

CHRISTMAS DON'T BE LATE

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IMAGINE THE MOST ANNOYING CHRISTMAS SONG EVER. That's what ALVIN AND THE CHIPMUNK'S singing "**CHRISTMAS DON'T BE LATE**" is. And that's what **STARTS PLAYING**, as we **SEE**:

EXT. SUBURBAN PENNSYLVANIA IN WINTER - DAWN

The **SUN RISES** over a small town covered in snow. The quaint **MAIN STREET** is all decked out for Christmas. We see block after block of **PERFECT HOMES**, with identical decorations.

A neighborhood of **McMANSIONS** covered in **OVER TOP LIGHTS**, with **PERFECT TREES** displayed in the windows. **EXPENSIVE CARS** parked in the driveways, all with annoying reindeer antlers on them.

But **ONE OF THE HOMES IS NOT QUITE LIKE THE OTHERS...**

EXT. THE HARPER'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

A beat-up old Camry is in the driveway, covered in heavy snow. The only decorations are a dinky string of lights leading to a **GIANT SANTA/SLEIGH/REINDEER DISPLAY ON THE ROOF**.

As we push in on the house, a **GUST OF WIND BLOWS** and the big **CHRISTMAS DISPLAY WOBBLER**- Haphazardly attached to the roof. It **CREAKS**, *like it's almost going to fall-*

INT. THE HARPERS' LIVING ROOM - SAME TIME

The **HORRIBLE SONG IS EVEN LOUDER NOW**. And we're close on:

NICK HARPER, 40s, still in yesterday's suit. He opens his eyes slowly, and finds:

His young son, **WESLEY HARPER**, 6, **LOOKING DIRECTLY AT HIM**, just inches from his face. Nick **JUMPS, STARTLED-**

WESLEY
OH GOOD YOU'RE UP.

Wes is in Christmas PJs, playing the **SONG** from his IPAD.

NICK
Wes... what time is it?

WESLEY
It's six PM in China.

Nick sits up, realizing that he's been sleeping on the couch. The room is **BIG**, and there's not quite enough furniture to fill it. Nick waves away **YELLOW FLIES** buzzing by his head-

NICK

Why are you... Giving me the time
in China, bud?

WESLEY

Because in China it's almost
Christmas, and so SOON it'll be-

NICK

-What??

(looking outside)

No! It wasn't supposed to snow! Ugh-

Nick starts searching for his coat, his boots-

WESLEY

Can we go ice skating today? After
the pageant but before the parade?

Nick is in such a hurry that he doesn't even notice that the
CHRISTMAS TREE CONTAINS A NEST OF WEIRD YELLOW FLIES. And he
steps right over a PUDDLE OF GOOP seeping from the kitchen-

NICK

I'd love to, bud, but our schedule
is pretty tight and-

A GUST OF WIND OUTSIDE, we hear a FAMILIAR CREAK-

WESLEY

Dad, don't you wish it could be
Christmas every day?

Then, THROUGH THE WINDOW, we see **THE GIANT SLEIGH CRASHING
DOWN FROM THE ROOF AND RIGHT ONTO NICK'S CAR-** WOOD SPLINTERS
EVERYWHERE. Santa CRACKS the windshield. REINDEER PARTS
SCATTER ALL OVER THE YARD. A GIANT CHRISTMAS EXPLOSION.

HARD CUT TO:

EXT. THE HARPERS' HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Nick trudges through FRESH SNOW, with a trash bag, picking up
sleigh fragments as he goes. He arrives at his CAR, and finds
that RUDOLPH has his ANTLERS LODGED INTO THE ROOF-

He tries to PULL IT OFF. YANKS. *The BODY FLIES OFF, FLINGING
NICK BACK-* **But the severed plastic reindeer head is still
stuck in the car...** Nick gets back up there, determined, when-

KEITH

Morning Nick! What happened there??

A NEIGHBOR, **KEITH**, 40s, emerges in a Christmas bathrobe-

NICK

Well my best guess is it... *fell off the roof*, but- I suppose we'll never know for sure.

He YANKS again, but that thing is really wedged in.

KEITH

I told you to hire my guy! Did the whole house for nine hundred bucks, so cheap.

NICK

Yeah... *so cheap*- I just-
(*yanks, fruitlessly*)
-Sonofabitch is really in there!

KEITH

And not to be an "Ebenezer Rules" here, but... As Treasurer of the H.O.A. I have to tell you: Your decorations are not following this year's "style guide." We want lights on ALL the trim, not just the roof. You know, we like to be a united front of holiday cheer.

NICK

Right, yeah. Sorry, Keith-

KEITH

Just a small fine, no big deal-

Nick nods, YANKS AGAIN- *So hard*. But it's not budging.

INT. OFFICE - SAME TIME

JEN HARPER, 40s, is asleep at a desk with her face on a keyboard. We see that she's written a SIX HUNDRED PAGE DOCUMENT full of the letter "B" over and over again-

ALEXIS (O.S.)

(British accent)

Morning, lovie darling!

Jen SHOOTs UP- Looks around, *regains her bearings*... She's been asleep at work, in yesterday's clothes, hair unkempt. She looks up from her desk to the doorway, where she finds:

ALEXIS FONTAINE, a decade younger than Jen, beautiful, great hair, and a handful of LITTLE GIFTS-

ALEXIS (CONT'D)
 You didn't... *sleep here last night? Did you, darling?*

JEN
 I was just... power napping. At night. Sheryl Sandberg does it.

ALEXIS
 Oh, lovie. Got to think about that work life balance, okay? I just popped in to give everyone their Happy Christmas gifts-

Alexis hands one over to Jen: A little SNOWMAN DESK CLOCK. Jen looks at it like all she wants is to smash it to pieces.

ALEXIS (CONT'D)
 But do take that half-day, love. See you at the pageant, *kiss kiss!*

Jen sneers as Alexis heads back out down the hall...

JEN
 (fake British accent)
 "Morning lovie darling!" *YOU'RE FROM CONNECTICUT!*

INT. SHANE'S ROOM - SAME TIME

THUMP. **SHANE HARPER**, 13, has just fallen on the floor from the top bunk. He sits up, looks around, **HOLDS HIS HEAD-**

SHANE
Ugh... I feel sick dude...

Another kid, **FARHAD**, 13, is on the bottom bunk-

FARHAD
Why did we drink so much eggnog??

SHANE
Shh! DUDE! My parents are here!

FARHAD
 Don't worry, dog, I unplugged your refrigerator last night and left the door open-

SHANE
 What? Why? How does that help?

FARHAD

Because now your family is going to be so busy throwing out all that rancid food that they'll NEVER notice the eggnog is gone. It's called being a friend. Read a book.

KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK on the door. Shane grabs his aching head and lays back down-

WESLEY (O.S.)

Merry almost Christmas, Shane!

SHANE

Go away, Oopsie!

INT. THE HARPERS' UPSTAIRS HALL - MOMENTS LATER

Nick heads upstairs in his heavy coat, covered in snow, passing by Shane's CLOSED DOOR, with Wesley outside of it-

WESLEY

Dad! Shane won't let me play with him and he's calling me Oopsie!

NICK

Yeah, okay, I'll talk to him, just give me a-

As Nick passes Shane's door, he can HEAR THE BOYS TALKING-

SHANE (O.S.)

Just don't ruin this for me, Farhad- I'm supposed to get the XPhone Black Edition for Christmas this year. I put it on my list.

Nick leans closer to the door, very interested now-

INT. SHANE'S ROOM - SAME TIME

FARHAD

Recognize I'm Muslim so I have limited experience: But this is going to be the best Christmas ever-

SHANE

But if I get an XPhone Blue instead-

FARHAD

Oh yeah, social suicide.

SHANE

You don't know how it is at my new school, dude. The ONLY WAY I could walk into that school and say "hey look at my cool blue phone" is if I'm walking out of a time machine and it's Christmas two years ago.

FARHAD

Plus, chicks dig time machines.

CRASH! From the hallway- They turn- What was that?

INT. HARPERS' ATTIC - SAME TIME

...It was the LADDER TO THE ATTIC. Nick CLIMBS QUICKLY and arrives at THE STASH OF GIFTS. He finds a BOX WITH A FANCY PHONE INSIDE. The box is BLACK, but it says: **X-PHONE BLUE**.

NICK

Crap, crap, crap!

He takes out his phone, starts searching for "X-PHONE BLACK" and everywhere he looks: **SOLD OUT. SOLD OUT. SOLD OUT.**

INT. MARK'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

LINDSAY HARPER, 16, opens her eyes... *SHOOTS UP.*

LINDSAY

-CRAP! What time is it??

She SUDDENLY HUSTLES, rolling out of bed- And we discover THERE'S A BOY IN HERE: **MARK, 17, great hair.** It's his room.

MARK

I don't know... Why?

LINDSAY

Because I slept over you idiot!

She starts grabbing her shoes (she slept in her clothes)-

MARK

Oh... Nice-

LINDSAY

No! Not nice! My parents are going to kill me! Literal murder, Mark! I need you to drive me-

She OPENS the window to see: ALL THE CARS ARE SNOWED IN.

LINDSAY (CONT'D)
Ugh, damn it, NEVER MIND!

So she QUICKLY HEADS FOR THE DOOR-

INT. THE HARPERS' HOUSE - SAME TIME

Nick KNOCKS on a door that says "LINDSAY'S ROOM"-

NICK
LINDSAY WATCH YOUR BROTHERS THANKS!

He **STORMS DOWN THE STAIRS**, putting his coat back on, when-

WESLEY (O.S.)
Dad? Where are you going?

NICK
I have to go to the mall-

WESLEY (O.S.)
THAT'S WHERE SANTA IS! CAN I COME??

NICK
Look, buddy, I know you're excited
but we don't have the time for...

At the door now, Nick sees that little Wes is now DRESSED AS A PENGUIN (for some reason). An adorable, adorable penguin, giving Dad the *sad puppy dog eyes*...

NICK (CONT'D)
Wes, why are you dressed as a...
You know what, yes, you can come-
explain in the car-

Wesley CHEERS and waddles out in front of him, OFF THEY GO-

INT. NICK'S CAR - MOMENTS LATER

They HURRY INTO THE CAR. Nick STRAPS WES IN. He gets up front, TURNS THE CAR ON. TRIES TO BACK UP- But... wait, they're totally snowed in...

Nick forgot to shovel the driveway. He takes a deep breath, trying to keep it together, then-

EXT. THE HARPERS' HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Nick SHOVELS furiously, fast, sweaty, powering through-

EXT. MAIN STREET - SAME TIME

Lindsay SPRINTS past TOWN WORKERS putting up crowd railings below a big banner: **41st ANNUAL CHRISTMAS PARADE, Dec. 24th!**

As she passes the entrance to a PARK, **A GUY WITH A SNOWBLOWER BLASTS HER IN THE FACE-**

INT. JEN'S CAR - SAME TIME

On the phone, Jen DRIVES QUICKLY. Her car is an EXPENSIVE SUV. Much nicer than Nick's little sedan.

JEN

They put a blue edition in a black box?? WHY WOULD ANYONE DO THAT??

INT. NICK'S CAR - SAME TIME

Nick also DRIVES QUICKLY, Penguin in the back, and RUDOLPH'S ANTLER STILL LODGED INSIDE, protruding from the roof-

NICK

I don't know! I thought I was getting the right one! But, it's okay, this is exactly why I took the day off- There's a shipment coming this morning. I'll get it.

Nick SWERVES, DODGING SNOW FROM A FAMILIAR SNOWBLOWER-

-INTERCUT AS NEEDED-

JEN

-Well thanks for handling this, I'll be home soon, I'll get the ham in a brine because *god forbid your mother tastes an un-brined ham-*

NICK

Jen, I... *what happened last night?*
I waited up for you-

JEN

Sorry- *Ms. Perfect* worked late, and I know I shouldn't let it get to me, but I didn't want to leave before her... Guess I passed out, she went home, came back, looking great, bearing gifts. Not my best morning. *Did you wrap the gifts for the kids?*

WESLEY

-Doesn't Santa wrap presents?

JEN

Why is Wesley in your car?? I need to get him ready for the pageant!

Jen MAKES A SHARP TURN into their DEVELOPMENT. Out the window, we can see from afar: **LINDSAY SPRINTING THROUGH YARDS-**

NICK

He's already dressed. He's going to be the cutest and most... historically accurate penguin in all of Bethlehem. *Right buddy??*

JEN

Please don't drop him off in front of school in the Camry- I can't deal with the judgy eyes-

NICK

Yeah it's also not in...
(eyeing the antlers)
...The *best* condition today.

JEN

And don't let Wes ruin that outfit! I spent way too much money on that... *But I'll show Alexis whose kid is "sooo charming!"*

NICK

Well money is just a giant number on our credit card statement at this point. What's the difference?

Jen pulls up to the house, and OUT SHE GOES-

INT. THE HARPERS' LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Shane has on black shades and drinks Gatorade, hung over, as he and Farhad swat at flies as they play video games.

Then- THE WINDOW OPENS. The boys turn to see LINDSAY CLIMBING IN. She brushes the snow off of her, takes her shoes off-

LINDSAY

Don't you dare say a word.

She joins the boys on the couch just before **JEN COMES IN-**

SHANE
HI MOMMY!

LINDSAY
Morning Mom-

JEN
Are you KIDDING ME?

Shane and Lindsay look to each other: WHICH OF US IS IN TROUBLE? But Jen walks up to the TREE, SWARMED BY **FLIES-**

JEN (CONT'D)
There's a nest! Did nobody notice-
(sniffing the air)
Do you smell that?

She steps away from them, toward the kitchen, where she sees: THE PUDDLE OF GOOP seeping from the kitchen... leading to the FRIDGE, with the DOORS OPEN, and ALL THE FOOD ROTTING-

JEN (O.S.) (CONT'D)
DEAR GOD! *Who unplugged the fridge?*

She runs up to it, starts looking at all the perished food- There were MEATS, DESSERTS, CHEESES, CHRISTMAS EVE DINNER-

JEN (CONT'D)
I spent two day precooking this! *I have to throw out EVERYTHING!*

Shane and Farhad give each other a secret fist bump- Jen tries to keep it together, forming a plan in her head-

JEN (CONT'D)
Okay okay okay- We can do this- Lindsay, you're going to the store, I'll still take Wes to the pageant-

THE DOORBELL RINGS-

JEN (CONT'D)
We'll have plenty of time before-

DOORBELL-

JEN (CONT'D)
FINE! I'M COMING!

Jen marches back toward the door, past the kids-

JEN (CONT'D)
Don't help or anything, Lindsay-

LINDSAY
What? Why me? Shane's here too!

SHANE

Yeah, Lindsay!

JEN

We need a grocery run RIGHT NOW-
I'm making a list. Everyone's going
to be here in five hours, so please-

SHE OPENS THE DOOR, TO FIND: **GREAT UNCLE CHARLIE**. Very old.

UNCLE CHARLIE

What? Am I early?

INT. THE MALL - MOMENTS LATER

IMAGINE THE WORST PLACE EVER. THAT'S THE MALL, DECEMBER 24TH.

And that's where we find Nick, dragging Wes the Penguin
through it all: THICK CROWDS, BAD CHRISTMAS MUSIC, GIANT BALL
ORNAMENTS HANGING IN THE AIR, and an INSANE LINE for SANTA.

WESLEY

-And my *first* favorite Christmas
was when I was little and we went
sledding, and then it snowed and we
stayed inside all night- Remember
that one? It was at the old house.

Nick stops at an ELECTRONICS STORE, IT'S MOBBED- From here it
seems like it's on the verge of VIOLENCE in there...

NICK

I don't know, kiddo. Listen-
(squatting to his level)
I have to make a quick stop before
we say hi to Santa, so you're going
to play the "wait right here" game.

WESLEY

You're leaving me alone?

NICK

It's safer here than it is in there-

Nick turns to a CHRISTMAS CANDY VENDOR GUY-

NICK (CONT'D)

Hey, can I get one of those
chocolate nut crackers?

Nick gives a GIANT CHOCOLATE TO WESLEY... And hands over CASH
to the Candy Vendor, slipping him a little extra-

NICK (CONT'D)

And listen, just... keep an eye on my son real quick, okay?

WESLEY

Dad you told me never to talk to strangers. Or take candy from them-

NICK

This is different, he's- A good guy-
(to the guy)
You're not like, some kind of deviant are you?

CANDY VENDOR GUY

No. But... to be fair, if I was, I'd probably say that anyway.

NICK

How is that helpful??

INT. ELECTRONICS STORE - MOMENTS LATER

IT'S TOTAL INSANITY IN HERE, full of people fighting over the last scraps of electronics. Nick weaves through the crowd-

Spots a SHELF FOR THE "XPHONE BLACK EDITION!" with one box left! He rushes toward it, grabs it- BUT- Somebody grabs the other end: A CREEPY, SWEATY GUY.

NICK

Um, sir- I was here first- And it's for my son for Christmas, so-

SWEATY GUY

Like I'm not somebody's son?

He TUGS, but Nick TUGS BACK-

NICK

Look, my thirteen-year-old wrote to Santa asking for this-

SWEATY GUY

Your thirteen-year-old writes to Santa? He's manipulating you, bro-

NICK

It's not that he *believes* in Santa, it's just a tradition, you know, this way we know exactly what he-

Sweaty Guy uses this moment to PUNCH NICK IN THE THROAT- AND DOWN HE GOES, GASPING FOR AIR-

SWEATY GUY

Haha, you suck at Christmas...

And OFF THE GUY RUNS. Nick, on the ground, gets a TEXT from JEN: "NEED A NEW TREE ASAP!" Nick tries to catch his breath-

INT. THE MALL, BY SANTA - MOMENTS LATER

Nick now RUNS, with Wesley sitting on his shoulders, PAST AN EPIC LINE OF FAMILIES, ALL WAITING FOR SANTA-

NICK

SORRY! IT'S AN EMERGENCY! SORRY!

ANGRY DAD

HEY! DON'T CUT THE LINE, ASSHOLE!

Wes has gotten chocolate ALL OVER HIS lips and outfit-

WESLEY

Dad... We should go back in line-
Everyone's yelling at us-

Nick finally gets to the front of the line and puts Wesley down, OTHER PARENTS STILL SHOUTING AT THEM-

NICK

Hey, who cares? Ignore them-

ANGRY DAD

HEY DICKHEAD! BACK OF THE LINE!

Wes looks at the guy, worried, but Nick keeps his focus-

NICK

Wes, look, *I'm trying*, okay? I'm trying to keep it all together- I'm trying to make this a perfect Christmas for all of you and I'm sorry that I'm so bad at it, but I got you here, and there's Santa's lap, and if you just sit on it and tell him what you want for Christmas you can take this *one tiny little win* and we can go onto the next thing because we *really don't have time to be sitting here arguing about it!*

Wesley looks to the ground, getting sad...

NICK (CONT'D)
Wait, Wes, I'm sorry, I didn't-

SKINNY SANTA
Hey, Little Boy!

Wesley looks up to the **SKINNY MALL SANTA** (50s), he's been watching Nick and Wesley all this time. Wes is intimidated...

SKINNY SANTA (CONT'D)
Come on up here! Ho ho ho!

Wesley snuffles, wipes snot on his filthy costume and GOES UP-

ANGRY DAD
So now terrible parents just get to skip the line! This is ridiculous!

NICK
BECAUSE I'M SURE YOU'RE A PERFECT FATHER! *HEY EVERYBODY, PERFECT FATHER OVER HERE! HIDE YA KIDS!*

WITH DAD YELLING, Wes gets on Santa's lap-

SKINNY SANTA
What do you want for Christmas, Wesley? Anything at all.

Wesley, still sniffing, looks away from his Dad, up to Santa, and... HE WHISPERS SOMETHING...

With Nick busy in his SCREAMING MATCH, he doesn't see any of it. He doesn't see Wes whisper, or the Mall Santa give him a little smile, and a **MAGICAL LITTLE SANTA WINK-**

EXT. THE GROCERY STORE - SAME TIME

IMAGINE THE SECOND WORST PLACE EVER. THAT'S THE GROCERY STORE PARKING LOT THE DAY BEFORE CHRISTMAS. That's where we find:

Lindsay driving Uncle Charlie's car. Shane shotgun. Uncle Charlie in the back. She HONKS, stuck behind a slow car...

LINDSAY
LEARN TO DRIVE, ASSHOLE!

UNCLE CHARLIE
Are you sure you're allowed to be driving? Your Mom said I was supposed to take you kids to-

LINDSAY

No she said I need to take YOUR car-
You're forgetting things again,
Uncle Charlie-

UNCLE CHARLIE

But do you have a driver's license?

LINDSAY

I'll be passing the road test soon-

SHANE

Oh so fourth time's a charm?

LINDSAY

Shut up! Parallel parking is hard!
And when I do pass it, I'm going to
drive as far away from my family as
possible and LIVE THERE FOREVER!

She STOPS SHORT. Because she is very bad at this. Shane looks like he might vomit. Because he's hung over.

UNCLE CHARLIE

There's a spot-

SHANE

She can't fit into-

She ACCELERATES INTO THE SPOT- *SCRAPES BOTH SIDES OF THE CAR WITH A HORRIBLE SCREECH- AND CRASHES INTO THE CAR IN FRONT.*

It LAUNCHES BACK, HOPS THE CURB, *HITS A GIANT CHRISTMAS TREE-*

Lindsay, Shane and Uncle Charlie WINCE as the tree slooowwwly TIPS OVER- *PEOPLE SCREAM, SCATTER- AND THE TREE TOPPLES DOWN DIRECTLY ONTO A SALVATION ARMY SANTA.*

A LITTLE GIRL, SEEING THIS, **SCREAMS BLOODY MURDER-**

EXT. SAINT MARK'S PREP - DAY

The super fancy K-12 private school looks like Christmas threw up all over it. An OVERACHIEVING FAMILY sings CAROLS at the entrance. EXPENSIVE CARS line the parking lot.

Jen waits out front, cold, half-smiling at the perfect families all coming inside the big doors with the light-up sign: **CHRISTMAS PAGEANT TODAY!** Then, we hear-

The SQUEAK OF TIRES- Nick's car, half as expensive as the others, still with RUDOLPH'S SEVERED HEAD LODGED IN THE ROOF, comes SQUEALING TO A STOP on the far side of the parking lot-

He lets out little Wes, who comes penguin-waddling over through DOZENS OF KIDS dressed for the NATIVITY-

JEN

What happened to your costume? Did you roll around in mud?

Nick mouths "I'M SORRY" to Jen from across the crowd, and he gets back into his car: More errands to run.

WESLEY

No, it's chocolate. A stranger gave me candy but he told Dad that he's not a deviant so it was okay!

Jen pulls WIPES out of her Mom-Bag to clean the outfit up-

JEN

How are you feeling? Ready to steal the show? *You're going to do great-*

Wesley looks uneasy, as Jen shoves him along toward the door-

JEN (CONT'D)

Remember: ANNUNCIATE! ANNUNCIATE-

INT. SCHOOL AUDITORIUM - MOMENTS LATER

IMAGINE THE MOST ELABORATE NATIVITY SCENE EVER. That's what these people have constructed. Professional grade lighting and the best costumes you've ever seen.

Out in front is handsome LITTLE **JOSEPH**, 6, a stud in the making, with a perfect fake beard and the VOICE OF AN ANGEL:

LITTLE JOSEPH

(singing)

Cooooome bear witness...

The mirrrrraaacleee! The baby Jesus!

SPARKLERS GO OFF! A dazzling spectacle! As they then bring out an **ACTUAL BABY**. The WHOLE CROWD AWWWS...

And in the crowd we see JEN, sitting next to ALEXIS FONTAINE and HER HUNKY HUSBAND, getting video on his phone-

ALEXIS

(whispering to Jen)

It took me an HOUR to get that beard to look right, but it's so worth it. Look at him, *so charming*. What a magical time of year...

Jen rolls her eyes. She can't escape this fucking woman.

Just then, ALL THE LITTLE ANIMALS APPEAR and start TROTting OUT in their ADORABLE COSTUMES. Lions. Tigers. A PENGUIN... But that Penguin looks a little out of it...

Jen looks worried, as Wes, still with chocolate around his lips, waddles to the front of the pack, gets close to get a glimpse of the baby, and ANNUNCIATES:

WESLEY

Hark! It's a...

He takes a moment. The crowd is uneasy. Jen winces. Then-

WESLEY VOMITS EVERYWHERE, AND ON THE BABY- PEOPLE SCREAM-

HORRIFIED MOTHER

HE PUKED ON BABY JESUS!

The THEATER DIRECTOR RUSHES THE STAGE- *BUT-*

SHE SLIPS ON THE VOMIT AND *SLIDES RIGHT OFF THE STAGE-* More GASPS as she LANDS OUT OF SIGHT- CRASH-

INT. JEN'S CAR - LATER

Wes is in his chocolate/snot/puke-covered penguin outfit in the back. Jen drives, very much not in a good mood.

WESLEY

Mom... Did I kill Mrs. Winetrapp?

JEN

No, honey! The E.M.T. said she probably only has a concussion.

As they pull up to the driveway, Jen sees something TRULY HORRIBLE IN FRONT OF HER HOUSE. Her expression DROPS...

EXT. THE HARPERS' HOUSE - SAME TIME

THE ENTIRE EXTENDED FAMILY IS SHIVERING AT THE FRONT DOOR. There are **UNCLES, AUNTS, COUSINS** with A.D.D. throwing snowballs. **GRANDMA** in luxurious FURS. And Jen pulls up.

GRANDMA

Nice of her to show up.

As Jen comes out, she now PRETENDS TO BE HAPPY TO SEE THEM-

JEN

You guys are all... *SO EARLY!*

Uncle Charlie's car then pulls up: ALL CRUNCHED UP.

JEN

What the hell?

GRANDMA

Charlie! Your car!

Lindsay and Shane get out of the back, with tons of groceries-

JEN

What happened??

LINDSAY

He's really losing his marbles Mom, you shouldn't let him drive- He almost murdered Santa.

SHANE

I think I have whiplash, I'm going to go lay down-

LINDSAY

Oh and we didn't get flour because Shane saw a girl he goes to school with and had a panic attack-

SHANE

She's not just a girl! She's Natalie Fiorello! I was powerless!

As they keep arguing, NICK'S CAR PULLS UP with a Christmas Tree tied to the top. And THE EXTENDED FAMILY BRIGHTENS UP-

GRANDMA

There's my baby!

NICK

(getting out)

Merry Almost Christmas, everyone!

Nick gives his mother a hug, looks to Jen up at the front door- Both look confused: *Why are they all here already??*

Nick's BROTHER **SCOTT** (30s) comes up, interrupting the moment. He's in an EXPENSIVE COAT and SUIT. He gives Nick a HUG-

SCOTT

Nicky boy! Hey- so sorry we bumrushed you like this, you know how Dad is about beating traffic-

GRANDPA

We made SUCH good time! 91 was
touch and go, but I took exit 4!

Scott puts an arm around Nick and they head for Nick's car,
where we now see that THE TREE IS A HALF-DEAD PIECE OF CRAP.

SCOTT

Man... This is why you don't wait
for the day before Christmas to buy
a tree, huh?

NICK

Wasn't exactly the plan, Scott. You
helping or what?

SCOTT

Yeah, but, uh, can we talk?

Nick nods, as they start UNWRAPPING THE TWINE from the tree-

SCOTT (CONT'D)

You know I would never lead you
astray, right? Like, on purpose.
Like when you asked about trying to
get in on something, I tried to
steer you to a sure thing. I had
money in it too-

NICK

Wait- *What are you saying?*

Nick looks to Scott, suddenly very concerned...

SCOTT

Look, investments are like boats.
Some boats float. Some boats sink.

NICK

That's your experience with boats?

SCOTT

Forget boats, okay... It's... The
investment, it... It's washed out.

Nick is frozen now... this is THE WORST NEWS...

SCOTT (CONT'D)

But it's like you said, you had
extra cash, it's not like you lost
your savings on it- Right?

He slaps Nick on the shoulder and lugs the tree down from the
car, but Nick just stands there, stunned and quiet...

INT. THE HARPERS' LIVING ROOM - THAT NIGHT

DEATH METAL plays from the **STEREO**, as we see our **BOISTEROUS CHRISTMAS EVE**. Little cousins chase each other around the **NEW TREE**, where Little Wesley adorably hangs delicate ornaments.

Shane and **OLDER COUSINS** play video games on the couch. Lindsay sits in the corner, texting, beside **SNOOZING** Uncle Charlie. **AND AUNTS, UNCLES, GRANDPARENTS, GIRLFRIENDS, ETC**, all sit around the table, drinking, eating, complaining-

GRANDMA

-All I'm saying is that if it WAS brined, I couldn't tell-

AUNT LORRAINE, 50s, is helping clear some plates-

AUNT LORRAINE

This still isn't Christmas music-
Somebody put on Christmas music!

GOTH COUSIN

(turning up the stereo)
Christmas is for pussies!

SCOTT

Hey! Don't say pussies in front of your grandma!

Wes is now handling a **VERY SPECIAL ORNAMENT**: It's clear glass with fake snow inside, and **FIVE LITTLE FIGURINES ICE SKATING**: His family. On the glass it says, "**THE HARPERS ON ICE!**"

GRANDMA

Nicky, when are you going to get some real furniture for this big house of yours?

NICK

We're uh... still- talking to some interior designers-

Jen emerges from the kitchen with a **MOUND OF CHOCOLATE**-

JEN

Lindsay! Can you put on some Christmas music please?

Lindsay ignores her, texting with **MARK**: "**MISS U**" "**MISS U MORE**" Etc- Meanwhile, Jen puts the chocolate on the table... the family all gaze at it, not sure what it is...

JEN (CONT'D)

Who wants coffee with their cake?

GRANDMA

That doesn't look like cake.

JEN

It's the cake I make every year!
It's just- *flourless*- *Because IT
HAD TO BE! LINDSAY!*

LINDSAY

IT WAS SHANE!

UNCLE RAY, with a thick PHILLY-ITALIAN accent looks at it...

UNCLE RAY

Looks like shit. I mean, no
disrespect, it looks DELICIOUS.
But, you know, it also looks like a
pile of shit. Is all I mean.

VANESSA, Uncle Scott's SUPER HOT TWENTY-SOMETHING GIRLFRIEND,
is getting ogled by the male family members-

VANESSA

No cake for me, thanks-

UNCLE RAY

I get it, *got to keep lookin' the
way you're lookin', am I right?*

AUNT LORRAINE, smacks him upside the head-

AUNT LORRAINE

If you're gonna make young women
feel uncomfortable, wait until
you're wife's not around-
(to Jen)
You. SIT. You've been doing too
much, I'll grab the coffee-

Jen nods a THANK YOU, then takes a seat beside Nick-

JEN

You okay? How was the ham? Honestly-
Not THAT BAD, right?

Nick shakes his head- *it was fine*. But his mind is elsewhere.
For the first time he seems truly defeated.

JEN (CONT'D)

Hey. What's wrong? I feel like I
haven't even seen you today.

NICK

I'm... fine... just... *Jen, I-*

INT. NICK AND JEN'S BEDROOM - LATER

SILENCE. Jen and Nick sit on opposite sides of their big bed, wrapping a HUGE PILE OF CHRISTMAS GIFTS.

NICK

At least the E.M.T. said there was no permanent scarring. Her burns should heal up in a few weeks, so-

JEN

Well your brother is *definitely* breaking up with her before then.

NICK

That's not our fault! She turns twenty-five in January. And you know how Scott feels about "middle aged women."

JEN

God, he's an asshole...

NICK

You don't know the half of it.

He looks up from the gifts, toward Jen, wants to tell her...

NICK (CONT'D)

Hey... I got you something...

JEN

What? No! We said no gifts!

Nick PANTOMIMES handing Jen an INVISIBLE BOX...

NICK

Don't open it now, but it's a shotgun to blow our brains out with-

JEN

Oh my god, that's EXACTLY what I wanted! How did you know??

Nick laughs as Jen mimes unwrapping it. She then looks up-

JEN (CONT'D)

-Is it this hard for everyone?

NICK

I don't know... I just feel like we're... snowed under. We work like dogs to pay for the house-

JEN
That damn school-

NICK
-I couldn't afford to get a guy to fasten that sleigh to the roof, tried to do it myself, after work, in the dark, exhausted- Now there's a reindeer head lodged in my sedan.

Jen lies flat down on her back, so tired.

JEN
You see these families, they work too, they have money- but somehow they still have time for carolling? *Who has time to practice carolling?* We can't even get all of us to sit down for dinner. And people have the nerve to call it-
(British accent)
"The most magical time of year!"

Nick looks down at the half-wrapped gift in his hand. It's the XPHONE BLUE for Shane. The one he's going to hate...

NICK
The only thing magic about Christmas is that it's all the stress and expense and everything that makes the rest of the year impossible- but it's compressed and distilled until it all fits into ONE time of year. *Magic!* Right?

Jen's quiet now. Nick can't see her over the gifts and paper.

NICK (CONT'D)
I thought if I could give you guys this one great Christmas, then it might make all the rest of it feel a little more manageable. I figured this family could use a win. But...
(beat)
I... I need to tell you something.

Then, Jen starts SNORING. Fast asleep. Nick gently takes the tube of wrapping paper from her hand, starts unspooling it- BUT- *IT'S EMPTY*. Because of course it is.

INT. THE HARPERS' LIVING ROOM - LATER

THE ROOM IS QUIET. The HALF-WRAPPED gifts are now under the tree. A BUG ZAPPER has been set up nearby. ZAP! It's got one. The chimney has no fire in it... But the TV streams a YULE LOG, crackling. Uncle Charlie snores on the couch.

On the floor, we see **WES'S SHATTERED ORNAMENT**, the figures of the Harper family scattered about in the fake snow...

FADE TO BLACK.

AND THE MOST ANNOYING CHRISTMAS SONG EVER COMES ON.

INT. THE HARPERS' LIVING ROOM - DAWN

WE'RE VERY CLOSE ON NICK'S FACE as he slowly opens his eyes... *Confused*... He turns his head and finds: WESLEY LOOKING DIRECTLY AT HIM, inches from his face.

WESLEY
OH GOOD YOU'RE UP.

ON NICK: *Wait. What??* He looks around, disoriented...

NICK
Where's... What... *time is it?*

WESLEY
It's six PM in China.

NICK
Why are you...
(big time déjà vu)
...Giving me the time in China?

Nick STANDS UP. Looks around. Notices the tree: *IT'S INFESTED WITH FLIES*. Out the window: SNOW. HE'S LIVED THIS ALREADY.

WESLEY
Because in China it's almost
Christmas, and so SOON it'll be
Christmas here too!

Nick gives Wes a look... But before he can say anything, we hear THAT GUST OF WIND... CREAK... RUMBLE... Nick looks up-

WESLEY (CONT'D)
-Dad? ...Don't you wish it could be
Christmas every day?

Nick turns to the window just as THE GIANT DECORATIVE SANTA AND SLEIGH COMES CRASHING DOWN ONTO HIS CAR. AGAIN.

INT. OFFICE - SAME TIME

ALEXIS
Morning, lovie darling!

Jen SHOOTs UP from her desk. Looks at Alexis, *confused*. Then at the computer, and the document she typed with her face.

ALEXIS (CONT'D)
You didn't... *sleep here last night? Did you, darling?*

Jen looks back at Alexis with a BLANK, DREAMLIKE STARE...

INT. SHANE'S ROOM - SAME TIME

THUMP. Shane has fallen off the top bunk. He holds his head, looks around... *Hang on a second...* Farhad is here too.

SHANE
Farhad? Dude- What are you... Why am I still hung over?

FARHAD
Because we drank like a bathtub of eggnog last night, dog.

Shane's looking around, so confused- WHEN: THE DOOR BURSTS OPEN, *IT'S NICK*, looking vaguely insane.

NICK
BOYS! Would you guys say that the XPhone Blue is lame and the XPhone Black is like, the jam?

FARHAD
I mean... I wouldn't say "the jam" because nobody says that, but- Kinda, yeah. Why?

Freaked out, silent, NICK HURRIES BACK OUT TO THE HALL-

INT. MARK'S ROOM - SAME TIME

Lindsay opens her eyes... Looks over to find... MARK.
SHE SHOOTs UP. LOOKS AROUND.

LINDSAY
...WEIRD!

Lindsay runs to the window, sees ALL THE CARS SNOWED IN.

LINDSAY (CONT'D)
Weird weird weird weird weird!

EXT. MAIN STREET - MOMENTS LATER

Lindsay SPRINTS down main street, noticing ALL THE FAMILIAR FACES, THE TOWN WORKERS PREPPING FOR THE PARADE... And just then **A GUY WITH A SNOWBLOWER BLASTS HER IN THE FACE-**

LINDSAY
 AH! *WEIRD WEIRD WEIRD!!!*

INT. THE HARPERS' LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Shane and Farhad are back to playing video games. But now Shane is looking around... *Like this is familiar.* He SWATS AWAY A FLY, just like yesterday...

SHANE
 Dude... When you drink a lot, is it supposed to give you like... REALLY freaky dreams?

FARHAD
 Yeah dude. Last night I dreamt I had a goatee. It was like *so real.*

Then, THE WINDOW OPENS- In comes Lindsay-

SHANE
Okay, I can't even right now.

Shane LIES DOWN, holding his head-

INT. THE MALL - MOMENTS LATER

Nick drags Wesley, dressed as a penguin, through the mall. Every little thing about this looks familiar: The FAMILIES. The BAD CHRISTMAS MUSIC. The LINE FOR SANTA.

And as they pass it, we see **SKINNY SANTA CRANE HIS NECK...** *Almost like he's looking at Nick from afar...*

NICK
 Hey, Wes, this is a weird question but... *Has this happened before?*

WESLEY
 Of course, Dad!

Suddenly, Nick gets down to Wes's level-

NICK
IT HAS, RIGHT? Like-

WESLEY
Yeah, we came here last year. Mommy
and Lindsay and Shane came, and we-

NICK
-No, I... yeah, we did that, but...

Nick then notices something: THE SWEATY GUY, the one that got
the XPHONE before Nick. He RUNS PAST NICK, toward the store-

NICK (CONT'D)
Oh crap- Stay here!

Wesley's confused, as Nick PAYS for a CHOCOLATE NUT CRACKER,
tosses it at Wesley, then SPRINTS TOWARD THE ELECTRONIC STORE-

INT. ELECTRONICS STORE - MOMENTS LATER

The Sweaty Guy has the BOX, but now NICK GETS HIS HANDS ON IT-

SWEATY GUY
Hey, old man, I got this first.

NICK
That didn't stop you last time!

SWEATY GUY
What? Do I know you?

NICK
Nope! *But I know you!*

Nick PUNCHES THE GUY IN THE THROAT- HE GAGS, DROPS- But then-

RANDOM PERSON
Hey, what the hell? This guy just
punched that guy in the neck!!

ANOTHER RANDOM PERSON
Who does that?? It's Christmas!

NICK
No no no, you don't understand- He
was going to do it to me!

A SECURITY GUARD GRABS NICK-

NICK (CONT'D)

No you can't take me away! My son
is out there! *I left him with a
stranger who has candy!*

I/E. UNCLE CHARLIE'S CAR / GROCERY STORE PARKING LOT - LATER

Lindsay drives, weirded out, through the PARKING LOT. We don't see Shane in shotgun. But Uncle Charlie's in the back.

LINDSAY

Man this is weird...

We now see that Shane has the seat FULLY RECLINED. His shades are on. His hands over his forehead.

SHANE

Lindsay, shut up, you don't know
the first thing about-

UNCLE CHARLIE

There's a spot!

Lindsay sees that TOO SMALL SPOT she saw "yesterday", her EYES WIDEN as she just ROLLS PAST IT, STARING AT IT...

LINDSAY

WIIIIIIERRRRD-

-SMASH! Distracted, she hits the car in front of her. *SENDING IT TOWARD THE SALVATION ARMY SANTA- A LITTLE GIRL SCREAMS-*

EXT. SAINT MARK'S PREP - LATER

As the same crowd files into the same auditorium, Jen squats next to Wes, in his chocolate covered Penguin costume-

JEN

Hon, how do you... *feel?* Because if
you don't want to go up there, you-

WESLEY

You said the penguin is the most
important part! I have a line!

JEN

Okay, you're right, just... If you
feel like you have to throw up...
Don't do it on the baby Jesus, kay?

INT. AUDITORIUM - MOMENTS LATER

THE PAGEANT IS UNDERWAY. Jen watches it from beside Alexis-

LITTLE JOSEPH

-The mirrrraacleee! The baby Jesus!

ALL THE LITTLE ANIMALS TROT OUT in their ADORABLE COSTUMES. But that Penguin looks a little out of it, again...

WESLEY

Hark! It's a...

THEN, WESLEY TURNS AWAY FROM THE BABY... AND **VOMITS ON THE GIRL PLAYING MARY-** EVERYONE FREAKS OUT.

HORRIFIED MOTHER

HE PUKED ON THE VIRGIN MARY!

JEN

Yeah that's not better.

The THEATER DIRECTOR RUSHES THE STAGE- More GASPS as SHE SLIPS ON THE VOMIT AND *SLIDES RIGHT OFF THE STAGE- CRASH.*

EXT. THE HARPERS' HOUSE - LATER

Nick pulls up to the house with that SAME SHITTY TREE. Scott comes up to him as he gets out of the car-

SCOTT

Nicky boy! Hey I'm so sorry we bumrushed you like this, you know how Dad feels about beating traffic-

GRANDPA

We made SUCH good time!

Nick looks bewildered, then *turns to Scott, remembering-*

NICK

Oh no, not this part.

SCOTT

Hey so, Nick, look... Investments... They're like *boats-*

INT. THE HARPERS' LIVING ROOM - THAT NIGHT

DEATH METAL plays from the STEREO. That same Christmas Eve.

SCOTT
Don't say pussies in front of your
grandma!

Lindsay is in the corner, just looking around-

Shane's on the couch, an ice pack on his head. He can't deal.
But Wesley is just innocently putting his adorable little
HARPERS ON ICE ornament on the tree, when a COUSIN GRABS IT-

LINDSAY
WEIRD. This is so weird.

And Jen sits beside Nick, looking despondent and freaked out.

JEN
Hon, I have to talk to you- I'm
having the strangest day...

NICK
Yeah? Did you punch a stranger in
the throat?

WESLEY (O.S.)
-GIVE IT BACK!

Lorraine arrives from the kitchen with a POT OF COFFEE-

AUNT LORRAINE
Who's having decaf?

SUDDENLY: JEN, NICK, SHANE and LINDSAY all LEAP INTO ACTION,
they SCREAM AT THE LITTLE COUSIN WITH THE ORNAMENT-

THE HARPERS IN UNISON
DON'T THROW THAT!

WOAH. The four Harpers look to each other... *Holy shit: YOU
TOO?* They SHARE A LONG BEAT... Then-

The annoying cousin THROWS THE ORNAMENT ANYWAY and LORRAINE
LIFTS UP THE COFFEE POT TO PROTECT HERSELF- **HOT COFFEE SPILLS
ALL OVER VANESSA. AGAIN-**

EXT. THE HARPERS' HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Jen, Nick, Shane and Lindsay stand in the snow and watch the
E.M.T. TRUCK DRIVE AWAY as Scott walks a bandaged Vanessa
back toward the house-

JEN
So... you guys too?

SHANE

I thought I was going crazy!

NICK

Well let's not rule that out-

LINDSAY

It's fine, this is a dream.
Tomorrow it'll be Christmas, and I
can go to Becca Horowitz's party-

JEN

You're not going to a party on
Christmas, Lindsay!

LINDSAY

You're not even yelling at me right
now! You're just my subconscious!

NICK

-HEY. Let's all keep our cool. If
tomorrow is today again instead of
tomorrow like today was, we'll meet
in the kitchen, first thing.

SHANE

Um... *What?*

NICK

What I'm saying is: don't panic.
This is probably just all in our-

HARD CUT TO:

INT. THE HARPERS' LIVING ROOM - DAWN

CUE THE MOST ANNOYING CHRISTMAS SONG EVER.

WESLEY

OH GOOD YOU'RE-

On the couch again, Nick instantly sits up, looks out the
window: His car is there in the driveway, untouched-

So he hops up, runs right past Wes, **SPRINTS OUT OF THE ROOM-**

INT. NICK AND JEN'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Nick rushes in, past a pile of unused wrapping supplies, and
quickly **CLIMBS OUT THE WINDOW-**

EXT. THE HARPERS' ROOF - SAME TIME

He gets out onto the LOWER ROOF, looks up and spots: THE SANTA DISPLAY, still intact. *He can do this-*

Nick scrambles onto the UPPER ROOF, careful with his footing, he REACHES THE SLEIGH, and- *HE'S GOT IT!*

KEITH
NICE SAVE, NEIGHBOR!

Nick, proud of himself, glances over to Keith, watching from his bedroom window.

KEITH (CONT'D)
How did you know it was going to slip like that?

NICK
Just... *Realized I could save it.*

Holding tight, Nick then glances at plastic Santa... and he has A THOUGHT... *AN EPIPHANY.*

NICK (CONT'D)
I can save it... I CAN SAVE IT!
THAT'S IT! I CAN-

-THE GUST OF WIND COMES THROUGH. *THERE GOES THE SLEIGH, Nick tries to hold on BUT IT PULLS HIM WITH IT- AND OFF IT ALL GOES, OFF THE ROOF- SLEIGH, SANTA, REINDEER- AND NICK-*

SCREAM! SMASH! BANG! Keith *winces*, watching on.

KEITH
...Shoulda called my guy.

INT. HOSPITAL - LATER

NICK IS IN A HOSPITAL BED, wrapped in BANDAGES AND CASTS... And there's a FAKE ANTLER STICKING OUT OF HIS ARM, from where he has obviously been impaled. But, weirdly, he looks EXCITED-

NICK
WE CAN SAVE IT!

Jen, Lindsay, and Shane stand around him-

JEN
What are you talking about?

NICK

Christmas! Look, we messed this up, right? I mean, this day, from the very start was just one big disaster after another. All I wanted was for us to have a *perfect Christmas* and now we-

Nick tries to gesticulate in excitement-

NICK (CONT'D)

Ow, damn it, moved too fast-

JEN

You okay?

NICK

Yes! I'm great! I've honestly never been better!

LINDSAY

There's an antler in your arm.

NICK

It's fine! We'll wake up tomorrow and it'll all start again just like everything else does. That's what I'm saying- This is a CHANCE. Jen, you were saying that other people manage to figure it out. They somehow find the time to get it right- *But all we have now is time!* What if THAT'S why this is happening? What if this isn't a curse, but instead-

SHANE

No, Dad, please don't say it-

NICK

IT'S A CHRISTMAS MIRACLE!

LINDSAY

Ugh, so lame.

NICK

I grabbed that sleigh, and for a second I fixed one small thing. What if we did that with everything- Got a better tree, better lights-

JEN

-Better pageant. Better ham.

NICK

Right! *We can fix what went wrong so that it never went wrong in the first place-*

SHANE

Like a video game. You screw up a level, you have to play it again until you get it right-

NICK

Yes! And we just got a whole bag full of quarters!

SHANE

Wait, I don't understand- What do quarters have to do with it?

NICK

From the arcade. Do you really not- Never mind. What I'm saying is the universe is giving us a fresh-

Just then, Grandma pokes her head in from behind a CURTAIN-

GRANDMA

-I'm taking Wesley back to your house... *Looks like I'll be cooking tonight.* Probably for the best.

Once Grandma disappears, Jen turns to Nick.

JEN

Nick... let's kick the shit out of this Christmas.

NICK

Yes! That's what I've been saying. Finally. A perfect Christmas.

JEN

A perfect Christmas.

LINDSAY

Great. Now *that's* gonna be a thing.

CUT TO:

INT. THE HARPERS' LIVING ROOM - DAWN

Nick's EYES OPEN to THE SOUND OF **THE CHIPMUNKS**. This time, Nick isn't upset or confused- He just SITS UP, looking at his arms and legs, excited to find his casts are gone.

WESLEY
OH GOOD YOU'RE-

NICK
-Wes, get your Legos. I have a job
for you.

Wes runs off, SO FREAKING PUMPED, as Nick then- *remembers something- AND HE RUSHES OUT OF THE ROOM-*

INT. NICK AND JEN'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Nick rushes in, grabs a SPOOL OF THICK RIBBON from the pile of wrapping supplies as he sprints toward THE WINDOW-

EXT. THE HARPERS' ROOF - MOMENTS LATER

On the upper roof, Nick ties the SANTA DISPLAY to the chimney, looping layer after layer with thick ribbon, when-

THE GUST OF WIND COMES IN- This time, Nick grabs the chimney, holding tight as he watches the SLEIGH SHAKE... BUT...

When the wind is gone, THE DISPLAY STILL STANDS. Nick nods, proud... *He can do this.*

INT. THE HARPERS' LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

CLOSE ON: **FOUR LEGO PEOPLE.** Three male, one female. And Wes's LITTLE HAND adds: ONE MORE FEMALE LEGO PERSON.

WESLEY (O.S.)
Mommy's home!

A WIDER SHOT REVEALS that Wesley and Nick have built a ROUGH LEGO MODEL of THE TOWN--key locations and to-scale distances.

Jen comes in to find Lindsay and Shane already on the couch. Shane secretly hung over. Lindsay secretly out of breath, due to her sprint from Mark's house.

JEN
Morning guys, I got here as fast as I could- Maybe I need to take the service road... *What is all this?*

Jen steps over Lego houses, the Lego park, etc...

WESLEY
We're making the town!

NICK

Wesley why don't you go get your wood blocks from the basement, I need a scale model of the mall-

Wesley excitedly runs off-

NICK (CONT'D)

Part of the problem is we're always one step behind. So we have to start coordinating. It takes me ten minutes to shovel the driveway-

SHANE

It takes me a little more to kick out Farhad- He's kind of a talker.

LINDSAY

Yeah, and Dad's not allowed to come into my room because... I have a lot of "lady things" going on-

NICK

Yeah I'm not touching that.

Jen is confused, looks to Lindsay, but-

NICK (CONT'D)

So Jen, if you can get here faster-

JEN

-But, no, you shouldn't wait for me. You should go right to the mall-

SHANE

What's at the mall?

Nick and Jen give each other a look...

NICK

Uh... Santa. It's not a perfect Christmas if Wes isn't on Santa's lap, right?

INT. THE MALL - DAY

Wes is back on Santa's lap- Nick has again cut the line- And is AGAIN IN A SCREAMING MATCH WITH A DAD. Skinny Santa is giving Nick a look, *shaking his head, tisk tisk...*

NICK (V.O.)

Plus I have to make one quick stop-

INT. ELECTRONICS STORE - MOMENTS LATER

Nick is OBSERVING the motions of people, checking his watch, taking NOTES, watching the PEOPLE and PATTERNS...

INT. ELECTRONICS STORE - NEW DAY

Nick now navigates that EXACT SAME MOMENT, he STEPS OVER a pile of gifts, goes AROUND an arguing couple, HOPS OVER a wayward shopping cart, **NABS THE XPHONE BLACK-**

He's got it. All by himself. He grins. Then, he turns around-
And **THE SWEATY GUY PUNCHES HIM IN THE THROAT-**

INT. ELECTRONICS STORE - NEW DAY

TRYING AGAIN. He STEPS OVER a pile of gifts, goes around an arguing couple, hops over a wayward shopping cart, **NABS THE XPHONE BLACK-** Turns around, THERE'S SWEATY GUY-

BUT THIS TIME NICK **PULLS OUT A CAN OF MACE AND SPRAYS HIM IN THE FACE.** NOBODY NOTICES. The guy HITS THE GROUND.

NICK

Merry Christmas. You filthy animal.

Nick STEPS OVER THE GUY as he goes-

INT. THE MALL - MOMENTS LATER

Nick walks out of the store HOLDING THE GIFT UP HIGH, triumphant. Then sees WES THE PENGUIN, **COVERED IN CHOCOLATE-**

NICK (V.O.)

*Oh, right, I should also make sure
his costume doesn't look like crap-*

THEN, SOMEBODY **GRABS THE BOX FROM NICK** and SPRINTS AWAY-

NICK

HEY! *God damn it!*

INT. THE HARPERS' LIVING ROOM - NEW DAY

A NEW, MORE PERFECT AND ELABORATE LEGO SET is spread out-

JEN

Actually... Wes isn't going to be the penguin anymore.

WESLEY

But Mom, you said the penguin was-

JEN

I lied to make you feel better.
But don't worry! *I have an idea.*

EXT. JEN'S OFFICE - DAWN

Jen WAKES UP at her desk to a PHONE CALL- It's Nick-

NICK (O.S.)

This is your wake-up call!

EXT. JEN'S OFFICE PARKING LOT - MOMENTS LATER

Jen passes Alexis, who is on her way INSIDE from her CAR.
Jen's ahead of schedule. And before Alexis can even ask-

JEN

Yup! I slept here!

ALEXIS

(confused)

Um, alright love... See you at the
pageant later... Kiss kiss.

When she's gone- We find that Jen is holding a SHARP LETTER
OPENER. She gets down to **ALEXIS'S CAR** and **SLASHES HER TIRES-**

JEN

...But YOU might be late.

EXT. SUBURBAN STREETS - MOMENTS LATER

Jen pulls up to a HOUSE with an ORNATE NATIVITY SCENE on the
front lawn with CHILD-SIZED FIGURES in PERIOD-EXACT OUTFITS.

She spots the LITTLE JOSEPH and get's out of the car-

INT. AUDITORIUM, BACKSTAGE - LATER

KIDS and CLINGY PARENTS are all gathering at the wings, but
the THEATER DIRECTOR (poor MRS. WINETRAP) looks concerned-

MRS. WINETRAP

Joseph is missing! Where's Joseph??

AND IN COMES JEN- tugging at Wesley, now WEARING THE NATIVITY
FIGURE'S OUTFIT- He seems a bit uneasy about all this-

JEN
He's right here!

Mrs. Winetrapp turns to see:

ALEXIS, AND HER PERFECT FAMILY, all ARRIVE FROM THE OTHER SIDE- Her little Joseph looks perfect as ever. Jen *fumes*.

ALEXIS
Sorry we're late! We had to take a Lyft-

JEN
It's called an ELEVATOR! You fake British piece of...

Eyes on her now...

JEN (CONT'D)
Oh, right... you're talking about the... rideshare app. Obviously.

Jen fights off a sea of judgy Mom eyes...

INT. THE HARPERS' LIVING ROOM - NEW DAY

The LEGO MODEL is ridiculously perfect. Tons of practice.

JEN
-I have infinite tries and I still can't beat her!

NICK
You guys had any luck at the grocery store?

Lindsay and Shane look to each other...

LINDSAY
(poorly faking it)
Uhhhh... yeah??

SHANE
(also)
Tooooooally good!

EXT. GROCERY STORE PARKING LOT - NEW DAY

-WHAM! Lindsay REAR ENDS A CAR-

NEW DAY- CRASH! Lindsay BACKS INTO A TRUCK-

NEW DAY- SMASH! Lindsay HITS A SHOPPING CART-

QUICK FLASHES: SMACK! CRUNCH! CRACK! IT'S GETTING RIDICULOUS as we CUT BACK TO-

INT. THE HARPERS' LIVING ROOM - DAY

Lindsay, sipping coffee, looks at a new SCALE MODEL of THE PARKING LOT, with TOY CARS where the real cars are-

LINDSAY
Guys, parking is hard.

SHANE
And we tried having Uncle Charlie drive, buuuuut-

INT. UNCLE CHARLIE'S CAR - NEW DAY

Uncle Charlie drives SOOOOOO SLOOOOOOWWWWWLLLLLY...

UNCLE CHARLIE
Did I ever tell you about my old Korean War buddy, Shoes Malone?

Shane and Lindsay want to fucking kill themselves.

INT. THE HARPERS' LIVING ROOM - NEW DAY

Once again, THE ELABORATE TOY TOWN HAS BEEN SETUP-

JEN
-Nick, how's the search for the perfect tree going?

NICK
Horribly- I've been to EVERY LOT!

EXT. TREE LOT - NEW DAY

Nick gets out of his car, sees a lot full of BROWN STRAGGLERS-

NEW DAY- DIFFERENT LOT- Nick looks out at all the RUNTY TREES-

NEW DAY- A CHRISTMAS TREE FARM. Nothing but STUMPS.

NEW DAY- Now we're somewhere with MANY BEAUTIFUL TREES. It's:

EXT. SNOW COVERED HILLSIDE

Nick SAWS a REAL TREE from the woods. He SAWS and SAWS, it's exhausting, taking forever. He takes a break, puts his hands on his knees, when he *sees something in the distance...*

NICK (V.O.)
But I have ONE MORE idea...

INT. BEAUTIFUL HOME - NEW DAY

A GORGEOUS CHRISTMAS TREE. Fully decorated. A beautiful living room. THEN **SMASH!** A BRICK FLIES THROUGH THE WINDOW-

In comes Nick. Totally calm and casual, he picks up their tree and CARRIES IT OUT OF THE ROOM-

EXT. BEAUTIFUL HOME - MOMENTS LATER

Nick opens the door. Lugging the tree out front.

COP ON BULLHORN (O.S.)
DROP THE TREE!

We now see **THE PLACE IS SWARMING WITH POLICE.** Nick sighs, puts his hands up. They cuff him, but Nick is pretty calm.

NICK
Mind if I ask- How'd you catch me?

COP
The neighbor, you idiot.

Nick looks over, sees AN ELDERLY MAN in the next yard.

NICK
Neighbor, right...

EXT. BEAUTIFUL HOME - NEW DAY

Nick pulls up, nonchalantly steps out of his car, WAVES at the neighbor spreading salt on his driveway-

NICK
Merry Christmas, sir! I'm just here to feed the Henderson's dog.

The neighbor looks suspicious...

MOMENTS LATER-

NICK IS CUFFED AGAIN.

COP
They don't have a dog.

NICK
Damn it.

EXT. BEAUTIFUL HOME - NEW DAY

NICK
Feed their cat-

The NEIGHBOR LOOKS SUSPICIOUS-

MOMENTS LATER-

Nick is cuffed again.

NICK
No cat?

COP
No cat.

EXT. BEAUTIFUL HOME - NEW DAY

Nick approaches the neighbor-

NICK
Hi Sir, I'm Nick. I'm here to take
your neighbor's Christmas tree.

ELDERLY NEIGHBOR
Oh. Um... *okay.*

The neighbor goes back inside. Nick grins. *Easy!*

EXT. THE HARPERS' HOUSE - LATER

Nick HONKS as he arrives with THAT GORGEOUS, DECORATED TREE-

He looks in the kitchen window, sees Jen give him a THUMBS UP-
But then gives him a "shoot me in the head" gesture as she
has to hurry Grandma back out of the kitchen-

Nick turns back to the tree, begins untwining it, when-

SCOTT
Hey, what a tree! They let you buy
it, like... decorated like that?

NICK
Little Christmas trick I picked up-

SCOTT

Let me help you with that-

Scott gets up on the car, when Nick realizes...

NICK

Oh, right, *this*-

SCOTT

Listen, Nicky... Investments...
they're like boats-

Nick's now caught in thought... *wheels are spinning*-

INT. CASINO - NEW DAY

IMAGINE THE MOST DEPRESSING PLACE EVER. That's a casino on December 24th. And that's where Nick wanders into...

He passes LONERS, WEIRDOS, people with no family... A GUY WITH ONE EYE pulls on a slot machine...

Nick checks his watch, makes a mental note of the time, then takes a seat at a BLACKJACK table-

NICK

Deal me in.

The GAMBLING ADDICTS look at him.

NICK (CONT'D)

What, is that... Not what you're supposed to say? *Merry Christmas?*

Nope.

NICK (CONT'D)

...This doesn't seem like a Happy Chanukah crowd-

DEALER

You need *chips*.

NICK

Oh! Right, sorry- Yeah, I'll just-

Then: BELLS AND SIRENS! THE ONE-EYED GUY WINS A JACKPOT!

ONE-EYED GUY

YESS!!!! FINALLY!

Now, *Nick has an idea*...

INT. CASINO - NEW DAY

Nick steps into the casino once again. He checks his watch, walks over to the guy tugging at the slot machine...

NICK

Excuse me, sir- Um, I was just wondering if you wouldn't mind if I used this machine-

ONE-EYED GUY

Use another machine. I feel a big one coming-

The guy PULLS ON IT AGAIN-

NICK

Wait wait wait! Listen, I...

Nick pulls a chair up next to him, leveling with him-

NICK (CONT'D)

You ever feel like things don't ever work out the way you planned? Like, you try and try and...

The guy gives him a look, like *what the fuck do you think?*

NICK (CONT'D)

Right, you're... probably going through some things yourself- But listen, I *also* have that feeling. I feel like whatever I do, it's never enough. I want my family to be happy and I... I always find a way to make it worse. Like, we used to have this house, you know, fine place, but it wasn't... *quite what we always wanted*. So about three years ago... I bought a new house. One that I honestly... couldn't really afford.

ONE-EYED GUY

Well that wasn't financially responsible.

The guy goes to put another quarter in the slot machine, but NICK GRABS HIS ARM, gently-

NICK

Yeah well, after my little... Oops-baby was born, the first house felt too small but also...

(MORE)

NICK (CONT'D)

My wife and I see these people with these big houses and- *Why can't we have that?* Right? So, we stretched ourselves a bit. And it's killing us, and... *we needed a win, you know?* So... we gave some money to my "big shot brother" to invest for us. All of our savings- *And he said it was a sure thing!* But...

A beat... Nick looks down to his feet, saying this out loud for the first time...

NICK (CONT'D)

I'm going to lose my house, man. This might be the last good Christmas I can give my family... And now, due to some... incredible miracle, I have a chance to make it all right. *But I need you to let me have a shot at that slot machine.* So... What do you say?

ONE-EYED GUY

I say... *Use a different fucking slot machine you weirdo-*

He GOES TO PUT IN ANOTHER QUARTER but Nick now SHOVES HIM out of the way, fighting for position, WRESTLING for the machine- SECURITY DESCENDS ON THEM, GRABBING NICK-

NICK

NO NO NO, JUST GIVE ME ONE-

But as they do, he notices something... THE ROULETTE WHEEL. He stares at it as he's dragged out of the casino, and GRINS-

INT. THE HARPERS' LIVING ROOM - LATER

The WHOLE EXTENDED FAMILY now here for Christmas. The TREE LOOKS GREAT. But Nick is alone at a coffee table doing some MATH on a notepad, with his BANK ACCOUNT INFO up on his phone-

UNCLE RAY

What ya doin' there Nicky?

NICK

Nothing Ray just... Hey- What do you want for Christmas?

UNCLE RAY

Combos.

NICK
Um... what?

UNCLE RAY
Combos. Pretzels on the outside.
Cheese on the inside.

NICK
That's what you want for Christmas?

UNCLE RAY
Lorraine won't let me eat them on
account of my heart condition. But
if I could just have some time to
eat some Combos... It would be a
truly magical Christmas.

Nick... Doesn't know what to make of that.

Meanwhile, Jen appears from the kitchen with her HAM, it
looks BEAUTIFUL, PERFECT-

JEN
Dinner time!

The family Ooo and Ahh and get to the table. But Grandma
looks at it SKEPTICALLY. Jen *slices*...

JEN (CONT'D)
Patricia. You want to try it first?

Grandma isn't impressed as a plate is passed in her direction
but she rolls her eyes and cuts a piece. Tastes it. *Then*...

GRANDMA
Did you even brine this?

Jen, Lindsay and Shane all SIGH, *come on, lady-*

INT. THE HARPERS' LIVING ROOM - NEW NIGHT

Grandma BITES into the ham-

GRANDMA
It's alright- But, *not enough brine-*

NEW NIGHT-

GRANDMA
Oh no, *too briney-*

NEW NIGHT-

GRANDMA
It's both too briney and yet...
Not briney enough-

JEN
THAT DOESN'T EVEN MAKE SENSE!

INT. THE HARPERS' LIVING ROOM - NEW DAY

Back to the drawing board. The LEGO/TOY TOWN IS INTRICATE AND PERFECT IN EVERY WAY. All five of them are helping build it-

LINDSAY
That won't work, there's a red
light on Spruce at nine twenty-six-

SHANE
And they shut down Baker starting
at eleven for the Christmas parade-

JEN
Well I need more from the store if
Grandma is going to be satisfied-

LINDSAY
But the problem isn't how quickly
we get there. It's... the STORE-

NICK
Why? What happens at the store?

Lindsay looks at Shane: *You want to take this one?*

INT. THE GROCERY STORE - NEW DAY

As Lindsay pushes the cart, grabbing food from her aisle, Shane tosses items over the wall of shelves from the neighboring aisle, landing them perfectly in her cart.

THEY'VE CLEARLY DONE THIS MANY MANY TIMES. They reach the end and go to turn down another set of aisles, when SUDDENLY-SHANE DIVES BEHIND AN END CAP DISPLAY OF FRUIT CAKE-

LINDSAY (V.O.)
*Every two minutes we have to hide
from The Majestic Natalie Fiorello-*

BEHIND THE FRUIT CAKE NOW, Lindsay confronts Shane-

LINDSAY
Shane, you have to stop this.

SHANE

We got here so early today! Does she just spend all DAY at the grocery store?

Shane is discreetly peeking out beyond the fruit cake...

LINDSAY

It's better than spending a *literal eternity in the grocery store*, BECAUSE THAT'S WHAT WE'RE DOING!

SHANE

Every time I see her I freeze up-

LINDSAY

She's just a GIRL, Shane-

SHANE

No, you're a girl... She's a WOMAN.

Shane again peers out at her from across the fruit cakes... THERE SHE IS: **NATALIE FIORELLO**... thirteen-years-old, like Shane. She's pretty, sure, but... she's *thirteen-years-old*.

LINDSAY

Shane, I understand that you have a lot of hormones raging in that weird little bod of yours but you have to MAN UP, you have to...

(sighs)

Damn it, do I *really have to give you a pep talk right now*, I am SUPER not in the mood-

SHANE

Yeah yeah yeah do it!

LINDSAY

Ugh- Fine. Look, maybe her being here is part of this whole thing. Maybe you need to overcome your fear of this girl- Maybe you need to get a little confidence and-

SHANE

-Make her fall in love with me?

LINDSAY

Not at all what I said.

SHANE

Yeah, it's kismet... Me and Natalie Fiorello are meant to be! *That's* my perfect Christmas. Falling in love!

LINDSAY

Ugh... This feels like it's about to be a whole thing.

SHANE

Can you imagine the look on those asshole Saint Mark's kids' faces when January second I walk in like, hey: This is my girlfriend, *Natalie Fiorello*, ever heard of her??

Shane stands up straight... Eyes on the girl... Then-

SHANE (CONT'D)

Thanks Lindsay. Here goes nothing.

And HE STRUTS- To Natalie Fiorello, alone **IN THE BAKING AISLE-**

SHANE (CONT'D)

ACHEM.

She turns- *Startled*, as she finds Shane just... standing there.... LOOKING AT HER. BREATHING HEAVILY.

NATALIE

Uh... Do you... need something?

He just BREATHES...

NATALIE (CONT'D)

....MOM!

And she RUNS AWAY. Lindsay, watching on, shakes her head-

LINDSAY

Ugh, damn it. This IS going to be a whole-

CUT TO:

INT. GROCERY STORE - NEW DAY

Natalie Fiorello is looking over cookie supplies... When-

SHANE

MERRY CHRISTMAS!!!

She turns to him. He's just SMILING AT HER, like a weirdo.

NATALIE
 ...MOM!!!

INT. GROCERY STORE - NEW DAY

Natalie Fiorello is looking over cookie supplies... When-

SHANE
 I'm in love with you.

She turns to him. Shane has FLOWERS and CHOCOLATES.

SHANE (CONT'D)
 And I know that love is just a shout into the void, and that oblivion is inevitable, and that we're all doomed, and that one day all of our labors will be returned to dust. I know that the sun will swallow the only Earth we'll ever have. And I am in love with you.

(Dear old people: this is from THE FAULT IS IN OUR STARS)

NATALIE
MOOOOOMMM!!!

INT. THE HARPERS' LIVING ROOM - THAT NIGHT

Shane MOPES, as Nick hands out cards to the EXTENDED FAMILY.

NICK
 I know this is strange guys, but please fill out comment cards- *How could this Christmas experience be enhanced?* Things like that.

Shane watches as Vanessa takes a card and passes it... He has a thought... then, leans into her-

SHANE
 Excuse me... Vanessa?

VANESSA
 Oh honey, you can call me *Aunt Vanessa* if you want.

SHANE
Yeah because this is going to last-
 Seriously, I have a question about... Uncle Scott-

Shane indicates to Scott on the phone in the next room...

SHANE (CONT'D)

How does a guy like that land a girl like you. I mean, I know you think you're my aunt but... You're super hot.

VANESSA

Well thank you, honey. Is there a girl you're trying to impress?

SHANE

This girl from my school, she's hot, like you. I mean, she's thirteen, but she'll be hot like you when she's... however old you are. Forty or whatever.

VANESSA

Um, I'm not-

SHANE

Come on, give me the goods, okay? What's the magic word?

Vanessa laughs, as over at the table, Jen's with Grandpa-

JEN

If you had to get from Yorktown to my house at seven-AM, Christmas eve, what would it take?

GRANDPA

Jennifer... Get me a MAP and a PENCIL. We are going to help you make GREAT TIME!

Back over by Vanessa and Shane-

VANESSA

Well I was a waitress, he tipped me five hundred dollars and wrote his phone number on one of the bills. I thought it was very romantic.

Shane thinks about this.

INT. GROCERY STORE - NEW DAY

Natalie Fiorello is looking over cookie supplies... When-

SHANE

Here.

She turns, sees Shane with a HAND FULL OF CASH.

SHANE (CONT'D)

A year's worth of allowance, plus
an iTunes gift card. Will you be my
girlfriend?

NATALIE

....MOM!!

NEW DAY

Shane approaches again, this time with some SWAGGER...

SHANE

Hey... are your legs tired? Because
you've been running through my mind-

NEW DAY

SHANE

Hey girl, do you have a parachute?
'Cause I think I'm falling for you.

NEW DAY

SHANE

Are you an angel, or-

NEW DAY

SHANE

-I like your butt.

NEW DAY

SHANE

We HAVE to stop meeting like this!

NEW DAY

Shane is at the end of the aisle with a BOOMBOX OVER HIS
HEAD, blasting PETER GABRIEL.

Natalie just looks back at him... and FREAKS OUT-

NATALIE

MOOOOMMMMM!!

NEW DAY

NATALIE
 MOOOOOOMMMMMMM!!!

NEW DAY

Natalie SLAPS SHANE IN THE FACE, then storms off-

SHANE
 I MEANT IT LIKE IN A GOOD WAY!

INT. GROCERY STORE - NEW DAY

Shane sees Natalie dip into the baking aisle-

SHANE
 Here goes nothing-

But this time, Lindsay GRABS HIM-

LINDSAY
 No, stop it. Here, take this-
 (handing him gum)
 You smell like Bacardi and nutmeg.

SHANE
 What? No I don't.

LINDSAY
 I know you're hungover, Shane. And watching you have a hangover over and over again has been literally my favorite thing about all this. But this has to stop. You need to smell better and then, stop TRYING.

SHANE
 What kind of zen bullshit is that?

LINDSAY
 She's not an object, she's a PERSON- Stop trying to get with her and just try to talk to her. Maybe LEARN something about her. The rest will come naturally.

SHANE
 Well that's stupid, but... Whatever-

Shane sighs as he walks off, into the aisle-

DOWN THE BAKING AISLE-

Natalie Fiorello is looking over cookie supplies... When-

SHANE

Hey, you're Natalie, right? I know you from school.

Natalie is a little weirded out...

NATALIE

Uh, yeah. Hi.

SHANE

What are you buying?

NATALIE

Um. Baking stuff?

SHANE

Right, but, I mean- Why? Like, what are you making?

NATALIE

It's... sort of embarrassing-

SHANE

Oh now I HAVE to know-

She laughs-

NATALIE

Well... when I was little, my family would do a ginger bread house competition. But my brothers are too old for it now so... I just make one every year myself-

SHANE

Like a really fancy one?

NATALIE

I'm going to make a scale model of our middle school, I think.

SHANE

Woah! That's really cool!

NATALIE

Thanks! I'll show it to you when I'm done. What's your number?

Shane BRIGHTENS UP as she takes out her phone-

SHANE

Um, I'm... Shane.

NATALIE

I know. We have math together.
That's not what I asked.

SHANE

Oh, right! My number! Here-

He takes her phone and types his number into it-

NATALIE

I'll text you a pic. Good seeing
you, Shane.

With slightly flirty eyes, she takes her items and heads off.
And now that she's gone, Shane RAISES HIS ARMS IN VICTORY-

SHANE

YEEEEESSSS! *IT WAS GOOD SEEING ME!*

Shane does a touchdown-style dance. Really getting into it-

BUT THEN- He realizes- NATALIE IS WATCHING HIM, with her
phone out, CAPTURING THE MOMENT ON VIDEO- *Shane is MORTIFIED.*

INT. THE HARPERS' LIVING ROOM - LATER

Shane is once again dejected at the dinner table. The house
looks EVEN MORE CHRISTMASSY THAN EVER. The extended family
all having a gay old time. Lindsay sits down next to him.

LINDSAY

What's up? Everyone's happy but you-

Shane looks up, sees Uncle Charlie laughing. Jen emerges with
the most perfect ham you've ever seen. Everyone's happy...

LINDSAY (CONT'D)

Come on, we're going carolling
soon, finally putting that annoying
practice to use...

(beat)

*Shane, you got her to talk to you,
I mean, maybe that's all that
needed to happen, right? Maybe
we're really out of this and-*

SHANE

She Gif'd me.

LINDSAY

What?

Shane shows Lindsay his phone- There's a GIF of Shane DANCING-

LINDSAY (CONT'D)

Woah, *look at the amount of views on this?*

SHANE

I mean, I get it, it's a funny Gif. If it wasn't of me I would have posted it, but it is me.

(looks to Lindsay)

And if you're right and all I needed to do was get her to notice me and this IS our last time through this... I don't know that I can handle that. I can't live in this post-Gif reality. This is not the kind of thing you live down.

LINDSAY

Yeah... I got you.

(standing up)

What's one more ruined Christmas-

Shane grins as Lindsay pats his shoulder and spots Grandma looking at the ham before trying it, already judgy-

LINDSAY (CONT'D)

Hey, Grandma...

All eyes on her.

LINDSAY (CONT'D)

Why you gotta be such an old bitch?

GASPS. Shane *loves* it.

JEN

LINDSAY.

LINDSAY

No, Mom. You put up with enough abuse. Grandma, look at you, why do you have to approach Christmas like it's Top Chef? Do you have ANY IDEA how much work my family put into this Christmas? And do you ever say thank you? No!

GRANDMA

Well I'm sorry but *I* would have
been happy to host Christmas-

LINDSAY

NOBODY WANTS TO GO TO YOUR HOUSE
FOR CHRISTMAS! BECAUSE YOUR HOUSE
SMELLS LIKE OLD PEOPLE!

UNCLE RAY

It does. It really does.

LINDSAY

You make us listen to smooth jazz!
And RHUBARB PIE is not an
acceptable dessert! We are making
Christmas SPECIAL AND MAGICAL AND
YOU HAVE TO COME HERE AND RUIN IT!
All because you think my mom isn't
good enough for your precious
little Nick- But mom is a ROCK
STAR. She works from dusk to dawn,
kicking ass at her agency, and
still has time to come to my dumb
dance recitals or Shane's dumb
basketball game or Oopsie's dumb
Christmas pageant. So Grandma...

Lindsay gets up in Grandma's face-

LINDSAY (CONT'D)

I want to hear you say THANK YOU!
Or is that too DAMN HARD for-

Grandma WHACKS LINDSAY UPSIDE THE HEAD-

GRANDMA

You do NOT talk to me like-

From left field- **JEN CLOCKS GRANDMA IN THE FACE.** SHE DROPS-

SHANE

Yes! Go Mom!

JEN

*Lay a hand on my daughter again,
see what happens.*

Nick then turns to his left, there's Scott. With his hand
over his mouth, shocked. So Nick shrugs...

NICK

Well, if we're starting over anyway-

Nick then **PUNCHES SCOTT IN THE THROAT. HE GAGS- DOWN HE GOES.** Shane **KICKS** the mean cousin in the BALLS. Jen **HULKS OUT AND FLIPS THE TABLE.** *Ham flies everywhere-*

CUT TO:

EXT. THE HARPERS' HOUSE - LATER

-CLINK! Nick and Jen cheers with glasses of champagne. Sitting on their front stoop, with cozy blankets over them, **WATCHING THE EXTENDED FAMILY DRIVE AWAY...**

JEN

For twenty years... I've dreamt of punching your mother in the face... This is a miraculous Christmas.

NICK

You know... I'll never forget the first Christmas you spent with them. I thought... *If she puts up with this, she must really love me.*

JEN

I'll never forget that night either. You bought me socks.

NICK

Oh god, I did! I'm still so sorry.

JEN

Don't be! We were broke. And I needed socks. You always knew how to make me happy... Still do.

NICK

So... why do you avoid me?

JEN

What?

NICK

Every morning, it's December 24th. And every morning, I wake up on that couch, and I think... Jenny doesn't want to be here-

JEN

Are you kidding me? Do you think I **WANT** to sleep at my desk?

NICK

No, I know, but... you know what I mean. I get that things haven't worked out the way we dreamt, and my car is a piece of crap that you don't want our kids seen in and we can't afford decent furniture, and our Christmas lights are-

JEN

Nick, stop.

He does. Looks to her.

JEN (CONT'D)

It doesn't have to be so complicated. Let's just... Enjoy this, right? Like, when was the last time it was the two of us and we just... did *nothing*. Together.

NICK

Before... "Oopsie" was born. In fact, I think that's sort of indirectly *how* he was born...

She laughs, they both look up at the stars. Taking a breather... Then, he looks to her. After a beat, she notices-

JEN

What?

NICK

Nothing. Just... I have something to tell you, but... I think I need to wait until it's all just right.

She gives him a kiss on the cheek, looks back up to the sky, sipping the champagne. Our camera RISES UP... and SETTLES-

UPSTAIRS, through SHANE'S WINDOW... We see Shane and Lindsay, sitting on the floor, chatting in the dark...

SHANE

Thanks for that.

INT. SHANE'S ROOM - SAME TIME

LINDSAY

Just get it right tomorrow- I need this to be over.

SHANE

Me too. This is my first hangover,
and it's lasting for *infinity*.

LINDSAY

For real, I've been looking forward
to Becca Horowitz's party for like,
I think it's been two months now-

She gets up, heads for the door-

SHANE

I don't understand- Who has a party
on Christmas?

LINDSAY

Jews. Her parents are out of town.

SHANE

Is *Mark* going?

Shane gets into bed-

LINDSAY

None of your business but yes-

SHANE

Is that where you are in the
morning?

LINDSAY

Yes. *But if you tell Mom and Dad-*

SHANE

I won't! But... isn't he, like,
going to college soon?

LINDSAY

Yeah, but- you know lots of couples
make it long distance. Mark isn't
just a boyfriend, he's the only one
who really gets me. I wanted this
winter break to be this... romantic
time with him. Instead I'm spending
it with *you*. The only thirteen-year-
old that still writes to Santa-

SHANE

You're missing out. I get to tell
Mom and Dad exactly what to get me.

LINDSAY

You realize that makes you sound
like a spoiled little shit, right?

SHANE

What? Because I want a good gift?
It's Christmas, that's the point.

LINDSAY

Night, Shane.

She goes to close the door... but first-

LINDSAY (CONT'D)

Hey... Big glass of water, two Alka-
Selzer, and the secret ingredient:
A dash of bitters. You'll be fine.

And out she goes, leaving Shane in bed with a little smile.

FADE TO BLACK.

AND THE MOST ANNOYING CHRISTMAS SONG EVER COMES ON.

INT. THE HARPERS' LIVING ROOM - DAWN

Nick opens his eyes- Wes is STARING AT HIM.

WESLEY

OH GOOD YOU'RE-

Nick puts on a happy face, then- QUICKLY STEPS past Wes-

NICK

*Go get your penguin costume on
buddy! We're going to the mall to
see Santa! Best Christmas ever!*

And Nick is already HALFWAY UP THE STAIRS-

WESLEY

Better than when we got snowed in??

NICK (O.S.)

(from upstairs)
Ten billion times better!

Wes just PUMPS HIS FIST- YES-

EXT. THE HARPERS' ROOF - MOMENTS LATER

Nick SECURES the santa sleigh with one hand, while he's on
the phone with the other-

NICK
 Hey hon, this is your wake-up call!
 Good luck- Love you too.

The sleigh secure, he then playfully slides down the upper roof, swinging back through the window- He's got this down.

EXT. JEN'S OFFICE PARKING LOT - MOMENTS LATER

Jen steps out into the parking lot, she's ON THE PHONE-

JEN
 Yeah, there's a suspicious vehicle
 parked in the lot at my office...

Jen passes Alexis's fancy car on the way to her own...

JEN (CONT'D)
 I've never seen it before and I
 just walked by it, I heard a noise-

Jen GETS UNDER THE CAR, unspools some DUCT TAPE, and then TAPES THE SNOWMAN CLOCK underneath Alexis's car. You can't see it under the tape, just hear *TICK-TICK-TICK...*

INT. MARK'S ROOM - SAME TIME

Lindsay wakes up to a TEXT FROM **SHANE**. It's a SANTA EMOJI. She rolls over to Mark and plants a BIG KISS...

MARK
 Mmm, what was that for?

LINDSAY
 Preview of tomorrow. Becca's party.

MARK
 You can ditch your family for it?

LINDSAY
 I've spent enough time with them,
 trust me.

CUE AN UPBEAT CHRISTMAS SONG (like JAMES BROWN'S **SOULFUL CHRISTMAS** or RUN-DMC'S **CHRISTMAS IN HOLLIS**) as we come to-

THE "PERFECT CHRISTMAS" MONTAGE:

INT. THE HARPERS' KITCHEN - SAME TIME

A HAND GRABS TWO TALL GLASSES.

A MEDICINE CABINET- *PLUNK. PLUNK. FIZZ FIZZ.* Alka Selzer-
 ANOTHER CABINET- BITTERS. *Dash dash* into the waters, making
 little black clouds- Shane and Farhad both DOWN the drinks-

INT. THE MALL - MOMENTS LATER

Nick and Wes are AT THE FRONT OF THE LINE as Santa takes his
 seat for the morning and an ELF opens a velvet rope-

Wes is SO EXCITED, runs up to Santa, when Nick notices the
 JERK DAD that yelled before, headed for the back of the line.
 Nick grins as he watches the guy take the long walk...

ELSEWHERE IN THE MALL-

Nick grabs ROLLS OF CHRISTMASSY WRAPPING PAPER. MORE HOLIDAY
 DECORATIONS. A YULE LOG. He stops at a **BOOK STORE**. Then a
JEWELRY STORE. Then:

INT. ELECTRONICS STORE - MOMENTS LATER

Nick is WHISTLING a little tune as he STEPS OVER a pile of
 gifts, goes around an arguing couple, hops over a wayward
 shopping cart, and *NABS THE XPHONE BLACK-* Turns around and,
 without a second thought, **MACES THE SWEATY GUY IN THE FACE-**

INT. MALL - MOMENTS LATER

Nick emerges from the electronics store with the gift, finds
 Wes there eating a TINY candy bar, guarding ALL THEIR STUFF-

He sticks out a leg as he gets to Wes- and **THE THIEF GUY FROM
 BEFORE** TRIPS OVER IT AND GOES *TUMBLING DOWN THE ESCALATOR-*

WESLEY
 DAD! Is he okay?

NICK
 Oh yeah, he usually just sprains
 his ankle, come on-

INT. AUDITORIUM - LATER

Wesley is FRONT AND CENTER, in a VERY GOOD JOSEPH costume.
 He's SINGING, in a TERRIBLE but still sort of cute voice:

WESLEY
The mirrrraaaclee! The baby Jesus!

In the crowd we see JEN and NICK watching. He WHISPERS to her-

NICK

And... *How many times have you had
to sit through this?*

JEN

For this, it's worth it.

She grins, and indicates to the BACK OF THE ROOM, where we see ALEXIS'S HUNKY HUSBAND IS TALKING WITH THE FBI-

Jen and Nick FIST BUMP-

EXT. GROCERY STORE - SAME TIME

The **SONG STILL KILLING IT**, we see UNCLE CHARLIE'S CAR COME SPEEDING DOWN THE ROAD, CUTTING OFF one car with just a split second to spare, BARELY MISSING A BIKER- And **TOKYO DRIFTING INTO A PARALLEL PARKING SPOT**, right in front of the store-

The door opens, and out comes Lindsay and Shane, both looking badass, strutting toward the grocery store.

Lindsay tosses some money into Salvation Army Santa's bucket. Natalie Fiorello sees Shane walk into the store. They catch eyes, *Shane grins, walks up to her-*

EXT. SUBURBAN HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Nick emerges from the FANCY HOUSE with the BIG FANCY TREE, and we find that THE NEIGHBOR IS *HELPING HIM CARRY IT-*

INT. CASINO - MOMENTS LATER

Nick grins as he puts a pile of chips on the ROULETTE TABLE-

NICK

Put it all on black.

The dealer does. Spins the wheel. And sure enough: BLACK.

NICK (CONT'D)

Now... all on *the third twelve.*

Nick's in the zone, other's are watching and- Boom, THIRTY.

NICK (CONT'D)

You know what, I'm feeling crazy-
now let's put it all on seventeen.

The dealer pushes what is now a MASSIVE STACK OF CHIPS toward seventeen. Others watch like- *look at the balls on this guy.*

The wheel spins. Dealer drops the marble. After a moment-

SEVENTEEN. The crowd goes fucking nuts! And a RIDICULOUS STACK OF CHIPS comes Nick's way. He's now surrounded by THE WHOLE GANG OF WEIRDOS, like a god among them.

NICK (CONT'D)

Must be my lucky day.

He gathers his chips, but gives a HANDFUL to the one-eyed guy, with a little head-nod, like "*Hey, come with me...*" Finally, **THE SONG COMES TO AN END**, as we settle on:

EXT. THE HARPERS' HOUSE - THAT NIGHT

THE HOME IS DECKED-OUT WITH EVEN FINER DECORATIONS THAN BEFORE, many of them are what Nick got at the mall. And up on the roof, putting on the finishing touches: **THE ONE-EYED GUY.**

This house now has the BEST DECORATIONS ON THE BLOCK. And we hear one... lonely... SLOW CLAP... It's coming from KEITH, next door, standing outside, looking at the decorations, clapping, so genuinely impressed.

INT. THE HARPERS' HOUSE - SAME TIME

WHITE CHRISTMAS plays from the stereo. A YULE LOG is on the ACTUAL FIRE. CHESTNUTS roasting on it.

Little Wesley hangs the HARPERS ON ICE ORNAMENT on the tree. The finishing touch. One of the A.D.D. COUSINS approaches him, but SHANE GETS UP IN THE LITTLE KID'S FACE-

SHANE

HEY. You take that from my brother
and I will put you *IN THE GROUND.*

The kid suddenly looks TERRIFIED. Shane pats Wes on the head.

Over at the table, Nick is HANDING OUT GIFTS from a big sack-

LORRAINE

Oh, sweetie, you shouldn't have-

Uncle Ray opens the gift Nick's given him: **A "LOW CALORIE COOK BOOK."** Ray looks dejected...

UNCLE RAY

Oh... thanks-

NICK

Open it.

Curious, Ray does... and finds that THE PAGES HAVE BEEN CUT OUT, AND INSIDE IS **A BIG BAG OF COMBOS**. Lorraine is too busy unboxing a BEAUTIFUL NECKLACE to realize-

Ray looks like he's going to cry tears of joy...

Meanwhile, Lindsay is sitting with Uncle Charlie, both sipping coco. She fake laughs at his story, he seems so happy-

LINDSAY

-Whatever happened to your friend Shoes Malone?

UNCLE CHARLIE

Oh, Shoes Malone?? Settle in, because this... is a doozy.

Meanwhile, Nick hands a gift to Scott-

NICK

Merry Christmas big brother.

SCOTT

Oh, Nicky, you really shouldn't have, I mean... we have to talk-

Nick glances into the kitchen, Jen's in there, out of earshot-

NICK

I know man, some boats float, some boats sink, I get it.

SCOTT

Um... Yeah... I... couldn't have put it better myself...

Then, Jen emerges from the kitchen with THE PERFECT HAM-

JEN

Patricia, first slice is for you.

Jen SLICES IT, plates it, hands it over...

The entire family watches as the ham is slid across the table, Grandma takes it, looks it over... BITES... THEN...

GRANDMA

Meh. It's fine.

OUR FOUR HEROES RAISE THEIR ARMS IN VICTORY.

JEN
IT'S FINE!

LINDSAY
COUNT IT!

Grandma takes ANOTHER BITE, she secretly loves it. Then, THE DOORBELL RINGS and Shane immediately POPS UP TO GET IT-

He hurries to the door, opens it, and finds NATALIE FIORELLO, with a GINGERBREAD HOUSE THAT LOOKS EXACTLY LIKE THE HARPERS'-

WESLEY
Is that our house?? Let me see!

Natalie brings it to the table, the family gathers around as she LIFTS THE ROOF OFF OF IT- And there we see: ALL OF THE FAMILY MEMBERS, represented in cookie form.

NATALIE
Shane sent me photos of all of you.
I didn't have a lot of time, but-

SHANE
Isn't she talented, you guys?

NATALIE
Shane, thanks for giving me this opportunity to share my gift.

SHANE
You're a special person, I wish your family saw it.

NATALIE
God, you GET ME, Shane.

He gently pushes her hair behind her ear, so smooth.

SHANE
You get ME Natalie Fiorello.

AUNT LORRAINE
I'll get some coffee-

ALL OF THEM
NO NO NO!

A beat...

JEN
I'll get it... And then a few of us have a *really quick thing to do-*

The four of them look to each other: IT'S GO TIME.

EXT. SUBURBAN HOME - LATER THAT NIGHT

DING-DONG. A DOOR OPENS. And a PLEASANT COUPLE are delighted-

PLEASANT HUSBAND
Ooh, honey. Carolers!

We find the carolers in question: JEN, LINDSAY, SHANE and NICK with Wes on his shoulders. They have candles in hand and-
THEY SING SILENT NIGHT IN PERFECT FIVE-PART HARMONY.

It is so fucking beautiful. Wesley is the only one off-key, looking around, like... *How did you all get so good at this?* But the others are so good you can barely tell.

The husband WIPES AWAY A TEAR as the **SINGING LEADS US TO...**

INT. THE HARPERS' LIVING ROOM - LATER

With THEIR CAROLING STILL PLAYING, we PAN ACROSS THE LIVING ROOM, all decked out for the night before Christmas.

A REAL YULE LOG roaring, Uncle Charlie sleeping in front of it. Stockings hung by the chimney with care. And Nick and Jen QUIETLY PLACE PERFECTLY WRAPPED GIFTS UNDER THE PERFECT TREE, when Jen picks up a gift that she doesn't recognize-

JEN
Wait who is this for?

Nick grins... She then looks at it, it says "**TO JEN**"-

JEN (CONT'D)
WHAT?? We said no gifts!

NICK
Perfect Christmas.

JEN
But I didn't get you anything-

NICK
Which makes it better. A real surprise. We should never have agreed to not do gifts in the first place- Where's the fun in that?

JEN
Well we went in on the new oven!
That was our Christmas gift!

NICK
Do you even hear yourself? Come on-

She laughs as she takes the package, opens it... it's a NECKLACE with a SNOWFLAKE on it. Very pretty. Elegant.

NICK (CONT'D)
...So you'll never forget this
Christmas.

JEN
I couldn't...
(leaning in)
Even if I wanted to.

And in front of the Christmas tree, Jen gives him a big kiss.

FADE TO BLACK.

FOR A LONG BEAT.

Then... **CUE THE MOST ANNOYING CHRISTMAS SONG EVER.**

INT. THE HARPERS' LIVING ROOM - DAWN

WE'RE VERY CLOSE ON NICK. His eyes SHOOT OPEN. And there's WES, right in his face, with his iPad.

WESLEY
OH GOOD YOU'RE UP.

Nick SHOOTS UP. Looks to Wes... *What the hell??*

WESLEY (CONT'D)
Dad... what's wrong?

Nick looks like he's been punched in the stomach. When, from upstairs, we hear the CREAKING... *RUMBLING-*

NICK
Oh no-

SMASH. ONCE AGAIN, THE SANTA DISPLAY CRASHES ONTO HIS CAMRY-

INT. JEN'S OFFICE - SAME TIME

ALEXIS
Morning, lovie darling!

Jen SHOOTS UP from her desk. Looks at Alexis, *confused*. Then at the computer: the document she typed with her face.

She looks back up to Alexis. Who HOLDS OUT a GIFT: **THE LITTLE SNOWMAN CLOCK.** *Jen boils on the inside...*

INT. JEN'S OFFICE, COMMON AREA - SAME TIME

Workers are saying hello, settling in, when:

CRASH! THE CHRISTMAS CLOCK IS THROWN CLEAR THROUGH THE GLASS WALL IN JEN'S OFFICE- GLASS SHATTERS- THE CLOCK SMASHES AGAINST A FAR WALL, FALLS TO THE GROUND...

The office is all SILENT... Until an EMPLOYEE picks the clock up off the ground...

EMPLOYEE

...Did Alexis get us these? Wow, she is always so thoughtful.

ANOTHER EMPLOYEE

And a great Mom too!

From the distance, we hear Jen SCREAM.

EXT. MAIN STREET - SAME TIME

Lindsay walks through the main street like a zombie, disoriented, *THEN- SHE'S BLASTED IN THE FACE BY A SNOW BLOWER-*

INT. THE HARPERS' KITCHEN - LATER

JEN, LINDSAY and SHANE surround Nick, who is seated at the table, in a daze. THEY ARE ALL SCREAMING AT HIM-

SHANE

How did this happen?

JEN

What did we do wrong?

LINDSAY

We TRUSTED YOU, Dad!

NICK

I know! I'm sorry, I don't... maybe the ham wasn't...

Jen gives him a look: DON'T EVEN.

NICK (CONT'D)

Sorry. You're right. That's not it.

SHANE

You said that if we got it right then this would stop!

Lindsay is about to pull her hair out. Jen has a faraway look in her eyes. Shane opens the cupboard, taking out the ingredients for his hangover cure-

LINDSAY
 You said Christmas Miracle! THOSE
 WERE YOUR DUMB WORDS!

Wes trots in, clearly disturbed by the commotion-

WESLEY
Why is everyone yelling?

SHANE
 Oh my god- GO AWAY, OOPSIE!

NICK
 HEY. Be nice to your brother-

SHANE
Why? Why should I listen to you?

LINDSAY
 Screw this, I'm going to Mark's-

JEN
 What? Who's Mark?

Lindsay grabs the car keys off the counter-

LINDSAY
 MY BOYFRIEND AND HE HAS GREAT HAIR
 AND I LOVE HIM!

Shane PLOPS Alka Selzer into his glass-

SHANE
 God you guys are dumb-

NICK
Shane! Watch it-

SHANE
 No! I don't know why I listen to
 you about anything! How could you
 know how to get out of a Christmas
 curse, you don't even realize that
 Lindsay isn't here in the morning-

JEN
 WOAHH- WHAT?

Lindsay stops for a moment at the doorway- *Rolling her eyes-*

SHANE
 She's been sneaking in from Mark's
 every morning and you two don't
 even realize it, right Linds?

LINDSAY
You little narc-

Shane shrugs as he drinks his elixir. *Who cares?*

JEN
You slept at a BOY'S last night?

LINDSAY
Yeah well Shane's hungover! He drank all of the eggnog Dad made and then unplugged the fridge!

At that moment, FARHAD STEPS IN... Then, *slowly backs away...*

JEN
Shane- Is that... *true?*

Shane puts down his glass. BURPS. *Deal with it.*

LINDSAY
I'm leaving- PEACE ON EARTH!

JEN
Lindsay! Stop! *You're grounded!*

LINDSAY (O.S.)
HA!

WESLEY
EVERYBODY STOP YELLING!

SHANE
OOPSIE! SHUT! UP!

WESLEY
STOP CALLING ME THAT!

SHANE
WHY? IT'S TRUE! EVERYONE KNOWS YOU WERE JUST A SEXY MISTAKE!

NICK
Ew, Shane-

JEN
What is happening to you??

SHANE
And guess what, Oopsie- I'll save you a trip today. There is no Santa! The guy in the mall is an hourly employee who hates his life!

Shane storms out into the living room, Wesley follows him-

INT. LIVING ROOM - SAME TIME

WESLEY

Yeah well if that's true then who brings us presents, you dummy!

Shane's putting a coat on-

SHANE

Mom and Dad do. They've been lying to you since birth. It's one of their sick little mind games-

Nick and Jen emerge from the kitchen-

JEN

Shane! I thought you believed in-

SHANE

Come on, Mom! Do you really believe that I believe that you believe that I believe in Santa?

NICK

Wait... *what?*

SHANE

It's just a cute little game so you get me what I want for Christmas- *But it never comes anyway so what the hell does it matter??*

Wes turns to his parents, so innocent...

WESLEY

Is this... true?

They look to each other, *how do we answer this...*

WESLEY (CONT'D)

I HATE YOU! I HATE CHRISTMAS!

Wes RUNS UPSTAIRS-

NICK

Shane, come on, why would you do that to him?

SHANE

Who cares if he has one crappy Christmas? He'll wake up tomorrow and forget everything anyway- *We're the ones who have to live with it-*

As Shane heads to the door, we HEAR A CAR DRIVE OFF- They look out the window, *there goes Jen's car-*

JEN

Did Lindsay just take my car?

They hear a DOOR SLAM. Shane's now outside- *getting into the driver's side of Nick's car. NOW, THEY'RE FREAKED OUT.*

They see Shane, way too short to be in the driver's seat, PULLING OUT- Nick and Jen are both shocked-

NICK

I'LL HANDLE IT! I PROMISE!

NICK RUSHES OUT... But it's clear Jen doesn't believe him.

EXT. THE HARPERS' HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

The GARAGE DOOR OPENS- And OUT ZOOMS: **NICK, ON A KID'S BICYCLE, SPEEDING OFF, THROUGH THE SNOW-**

He pulls out onto the road, RIGHT ON THE HEELS OF SHANE'S CAR, WHICH STILL HAS AN UPSIDEDOWN RUDOLPH LODGED ON TOP- It quickly pulls over to pick up: FARHAD-

INT. NICK'S CAR - SAME TIME

SHANE

GET IN!

Farhad looks around, hesitates... *then-* Hurries into the car-

FARHAD

...Best Christmas ever.

EXT. STREETS - MOMENTS LATER

Nick, with his big puffy coat on, PEDALS HARD, huffing, puffing- Shane makes a SLOPPY TURN, HOPPING A CURB- Rudolph FALLS OFF, but the SEVERED HEAD IS STILL STUCK-

Nick has to SWERVE to DRIVE AROUND IT-

INT. NICK'S CAR - SAME TIME

The boys BUMP HARD, Farhad turns around-

FARHAD

Dude, is your Dad... *chasing us??*

-Shane BLOWS A RED LIGHT, Farhad is now *freaked out*. But Shane is so calm.

SHANE

If you could do anything in the world, what would you do?

FARHAD

Um, grow a goatee, I guess-

Shane WHIPS A QUICK U-TURN, CARS HONK, NEARLY KILLING THEM-

SHANE

No I mean if you could never get in trouble, like if nothing mattered-

Shane now PASSES HIS DAD GOING THE OTHER WAY- Shane GIVES NICK THE FINGER as he goes-

FARHAD

Did you just flip off your Dad?

Shane puts the PEDAL TO THE MEDAL, and OFF THEY GO-

INT. WESLEY'S ROOM - SAME TIME

Jen *knock knock knocks* on the door, comes in to find Wesley sitting at the window... silent...

JEN

Hon... Are you okay?

WESLEY

What about the Easter Bunny?

JEN

What?

Wes turns around, confrontational, angry-

WESLEY

I need to know if the Easter Bunny is real!

JEN

Honey...

(sitting down with him)

...Why would a rabbit give you eggs? Rabbits don't even lay eggs.

WESLEY

I don't know. I always thought they just, like, kidnap lizards.

JEN
Wesley... I'm sorry. We only lied
to you to make Christmas special-

WESLEY
-Is Mexico real?

JEN
What? Yeah. Of course, why would-

WESLEY
I don't know! I've never been
there! *I'M SO CONFUSED!*

INT. MARK'S ROOM - LATER

Mark's door opens, Lindsay comes storming in-

LINDSAY
I need to talk to you about
something, and you *won't* believe me-

She sits down on Mark's messy bed with him-

LINDSAY (CONT'D)
But I feel like you're the only one
who understands me. So, I... I need
to know what you think I should do-

MARK
Should we, maybe, like... *go out,*
to talk about this?

LINDSAY
No, listen, I just...

She swings her legs around to get them on the bed, when-

A FEMALE VOICE
Ow! Crap-

FROM UNDER THE COVERS: **ANOTHER GIRL- Lindsay SHOTS UP** as
BECCA HOROWITZ takes the covers off- Lindsay looks to her,
then Mark. Mark just... pretends to be surprised. Poorly.

MARK
How did Becca Horowitz get in
there? That is... that's the real
mystery here! Right Lindsay?

On Lindsay now. She looks like she's going to cry...

EXT. PUBLIC SCHOOL, FOOTBALL FIELD - LATER

Nick's car is parked in the middle of the fifty yard line.

FARHAD (O.S.)

My brother said this is the best way to get rid of a hangover-

INT. NICK'S CAR - SAME TIME

Sitting in the front seats, we find Farhad and Shane, they both now open up CANS OF BEER. Cheers them, then SIP-

THEN- *BOTH LOOK TOTALLY DISGUSTED. But pretend not to be-*

SHANE

Oh man it's... so good.

FARHAD

I love this. I love the... flavor.

Shane looks like he's going to barf, so puts down the beer-

FARHAD (CONT'D)

Man... I wish I had your balls. Stealing your Dad's car, paying older kids for beer-

SHANE

I'm telling you. Nothing matters. Like... I used to care so much about what people thought of me at that dumb school...

FARHAD

I wish you guys never moved, dog. You're all crazy stressed about being cool or whatever in that new school. Back when you went here, we could just be weirdos together.

Shane looks out at the rundown public school, nostalgic-

SHANE

Yeah... It kinda feels dumb now. Like, there's this girl in my new school Natalie Fiorello. Popular, way hot, and I know for sure that I could get her to like me.

FARHAD

You're drunk.

SHANE

It's true, dude. But... I can't like trick that girl into liking me, or force the kids at my school to think I'm something I'm not, or force my parents to get me some present, I mean, who cares?

FARHAD

It's like I always say... Christmas makes white people fucking crazy.

Shane and Farhad CHEERS to that- And have another SIP... then-

SHANE

-Okay this is terrible.

FARHAD

-*Why would anyone drink this?*

INT. THE HARPERS' KITCHEN - SAME TIME

Jen, Uncle Charlie, and SEVERAL EMPTY BOTTLES OF WINE are at the kitchen table. The two of them are drunk.

JEN

But for real, Uncle Charlie, for, the realness: People don't understand the PRESSURE I'm under-

UNCLE CHARLIE

Hey, I ever tell you about Shoes Malone? From the service?

She POUNDS her glass-

JEN

No! He sounds *so interesting!*

UNCLE CHARLIE

Every morning he'd wake up in a panic- Jump out of bed and scream: I LOST MY SHOES! I LOST MY SHOES! We'd all laugh. *Old Shoes Malone, always thinking he lost his shoes.*

JEN

That is a GREAT STORY-

UNCLE CHARLIE

Well but the funny thing about Shoes is that he was so afraid of losing his shoes that he would sleep in them, but he'd still have the same nightmare. He'd wake up saying MY SHOES ARE GONE! MY SHOES!

JEN

But I don't unnnnerstand... I
thought he was wearing his shoes.

UNCLE CHARLIE

He WAS. Don't ever forget that,
Jenny. Sometimes, *you're already
wearing your shoes.*

As she thinks about this, Scott comes in-

SCOTT

Hey, Jen, have you seen Nick?

JEN

He went to find our kids who stole
our cars. So, *he might be a while.*
You know- *kids!* They drive so fast!

SCOTT

Well, I need to... Talk to you-

GRANDMA (O.S.)

Jenny! We're hungry!

JEN

ORDER A GOD DAMN PIZZA PATRICIA!!
(to Charlie)
See what I deal with??

SCOTT

Look, Jenny, there's something
important I need to talk to you
guys about... I was going to talk
to my brother first, but...
(sitting down)
How familiar are you with boats?

She looks at him... *what do you mean?*

EXT. THE HARPERS' HOUSE - LATER

Nick comes PEDDLING back toward the house, he looks so
disappointed in himself, as he pulls up, dismounts the bike-
Then, Jen comes STORMING OUT OF THE HOUSE toward him-

JEN

YOU ASSHOLE!

NICK

I'm sorry, they won't pick up their phones, their friends don't know where they are- But at least we know that tomorrow they'll be-

She PUSHES HIM- He FALLS into the snow-

NICK (CONT'D)

Hey, I'm sorry! I tried-

JEN

-How long have you known?? And don't try to tell me he NEVER gave you his little speech about boats-

NICK

Oh... you... talked to Scott-

JEN

How long have you known?

NICK

The... the first day, *but-*

JEN

WHAT?

NICK

I wanted to tell you! But then this whole thing was happening and I thought I could fix it-

JEN

No! No excuses! I wouldn't have been mad about the money- We made that decision TOGETHER! I'm mad because you *lied*- Because you think we're just a bunch of *problems to fix*. But once in a while you should realize: YOUR SHOES ARE ALREADY ON!

NICK

My what?

SLAM. She's inside... Now Nick looks into the house, through the window... He sighs, gets back on the bike and RIDES OFF.

INT. DIVE BAR - LATER THAT NIGHT

IMAGINE AN EVEN SADDER PLACE THAN A CASINO ON DECEMBER 24TH... **THAT'S A DIVE BAR ON CHRISTMAS EVE.**

The saddest, loneliest people you could possibly fathom are spread thin in a bar. On a KARAOKE MACHINE, a VERY DRUNK MAN sings **HAVE YOURSELF A MERRY LITTLE CHRISTMAS. But like this:**

VERY DRUNK MAN SINGING
*Have yourself a shitty little
 Christmas...*

Nick is among them, sipping beer, beside THE ONE-EYED GUY.

ONE-EYED GUY
 Look, think of it this way...

VERY DRUNK MAN SINGING
How I hate my liiiiiifee....

ONE-EYED GUY
 If this is your worst day, you're okay.

Nick shakes his head- *This guy doesn't get it.*

VERY DRUNK MAN SINGING
*From now on I'm never gonna trust
 my wiiiife... Or the U.P.S. Guy...*

ONE-EYED GUY
 When you find yourself in a knife
 fight with a Scandinavian bookie
 who has nothin' left to lose,
that's a bad day.

NICK
 Oh, wow, I'm... so sorry, Larry. Is
 that how you lost your eye?

ONE-EYED GUY
 What? *This?* No. Solar eclipse. I'm
 just really into science.

VERY DRUNK MAN SINGING
*Have yourself a shitty little
 Christmas. 'Cuz they usually are...*

Nick has another drink, watches the Karaoke guy now...

INT. JEN'S CAR - THAT NIGHT

We **STILL HEAR THE SONG** as we see Lindsay behind the wheel, crying, driving, she sees an exit sign for NEW YORK CITY...

VERY DRUNK MAN SINGING (V.O.)
*And tonight I'll probably just
 sleep in my caaaar...*

She thinks about it- Then, CUTS THE WHEEL, STEPS ON THE GAS-

INT. THE HARPERS' LIVING ROOM - SAME TIME

Shane creeps into the house... There are EMPTY PIZZA BOXES on the table. And FLIES SWARMING EVERYWHERE. It's a MESS.

VERY DRUNK MAN SINGING (V.O.)
Instrumental break!! Eight barrs!!

Shane looks to Jen, asleep on the couch. He has a guilty look on his face, so... he heads for the tree-

EXT. THE HARPERS' HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Shane DRAGS THE INFESTED TREE outside-

VERY DRUNK MAN SINGING (V.O.)
*Have yourself a shitty little
 Christmas...*

INT. THE HARPERS' LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Shane lugs the BUG ZAPPER out from the basement, plugs it in-

VERY DRUNK MAN SINGING (V.O.)
Because you're... like a... jerk-

Shane flips on the bug zapper. ZAP ZAP ZAP! He nods to himself, a job well done. He walks toward the stairs...

VERY DRUNK MAN SINGING
*I think my wife has slept with all
 my friends from woook!*

He accidentally TRIPS OVER A WIRE, it KNOCKS DOWN THE BUG ZAPPER, it FALLS ONTO THE PIZZA BOXES- THEY CATCH FIRE-

INT. MALL - SAME TIME

SMASH! A BRICK FLIES THROUGH THE BIG MALL DOORS- **ALARMS BLARE-**
 But in comes Nick and the One-Eyed Guy-

VERY DRUNK MAN SINGING (V.O.)
So have yourself...

They RUSH THROUGH THE MALL- Nick GRABS A BASEBALL BAT at a sporting good store- But keeps running toward something-

VERY DRUNK MAN SINGING (V.O.)
A shitty... little...

EXT. THE HARPERS' HOUSE - SAME TIME

Jen and Shane, carrying Wes, RUN OUT OF THE SMOKING HOUSE-

VERY DRUNK MAN SINGING
Christmaaaaaas.....

INT. MALL - SAME TIME

As the singer BELTS OUT THE LAST NOTES, Nick arrives at the STAND FOR SANTA, and he **SMASHES EVERYTHING-** THE CHAIR. WOODEN ELVES. HANGING BALL ORNAMENTS EXPLODE LIKE PIÑATAS.

VERY DRUNK MAN SINGING
Annnnnnnnd.... Whateverrrrrrrrr!

EXT. ROCKEFELLER CENTER - NIGHT

Lindsay arrives at the famous NEW YORK CHRISTMAS TREE-

VERY DRUNK MAN SINGING (V.O.)
Instrumental outro!

INT. THE MALL - LATER

NICK IS THROWN ON THE GROUND, getting CUFFED (by the same mall cops who have cuffed him before)-

NICK
YOU CAN'T HOLD ME!!

And the song COMES TO AN END as we come to-

EXT. ROCKEFELLER CENTER - SAME TIME

Lindsay tears up as she sees a HAPPY COUPLE. They start to MAKE OUT. Lindsay can't watch, looks away, and she spots:

A CUTE FAMILY OF FIVE, exactly like hers, down on the rink.

They're ICE SKATING while holding hands to keep each other up. The way they're standing looks just like the ORNAMENT back at home. Of "THE HARPERS ON ICE"...

She wipes a tear from her eye. Then-

LINDSAY
HEY! YOUR CHILDREN SHOULD BE IN
BED! YOU ARE TERRIBLE PARENTS!

The littlest one gives her the FINGER-

LINDSAY (CONT'D)
This is why people hate New York.

CUT TO BLACK.

CUE THE MOST ANNOYING CHRISTMAS SONG EVER.

INT. THE HARPERS' LIVING ROOM - DAWN

Nick opens his eyes, looks unsurprised as he glances over at Wes, only a few inches from his face.

WESLEY
OH GOOD YOU'RE-

Nick suddenly GRABS THE IPAD AND **SMASHES IT LIKE A CRAZY PERSON AGAINST THE FLOOR-** Alvin and the Chipmunks CUTTING OUT-

He PANTS... out of breath... Then... he looks to Wes... WHO BURSTS INTO TEARS AND RUNS AWAY. Now Nick feels shitty-

NICK
Wait... Wes... WES...

As Nick rushes off to Wes, we stay at the window... And the Santa display DROPS FROM THE SKY: SMASH.

INT. MARK'S ROOM - SAME TIME

Mark opens his eyes to the sound of a BUZZING... he looks up- Sees LINDSAY STANDING OVER HIM...

LINDSAY
Merry Christmas, honey.

He's confused... which is when we realize THAT SHE IS JUST FINISHING UP **SHAVING HIS HEAD-** He FREAKS OUT-

MARK
AHH!! WHAT THE HELL!??

LINDSAY
Where did your hair go? That's the real mystery here, huh?

Then Lindsay marches on out, leaving him bald, his long beautiful locks all over the bed- He's super... CONFUSED-

INT. THE MALL - SAME TIME

THERE'S **SKINNY SANTA**, a huge line before him. Nick and Wes, clearly having waited, are near the front. Wes is still upset-

NICK

I'm sorry, I'm so- so sorry-

WESLEY

Was I a bad boy or something? *Do you think I'm on the naughty list?*

Wes gets teary again as they step up, they're next in line-

NICK

No, Wes, you're... You're on the good list. I promise. If anyone's on the naughty list it's... *me-*

Nick has a thought, looks up to Santa, who's **LOOKING AT HIM- SANTA QUICKLY LOOKS AWAY-** Talks to the little boy on his lap- But Nick is now *suspicious...*

WESLEY

Dad, are you okay?

NICK

Umm, yeah, bud... Sure...

Santa's lap is again free, so Santa **WAVES WES UP-** Nick is still caught in thought as Wes steps up to Santa...

SKINNY SANTA

...What do you want for Christmas?

In the distance, the **SWEATY GUY** gets his **XPHONE STOLEN** by the **THIEF WHO STOLE FROM NICK-**

SWEATY GUY

HEY! I'M SOMEBODY'S SON!!

But Nick doesn't notice any of that, he just watches as **WES WHISPERS SOMETHING TO SANTA...** **NICK'S EYES WIDEN. HOLY SHIT.**

Santa **WINKS** at him, lets Wes down-

SKINNY SANTA

Ho ho ho! Next little boy or girl!

Nick quickly gets down to Wes's level-

NICK
Hey, buddy- What did you just...
ask Santa for?

WESLEY
I think that's a secret between me
and Santa-

NICK
WESLEY YOU HAVE TO TELL ME!

Some eyes on them now. Wes looks sad, but...

WESLEY
I told him... I wanted us to be all
together on Christmas-

NICK
Wait- Who? What- *"together"*?

WESLEY
Like... you. And Mom. And Shane and
Lindsay- Like it used to be-

Nick's mind is racing now: **THAT'S IT. THAT'S THE CURSE.**

WESLEY (CONT'D)
-You just seem so worried all the
time, I wish you were happy like
when we were in the old house when
we went ice skating and sledding
and there was a blizzard, and we
were... together-

NICK
But we're together! We've been
together non-stop! Is that what
this is!? *Hey-*
(standing)
LESSON LEARNED!

Nick looks up to find: **SANTA IS GONE.** Nick now looks around-

WESLEY
Dad, what's going on?

NICK PICKS UP WES, RUNS OVER TO THE LINE- ACCOSTS AN ELF-

NICK
Excuse me! Where's Santa?

ELF
In the hearts of children across-

Nick GRABS THE ELF BY HIS COLLAR- He's freaked out now-

NICK
YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN! WHERE IS HE??

ELF
I don't know, he took a break, even
Santa has to pee, man.

NICK
HE'S NEVER DONE THAT BEFORE! *HE'S
ALWAYS HERE RIGHT NOW!*

The SECURITY GUARDS FROM YESTERDAY step up- So Nick *sprints-*

EXT. THE HARPERS' HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Jen is at the front door with the penguin costume in hand, as
NICK'S CAR SPEEDS UP TO THE HOUSE- HE GETS OUT-

NICK
JEN! We have to talk!

She marches right past him, ignoring him as she goes over to
Wesley's door and lets him out-

JEN
Wes honey, let's go in my car,
don't want the pageant to not have
a penguin, now do we??

NICK
You have to hear me out-

Jen follows Wes over to her car, past Nick-

NICK (CONT'D)
*I know how to fix this! Jenny! Wes
made a wish!*

She gets in the car, starts to drive- So he JUMPS IN FRONT OF
HER CAR, she STOPS SHORT-

NICK (CONT'D)
I'M NOT LETTING YOU LEAVE. I'M
TRYING TO SAVE MY FAMILY!

She REVS her engine-

WESLEY
Um... Mommy? *What are you doing?*

JEN
GET OUT OF MY WAY, NICK!

NICK
I'M NOT MOVING!

She REVS IT SOME MORE...

JEN
LAST WARNING!

NICK
I'M SORRY, YOU HAVE TO-

She STEPS ON IT, DRIVES TOWARD NICK- BUT HE DOESN'T BUDGE- SO-

JEN SLAMS INTO HIM- HE FLIPS OVER THE CAR- WES SCREAMS- NICK SCREAMS- JEN INSTANTLY REGRETS IT-

JEN
NICK!!

INT. HOSPITAL - LATER

Nick is in the HOSPITAL BED, again, covered in bandages.

NICK
SANTA DID IT.

Jen, Shane and Lindsay are here too, scattered about the room, and giving him a look, like... *What?*

NICK (CONT'D)
I don't know how I was so stupid before- I thought we were getting like a *gift*, that I could give you the perfect Christmas that I always wanted to but- *I suck at Christmas*. I also don't really make a great dad or husband- And that's why I wanted a *win*. Like I was... making up for the rest of it. I'm not the guy who deserves to be on Santa's nice list. But you know who is?

LINDSAY
...Oopsie.

NICK
It was right in front of my face a hundred times... *But today I saw it...* Wesley asked Santa for something for Christmas...

(MORE)

NICK (CONT'D)

(beat)

He asked for us to be together.

That is so damn cute that Jen has to sit down.

LINDSAY

Okay but even if that's true- Wes wished for us to be together and Santa's doing this: So what? We've already been together. That obviously doesn't work-

NICK

I know! Which is why we have to go find Santa! This is a good thing!

SHANE

Feel like I've heard that before-

NICK

No, listen- *we know who's doing this*. All we have to do is go talk to him! I know exactly where he's going to be tomorrow morning- We'll be there the moment that mall opens. Shane and I will pick up Lindsay from her boyfriend's house-

LINDSAY

Ex boyfriend.

Jen shoots her a look, but no time-

NICK

Then we'll go grab Mom from work- And we'll march in there and we'll say: *Hey Santa! Look at us! We're together! We sing harmony!* Tomorrow morning, this ends. *Tomorrow morning... We ACCOST SANTA CLAUS!*

They suddenly realize that A NURSE IS IN THERE WITH THEM.

SHANE

What? What's your family do on Christmas?

THEN- CUE THE MOST ANNOYING CHRISTMAS SONG EVER!

INT. THE HARPERS' LIVING ROOM - DAWN

Nick opens his eyes. THE CHIPMUNKS PLAYING-

WESLEY
OH GOOD YOU'RE UP!

Nick smiles, and POPS UP, as **THE SONG KEEPS PLAYING:**

THE CHIPMUNKS (V.O.)
Christmas, Christmas time is near-

INT. SHANE'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

THE CHIPMUNKS SING ON as we see Shane, asleep, ROLL OFF THE TOP BUNK- But NICK IS THERE, *CATCHES HIM-*

THE CHIPMUNKS (V.O.)
Time for laughter, time for cheer-

EXT. THE HARPERS' HOUSE - MORNING

THE SLEIGH DISPLAY HAS ALREADY SMASHED THE CAMRY. But now, Nick doesn't care. He, Shane and Wes GET IN THE CAR- PULL OUT- Rudolph FALLS OVER, LANDS ON KEITH'S YARD-

THE CHIPMUNKS (V.O.)
We've been good but we can't last-

EXT. MARK'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Nick's car PULLS UP to find Lindsay in front of Mark's house, just as she DROPS A MATCH ON A PILE OF CLOTHES: **IT IGNITES.**

Lindsay grins, gets into her dad's car, and RIDES OFF- At that moment, Mark pokes his BALD HEAD out of the window, to find ALL OF HIS CLOTHES ON FIRE-

THE CHIPMUNKS (V.O.)
Hurry Christmas, hurry fast-

INT. NICK'S CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Jen squeezes into the BACK SEAT with the kids-

THE CHIPMUNKS (V.O.)
We can hardly stand the wait!

She and Nick catch eyes in the rearview, then she looks away- Clearly, Jen is still mad. Nick STEPS ON IT-

INT. THE MALL - MOMENTS LATER

THE BIG DOUBLE DOORS OPEN, and IN WALK **THE HARPERS**, IN BADASS SLOW MOTION... They're strutting, on a mission...

THE CHIPMUNKS (V.O.)
Please Christmas don't be late!

Nick leads the way over to the line for mall Santa- He's not out and there's no line yet, so they're RIGHT IN FRONT... THE ELF GUY gets ready to open the velvet rope... WHEN-

A TOTALLY DIFFERENT SANTA EMERGES. (This Santa, for instance, is African American). THE SONG CUTS OUT- Nick looks confused-

NICK
Wait, that's- Something's wrong...
(to the Elf)
Hey, where's the other Santa?

ELF
What are you talking about?

NICK
You KNOW what I'm talking about!
The *usual* Santa! I mean, the REAL
Santa... You know... right?

Black Santa. The Elf. Even his family all give Nick a long... judgemental look... Shaking their heads... For a BEAT...

NICK (CONT'D)
...What?

MOMENTS LATER-

They are now walking away, dejected.

NICK
You know I'm not racist, right?

JEN
So I don't understand what this means- If that guy wasn't the one who Wes made his wish with-

NICK
Then the real Santa is gone because
he's onto us.

LINDSAY
And you're saying "Real Santa"
because he's... *white?*

NICK

No! You guys are the ones making this about race! All I'm saying is that if the real magic Santa that did this to us is ALSO repeating this day, then he's trying to avoid me... Because he knows I'm onto...

Nick stops... sees: a door that says "EMPLOYEES ONLY"...

INT. MALL, BACK ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Nick again leads the charge through SHORT HALL into a LITTLE ROOM, the others following him, uncertain-

JEN

Nick, what are we doing?

The room has some RANDOM CHRISTMAS PARAPHERNALIA. Stray Elf ears, Santa beards, and some FILING CABINETS. Nick opens one-

NICK

-Even if he is 'Real Santa', the mall still had to hire him, right?

Nick pulls out a FOLDER, opens it up: *STACKS OF RESUMES*. He and Jen start fishing through them. Meanwhile, Wesley is inspecting the *STRAY WHITE BEARDS*...

WESLEY

Guys... I have a lot of questions-

SHANE

Trust me, little guy. So do we.

Jen and Nick quickly flip through *SANTA HEAD SHOTS*. One fat man after another after another after another- *Until-*

NICK

THAT'S HIM!

The picture is *SKINNY SANTA*. Nick looks through his resume-

NICK (CONT'D)

His name is Steve Willson! Look at this employment history- He's been a mall santa *all over the country-*

SHANE

Wait, Santa's name is STEVE?

WESLEY

SO many questions.

NICK
There's an address here!

Lindsay quickly maps it on her phone-

LINDSAY
It's only an hour away-

The family looks to one another as Nick POCKETS the resume-

INT. MALL - MOMENTS LATER

Our family SNEAKS out of the EMPLOYEES ONLY area and heads for the EXITS, when Nick hears something-

SWEATY GUY (O.S.)
HEY! I'M SOMEBODY'S SON!!

Nick turns- *He knows that voice.* He looks around, his wheels spinning, he gets an idea...

JEN
Nick? Are you okay?

Nick nods, he's got a plan. He reaches up, grabs one of the GIANT BALL ORNAMENTS hanging from the roof, he holds it...

SHANE
Dad, what are you-

NICK
Get ready to run. *In three, two...*

He PUSHES the ornament, it SWINGS- And...

It FLIES RIGHT INTO THE **THIEF**, HOLDING THE XPHONE HE STOLE FROM THE SWEATY GUY- **SMASH!** The guy LAYS OUT- DROPS THE GIFT, IT SLIDES RIGHT TO NICK'S FEET... HE GRABS IT-

NICK (CONT'D)
GO GO GO!

LINDSAY
Did that guy do something to you??

The WHOLE FAMILY RUN WITH HIM NOW- Toward the exits- but: THERE'S MALL SECURITY, standing in the way.

NICK
DAMN IT! IT'S RON AND TERRY! *Terry is going through a tough divorce, you don't want to mess with him!*

TERRY
WHAT? How did that guy know that?

RON
It's true, man. You've been a
NIGHTMARE lately.

Nick then SPRINTS in another direction- Shane GRABS WESLEY and they ALL RUN. Wesley is LOVING THIS, they head toward-

INT. DEPARTMENT STORE - MOMENTS LATER

They SPRINT THROUGH the crowds- They HOP FROM BED TO BED in the mattress section- The SECURITY GUARDS DO THE SAME-

They DASH PAST the PERFUME SECTION- Each of them getting individual spritzes of perfumes as they run-

They RUN PAST RACKS AND RACKS OF CLOTHES- Lindsay DROPS A PILE OF JACKETS in the way- Jen KNOCKS MANNEQUINS behind them as they run- They pass SHIRTS, UNDERWEAR, SOCKS- THEN: **THE EXITS- AND OUT THEY GO-**

INT. NICK'S CAR - MOMENTS LATER

They all PILE IN. Nick PUTS THE BOX ON SHANE'S LAP, and winks-

NICK
Merry Christmas.

Shane looks down at it, as Nick STARTS THE CAR- And ZOOM-

SHANE
Wait, Dad... You did that for ME?

NICK
Every day!

WESLEY
GUYS! *LET'S DO THAT AGAIN!*

THEY'RE OFF- Out of the parking lot, down the highway...

EXT. ADORABLE COTTAGE - LATER, AFTERNOON

A COZY HOME nestled in the snow, with candy cane decorations. Nick's car pulls in, and our family get out, a bit confused-

WESLEY
SANTA'S HOUSE!

Wesley RUNS OVER TO THE DOOR-

NICK
Wait, Wesley, maybe don't-

He starts KNOCKING on the door- They peek their heads in-

JEN
Doesn't look like anyone's here-

LINDSAY
Not to state the obvious but: *I think Santa works on Christmas.*

JEN
I'll see if there's a back door-

NICK
You're going to break into Santa's house?

JEN
He literally does it to everyone on Earth. I think we get a pass-

Jen goes around the corner, Lindsay follows-

EXT. BEHIND THE COTTAGE - MOMENTS LATER

Jen JIGGLES the back door, no dice. Lindsay pulls at a window-

LINDSAY
Hey, Mom, help me with this?

Jen does indeed go to help, they *STRUGGLE*... Then, break-

JEN
I'm sorry about the boy.

Lindsay nods, *it's okay*...

JEN (CONT'D)
You know... I had a boyfriend when I was your age. I used to sneak out and walk around the corner for him to get me in his pickup, then we'd drive over to the lake and-

LINDSAY
Ew, Mom, did you grow up in a Luke Bryan song?

JEN

What I mean is: I've been there.
And boys, at your age... It's
tempting to see them as the answer.
Or to think your boyfriend is the
only thing that matters. But, trust
me, universal truth: High school
boyfriends are jerks. It's almost
not even their fault, they're still
figuring out who they are, and
people around them get hurt.

LINDSAY

They get better, right?

JEN

Some no. But some...

As Jen thinks about this, we hear **SMASH!** *Like glass breaking.*

NICK (O.S.)

I found a way in!

At that, Jen and Lindsay share a LAUGH-

INT. ADORABLE COTTAGE - MOMENTS LATER

A NARROW STAIRWELL. Nick and Jen creep up it, slowly...

NICK

-Just anything that could tell us
where he might be...

Jen nods, looking around... this looks more like a sweet old
couple live here than it does "Santa's House" but there are
little Christmas touches...

DOWN IN THE KITCHEN - SAME TIME

Lindsay, Shane and Wesley creep slowly through the cozy
living room, reaching the quiet kitchen... *when-*

A WOMAN

-Cookie?

The kids all JUMP IN FEAR when they see: **MRS. CLAUS**, taking
cookies out of the oven-

WESLEY

MRS. SANTA!

Wesley runs up to her and takes a cookie-

LINDSAY

Listen, we're- We're sorry, we're-

WESLEY

Do you know where Santa is? He put my family in a Christmas curse-

LINDSAY

Wes!

MRS. CLAUS

-Oh damn it, *Steve*. What did he do this time?

Lindsay and Shane give each other a look: *What does she know?*

UPSTAIRS, MASTER BEDROOM - SAME TIME

They're really snooping now, going through drawers, looking under tchotchkes, when Nick glances at Jen...

NICK

I pushed you to make the investment-

She looks back to him...

JEN

No... we did it together.

NICK

But you're more patient than I am. You knew that a few more years of working like dogs and we'd be able to get our heads above water, but-

JEN

We both wanted the win.

NICK

Yeah, but maybe the thing is... we already won? I just wanted to give you guys everything- but what if we already had everything?

Nick crosses the room, closer to her...

JEN

I know. I'm so busy trying to keep up with the neighborhood- I don't realize that what we have is...

NICK

-So good. Yeah.

She reaches for his hand, he takes it.

JEN

And not just you and I. But, those brilliant little idiots downstairs. They're *amazing*- They're growing up so fast, I feel like I didn't even realize it until all this. Shane has a *hangover*. Lindsay's had her heart broken. *Those are our babies.*

NICK

But they're not. They can handle it. I never really took the time to notice it- I just feel like... We never have the *time*-

JEN

We have the time now...

She looks into his eyes... *He gives her a look...* Then they both look down to... THE BED.

NICK

...*We can't.* The kids are here, and... *this is Santa's bed.*

JEN

Nick... *we're ALREADY on the naughty list-*

That does it: Nick GRABS Jen and they KISS, FALL ONTO THE BED-

DOWN IN THE KITCHEN - SAME TIME

Wesley is eating what looks like his tenth cookie, as Shane and Lindsay grill Mrs. Claus.

LINDSAY

But- I don't get it, he's a *mall Santa*- Are all mall Santa's magic?

WESLEY

There's only ONE Santa, Lindsay-

MRS. CLAUS

Yeah LINDSAY... My husband is the only real Santa, we relocate every year so he can go to a different mall, be with the kids, hear what they really want. And if you're good, Santa does what he can.

Wesley gives her a big cookie-filled smile.

MRS. CLAUS (CONT'D)
 Hey this is a silly question but...
 You have PARENTS right?

Lindsay and Shane look to each other: *Where are they?*

UPSTAIRS HALL - MOMENTS LATER

Shane creeps through the hall... *hears something behind a door...* he pushes it open slowly... and finds:

A BATHROOM. WHERE AN ACTUAL ELF IS TAKING A SHIT.

ACTUAL ELF
YOU MIND?

Shane, FREAKED OUT, *SLAMS THE DOOR.*

DOWN IN THE KITCHEN - SAME TIME

LINDSAY
 So this has happened before?

MRS. CLAUS
 Are you kidding? This EXACT thing has happened before. This one time a guy wanted to get with the girl of his dreams. So Steve gave him a bunch of chances to win her over. You ever hear the song "Twelve Days Of Christmas"? It was written by *that guy*. And let me tell you- he was a lost cause.

LINDSAY
 Boys are idiots.

MRS. CLAUS
 On the first day he gave her a *partridge in a pear tree*. WHO WANTS A PEAR TREE? I mean, a partridge-*fine*. But, an entire pear tree? It took up like half of her apartment- But he figured it out eventually. I'm sure you guys will figure out your thing too-

LINDSAY
 But what if we... *don't?*

She shrugs-

MRS. CLAUS

Probably be doomed to repeat this for the rest of your lives. Not totally sure- We try not to talk about work at home.

UPSTAIRS HALL - SAME TIME

Shane slowly approaches the BEDROOM DOOR... he creeps over to it, closer... CLOSER, *REACHES FOR IT*- BUT IT OPENS-

Nick and Jen are on their way out (tucking in shirts, etc)-

NICK

OH! Shane, Hi!

SHANE

Hey we found Mrs. Claus! Come on!

Shane leads them away... Nick and Jen look to each other, like: "Oh good, he doesn't suspect anything"-

SHANE (CONT'D)

Also, *gross*. Let's try to focus.

And DOWN THE STAIRS HE GOES-

DOWN IN THE KITCHEN - SAME TIME

LINDSAY

So can we just wait here and talk to him? We have to know what we're doing wrong-

They look up and find Nick, Jen and Shane coming in-

NICK

She's right- We need direction. You can't just throw people into a magic curse without a way out!

(beat)

Hi I'm Nick by the way-

JEN

You have a beautiful home.

MRS. CLAUS

Look Insane Family, I'd invite you to stay, but it's Christmas Eve, it's his busiest night at work.

(MORE)

MRS. CLAUS (CONT'D)
 He won't be back until tomorrow-
 He's got special appearances, he's
 going to some parade, then he's
 going to-

NICK
 Wait- *the parade- OUR parade?*

They look to each other... *That's it-*

EXT. ADORABLE COTTAGE / NICK'S CAR - SAME TIME

They all PILE IN AGAIN, getting ready to go. Mrs. Claus waving them goodbye from the front door-

MRS. CLAUS
 Good luck! Merry Christmas!

But as Shane puts his gift back on his lap, he has a thought-

SHANE
 Wait. One thing-

Shane hops out of the car and hands the gift to Mrs. Claus-

SHANE (CONT'D)
 It's super hard to get. So... if he
 knows any kids who really deserve
 one, give it to them. Okay?

IN THE CAR, we see Nick and Jen's faces... *Proud of him...*
 Mrs. Claus accepts the gift, nodding, and OFF SHANE GOES...

They all wave goodbye to Mrs. Claus as they ride off... she waves too, and when they're gone... She CALLS INTO THE HOUSE-

MRS. CLAUS
 Alabaster! New phone! Woot woot!

She SHUTS THE DOOR-

EXT. HIGHWAY - LATER, SUNDOWN

The SUN SETTING, Nick's car ZOOMS down the road-

INT. NICK'S CAR - LATER, NIGHT

They're now back in town, Nick still driving-

WESLEY

Santa's usually near the end of the parade, right?

NICK

That's right- So we should get in on Baker street-

LINDSAY

No Baker's closed, use Primrose- But get on third to avoid the light-

JEN

Man, we are gonna make GREAT TIME-

He nods, CUTTING THE WHEEL-

EXT. CHRISTMAS PARADE - THAT NIGHT

A BIG, LOUD, OVER-THE-TOP PARADE. **TONS OF FAMILIES** CHEERING. And right in the middle of it all: **SKINNY SANTA** up on a TOWERING SLEIGH FLOAT. He waves, smiles, *Ho ho hos*, etc...

And just behind the crowd, is NICK'S CAR. The family gets out-

NICK

There he is.

JEN

Let's do this.

WESLEY

Yay! Santa!

Wes gets up on Shane's shoulders. And OFF THEY GO-

DEEP IN THE PARADE - MOMENTS LATER

Our family sticks together as they make their way through COSTUMED CHARACTERS, A MARCHING BAND, DANCERS-

Lindsay is almost lost in the sea of people, but Nick holds out his hand, she takes it, *they're a team*. And they approach-

THE SLEIGH- Santa, waving, tossing candy, NOTICES THEM-

SKINNY SANTA

Ah crap.

NICK

Hey! You! You have to help us!

SKINNY SANTA
GO AWAY! YOU NEED TO DO THIS ON
YOUR OWN!

He starts PEGGING THEM WITH CANDY, so Nick begins to CLIMB
ONTO THE SLEIGH-

NICK
LET THEM GO! THIS WAS MY FAULT! LET
ME BE THE ONE WHO'S PUNISHED!

SKINNY SANTA
Stop it! I'm not kidding! STOP
TRYING TO CHEAT!

Nick CLIMBS HIGHER ON THE SLEIGH-

NICK
I'M NOT CHEATING! I'M JUST TRYING
TO HELP MY-

But Nick's too heavy, the SLEIGH BEGINS TO LEAN-

SHANE
DAD!

NICK!

JEN

Then- IT TOPPLES OVER- *SANTA GOES CRASHING TO THE GROUND-*
ONLOOKERS GASP- Jen hurries over to:

NICK, on the ground too, has the big sleigh on top of him- He
pushes it out of the way- Mostly paper mache.

NICK (CONT'D)
I'm okay, where's Santa?

They look up, find: SKINNY SANTA DISAPPEARING INTO THE CROWD-

SHANE
I'm on it!

Shane rushes through the crowd, Lindsay just behind him-
Leaving their parents behind. Wesley, on Shane's shoulders,
has a head above everyone, so he DIRECTS HIM-

WESLEY
That way! Past the band! Hurry!

Shane runs faster- Lindsay just behind them, there are too
many people in the way now-

LINDSAY
Wait guys, we're never going to get
him like this- *Follow me-*

Lindsay cuts off TOWARD THE SIDEWALK, Shane/Wes follow-
BUT IN THE CROWD, Jen and Nick can't see any of them-

NICK
They had to go this way!

JEN
-Wait! I see Santa!

A FLASH OF RED IN THE CROWD- Jen grabs Nick's hand and they
RUN INTO A CROWD, TO THE FAR END OF A FLOAT, WHERE THEY FIND:

A GIANT SEA OF SANTA CLAUSES. Like... HUNDREDS OF THEM. ALL
OF THEM ARE *HO HO HO-ing*. It's a nightmare. But Jen and Nick
push through checking each Santa's face. Until-

JEN (CONT'D)
THERE!

She spots SKINNY SANTA hopping on a HORSE with FAKE ANTLERS-

NICK (O.S.)
I'm on it!

Nick MOUNTS a smaller horse, then PULLS JEN UP with him-

SKINNY SANTA
ON DANCER!

Santa's horse GALLOPS-

NICK
On...

He looks down. We now realize that this is not a horse, but a
DONKEY, a sign says "DOMINIC THE DONKEY"-

NICK (CONT'D)
...Dominic.

Dominic the Donkey BRAYS and then trots forward, slowly.

Santa is getting away, his horse is swift and beautiful.
Dominic waddles his fat butt, Nick and Jen nudging him along-

The horse breaks into a gallop as he reaches the barrier to
the parade and it LEAPS OVER ELEGANTLY-

Little kids watch in awe. Santa tips his cap to them, tosses
them candy, and RIDES OFF-

Then- DOMINIC COMES SMASHING THROUGH THE BARRIER, FLINGING
NICK AND JEN OUT INTO A PILE OF SNOW...

Then... we hear AN ENGINE ROARING TOWARD THEM. Nick and Jen look up to find NICK'S CAR ZOOMING ACROSS THREE LANES OF TRAFFIC, SKIDS ACROSS A STREET and-

SLIDES RIGHT INTO A STREET PARKING SPACE.

RANDOM ONLOOKER

My God... That was the greatest parallel park I've EVER SEEN.

ANOTHER RANDOM ONLOOKER

*(wiping a tear)
Just... so beautiful.*

Down slides the window: IT'S LINDSAY.

LINDSAY

Hop in.

I/E. NICK'S CAR / STREETS - MOMENTS LATER

Lindsay WEAVES through traffic like a pro- following SANTA ON HIS HORSE twenty yards ahead of them and keeping pace-

NICK

Lindsay, you got GOOD at this.

LINDSAY

Yeah, pretty sure I'm gonna pass my road test-

She makes a SHARP TURN, SPEEDS UP, STOPS SHORT, then *URNS INTO A TIGHT ALLEY-* Everyone FLINGS to one side of the car-

She POPS OUT OF THE ALLEY AND HER HEADLIGHTS ARE ON:

ALEXIS FONTAINE, she's holding a STORE BOUGHT PRE-COOKED HAM, about to get into her own car. She's caught like a DEER IN HEADLIGHTS. Literally, in headlights.

JEN

Alexis??

They both look to the HAM...

JEN (CONT'D)

Did you... *ruin your ham and...
HAVE TO BUY A NEW ONE?*

ALEXIS

*(no accent)
I over-brined it! Please don't tell
my husband!*

Jen can't help but smile. But... she takes the high road:

JEN

It's okay. That's literally
happened to me a hundred times.

ALEXIS

You? But... *you're Ms. Perfect.*

NICK

Lindsay! There he is! Go! Go!

They see SANTA ON HORSEBACK running behind them, so Lindsay
BACKS UP. Jen calls out to Alexis-

JEN

Don't worry! Your secret's safe
with me!

SHANE

*And Mom's heart grew three sizes
that day!*

And ZOOM- They're off. Alexis is left alone with her ham,
watching Jen and her family, all together... envious.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - MOMENTS LATER

The HORSE IS NOW OUT ON THE OPEN ROAD- But Nick's car is
close behind, FASTER. SANTA CUTS INTO A LINE OF TREES-

NICK

Wait, there's no road back there!

Lindsay slows the car down, looking out past the treeline-

JEN

You're right- This is the hill by
the pond at Smallwood park-

SHANE

So what do we do?

Nick looks back to them...

EXT. FROZEN POND - MOMENTS LATER

The stars and moon shine down on a VAST FROZEN POND and a BIG
SNOW-COVERED PARK, and we hear the SOUND OF SOMETHING SLIDING
DOWN SNOW, like a CRUNCHING getting LOUDER, LOUDER- **LOUDER-**

ZOOM! ZOOM! ZOOM! ZOOM!

THE HARPERS ARE ALL **SLEDDING ON TIRES**, and they FLING through the treeline, OUT OVER THE ICE- THE MOMENTUM CARRYING THEM SO THAT THEY GLIDE SWIFTLY OVER IT-

Wes is on Nick's lap, laughing hysterically. As Jen sees a figure up ahead: SANTA, RUNNING IN THE SNOW. He's abandoned his horse (having not gone over the pond with it)-

JEN

He's got nowhere to go!

ZOOM! ZOOM! ZOOM! ZOOM! None of them can stop from smiling. Not Shane. Not Lindsay. Not Jen. Not Wesley. And definitely not Nick. We've never seen him happier.

Their eyes are on the silhouette of Santa out in the distance, getting closer and closer until....

They start SLOWING DOWN... SLOWING, AND...

They SKID TO A STOP... **OUT IN THE MIDDLE OF THE POND.**

They are still a hundred yards from Santa, and he's on solid ground... He's as good as gone...

The five of them watch as Santa disappears into the night. Then, Wes VOMITS ONTO NICK-

WESLEY

Sorry, too many cookies.

Then, Shane VOMITS onto the ice-

SHANE

Ugh, too much eggnog.

They look around... and then... begin to LAUGH... AND LAUGH-

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - LATER

The five of them emerge from a line of trees, out onto a STREET WITH CUTE LITTLE HOMES, all decorated for Christmas-

SHANE

Where are we?

NICK

Wait I know... You guys don't recognize it?

They all look up, realizing...

JEN
We're... by the old house-

NICK
Yeah... Just... that way-

They trot down the road, and turn a corner... to-

EXT. "THE OLD HOUSE" - MOMENTS LATER

It's a **CUTE LITTLE HOUSE** - a starter home on a rural street. No decorations, not particularly pretty, but... cozy. The five of them stand in front of it now...

JEN
All three of you guys... came home from the hospital to this house.

She puts a hand on Shane's back.

NICK
Look, they're selling it already.

There's a FOR SALE sign. And "OPEN HOUSE SATURDAY!"

JEN
I knew those buyers wouldn't appreciate this place...

Jen walks up to the house, squints into the window...

LINDSAY
Doesn't look like anyone's home-

JEN
Yeah that's all realtor furniture- they stage it for the open houses. They must have moved out already.

Looking at the house, Nick gets an idea...

NICK
Wes... What was your favorite Christmas?

WESLEY
It was when I was little, we went sledding, then we went home, like, here home- And then that blizzard came and we stayed inside all night-

LINDSAY

Yeah... that WAS a good Christmas.
Right, Dad?

They look around... *Where did he go?*

NICK (O.S.)

Just checking something...

They find Nick now up on the ROOF. He attempts to open an upstairs window, but it's locked shut-

JEN

I think we've broken into enough houses today, don't you?

SHANE

Yeah, Dad, maybe we should go home-

NICK

Guys... We are home.

Nick comes to the chimney, and YANKS the vent off of it, and the family watches, delighted, as HE CLIMBS DOWN THE CHIMNEY-

Then... we hear ROCKS CHIPPING, THEN A LOUD **THUMP**. BEAT...

NICK (O.S.) (CONT'D)

...I'm in!

INT. "THE OLD HOUSE" - MOMENTS LATER

A ROARING FIRE. A COZY LIVING ROOM. A CHRISTMAS SONG that's ACTUALLY GOOD plays from LINDSAY'S PHONE (like Chuck Berry's *Spending Christmas*), which is in Wes's hands, playing DJ.

Nick is tending to the fire-

NICK

How about the kitchen table?

We find Lindsay in GOGGLES, with a sledgehammer. And she SMASHES the wooden table- It SHATTERS-

LINDSAY

It breaks, it burns!

Shane and Jen, meanwhile, sit beside Wes, warming at the fire-

SHANE

If tomorrow morning we go straight to Santa's house- Maybe we can get there before he gets up.

JEN

Yeah you boys just hit the road the moment Wes gets you up. I'll pick up Lindsay and meet you there-

Lindsay grabs some big chunks of wood from the table and brings it over to Nick. She then sits beside Wes-

LINDSAY

Ugh, I wish I was waking up at home with you guys tomorrow-

JEN

Same.

As Nick feeds the fire with the wood, he gives Jen a look-

NICK

Tomorrow we could... take the day off. Maybe we can go ice skating?

LINDSAY

That would be fun. *I know a spot.*

They look down to Wesley, who is now FAST ASLEEP between Shane and Lindsay. She smiles, puts an arm around him.

SHANE

He'd love that. We should do it.

Nick feeds more fire-

NICK

I didn't realize how much I missed this place...

JEN

Yeah...

NICK

You know...

(beat)

It's for sale.

Nick and Jen share a look...

JEN

We were happier here, weren't we? When it was simpler... What do you guys think?

Jen finds that all of the kids are asleep now. The three of them almost snuggling. The image makes her smile, as Nick skootches up next to her...

NICK
 Hey, so I know we said no gifts-
 But... Little something I picked up-
 (reaches into his pocket)
 By which I mean I stole it, so-
 sorry I didn't wrap it.

And reveals: A PAIR OF CHRISTMAS SOCKS.

Jen loves it. She leans over, kisses him. Snuggles up close to him, and they sit there, the fire roaring, the kids sleeping, music playing from the phone, and over this...

FADE TO BLACK...

SILENCE. For a long beat... Then...

CUE THE MOST ANNOYING CHRISTMAS SONG EVER.

INT. THE HARPERS' LIVING ROOM - DAWN

CLOSE ON NICK AS HIS EYES SHOOT OPEN. He SITS UP, to find...

-PSYCH! WE'RE ACTUALLY:

INT. "THE OLD HOUSE" - MORNING

He's laying beside Jen. She's asleep. The kids are all asleep nearby. The music is playing from the phone--clearly, the Christmas playlist from last night just kept going.

He looks toward his feet. His shoes are still on. The fire has gone out. Jen is wearing the new Christmas socks... So Nick lays back down, soaks in this moment of triumph.

NICK
 (to himself)
Merry Christmas.

MAN'S VOICE
THANKS.

THEY ALL LOOK UP, STARTLED, AS THEY FIND:

POLICE OFFICERS ARE STANDING ABOVE THEM. The same ones who have arrested Nick literally dozens of times.

COP
 -You're under arrest for breaking
 and entering...

He looks out at ALL THE SMASHED UP BROKEN FURNITURE.

COP (CONT'D)
 ...and destruction of property.

A long beat... then-

SHANE and LINDSAY both LEAP TO THEIR FEET-

SHANE LINDSAY
 YESSSS!!! WE DID IT!!!

Jen looks around, so happy, she KISSES NICK-

The cops look to each other: Confused.

NICK
 We're just really into Christmas-

THE SONG KEEPS PLAYING AS WE COME TO-

EXT. THE POLICE STATION - LATER

The Harpers CHEER as they exit the station, HUG, celebrate.
 And the whole extended family are there, loitering on the
 steps. Nick approaches Scott-

NICK
 Thanks for posting bail, brother.

SCOTT
 Yeah, it's the least I can do-
 Because... Look, we have to talk-

NICK
 Scotty, you're my brother. This is
 the most magical time of year,
 so... You're forgiven. Just stay
 away from boats.

Shane looks to Vanessa-

SHANE
 Hey, if you ever want to spend
 Christmas with a *real man*, here's
 an iTunes gift card.

He hands her the gift card, WINKS at her- And the five of
 them walk out toward the road, passing THE OTHERS-

GRANDMA
 (calling after them)
*Since you guys couldn't handle
 Christmas, we're doing it at my
 house.*

UNCLE RAY

No! Your place smells like old people!

Aunt Lorraine smacks him on the back of the head-

JEN

Sorry Patricia, looks like we'll have to miss your Rhubarb pie.

UNCLE CHARLIE

Why? It isn't even real dessert.

NICK

Yeah we... actually have plans just the five us. It's what the kids asked Santa for. Sorry, everybody. Merry Christmas.

They get in Scott's car-

SCOTT

Wait are they... taking my car?

ZOOM- THEY'RE OFF. Lindsay, of course, behind the wheel-

But they're already gone. As they go down the road, we hear Wes, from inside the car-

WESLEY (O.S.)

Guys, don't you wish it was Christmas every day?

A beat. Then-

THE HARPERS IN UNISON (O.S.)

NO.

And we here them LAUGH as they drive away...

EXT. ROCKEFELLER CENTER - LATER THAT DAY

The **ANNOYING SONG STILL PLAYING** (but, let's face it, it's grown on us), we see the Harpers ICE SKATING below the big tree, laughing, grabbing hands to keep balanced.

Snow begins to fall. And we PULL BACK, they disappear into a sea of DOZENS OF OTHER FAMILIES, and we keep on PULLING BACK, the SONG PLAYING, as we FADE OUT...

THE END.