



What's your
Christmas Wish?

Santa
Maybe

Scarlett Bailey

Contents

Cover

About the Book

About the Author

Also by Scarlett Bailey

Title Page

Dedication

1. Jingle What?
2. Making a List, Checking it Twice
3. Mistletoe and Whine
4. Walking in the Air
5. Where Music and Passion are Always the Fashion
6. So Good They Named it Twice
7. Let's all Meet Up in the Year 2000
8. I'm Never Going to Dance Again
9. I Will Survive!
10. Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas
11. Make the Yuletide Gay
12. Walking in a Winter Wonderland
13. Rockin' Around the Christmas Tree
14. Hark! the Herald Angels Sing
15. Away in a Manger
16. When a Child is Born
17. Silent Night
18. All I want for Christmas is You
19. Summer Lovin'
20. Mamma Mia!
21. Blue Christmas
22. Santa Claus is Coming to Town
23. A Matter of Life and Death

24. We Wish You a Merry Christmas!

Just For Christmas

Other titles by Scarlett Bailey

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About the Book

Amy Tucker is single. So single in fact she hasn't had a man in her room for three years and her idea of a good time is buying new kitchenware at Ikea. So when she wakes up on Christmas Eve to find a strange man at the end of her bed, she is more than surprised.

Least of all, when the beautiful man claims to be Santa and has sexy stubble to rival George Clooney.

Santa whisks Amy on an exciting and unforgettable journey around the world through time and space. But can he really make Amy's Christmas dreams come true?

About the Author

Scarlett Bailey has loved writing stories since childhood. Before writing her debut novel, *The Night Before Christmas*, she worked as a waitress, cinema usherette and bookseller.

Passionate about old movies, Scarlett loves nothing more than spending a wet Sunday afternoon watching her favourite films back-to-back with large quantities of chocolate. Currently she lives in Hertfordshire with her dog and very large collection of beautiful shoes.

Also by Scarlett Bailey

The Night Before Christmas
Married by Christmas

Santa Maybe

Scarlett Bailey



For everyone who still believes

1. Jingle What?

SOMETHING SOFTLY CHIMING disturbed Amy from her sleep, causing her to force her tired, and quite honestly, over-made-up eyes open, cursing that extra coat of false lash effect mascara. It was then she spotted him, a man in her bedroom and she knew something was wrong. There hadn't been a man in her bedroom since 2009.

'What the hell?' Amy shouted as she sat up, forgetting to be scared for a moment, adrenalin pumping through her veins. A man in a Santa suit stared back at her.

'OK, missy, less of the language, it's me you're talking to,' he said rather indignantly, crossing his arms over his manly chest. 'I'm Santa, you plank. It's Christmas Eve remember? Now close your eyes, go back to sleep and we'll say no more about it.'

'Wa...bu...ya...' Amy stumbled for several seconds over the intruder's sheer audacity. 'You are not Santa. Santa is old and tubby, not thirty-ish and stubbly. And very much most crucially of all, SANTA IS NOT REAL!'

The man sat down heavily on her dressing table stool, causing the wobbly leg to bow a little and his hood to slip down revealing short silver tousled hair and a chiselled jaw line.

'I blame the Victorians for that negative PR campaign,' he said, decidedly crestfallen. 'They never could stomach the idea of a foxy Father Christmas, I mean why would they? The didn't approve of ankles either.'

Amy rubbed her eyes hard and blinked several times, but still the man was sitting there on her dressing table stool, watching her with what she thought was mild

sadness. And then he grinned, making him look, well rather handsome.

‘The panda look suits you,’ he said, a touch flirtatiously. ‘Although you don’t need all that make-up. You know most men prefer girls who wear less, make-up, I mean. Although less clothes works too.’

‘Are you care in the community?’ Amy asked, her fingers edging their way along the bed to where her phone was concealed under her pillow, just in case this was the night that Gavin phoned to tell her he couldn’t live without her after all, and he wanted her back. It had been three years, but still Amy held out hope.

‘Honestly, where’s the gratitude?’ the man said. ‘It’s Christmas Eve, woman. And here I have your Christmas list.’ From a pocket in his red velvet tunic he produced a crumpled post-it note, causing Amy to gasp and clap her hands over her mouth. ‘Delivered in a nontraditional way via waste basket, but delivered never-the-less, and it reads, “All I want for Christmas is someone to love”.’

‘How did you get that?’ Amy managed to ask on a strangled breath. ‘Have you been stalking me?’

‘Er, no. An elf brought it to me. We only used to do chimneys, post boxes, that sort of thing. But in the modern age you’ve got to cover all the bases. I’ve even got an app out this year.’ He looked pleased with himself. ‘Anyway, I checked against your records and you’re in luck! You’ve been nice, and when I say nice, I mean *nice*. Are you *never* naughty, Amy Tucker?’

‘Maybe I shouldn’t have had that last tequila,’ Amy said, running her fingers through her hair.

‘Still you’re a grown-up, aged twenty-eight – and three years – according to your records, and there are rules for grown-ups. For me to grant you your very non-specific wish – by the way, you want to watch that, you could end up with a cat – you have to do something for me.’

‘Oh OK, here it is, here’s the pervert bit,’ Amy said unhappily.

For a moment the man looked a little sheepish, and then from goodness only knew where he produced an elf suit. ‘Seems a little inappropriate now. But anyway, your task is to pop this on while I turn my back and hop on my sleigh and help me out tonight. Deal?’

‘Why aren’t I dreaming?’ Amy wailed. ‘Aunty Maud was mad. Hey maybe I’m mad?’

‘You’d rather be mad that Santa’s little-ish helper?’ the man asked, rolling his eyes. ‘What is the world coming to? Look, if it helps, Amy, you are dreaming. OK? It’s just a really, really vivid dream. Talking of which, have you got gloves, because it can get quite chilly up there over Alaska. Now are you coming or what, because I’ve a bloke in Chipping Norton who’s asked for a bigger...never mind. Are you coming?’

And for reasons that were entirely a mystery to her, Amy pulled back the duvet and got out of bed.

‘Nice penguin PJs,’ Santa said with a little smirk.

‘Oh, just give me the elf suit and can it.’

2. Making a List, Checking it Twice

'IS THIS MY rooftop?' Amy asked, a little bewildered as she gazed around the panoramic view of the city laid out before her which was glittering in the night as if it had been decorated especially for the occasion. 'Who would have thought that Peckham could be so lovely?'

'Er, hello?' Santa asked. 'I've got a sleigh here, several legendary reindeer and you're admiring *Peckham*?'

'Oh, sorry,' Amy said, turning to see Santa's sleigh in all its glory. Oddly enough she hadn't noticed the hulking great vehicle that looked like it was made of red painted wood and gilded with silver until he'd mentioned it. Nor its rather smelly accessories: nine full size reindeer which were actually alive, straining at their festively decorated harnesses, snorting hot air through their nostrils and impatiently hoofing at the roof, eager to be away. 'Wow that is quite something...do they fly then?'

'No, I thought we'd nip down the fire escape, take a left at the lights and see how the traffic is on the High Street. Of course they bloody fly!' Santa said, shaking his head. 'So anyway, where to, Amy Tucker?'

'What do you mean where to?' Amy asked. 'Aren't you taking me on a magical mystery tour to find my inner self?'

'You know your trouble,' Santa said, 'too many self-help books. The deal is that I help *you* find out how to make *your* Christmas wish come true. The truth is you already know the answer, you just need to remember it. That's the one thing I *can't* do for you. Irritating, I agree. We could get this whole thing over so much more quickly if I could just tell you what to do, but that's not the way it works. It's

never the way it works. So where should I take you to find someone to love?’

‘Gavin’s house!’ Amy cried, clapping her hands together so that the little jingle bell on her elf hat tinkled in the breeze. ‘Take me to see Gavin, because I know when he sees me he’ll remember that he loves me and we’ll be together forever. Although it might take him a *bit* longer to remember when he sees me in this outfit.’

‘Typical woman, so predictable.’ Santa sighed. ‘The whole world, literally all of it, at your pretty little pixie booted feet and you want me to take you to Clapham to visit Gavin Stark, who, let me tell you, has not been on the ‘Nice’ list since 1998. I was hoping you might think outside the box, that we might do this a little differently this time. But no, we have to go and check out the long-lost love of your life, blah, blah-PMT-chocoholic-biological-clock-make-mine-a-chardonnay-blah. I remember that time I took Lauren Bacall out one Eve, now there’s a lady who knows how to whistle. Why don’t they make dames like that any more?’

‘You’re not Santa,’ Amy said, with sudden certainty, taking him off guard for a moment so that even he, with his hair and chin and Roman nose, looked a little rattled. ‘I don’t know who you are or why you’re dressed like a nutter, and this is all very clever and obviously cost a lot of money, but you are *not* Santa.’

‘And how do you come to that conclusion, sweet cakes?’ he asked, giving her that disconcertingly attractive grin, perfectly composed once more.

‘Because the real Santa wouldn’t be doing the whole Ghosts of Christmas Past spiel with a single thirty-something girl from Peckham. He’d be delivering gifts to the children of the world, spreading joy and love and understanding and...stuff!’

‘And I will be!’ he said, gesturing at himself. ‘I’m magic don’t forget. And besides Rudolph, that’s the one at the