



The Nanny's Christmas Wish (Harlequin Special Edition)

By Ami Weaver

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But rules are made to be broken, and while Maggie only wants to know the nephew she never knew she had, deeper feelings keep getting in the way! As the holiday season creeps closer, his rules collide with her secret. Can their unexpected love survive the truth?

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Editorial Review

About the Author

Two-time Golden Heart® Award finalist Ami Weaver has read reading romance since she was a teen and writing for even longer. Now she can be found drinking gallons of iced tea at her local coffee shop while doing one of her favorite things—convincing two characters they deserve their happy-ever-after. When she's not writing, she spends at the lake, hangs out with her family and reads. Ami lives in Michigan with her four kids, three cats and very supportive husband.

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Thirty-Eight Easton Street. Maggie Thelan double-checked the address on the big blue Victorian with the sticky note on the steering wheel. Her pulse kicked up a bit as she eased the car to the curb.

She drew in a deep breath and let it out slowly, trying to calm the butterflies in her belly. Cody, her nephew, lived here. Her half sister, Lucy, had lived here until her death. It would be Maggie's home during her stint as Cody's nanny.

If she got the job.

No way am I missing this chance. She grabbed her purse and keys and checked her reflection in the rearview mirror. Hair behaving, mascara not smeared, all good. She did a quick application of lip gloss and wondered for the millionth time if she shared her Black Irish coloring—dark hair, blue eyes, pale skin—with her half sister.

With any luck there'd be a photo out for Maggie to see. Anticipation quivered through her as she threw open the car door.

She'd gotten through the first interview just fine. Cody's grandmother, Ellen Tanner, was a lovely woman, warm and friendly and concerned about her grandson's welfare. This time, she'd meet Cody and his father and hopefully walk away with the job.

She'd staked everything on it.

Not wanting to think about that, Maggie hurried up the walk, her ponytail blowing over her shoulder in the wind. Being October in northern Michigan, the breeze had a bite to it but the sun still held some warmth. The maple trees on the front lawn blazed gold and flame.

A couple of squat pumpkins sat on the front porch. Maggie stepped around them and up to the heavy front door.

She pressed the doorbell and the door opened almost instantly, causing her to take a big step back and stumble over one of the pumpkins behind her. "Whoa," said a deep voice, and he grabbed her elbow before she ended up smashing the pumpkin under her rear. She pitched forward and felt a firm, broad chest under her cheek. He smelled of clean laundry and soap. Warmth seeped through his blue oxford dress shirt.

Or maybe that was her face, burning with embarrassment.

Smooth, Maggie, real smooth. She stepped back, carefully this time, cleared her throat and promptly forgot what she'd been about to say as her gaze traveled up.

Oh, he was tall, north of six feet and broad, with light brown hair that curled slightly at the nape. And his eyes. Damn if she hadn't just lost her voice in those whiskey-colored eyes.

"You all right?" His voice, laced with amusement and concern, snapped Maggie out of her trance.

"Yes. Thanks for the help." She thrust out her hand as she tried to recover her scattered wits. "Maggie Thelan. I'm here for a second interview for the nanny position."

He raised his eyebrows, arched over those incredible eyes. They weren't the color of just any whiskey, but the good Scotch stuff her father had favored. Her heart pinged. The man grasped her hand, his palm warm and slightly rough on hers. She sucked in a breath at the unwelcome little shiver that zipped up her arm. "Dr. Josh Tanner. Nice to meet you," he said as he released his grip.

"You, too," she replied. Dread seized her. This man was Cody's dad. What if he thought she'd be a klutzy danger to his son? *Good one, Maggie.*

He stepped back. "Come on in. Have a seat over there." He indicated the sofa in a comfortable living room. *Photos.* Her pulse picked up a bit as she made her way to sit down.

She cleared her throat and smiled as he sat down opposite her. She peeked around him at the pictures on the mantel. *Shoot.* Some of them were too small to see the subjects clearly. She snapped her focus back to find him studying her with a crease between his eyebrows.

Her stomach clenched. "Is there a problem?"

He hesitated a split second. "I have to say I was expecting someone older. I told my mom—" He broke off and the frown deepened.

"What?" Her stomach tightened. "Why do you need someone older?"

"I just thought, well, more experience, maybe." He had the grace to look slightly embarrassed.

Maggie's eyebrows shot up and she straightened her spine, spearing him with the look that had sent plenty of fourth-graders scurrying back in line. "I've been a teacher for ten years, Dr. Tanner. I assure you, I have plenty of experience with kids."

He nodded, reluctance still etched on his face. "I saw that on your resume. You are by far the most highly qualified candidate. My mom thinks highly of you and I trust her judgment. Your background check is clean and the references are excellent, so as long as Cody likes you we'll consider this a done deal."

Relief flooded Maggie even as she noted he didn't look pleased about the whole thing. "Thank you. I hope he does, Doctor. I'm looking forward to meeting him." *More than you'll ever know.* The chance to know Cody, hopefully learn something about her half sister, meant everything to her. Her heart squeezed. Since her father's death and learning he had kept his older daughter a secret, Maggie's world had been in a tailspin.

He glanced at his watch. "While we're waiting, do you want to see where you'll be staying?" he asked.

"I'd love to," she said.

A quick perusal of the mantel on her way past revealed photos of Cody, either alone or with his dad or Grandma. Nothing of Lucy. She climbed the creaking stairs behind Dr. Tanner and since it felt wrong to look at the view of his rear she kept her eyes at his waist. His pants were frayed at the belt loops, a little detail at odds with the crisp pleats in the front.

Upstairs, he walked past three rooms to the end of the hall and pushed open a door. "This be okay for you?"

Maggie stepped around him, catching a whiff of his scent as she did so. The little jolt of awareness was almost drowned out by the pleasure that flooded her at the room.

"This is beautiful!"

The room was huge and she could see a balcony through French doors. A four-poster bed sat across from the fireplace, where a cozy little grouping of furniture had been arranged. She could picture herself reading to Cody there, snuggling by the fire on a cold and snowy night.

A little shiver of joy ran through her. She couldn't ask for a more perfect setting to get to know her nephew.

"There are plenty of extra sheets if you want to use them, and comforters, too. Not sure what you'd like, but if you don't find something that works just buy what you want and I'll cover it. Bathroom's in here." Dr. Tanner stepped around her and pointed to the first of two doors. "Closet's the next one."

Maggie pulled open the door and peeked in at the bathroom. Double sinks, oversize tub, separate shower. Fresh towels, no doubt his mother's touch, on the towel rack.

A master bedroom. Why didn't he use the master? Too many memories?

"Dr. Tanner, really, this is amazing. I love it." She moved over the plush carpeting to the four-poster and ran her hand over the smooth wood of the footboard. Unless she missed her guess, this bed was an antique.

When she looked up, she caught him watching her with caution and something else, a something that made her skin get hot and reminded her she was alone with a gorgeous man. In a room with a bed.

The one man she couldn't have and wouldn't want anyway.

So why had her mouth just gone dry?

"Josh," he said, and Maggie blinked, her thoughts thankfully derailed. "Call me Josh, please. You're not my patient."

"Josh, then," she murmured.

A banging from downstairs made them both jump, shattering the awkward moment.

"That'd be Cody and my mother," he said, relief clear in his voice. "Let's go meet them."

Cody Tanner, age four, looked up at Maggie with serious blue eyes ringed with long, dark lashes. Light

brown curls haloed around his head. Her heart melted, and emotion crashed over her in a fierce wave. She ached to pull him in her arms. This little boy was the only link to the half sister she'd never have the chance to know. He dropped his gaze to her feet and she swallowed hard.

"Hi, Cody." Maggie stuck out her hand, but Cody ignored it, instead pressing against his grandmother's leg. She tried to ignore the sharp sting his rejection produced.

"Code," his father said in a gentle voice, "you can do better than that."

Cody looked up at Maggie, his big blue eyes swimming with tears, and shook his head.

Maggie's heart cracked. "It's okay—" she began but Josh shook his head.

"Cody, we talked about this. Remember?"

"Don't want her," Cody cried and Maggie sucked in her breath, each word almost a physical blow. "I wanna have Mrs. Herman!"

Josh knelt down in front of his son. He tugged Cody into his arms. "I know it's hard on you. But she had to leave, Code," he said. "You know that. She had to go help her daughter out. She'll miss you and she loves you. She'll call and send you letters. Remember?"

Cody dipped his chin. "I know," he mumbled, and his father hugged him.

"Now, let's try this again. What do you say to Ms.

Thelan?"

Cody slid a sideways glance her way. "Hi," he muttered and Maggie smiled.

"Nice to meet you, Cody." Oh, if he only knew.

Ellen held out her hand to her grandson. "Cody, you want to help me make some sandwiches for lunch?"

Cody brightened. "C'n I have peanut butter?"

"Of course. You can even spread the jelly if you want."

"Okay." With a last cautious glance at Maggie, Cody followed Ellen into the kitchen.

Josh looked at Maggie. "Mrs. Herman is Cody's former nanny. Her leaving has been hard on him. I'm sorry you had to see that."

"Don't be," Maggie said, and meant it. "He is attached to Mrs. Herman. It's a loss he has to process. I understand. It'll take some time, but we'll be okay."

Maggie held her breath while Josh gave her a thoughtful look. "Let's have a seat and go over what exactly you'll be doing."

Maggie's heart soared. "Does this mean I officially have the job?"

"Yes."

Even with the reluctance in his voice, relief flooded her. Maybe her luck had finally turned, after all.

Too young.

Later that evening, Josh's thought upon seeing Maggie Thelan for the first time kept playing through his head. And too gorgeous, with that long dark hair and those blue, blue eyes rimmed with dark lashes. Similar to Lucy's, really, but hers had been a paler blue. He pulled his thoughts back to the problem at hand.

His mother was playing matchmaker.

He groaned and clicked the TV remote, not seeing the images on the screen. He'd specifically requested an older woman so there'd be no chance of anyone thinking there was anything remotely marriageable about him. That possibility died with Lucy, as it should have.

But Mom clearly had other plans. She'd told him over and over to move on. To let Lucy go. He'd listened politely, but he knew it didn't matter. He'd made a promise to her, intended to keep it. He'd managed it for nearly four years.

But then Maggie stumbled into his life and now things were not quite so cut and dried. She made something he'd buried long ago want to sit up and take notice.

Josh groaned again and scrubbed his hand over his eyes.

Hell. She'd be the nanny. Meaning she'd be living here, under his roof, right down the hall from his bedroom.

Josh shifted on the bed. Uh-uh. No way could his thoughts take that course. No.

Maybe he could tell her he'd changed his mind, they didn't need her and he'd go find a nanny on his own.

A nice, grandmotherly type. Someone who wouldn't remind him he couldn't get involved with another woman.

"Daddy?" Cody's voice sliced across his thoughts.

"Cody. I thought you were sleeping." Josh hit the mute button on the TV. He patted the bed beside him. "You okay?"

Cody nodded as he crawled up next to Josh. "Yeah. Is Miz Thelan gonna be my new nanny?" His voice dropped off.

"Mrs. Herman isn't coming back," Josh said gently. "You know that, Code. We need someone to help us out around here. Ms. Thelan seems really nice. I think she'll be a good nanny."

So much for not hiring her.

Cody bit his lower lip. "But—don't—if I don't get a nanny won't Miz Herman hafta come back?" The words tumbled out in a rush.

"No. Oh, Cody, is that what you thought?" Josh's heart broke and he reached over to hug his son to his side, felt the little body nestle into his own.

Cody shrugged his small shoulders, then nodded.

Josh spoke gently, knowing how hard this had been for his son. "Cody, she loves you, but she had to go."

"Like Mama," Cody said matter-of-factly, and pain seared through Josh, cutting off his air for a heartbeat. *Like Mama.*

"Mama can't come back. But she loved you, too, Cody." His voice grated in his throat. Lucy had adored Cody, doted on him, loved him with every last fiber of her being. This Josh knew without a doubt. Guilt crushed him every time he thought of it. He was the reason his son didn't have a mother anymore.

"Miz Thelan is pretty," Cody said. Josh said nothing, stymied by the realization that he couldn't deny he agreed, or what it meant. "Will she live here? With you an' me, Daddy?"

"Yeah," Josh said and wondered again if having Maggie under his roof was a good plan.

"Then I guess it's okay to try her, Daddy." Cody's small face was serious. Josh hid a smile.

"Then we will. I think she'll be just fine."

"Is she gonna cook for us?"

Josh shrugged. "She said she could but we'll see."

They looked at each other for a moment, and Josh knew they were both thinking of Mrs. Herman's practical casseroles.

Years of casseroles.

"No, um, cassy-oles?" Cody ventured and Josh laughed.

"She doesn't look like the casserole type but we'll ask her tomorrow when she gets here just to be sure. Okay? Now let's get you back to bed."

"Okay." Cody slid off Josh's bed. Josh followed him across the hall and tucked Cody back in. He ran a hand over the boy's curls and Cody gave him a sleepy smile.

"G'night, Daddy."

"Night, Code." Josh lingered for a moment, enjoying the little rustles Cody made as he settled. Then he returned to his room, flopped on the bed and stared at the ceiling.

Sleep wouldn't come easy for him tonight.

Maggie pulled in the driveway of the big blue house, her car packed to the gills. Everything else had gone into storage when she sublet her apartment. That had been a bit of a risk. If this nanny position had fallen through, she'd have been up you-know-what creek without a paddle.

At least it would be familiar territory.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Gregory Proctor:

What do you think about book? It is just for students since they're still students or that for all people in the world, the particular best subject for that? Simply you can be answered for that issue above. Every person has several personality and hobby for every other. Don't to be pressured someone or something that they don't desire do that. You must know how great and important the book The Nanny's Christmas Wish (Harlequin Special Edition). All type of book is it possible to see on many methods. You can look for the internet options or other social media.

Molly Marquis:

In this era globalization it is important to someone to find information. The information will make a professional understand the condition of the world. The health of the world makes the information much easier to share. You can find a lot of referrals to get information example: internet, newspaper, book, and soon. You can see that now, a lot of publisher this print many kinds of book. The particular book that recommended to you is The Nanny's Christmas Wish (Harlequin Special Edition) this publication consist a lot of the information of the condition of this world now. This book was represented how does the world has grown up. The language styles that writer require to explain it is easy to understand. Typically the writer made some study when he makes this book. This is why this book ideal all of you.

Randal Gore:

As a student exactly feel bored to be able to reading. If their teacher inquired them to go to the library as well as to make summary for some guide, they are complained. Just minor students that has reading's internal or real their passion. They just do what the educator want, like asked to go to the library. They go to right now there but nothing reading critically. Any students feel that looking at is not important, boring in addition to can't see colorful photos on there. Yeah, it is being complicated. Book is very important for you personally. As we know that on this era, many ways to get whatever you want. Likewise word says, ways to reach Chinese's country. Therefore , this The Nanny's Christmas Wish (Harlequin Special Edition) can make you sense more interested to read.

Andre Barrett:

What is your hobby? Have you heard that question when you got college students? We believe that that question was given by teacher on their students. Many kinds of hobby, Everybody has different hobby.

Therefore you know that little person similar to reading or as examining become their hobby. You must know that reading is very important and book as to be the factor. Book is important thing to incorporate you knowledge, except your teacher or lecturer. You see good news or update concerning something by book. Amount types of books that can you go onto be your object. One of them is this The Nanny's Christmas Wish (Harlequin Special Edition).

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