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## **“A Very Martha Christmas”**

by  
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- What** This humorous skit is a modern day look at Mary’s sister, Martha, and how expectations of the perfect Christmas don’t compare to focusing on the reason for the season.  
Themes: Christmas, Mary and Martha, Simplification, Priorities, Being Present
- Who** Martha, a television personality  
Lilly, her personal assistant
- When** Present
- Costumes and Props** Contemporary, Stylish, Casual wear for Martha, Lilly wears an apron with the show’s logo, “Martha Live” over her clothes.  
Cellphone Earpiece/Speaker  
iPad or Clipboard with Checklist  
Large Canvas Bag with Craft Project Samples  
Decorative Christmas Ribbon on a Spool  
Tray of Hors D’ Oeuvres  
Formal Christmas Table Decorations (Suggested Napkins with Rings and Candles)  
Candle Lighter  
Stool  
Two Sound Cues—Offstage Voice  
Doorbell
- Why** Luke 10:38-42
- How** Martha is known for planning perfect parties: from cooking to craft. Lilly is a walk-on role only. This can be performed as a monologue with an “unseen” scene partner. Martha is speaking first to Janelle her television producer (offstage), then briefly to herself, and then to various people on her cellphone earpiece. The character of Lilly creates a wonderful addition of surprising realism, if you choose to cast her. Martha never breaks the 4<sup>th</sup> wall to speak to the audience, but if she can “see” Jesus and Mary in the next room (4<sup>th</sup> wall) it’s very effective. If performed as a traditional monologue, the actress will interact with all unseen scene partners. She should take her time with realistic reactions and discoveries, allowing the audience time to make their own discoveries along the way.
- Time** Approximately 3-4 minutes

*The scene begins with **Martha** offstage.*

**Voice:** That's a wrap!

**Martha:** *(offstage)* Thanks, Janelle.

***Martha** enters with a clipboard or iPad, a large bag of assorted crafts, and her cellphone earpiece, clearly visible.*

**Martha:** *(talking over her shoulder towards the wings)* Have the crew re-dress the set before they go home, ok? *(she sets the craft bag down on the stool)* I want to have everything ready to go the minute we're back from the holiday break. *(she turns back to call off into the wings)* Oh, and make sure the champagne flutes for the New Year's segment are spotless this time!

***Martha** goes through her list and begins pulling sample crafts out of the bag with frustration.*

**Martha:** I did not need this today of all days. *(as she instantly evaluates a few of the crafts)* Yes. No. Keep for later. No. No! *(Martha taps her earphone to make a call)* These are really awful, Janelle. ... Well, you're going to have to find some other options. My audience expects quality craft projects. ... You have a whole week to do it, Janelle. ... Well then, I guess you'll need to bring your laptop on vacation. My other line's ringing... *(Martha taps the earpiece again to accept the new call)* Yes? ... Oh, hello, Aunt Dorothy.

***Lilly** enters with a tray of hors d'oeuvres. **Martha** samples each as she continues on phone.*

**Martha:** It's Martha. ... Martha! ... I don't know, dear, you called me. Are you calling about Christmas dinner? *(Martha raises her voice to be heard)* Are you coming for Christmas dinner? ... Yes, Christmas dinner! We'll pick you up at 7:00. *(Martha speaks louder still.)* 7:00! ... Well dear, the teacher's here now and— *(Aunt Dorothy hangs up and Martha abruptly turns her attention to Lilly, gesturing to the company in the next room)* How is it going in there?

**Lilly:** *(startled)* Oh! uh, well...I think...

**Martha:** Forget I asked. Have the chef send in the shrimp canapés and the stuffed mushrooms right away, and then follow that up with the soup course in about 15 minutes or so. Hopefully that'll tide them over for a while.

*Lilly begins to leave.*

**Martha:** I wasn't expecting him to bring his whole, hungry entourage. Lilly, *(Lilly turns back, offering the tray; Martha samples another hors d'oeuvre)* Yes, definitely the shrimp canapés. Well, what are you waiting for? Go! *(Lilly begins exiting)* Oh, after you speak to the chef... *(Lilly returns to Martha's side)* I need you to come back and show me how you plan to dress the tables. We can't have any stains on the linens, not tonight. *(Martha takes a final bite and then waves Lilly off)* Go!

*Martha begins intently taking notes when the doorbell rings.*

**Martha:** Heavens! What is it now? *(calling out)* Mary, can you get the door? *(doorbell chimes again)* Mary? Where is she?

*Martha walks to the other side of the performance space to the front door. Seeing the landscaper off in the wings, she calls out to the unseen worker.*

Yes? Oh good. I'd like you to line the poinsettias along the garden path and then use the greenery for the staircase banisters. And do you have any Christmassy ribbon or...? Never mind; I'll take care of it.

*Her cell phone rings in her ear and Martha taps the earpiece to answer it.*

John? Thank goodness, it's you! *(crossing to center, Martha looks through the craft bag for ribbon)* Oh, you know how it is, the busiest day of the year and the teacher shows up for dinner. ... Well, of course I'm happy to see him, John! It's an honor having him here, but there's just so much to do. ... Yes! And on top of that I had to finish taping my holiday special, and Better Homes and Gardens is coming over to photograph my winter display.

*Lilly enters with table decorations on a tray, singing a Christmas tune.*

**Martha:** *(shushing Lilly)* One second, John. *(checking over the items)* These will do, Lilly. Now make sure in addition to the candles you put hurricane lamps filled with glass ornaments down the center of the tables—1 for every 6 guests, I should think. And Lilly, *(Martha hands Lilly the ribbon)* see if you can make some pretty bows with this to spice up the greenery on the banisters, ok? Better Homes and Gardens will be here for the photo spread in less than an hour.

*She waves Lilly off to the exit.*

So sorry, John. You were saying?... No that's just it, I can't find her anywhere, and you'd think with the teacher visiting. *(Martha suddenly spies Mary in the next room/4<sup>th</sup> wall)* John? I see her. *(trying to get Mary's attention)* Gotta go. Mmm, bye.

*Martha taps the earpiece to hang up the call and initiates a call to Mary's cell phone.*

**Martha:** Pick up Mary...I know you see me, Mary...No! Don't hand it to—  
Oh, I'm so sorry, Jesus, I didn't mean to disturb you. If you could just hand Mary the phone ... I need her help with some special ... Yes, I'm listening.

*A realization for **Martha** as she hears that what Mary is doing is better than worrying about many things. Luke 10:38-42.*

***Lilly** enters with a candle lighter, singing a Christmas tune. She stops singing abruptly when she sees **Martha**.*

**Martha:** *(taps her earpiece to end the call and looks at her list)* Wait, Lilly. I've been focusing on the wrong things. Let's skip the hurricane lamps and forget about the bows for the greenery. It's all...too much. I'll reschedule the Better Homes and Gardens people; I'm sure they have better places to be on Christmas Eve. Oh and Lilly? Can you tell the chef I said we don't need so many courses? We're going to keep things simple tonight.

***Lilly** smiles at **Martha** and exits. **Martha** puts the iPad/clipboard in her bag and removes her earpiece before looking once more to the company in the next room, as she takes a deep breath in and out, and then exits with a smile.*