



## The Midnight Before Christmas

*William Bernhardt*

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Thirtysomething lawyer Megan McGee is facing a quiet Christmas with her bulldog when Bonnie Cantrell comes looking for legal protection from her violent ex-cop husband, Carl. In a recent bout of rage, Carl vowed to kill their seven-year-old son, Tommy, rather than be separated from the boy. It's no idle threat, either - as Bonnie assures Megan: "He's tried before." And when Tommy's school unwittingly allows him to leave with his father, Carl gets his chance to try again. Now, with the town all but shut down for the holiday, Megan races against time - and terror - to keep Carl's Christmas Eve jaunt from turning into a slay ride.

## The Midnight Before Christmas Details

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Author : William Bernhardt

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## **From Reader Review The Midnight Before Christmas for online ebook**

### **Kathy Govreau says**

I always enjoy reading his books. This one was no exception.

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### **Jill D Coffin says**

#### **Well done**

I like to read Christmas ministries around the Christmas season but often find that I getting the something that's syrupy , preachy and just a bit too nice .

This author used surprise , irony , and all sorts of challenges and human emotions to come up with a wonderful story . Without rubbing our noses in the magic of the season he managed to bring it fully forward by actively showing, not telling .

If you're looking for something just a bit more intense than a cozy in a Christmas thriller , this might just be the one for you .

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### **Deb says**

I really enjoyed this quick read. Even though it was a mystery it was a light read with a little bit of holiday spirit. It had some funny cute moments and some more serious incidents. I want to read more of William Bernhardt books.

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### **Teresa says**

Tis the season, so I decided to take a break and read The Midnight Before Christmas. The e-book is 123 pages, and it is a quick read. I was somewhat disappointed at how predictable and easy and nice everything turned out to be in this book. The writer led us to believe one thing, and then gradually, things were totally turned around the other way. The book flows well, but the horror, thriller lover in me wasn't satisfied by this story.

Carl starts out a raging, abusive alcoholic, and by the end of the story, you just have to love him. Living with an alcoholic, things are never that easy.

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### **Briansmom says**

I wanted to like this book, because I enjoy reading seasonal-themed mysteries around the holidays, but I could only give this 2 stars for several reasons. One, because I never really liked the so-called heroine, the

lawyer/priest Megan McGee, mainly because she stopped being a priest, and instead went to law school, because she lost her faith after the bombing in Oklahoma City. Really? If she'd have read her Bible once in awhile, she'd understand that man makes evil choices, and God doesn't always intervene. Also, she has a disgusting dog that she hates, and I kept wondering, why doesn't she just get rid of it instead of carping and being disgusted by it? If she did give it away, then I guess the author wouldn't have a reason to write sophomoric "jokes" about it's frequent gas. Also, too many of the characters and situations were entirely non-believeable and just didn't work for me. At the end, the readers are supposed to believe that the original baddie in the story, alleged wife-beater and drunk Carl, has been rehabilitated over the course of 1 day to the point where Megan agrees to go into business with him. Really?????

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### **Daniel says**

Megan McGee, a lawyer, is spending a quiet Christmas eve alone. A battered wife, Bonnie Cantrell, needs legal advice and protection against her ex-cop husband, Carl. Bonnie tells Megan that Carl wants to kill their son,

A twist in the novel makes Megan rethink the whole case.

I really enjoyed the fast paced action in this book. I would have given it five stars but the very ending knocked it down a notch.

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### **Ellen says**

Megan McGee, lawyer and ex- Episcopalian priest, takes on the case of an hysterical woman named Bonnie who insists that her former husband, Carl, wants to kidnap and kill their 7-year-old son Tommy. Bonnie relates gruesome details of savage beatings she has suffered at Carl's hands and that he has attempted to kill Tommy in the past. Carl is a cop, currently suspended for drinking, so Bonnie is sure the local police will not help her. While Megan and Bonnie are at the courthouse to obtain a restraining order, Carl manages to get Tommy from school and take off with him. A frantic Bonnie and a determined Megan search for the two hoping to find them before Carl can do something horrible. As Megan investigates the case she sees that things are not always what they seem and some very troubling issues just do not add up.

I am a great fan of Bernhardt's but I can't say that this book is one of his better ones. It had a great twist but was mostly very predictable and simplistic. It won't keep me from reading his other novels.

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### **Merceda says**

Interesting take on Christmas Eve. Wife was bat-crazy for money.

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### **Rob Smith says**

I really liked this book. it's the first for me by William Bernhardt. I've been meaning to read him for years, especially after he "Friend"ed me on Facebook way back in 2009. I've got a number of his books already. My reading this book will have me finally dive into others.

I really, really liked how this book was plotted. I noticed others wrote of a sudden twist. Nope. This book is written to have you think a certain way and slowly changes gears until you see the story at a whole new perspective. As one reads certain facts are presented over the many pages. Then as facts supporting one view are presented, other facts are presented intertwined giving the reader a few different views. Very clever.

Adding the gift exchange throughout adds further dimension to the book and a nice distraction that will surprise some readers into realizing that while looking one way, a whole other fact of the story had slid by and - surprise - maybe this book is about something else all together.

I also liked the construction of the characters. The main one is deftly handled. The supporting characters are really well done as, again, different viewpoints in the narrative creates almost new characters.

What I didn't like was the acceptance in the end of the main character of a partner. Take away the problems of the partner and still a person would want to know far more before such an agreement is made. It's among a few other untidy story pieces that were placed to make the timing of events easier. Just poorly handled.

Over all I thought this a great book best ready during the Christmas season.

Bottom line: I recommend this book. 7 out of 10 points.

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## **Paul says**

### **BOTTOM-LINE:**

Surprisingly light story given the dark nature of the case

### **PLOT OR PREMISE:**

Megan McGee is a 30-something lawyer facing a quiet Christmas with her dog when a new crying client Bonnie Cantrell comes asking for a restraining order.

### **WHAT I LIKED:**

The restraining order is against an abusive ex, Carl, who's also an ex-cop, and Bonnie is worried for the safety of not only herself but also her son and her new lover. The story starts as a simple textbook case, but starts to morph as it becomes evident that while Carl is unhinged, perhaps Bonnie isn't telling the whole truth.

### **WHAT I DIDN'T LIKE:**

A thread of Christmas presents runs through the story showing that sometimes little miracles do happen, but it's rather cliché.

### **DISCLOSURE:**

I received no compensation, not even a free copy, in exchange for this review. I am not personal friends with the author, nor do I follow him on social media.

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### **Alton Motobu says**

exciting and fast-paced with some plot twists you never see coming, but climax is weak and disappointing after such a tremendous build up.

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### **Frederick Danysh says**

Megan McGee is an Episcopalian priest turned lawyer. She is stuck with a domestic violence case the day before Christmas and gets a restraining order against the ex-husband. But as she becomes more involved in the case, Megan learns that all is not as it appears. She and her unwanted English Bulldogs try to right what is wrong before Christmas day.

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### **Eilonwy says**

I often read this short book at Christmas. I like the main characters and enjoy how the author uses funny gifts to move the story forward

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### **Manugw says**

#### **SHORT AND PLEASANT**

All I can say is that this short pleasant story focus the intrigue on the behavior of the characters, (the different members of a typical family) and its plot, fast paced and plenty of action also gives room for some reflections about the meaning of Christmas and the relationship between parents and their children. Finally, after a sudden turn of events disclosing the nature of the mystery, the suspiciously obvious ending comes naturally

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### **B says**

I like to read a few "Christmas" related books every holiday season to get me in the mood. This one had a pretty dark theme, family abuse, but with a good twist in the middle and a little bit of humor.

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