

# A dilemma for the mother-to-be

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**CHRISTMAS DAY**

BY this time of the year, reduced to a standstill and mesmerised by bonhomie, you'll be ready to contemplate **The Marriage Bed** tonight, which stars Layne Coleman and Linda Griffiths as Ross and Anne Graham.

Written by Anna Sandor and based on the novel by Constance Beresford-Howe, it is a comforting tale about a feisty woman who finds herself pregnant yet again and ready to put even more distance between herself and her career as a botanist and research scientist.

Luckily hubby is a lawyer, so the question of economic and emotional dependence is not so pressing and having the baby should constitute the basis for a story with a happily-ever-after ending. This movie is no exception.

Consequently it bumbles along, prettily and inoffensively reinforcing the status quo, as Anne commits herself to the

**The Marriage Bed: (ABC, 9.20pm)**  
**Silent Night: (SBS, 7pm)**

*Times and programs may vary*

endless round of domestic trivia.

There's just one catch. The husband leaves home just as she reaches the final stages of her third pregnancy. It's not so much a question of his sadistic timing. It's more an expression of his sudden need to discover the freewheeling spirit of student days which he missed on because he became a Dad so early.

What to do?

A new haircut? A lover? Go back to her career?

Finally mum finds a Hollywood-style resolution that carries her through.

Most people will adore this charming, if lightweight, production.

If you haven't yet overdosed on Santas, turkeys, snow flakes, fir trees, Madonnas and their offspring, angels and ringing bells, tune into **Silent Night**.

Warm and happy home atmospheres are trotted out until this seeming regurgitation of the same old Christmas hype spits up a stunning new slant.

Forget the brass bands, candles and sleigh scenes.

Here are gum trees and Aboriginal children from Broome in Western Australia, singing carols in their own language and performing a nativity play against a backdrop of rocky escarpments and the beach. It's touching, but heaven knows what they made of the Three Wise Men, who eschew the camel, their usual means of transport, for a pearling lugger.

— BERWYN LEWIS



Linda Griffiths plays a wife caught in domestic trivia