

All I want for Christmas: Erica Griffiths

As they waited in line for the cashier, she stole a glance at his trolley. A fancy assemble-yourself Christmas tree, three boxes of shiny Christmas baubles, a box of expensive chocolates, the type with the gold wrapper, half a leg of ham and an enormous plum pudding (ooh delicious), plus four adorable little red reindeer jumpers.

She imagined him at home on Christmas morning with his wife and kids, sitting down to a big fancy meal in front of their beautifully decorated tree, adorned in their festive wear. How lovely.

'That's not very festive,' he said as he motioned his head towards the contents of her trolley.

She looked again at the carefully chosen goods scattered along the bottom of her cart. A tin of prunes, two shiny apples, a Betty Crocker sultana cake mix, plus a treat of Monte Carlo biscuits.

'There's nothing more festive than a fruit cake,' she said and smiled at him as they parted.

'*Tis the season to be jolly*' she hummed, enthusiastically stirring her cake mix, smiling at her creative thought to add the prunes. It was definitely going to make it more like fruit cake and of course it would help to keep the cake moist – genius!

'*Fa la la la laa*,' the girls were coming over, her tiny apartment would be full. Her dear friends each bringing over a plate to share. They were going to love her fruit cake and she couldn't wait until she showed them the Monte Carlos.

'*Deck the halls with boughs of holly*,' she giggled, imagining herself in her new red cardigan that she'd found at the Salvos store, it was almost like new. She also had that silver ribbon for her hair. Tomorrow was going to be great!

He woke early, alone. It was still dark. He poured his cereal and milk and put the kettle on to boil. This day would be the same as all his other days, well almost the same. He would shower, dress in his green overalls and drive to the hospital to scrub and clean until it was dark again. But the small difference today cracked a smile across his face and brought him Christmas joy. He thought of his neighbour down the hall, he only knew her as Sue, a single Mum, always working hard for her kids. He imagined her delight when she opened her door to find a box full of fancy festive food and little red jumpers.