

My Christmas Extravaganza

By Katie Ingrasci

The purr of the 2003 Volvo engine echoes through the glassy, cold, late December night. Street lights flicker, startled by the revving hood of the vehicle. The flannel stitching of my Christmas pajamas send thrilling chills down my spine as I tense with excitement. The aroma of the sweet hot chocolate journeys up into my nose, begging for a sip. Sweet, delicate snowmen wave spiritedly as I cruise by. Crisp, magical lights intertwine with the beautiful army green garland and dance through the whispers of the wind. Neighbors stare, mesmerized as they snow blow 10 inch snow. Frowns emerge when the snow takes victory after the fifth push. Rose colored cheeks walk quickly into their homes to get warm, but not my mom and I, we are truly prepared for our Christmas Extravaganza!

Every December, my mom and I escape from the uptight Christmas shoppers and drive through local magical towns to observe holiday lights that neighbors hang for our enjoyment. The clock sharply strikes midnight as my mom and I scurry to the warm car in our cozy pajamas

accompanied by scorching thermoses filled with delicious chocolate liquid. With one simple glance at each other we shiver with excitement! "It's time!" my mom calls. Christmas carols swim out from the speakers and enter our hungry ears. Fog gently layers and protects the cold windows giving them a frosty, winter glow. Pads of paper, ready to be scribed look up at us knowing momentarily our pens would begin to salsa over them. We slowly begin to pull out of our icy driveway, holding our breath until we were safely on the smooth, paved street of Manchester Way. Our first house was simple, with garland swinging between 4 pillars. Lights aglow reflect onto the breathtaking French doors yearning for a knock. Exquisite red, velvet bows perfectly tied onto the crisp white pillars smiled back at us. I whispered quietly, "Simply perfect."

My burning cheeks began to throb from smiling so much, with the sight of every new house. We busily record our remarks on each house, so we could brag and boast to friends and family about what we had experienced on that very special night. Though a winner has not been chosen yet, I knew there was plenty more sceneries to be experienced! Thermoses were getting low, and bladders were getting full! Rest stop! It

was 12:45am and stores had been closed for hours. "That's it!" I screamed. Light bulbs frolicked around my head. Grandma's house was just around the corner. My mom tore up the pavements as she rushed to Grandma's house.

Fifteen minutes had passed. We were all bundled up, our thermoses were full with "Grandma's Secret Recipe", and we were ready to move on. We quietly pulled out of the driveway, trying not to wake the neighbors. As we rounded Elm Street we suddenly stopped dead in our tracks. It was astounding, astonishing, amazing... our winner! Its branches swayed through the dark starry night. Its trimmings were perfect. Each piece of tinsel looked perfectly placed in its exact spot draped and snuggled in between the sharp pines of the creation. It was the most breath taking Christmas tree I had ever seen. Its triumphant trunk stood proudly in the window right above the white balcony of the extravagant yellow Victorian. Looking at that tree diminished every other creation in the town. The car fell silent. My mom and I were mute trying to take in the amazing sight. Who knew such a magnificent tree could bring so many thoughts and feelings to your mind? That was the house.

That beautiful masterpiece immediately concluded the contest of the best creation in the town. This house not only had the most perfect tree display in the window but so many other extraordinary accents to make this scene a winner. Snowflakes kissed the red brick chimney, benches full of presents scattered throughout the front yard. Spotlights surrounded the peaceful Nativity scene as Mary looked upon her baby Jesus. Music screamed through the speakers hidden in the bushes. Lights appeared choreographed to the music. My eyes shifted to the right then left then back to the right again just to take it all in, and not to miss a thing.

Suddenly, the clock sharply struck 2:00 am. My mom and I immediately looked at each other, knowing that this house would be the perfect finish to our spectacular night. Driving home, I heard this peculiar sound. "Sorry!" my mom explained as she gestured to her stomach. It was clear we both were sick of hot chocolate and ready for our traditional early morning breakfast at Matthew's Diner. That night full of dreams, journeys and memories finished off with tall stack of chocolate chip

pancakes, French toast, and a kiss good morning with my best friend as
we watched the sun come up.