own emptiness is revealed, one of her patients prescribes something much different than her own clinical prescriptions.

THEMES

Holiday stress. Loneliness. Christmas. Contentment.

The Christmas HotSeat

(We're in a waiting area that's cordoned off or with several chairs. PATIENT ONE, PATIENT TWO and PATIENT THREE are waiting for their turns. A large contraption, The HotSeat, is center stage. A sign reading HotSeat Therapy™ is nearby. The HotSeat is decorated with secular holiday decorations and has a large switch or push-button that activates it. The DOCTOR enters. She wears a lab coat and carries a clipboard and large prescription pad)

DOCTOR

Next please.

(PATIENT ONE, wearing an apron and carrying shopping bags, approaches. She steps forward to the DOCTOR)

DOCTOR (cont'd)

Sorry for your wait. Physician referral? Insurance card?

(DOCTOR holds out her hand for the papers without looking at PATIENT ONE)

PATIENT ONE

(Begins to sit down)

Here?

DOCTOR

No, no, no. Let us explain the procedure: We'll begin your session with a modified, rapid-fire word association. Our patented HotSeat XT 3000 forces your holiday anxiety to the surface, and as your specialist, we analyze and address your concerns. The HotSeat will then produce a task list customized to fit your needs. You may be seated now. Darling apron, by the way.

PATIENT ONE

Well, that's what I've come about.

DOCTOR

Don't tell me. Let's see what the HotSeat says.

(DOCTOR pushes the HotSeat button and begins writing rapidly on her prescription pad)

PATIENT ONE

(Reacting to the shock)

Ooh! Chocolate crinkles. ... Springerles. ... Peanut Brittle. ... Chex Mix. ... Snickerdoodles. ... Icing. ... Food coloring. ... Sugar cookies. ... Cookie sheets. ... Pre-heat oven. ... Cookie exchange –

DOCTOR

-- Hold on, let me tweak the settings. Now, tell us your time frame and the specific events involved in your holiday baking.

PATIENT ONE

It's a pretty long list.

DOCTOR

No problem. If the HotSeat's effects wane at all, we simply hit the HotButton for an additional pulse. There will be a ten dollar per pulse fee. One hundred dollars per pulse if we're billing an insurance company. Ready?

(PATIENT ONE nods, braces herself. Her voice begins on an unnaturally high pitch before settling to a normal tone. If necessary, PATIENT ONE can pull out a DayTimer to refer to the dates on her list)

PATIENT ONE

December tenth. ... Hogan Family cookie exchange. Chocolate crinkles. December twelfth. ... German Village Family Bazaar. ... Springerles. December eighteenth. ... Girl Scout bake sale. ... Peanut brittle. Family get-togethers. ... Chex Mix because Grandma passed her secret recipe to me, and she's staying in Florida this year.

(DOCTOR hits hot button. PATIENT ONE speeds up delivery)

PATIENT ONE (cont'd)

December tenth, eleventh, fifteenth, twenty-fourth: Snickerdoodles and sugar cookies for Dad and "Santa" by December twenty-fourth. Plus, Rice Krispie

PATIENT ONE (cont'd)

Treats for my Grandpa because I'm the only one on the planet who uses as much real butter as in the original recipe ... oh, and --

(Takes a deep breath)

I'll see him New Year's weekend.

(PATIENT ONE jumps from the HotSeat to avoid another pulse.

DOCTOR pulls a paper report from behind the HotSeat to show to PATIENT ONE)

DOCTOR

Quite manageable. Fill in baking times where indicated and simply subtract those from your stop times to determine when you'll begin.

PATIENT ONE

Okay. ... In these spaces here?

DOCTOR

That's correct. So sorry about the twenty-third. You'll need a one-hour allotment for each batch of Chex Mix – so you're looking at, let's see ... a four a.m. start time.

PATIENT ONE

Four a.m.!

DOCTOR

Unless ...

PATIENT ONE

What? You can help?

DOCTOR

You don't have two ovens by any chance?

PATIENT ONE

Yes! Yes, I have two. Will that change the schedule?

DOCTOR

Considerably. Your start time on December twenty-third will be as late as 6:45 a.m., or as early as 6 a.m., once you add your variables.

PATIENT ONE

Well, thanks, I guess.

(PATIENT ONE gathers her packages)

DOCTOR

Admit it, you're feeling better already. After all, we see you do have your shopping done.

PATIENT ONE

Well, no, not really. There's still so much to do.

DOCTOR

We're afraid we are limited to one consultation per customer. You can manage without?

PATIENT ONE

I suppose. But—

DOCTOR

-- We'll leave you with our HotSeat motto: "It's early yet. There's still time for you!"

END OF SAMPLE

This play is protected by copyright law. It is illegal to print, transcribe or otherwise duplicate this electronic document.

We hope you have enjoyed this sample. To prevent copyright infringement, the rest of this play cannot be displayed. To purchase this script with full performance rights, visit www.rileysdiner.com.