

'THE CHRISTMAS SECRET'

SYNOPSIS

In the charming, small town of Wilsonville, divorced, young waitress Christine Easley examines a star-shaped locket and helps her 6-year old daughter Haley and 8-year old son Zach, prepare for school. Running late, they all rush out to the car, which barely starts as Mrs. Meredith, a spooky, elderly neighbor known as "The Bat Lady" watches. When Christine arrives late to work, her boss gives her a final warning.

Christine arrives home to find her landlord on her porch. She is behind on the rent and he threatens to evict her. Inside, Christine finds her ex-husband, Brad, playing video games with Zach and Haley. He has neglected to pay child support and Christine asks him to leave the house. With Christmas only three weeks away, Christine's world is falling apart and she's struggling to make ends meet. As Christine gets ready for bed, she holds the star-shaped locket and recalls an emotional memory from her youth: Her mother, Agnes, gave her a locket when she was a little girl at Christmastime and told her it came from her dad, just before he went away and never returned. Agnes tells the young Christine that no matter how tough life gets, the star-shaped locket will remind her there is always hope for things to get better.

In a local store called Wilson's Collective, elderly shop owner Marshall Wilson and his feisty wife Judy prepare the shop for Christmas. Jason, their good-looking and charming grandson pulls up in his BMW, having just returned from New York where he'd been laid off from a job in the financial world. Marshall asks Jason to help out in the store while he is in town.

Running late again, Christine drives Haley and Zach to school and sees another car crash into a snow bank. Christine rushes over to the car and sees that the driver is Judy and that the crash has given her a heart attack. As Christine performs CPR, the locket around her neck jostles loose and falls into Judy's jacket. Paramedics takeover. Christine arrives to work late and is fired. She bursts into tears, rushes out of the restaurant and is approached by Patricia Addison, a Children's Services representative. Patricia informs Christine that Brad has petitioned the court for custody of Zach and Haley, claiming she is an unfit mother. Things are getting worse. At the hospital, Marshall and Jason are told that thanks to Christine's performing CPR, Judy is going to be okay. Judy awakens and says she wants to find, the young woman who saved her life and thank her. Jason sets out to find Christine.

Worrying about how she's going to make ends meet, Christine wanders around town and finds herself in Betty's Bakery. Betty, the bakery's gregarious owner, hires Christine on the spot.

Jason and Marshall arrange a doll display in the Wilson's Collective window. When Jason takes a call about a possible job lead in New York, Marshall asks him if working in a big city, corporate environment is really what he wants to do with his life. Jason goes to Betty's Bakery, where Christine is now working. They come face-to face. Jason is smitten with Christine, though he doesn't realize she is the young woman he's looking for - the woman who saved his Aunt's life. Christine assumes Jason is a spy sent by Brad to observe her and is rude to him.

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Zach and Haley enter Wilson's Collective and start looking around at potential Christmas gifts. Haley looks at dolls. Jason, now working in the store, approaches Zach and tells him he'd make a good baseball catcher. Jason and Zach play catch with a baseball.

At Betty's Bakery, Christine tells Betty she moved to Wilsonville because she thought her long, lost father may be living there. Zach and Haley enter the bakery and Betty gives Zach a baseball cap. On the drive home, Zach tells Christine he wants to play little league baseball. When they arrive at home, there is an eviction notice on the door.

The following evening, Christine, Zach and Haley purchase a Christmas tree. Patricia gives Christine advice for her upcoming court date and tells her she is a good mother. Haley says she wants the doll featured in the Wilson's Collective window display for Christmas. Christine is heartbroken, knowing she cannot afford it.

Days later, with Christmas now only ten days away, Christine is at work in the bakery. Glory, Betty's vivacious friend and day care center owner, enters the bakery to visit Betty. After her shift, Christine's car will not start and Jason shows up to help her. As Jason fills her gas tank, he and Christine share a sweet moment looking up at the stars. Christine finds herself becoming attracted to Jason.

Zach and Haley are home, being supervised by a teenage babysitter. Haley sneaks outside, falls off a railing and injures herself. Out of nowhere, Mrs. Meredith appears and takes Haley to the hospital. Christine arrives at the hospital and sits with Haley in her room. Brad arrives, furious with Christine for leaving the kids with a teenage babysitter. Brad and Christine have an argument in the hallway and Zach overhears.

The next day at the hospital, Judy introduces herself to Haley. Haley notices that Judy is wearing Christine's star-shaped locket. Judy puts the locket around Haley's neck, tells her it came from an angel and asks her to promise to give it to someone in need of help. Haley is thrilled to have this magical item.

At Betty's Bakery, Christine confides in Jason, telling him about the custody battle she is in with Brad. Christine and Jason make a lunch date. Christine is feeling good about her budding romance with Jason, who still has no idea that Christine is the one who saved his Aunt's life. Betty tells Christine about her son, Dennis, who passed away. Betty then informs Christine that Zach and Haley are going to be able to attend Glory's day care center for free. Christine is thrilled.

At the hospital, Christine notices that Haley is wearing the star-shaped locket. Haley - keeping her promise to Judy - gives Christine the locket. A frustrated Brad enters the room, ending the sensitive mother/daughter moment. He tells Christine he's hired an expensive lawyer and that she will lose custody of the children.

Jason is asked to attend a job interview in New York. Jason debates whether he should go to New York or stay in Wilsonville for Christmas. Marshall asks Jason if he's found the young

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woman who saved Judy's life and, still not realizing Christine is that young woman, Jason says he has not. Jason decides to leave immediately for the job interview in New York. Marshall asks Jason if he can make one last delivery before he leaves, a delivery of baseball equipment to Glory's Day Care Center. Jason agrees.

At the day care center, Jason unloads the baseball equipment as Christine drops off Zach and Haley. Zach asks Jason to be his little league coach and Jason sees the disappointment on Zach's face when he tells him he is going to New York. Christine cries, feeling sad because she won't be able to afford Christmas presents for Zach and Haley.

The next day, Judy, now out of the hospital, returns to work at Wilson's Collective. As she and Marshall converse, Jason enters, announcing he has decided to stay in Wilsonville and work in the family business. Jason goes to Glory's Day Care Center. He is about to take Zach outside to play catch when Brad shows up, demanding to take Zach and Haley. Brad tries to force his way into the day care center, but Jason stands in his way and stops him. Authorities are contacted and Brad winds up in the back of a police car, spoiling his chances of winning custody. Christine arrives and Glory tells her Jason stopped Brad from taking Haley and Zach. At this point, Jason learns that Christine is the woman who saved Judy's life, the woman he's been looking for. Jason kisses Christine and rushes off to tell Judy he's found the woman who saved her life.

That night, as Christine worries over her financial troubles, a package from Wilson's Collective arrives at her house. The package contains the doll Haley wants for Christmas and a stack of hundred dollar bills, a gift from Marshall for saving Judy's life. Finally, good fortune has arrived. The next morning, Betty notices the locket around Christine's neck and tells her it belonged to her deceased son, Dennis. Christine realizes that Betty's son, Dennis, was her father.

On Christmas Eve, Christine, Zach, Haley, Jason, Marshall, Judy and Betty gather around Christine's Christmas tree. Jason gives Zach a catcher's mask and tells him he will be his little league coach. Haley is given the doll and Zach is given a vintage baseball jacket. Zach and Haley learn that Betty is their great grandmother and Betty tells Zach his vintage baseball jacket belonged to his grandfather, Dennis. Christine hangs the star-shaped locket – the magical item that brought everyone together – on the Christmas tree. Jason kisses Christine.

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