

Reconcile the past. Survive the present.

Fear the future...

# Do NOT Open

by

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**INT. APARTMENT BUILDING HALLWAY - DAY**

A Christmas present.

It's a ten-inch cubic box wrapped in green paper with a tattered red ribbon, waiting at someone's door. It's pretty banged up but sealed and structurally intact.

The door suddenly SCRAPES open. A woman's bare foot steps out, accidentally kicking the box across the hall.

HOLLY (24) emerges, half awake with a serious case of strawberry blonde bed-head, a toothbrush in her mouth and a bag of garbage in each hand. She rocks a well-worn Metallica t-shirt and a kitschy pair of bright red underwear with candy canes printed all over them.

She stares down at the box.

The words "DO NOT OPEN" are scrawled across the top of it in black marker.

She looks up and down the hall...

Nobody.

Her apartment door, overly decorated with a wreath, garland and twinkling Christmas lights, closes behind her as she approaches to investigate.

"DO NOT OPEN"

Puzzled, she slides it back across the hall to her door with one foot before proceeding to a garbage chute at the end of the corridor.

She shoves the two bags of trash into the chute and returns to the box.

She picks it up and shakes it. It seems to be empty.

Preoccupied with the mystery gift, she approaches her apartment door.

CLICK-CLICK

It's locked.

HOLLY  
Oh God, no...

She keeps trying the handle in vain.

HOLLY  
Shit! This is not happening.

**INT. APARTMENT BUILDING LOBBY**

The building's elevator opens. Holly peeks through.

Coast is clear.

She quickly sneaks out, gift under her arm and toothbrush in hand.

Watching out behind her for people entering the building, she dashes around a corner and bumps into an ELDERLY COUPLE.

She drops the present.

HOLLY  
(startled)  
Fuck me!

The old lady gasps in shock.

Holly immediately covers her mouth with both hands. The fact that she's just f-bombed a couple of nice senior citizens registers fast.

HOLLY  
Oh my God, I'm so sorry Mrs.  
Ferguson! You sacred me.

MRS. FERGUSON  
Goodness, Holly! Where are your  
pants, child?!

HOLLY  
Um, in my place. Y'know. Upstairs.  
(sigh)  
I locked myself out. I gotta go get  
Phil to let me back in.

MR. FERGUSON makes a belabored effort to bend down and pick up the gift for her.

HOLLY  
Oh, that's okay Mr. Ferguson. I've  
got it.

She scoops it up in her arm before he can touch it.

The old man seems too distracted by the under-dressed young lady to notice the words written on the box.

HOLLY  
Thank you, though.

MR. FERGUSON  
(grins)  
Thank you!

Holly offers a sheepish smile as she awkwardly steps around them.

Mr. Ferguson turns to watch her go.

HOLLY  
(looks back)  
So sorry. Merry Christm-- er, happy  
holidays...

MR. FERGUSON  
(smiles wide)  
Merry Christmas!

Mrs. Ferguson promptly WHACKS him with her purse.

**INT. SUPERINTENDENT'S DOOR**

Holly KNOCKS loudly on the super's door. She looks up and down the hall, waiting impatiently for him to answer.

HOLLY  
(under her breath)  
Come on, come on, come on...

No response.

HOLLY  
Seriously?

She POUNDS on the door again, much louder this time.

PHIL (OS)  
(from inside)  
Christ sake. Just a minute!

She looks at least a little relieved to know that he's home.

She can hear the sound of multiple locks being DISENGAGED.

PHIL (40), portly and rather unkempt, eventually opens.

He's got long greasy dark hair, bald on top, with a full neck beard and a couple of extra chins. His white-ish shirt boasts an impressive array of grease stains in a variety of sizes and colors. If it is possible for one to simply appear intelligent, Phil does not.

But his dour face brightens slightly upon finding Holly at his door.

**INT. APARTMENT BUILDING HALLWAY**

Phil leers unabashedly at her as they exit the elevator and approach her apartment.

She stretches her t-shirt in an effort to cover up.

He produces a ring full of keys and takes his sweet time locating the right one.

Holly shuffles anxiously from side to side.

Finally, he opens the door. She quickly slips inside.

HOLLY

Thank you, Phil!

PHIL

Look, uh...I hate to do it to you...'cause I can tell yer day's not off to a great start, but...I have to give you this.

He hands her an envelope.

PHIL

Sorry.

HOLLY

Ugh...thanks.

He looks like he's about to say something else when she CLOSES the door on him.

**INT. HOLLY'S APARTMENT**

As soon as it's shut she LOCKS the deadbolt and leans back against the door, clutching her chest and breathing heavily for several seconds.

She repeatedly opens and closes her trembling left hand.

HOLLY  
 (gasping to herself)  
 You're okay. You're okay. You're  
 okay. Okay. Okay. Okay. Okay...

Holly's place is a small one-bedroom apartment. Dark, not particularly tidy and modestly appointed but fully decked out for the holidays.

A ratty-looking artificial Christmas tree stands in the corner and multicolored lights surround the room's only window. Most of her furniture looks like it was probably salvaged from the curb.

Once she composes herself, she sets the box down on the cluttered kitchen table and turns her attention to the envelope.

She RIPS it open.

*NOTICE OF EVICTION*

*"Pursuant to the provisions of RSA 540:2, you are hereby given notice to fully vacate the residential rental property owned by Alastair Murray Holdings located at:*

1843 Camden Avenue      Unit # 304

*on or before 12/31/2017 for failure to pay rent due and in arrears when demanded pursuant to RSA 540:2..."*

HOLLY  
 Great.

She tosses it onto an imposing stack of bills and "PAST DUE" notices that are piling up on the table.

As she passes through the tiny kitchen, she grabs a prescription pill bottle from the counter and shakes it.

It's empty.

HOLLY  
 (big sigh)  
 Have to go out today. You HAVE to  
 go out today...out today. Go out.  
 Today...

Holly tosses the empty bottle into the sink when the gift catches her eye.

She picks it up, looks it over, checks out every side and shakes it again.

HOLLY  
So what the hell is your deal?

"DO NOT OPEN"

She listlessly carries it over to her decrepit Christmas tree. There are no presents beneath it.

She tosses it under.

The gift knocks an ornament off of the tree. It SHATTERS on the floor into a dozen pieces.

It was a crystal star.

Holly freezes.

She stares down at the busted ornament for several seconds, like she can't quite process what just happened.

HOLLY  
Oh no...

Eventually, she tears her focus away from it, forcing herself to move on.

She makes her way to the closet by the front door with a stunned expression on her face. She's clearly struggling to keep it together.

She retrieves a broom and dustpan.

On her way back to the mess, she steps on a shard of the crystal with her bare foot.

She cries out in pain.

HOLLY  
ARGHHH! Fuck!

Blood drips to the floor as she grabs her foot to survey the damage.

HOLLY  
Goddamn it.

**INT. APARTMENT BUILDING LOBBY - DAY**

Holly creeps out of the elevator. She's fully dressed now, including a winter coat, hat and scarf.

She slowly approaches the main door of the building, limping slightly. She hesitates before opening it.

She's breathing heavily again. She closes her eyes tightly and places both hands against the glass.

HOLLY  
 (whispers to herself)  
 Open it. Just fucking open it you  
 stupid bitch.  
 (out loud)  
 Open it!

Her hands SMASH against the door's crash bar.

**EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING. HOLLY'S CAR - DAY**

Holly finishes brushing the snow off of her car before jumping in the driver's seat.

**INT. HOLLY'S CAR**

She turns the key in the ignition. The engine makes a few halfhearted attempts to ROLL OVER...

HOLLY  
 C'mon you piece of shit. Please.  
 Not today...

A couple more attempts, then nothing.

She turns the key off and CRANKS it again.

CL-CL-CL-CL-CLICK! CL-CL-CL-CL-CLICKKKK!

HOLLY  
 (yells)  
 NO!!!

She SMASHES both fists against the wheel.

She takes a few deep breaths, momentarily weighing her options, and pulls out her phone.

"NETWORK UNAVAILABLE"

**INT. HOLLY'S APARTMENT - DAY**

Holly stands next to the tree, her eyes locked on her only gift.

She's thinking about it...

"DO NOT OPEN"...



MARLENE (OS)  
 (through intercom)  
 Finally! D'you forget about wine  
 and pizza night?

HOLLY  
 No. I fell asleep.

MARLENE (OS)  
 (through intercom)  
 Let me in!

Holly smiles and hits the button. BUZZZZZZZ.

She glances over at the box under her tree while she waits.

"DO NOT OPEN"

She stares at it, lost in thought...

KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK

Holly snaps out of her daze, UNLOCKS and opens the door.

Marlene (26, Latina) holds a pizza box in one hand and bottle of wine in the other. She's got a slightly goth-ish thing happening. Tattoos, piercings and short, pixie-style black hair.

MARLENE  
 (smiles wide)  
 Hey, you!

Holly smiles back at her and takes the the pizza from her hands.

HOLLY  
 Hey.

Marlene plants a quick kiss on her cheek as she enters. She suddenly looks really surprised by Holly's appearance.

MARLENE  
 Oh my God!

HOLLY  
 What?

MARLENE  
 You're wearing pants!

HOLLY  
 (half smiles)  
 Yeah.

MARLENE  
 What the hell? Did you go out today  
 or something?!

HOLLY  
 Almost.

Marlene already has her coat off and is working on opening  
 the wine.

MARLENE  
 What do you mean by "almost"?

HOLLY  
 I was supposed to go pick up my  
 refill. But I had some car trouble.

Marlene pulls two glasses out of the cupboard.

MARLENE  
 Shit. Why didn't you call me?!

HOLLY  
 Phone trouble too.

MARLENE  
 Aww, babe! Hey, y'know, I can  
 always spot you some coin or--

HOLLY  
 (interrupts)  
 No. I'm good. Thanks, though.

### **LATER**

The pizza sits on Holly's coffee table with a few pieces  
 gone. The wine bottle is next to it, nearly empty. AC/DC's  
 "Mistress for Christmas" PLAYS softly in the background.

Holly sips her wine on the couch.

Marlene sits next to her, marveling at the festive lights  
 and decorations all over the apartment.

MARLENE  
 So you're really all-in on the  
 whole Christmas thing, huh?

HOLLY

What's wrong with that?

MARLENE

Nothing! Is just a little surprising, y'know, for someone that hates everyone and everything.

Holly doesn't reply. Takes another drink.

Marlene notices the bandage on Holly's foot and quickly changes the subject.

MARLENE

Oh my God! What did you do to yourself?!

HOLLY

Just broke a glass earlier.

MARLENE

Damn. You really are having the day from hell, aren't you?

HOLLY

I've had worse. But not many.  
(points at the box)  
Ever since *that* landed on my doorstep, my luck's gone straight to hell with no stops.

MARLENE

What is it?

Holly gets up to retrieve it.

HOLLY

I dunno. It was just sitting outside my door this morning.

She makes her way over to the tree, picks up the gift and brings it back to the couch and sits.

HOLLY

My first Christmas gift in fifteen years and what's it say?

She hands it to Marlene.

MARLENE

Do not open.  
(stares at gift)  
Too weird. Are you gonna?

HOLLY  
Open it?

MARLENE  
Yes!

HOLLY  
No.

MARLENE  
Why not?!

Holly returns to her spot on the couch.

HOLLY  
Well it clearly says not to.

MARLENE  
You're taking orders from a box?!  
What if there's money in it?!

HOLLY  
It feels empty.

Marlene holds the gift up to her ear and shakes it vigorously.

MARLENE  
Thousand dollar bills don't weigh a whole lot, yo.

HOLLY  
Neither does a lethal dose of anthrax.

The share a laugh.

MARLENE  
Damn. How do you resist some shit like that?

HOLLY  
Ever heard of Pandora's box?

MARLENE  
(smirks)  
Hmm...maybe. Is that one on Cinemax After Dark?

HOLLY  
Funny.

MARLENE

Are you seriously just gonna keep  
this thing sitting under your tree  
making you all crazy?

HOLLY

Crazier perhaps.

MARLENE

C'mon. Let's open it!

HOLLY

I don't think so...

Marlene shrugs and hands it back to Holly.

MARLENE

Mala suerte, esa.

HOLLY

Huh?

MARLENE

Is bad luck!

HOLLY

What's bad luck? Not opening gifts?  
That's not a thing.

MARLENE

(laughs)

It totally is!

Holly holds the present in both hands.

MARLENE

You know you want to. Everything's  
gonna turn around for you if you  
open it. I can feel it!

She looks up at Marlene and back to the box.

HOLLY

Okay, fuck it.

MARLENE

That's the spirit!

Holly gently peels the green paper away one fold at a time.  
Painfully slow.

MARLENE

What, did you forget how to open presents? Rip that shit, girl!

HOLLY

Alright, alright.

She tears the wrapping paper away revealing a basic cardboard box.

They both stare at it.

HOLLY

I dunno, Marlene. I've got a bad feeling ab--

MARLENE

(interrupts)

No! You've come too far to turn back now!

Holly starts picking at its yellowed packing tape, which pulls apart in tiny, dried-out pieces.

MARLENE

Hang on!

Marlene runs to the kitchen and can be heard RIFLING around in the cutlery drawer as Holly stares at the box.

She returns to the couch with a steak knife and hands it to Holly, smiling.

MARLENE

Go on!

HOLLY

Okay! Jesus.

Holly slices one end open.

Then the other.

They exchange nervous glances.

She pulls the cardboard flaps open.

They both peer inside...

Empty.

Holly holds it up.

HOLLY  
Yup. Empty. Satisfied?

Holly throws the empty box across the room in frustration. Marlene puts a consoling arm around her.

MARLENE  
You had to do it, babe.

HOLLY  
I guess.

Marlene suddenly swings a leg over Holly's lap, straddling her face to face.

She peels off her top revealing a lacy black bra, explicitly built for maximum sex appeal.

She pins Holly back into the couch and plants a kiss on her. Holly seems to welcome it.

MARLENE  
See? I told you you were gonna get lucky.

Holly wraps both arms around Marlene as they make out.

**INT. APARTMENT BUILDING HALLWAY - LATER STILL**

Holly's apartment door SCRAPES open. Marlene exits with her coat and scarf back on.

Holly remains in the doorway with only a bed sheet wrapped around her.

MARLENE  
I'm off tomorrow. How about if I come pick you up at noon? We'll go get your meds.

HOLLY  
That'd be great.

MARLENE  
Cool. I'll text you when I'm here.

HOLLY  
My phone's cut. Remember?

MARLENE  
Oh, right. So just meet me downstairs at noon?

HOLLY

Okay. Thanks.

Marlene leans in and gives Holly a quick peck on the lips and a smile before turning to leave, but she suddenly turns back.

MARLENE

Oh, hey! What are you doing for Christmas?

HOLLY

What do you mean?

MARLENE

What's your plan? Did your parents ever call you or anything?

HOLLY

(scoffs)

Hell no. And they don't celebrate it anymore anyway. I told you about that.

MARLENE

Right. So why don't you come to my folks' place with me?

HOLLY

Oh, um...

MARLENE

I mean, my family's pretty big and loud and everything, but--

HOLLY

(interrupts)

I don't think I could do that.

MARLENE

C'mon! This is exactly what you need! To get out of your little comfort zone here.

Holly looks a bit incensed.

HOLLY

Oh, *that's* what I need, is it?

MARLENE

Don't be like that! I just can't stand the thought of you holed up in here all alone for Christmas. That's all.

HOLLY

Well I was kinda hoping you might come here. Spend Christmas with me or whatever.

Marlene looks surprised.

MARLENE

Aw, babe. I'm sorry. My family--

HOLLY

(interrupts)

I know. Your family still loves you, right?

MARLENE

Yes! And they'll love you too if you allow it!

HOLLY

Uh huh. But what about you?

MARLENE

What?!

HOLLY

Do you love me?

MARLENE

Stop it! You know I do.

HOLLY

But not enough to spend just one Christmas without your big, loud, happy family.

Marlene seems taken aback by this. Hurt.

MARLENE

That's not fair.

HOLLY

No, you're right. I'm really happy for you. Seriously.

MARLENE

I don't believe it. Why are you doing this?

HOLLY

What am I doing?

MARLENE

Being so nasty! Is it cause you're  
outta pills or something?

HOLLY

Oh, that's fucking nice. Are you  
kidding me right now?

MARLENE

Holly. Don't push me away. Please.

HOLLY

Just forget it. Merry Christmas. I  
hope you have fun.

Holly turns her back on her abruptly.

MARLENE

Get some rest, esa. We'll go get  
your pills tomorrow. I'll be here  
at noon! Okay?

Holly SLAMS the door.

Marlene looks devastated. She reaches out to knock on the  
door but pulls back at the last second.

She turns to leave instead.

#### **INT. HOLLY'S APARTMENT**

Holly starts to cry as she LOCKS the door. She watches  
Marlene walk away through the peep hole.

Marlene stops in her tracks. She slowly turns her head back  
to the door.

Her eyes are glowing! Bright white. But her face is  
strangely darkened, like it's been painted with shadows.

Holly gasps and quickly pulls her eye away from the peep  
hole. She covers her mouth in shock. Her breathing is  
getting fast. Panicked.

After a moment, she looks through again...

Marlene, or whatever that was, is now gone.

Holly leans against the door, taking a minute to compose  
herself. She's opening and closing her left hand, over and  
over. Her whole body shivers.

**BANG!**

Something smashes into the other side of the door, hard!

Holly screams and jumps back from it.

Eventually, she musters up the courage to peek through the peep hole...

Nothing there.

She double checks the lock before slowly making her way back to her bedroom. She's breathing fast and heavily.

Her bed sheet drags along the floor behind her.

The shapes of two hands and a face appear beneath the sheet as if it were being swept over someone lying on the floor! It passes over revealing nothing there to account for it.

Holly doesn't notice.

She CLOSES the bedroom door behind her.

**INT. HOLLY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT**

Holly stirs awake in her bed, opening her eyes. She stares straight up at the ceiling.

Gradually, she turns her head towards her bedroom door.

It's open now. Just slightly.

Her eyes dart all around the room.

She doesn't see it...until it steps out from the darkened corner behind the door.

A shadowy, man-shaped FIGURE! Lean with really long arms and legs and over seven feet tall.

It takes a single step and stops.

HOLLY  
(panicked)  
What the f--

The figure takes another step. Stops.

And another. Stops.

She's paralyzed with fear and can only watch.

Step...stop.

Step...stop.

It's only a few short feet from her bed now.

Its eyes suddenly snap open. They glow. Bright white with dark pupils. Burning through the darkness.

Holly manages to reach out to the lamp on her nightstand.

CLICK

Light fills the room.

The figure is gone.

She gasps for air hard and fast, looking all around.

Nothing here.

HOLLY  
(gasping)  
What the fuck? What the fuck? What  
the fuck? What the fuck?

Eventually, she lets her head sink back into the pillow.

She leaves the lamp on.

**INT. HOLLY'S BEDROOM - DAWN**

Darkness begins to give way to the morning sunlight.

Holly remains in bed, her eyes wide, fixed on the door.

It's still ajar.

She sits up.

**INT. HOLLY'S APARTMENT. BATHROOM - DAY**

Holly splashes water on her face and looks herself over in the mirror. She takes a deep breath and exhales slowly, followed by another.

**INT. KITCHEN CUPBOARD - LATER**

Light pours in as the cupboard door opens. Holly looks inside. She reaches in and grabs a box of tea hiding way in the back.

"Calming Chamomile".

**INT. HOLLY'S APARTMENT**

Holly stands on her tiptoes as she reaches high into the cupboard. She's wearing the same Metallica shirt with a different pair of Christmas themed underwear. Green with reindeer shapes today.

An electric kettle WHISTLES away on the counter. She drops a tea bag into a mug.

She yanks the kettle's plug from the wall and picks it up. Her hands are shaking, still rattled by last night.

She pours boiling water into the cup, accidentally splashing it onto her hand.

She winces in pain.

HOLLY

Fuck!

She shakes her burning hand and quickly runs cold water over it in the sink.

**INT. HOLLY'S APARTMENT - LATER STILL**

Holly stands at her front door, dressed now with her coat, hat and scarf.

She peeks through the peep hole.

Nobody there.

She looks at her phone:

11:58

She takes a couple deep breaths. In through the nose...out through the mouth...repeat...

11:59

HOLLY

Okay. Go.

She OPENS the door.

**INT. APARTMENT BUILDING HALLWAY**

She LOCKS up her apartment and makes her way down the hall and around the corner toward the elevator.

**INT. ELEVATOR**

The elevator doors slide open. Holly steps inside.

She turns to the button panel. It has four options:

3

2

1

G

She hits "G". It lights up at her touch but immediately goes out.

She tries it again.

Same thing. The doors remain open. It's as if the ground floor is locked off for some reason.

She punches the button repeatedly. CLICK CLICK CLICK...

No effect.

HOLLY

The hell?

**INT. APARTMENT BUILDING HALLWAY**

She exits the elevator and continues down the hall. She checks her phone again:

12:02

Her pace quickens as she rounds another corner and approaches the door leading to the stairwell.

She SLAMS her weight into the crash bar.

The door doesn't budge. Not even a hair.

HOLLY

Okay...

She tries a couple more times. Nothing.

She steps back and KICKS the bar as hard as she can.

SMASH!

She falls back to the floor landing flat on her ass. She might as well be kicking a solid, concrete wall.

She stares up at the door.

**INT. HOLLY'S APARTMENT**

Holly re-enters her apartment looking totally perplexed.

She LOCKS her door and rushes into her living room, dropping her coat and hat behind her.

The empty box remains on the floor.

She hurries over to it and picks it up.

She looks it over, inside and out.

**LATER**

Holly stands at her lit-up living room window, pant-less as usual, her clothes strewn about wherever.

She gazes out at the street below.

It's snowing pretty heavily and starting to pile up.

Otherwise, there's no sign of life out there. No people walking or shoveling. No traffic or snowplows. Nothing moving whatsoever.

HOLLY  
(whispers)  
What the fuck is this?

**INT. HOLLY'S BEDROOM**

Holly lays on her bed scrolling up and down the dial on her clock radio's tuner.

HISSSSSS...

Across the band, only static.

**INT. HOLLY'S APARTMENT**

She plops down onto her couch and sits in silence for a moment, unsure what to do next.

Last night's pizza box is still on the coffee table.

She opens it, grabs a slice and munches on it while absently gazing off into space.

**INT. APARTMENT BUILDING HALLWAY - DAY**

The silence breaks as her super-festive door SCRAPES open as much as its security chain will allow.

Holly peeks through.

Nothing is stirring.

The door shuts and the chain can be heard SLIDING before opening again.

Holly apprehensively slinks out into the hall. She's managed to put on a pair of fleecy pajama pants, light blue and covered with green Christmas trees.

She looks all around.

HOLLY

H-hello?

It's completely empty.

She creeps down the windowless hallway.

It's gravely quiet save for the HUM of the fluorescent lights overhead and the sound of her bare feet on the floor tiles.

**ELEVATOR**

The elevator doors are wide open. Holly approaches it and dashes inside.

CLICK CLICK CLICK...CLICK...CLICK...

She steps right back out again, thoroughly baffled by all of this.

Alone.

**STAIRWELL DOOR**

Holly SMASHES her hands into the crash bar on the stairwell door, over and over.

SMASH SMASH SMASH.

The noise echoes through the hall.

HOLLY  
Come ON!!!

**HALLWAY**

She stands in the middle of the dreary corridor, silent for several seconds...

HOLLY  
(screams)  
HELLLLLLP!!!

She listens for...something. Anything.

HOLLY  
IS ANYONE THERE?!!!

Still nothing.

HOLLY  
(screams even louder)  
HELLO!!! I NEED HELP! PLEASE...

She storms over to the nearest apartment door, number 307, and POUNDS on it.

HOLLY  
(yells)  
HELLO! Is anyone in there?!

She KNOCKS again.

HOLLY  
(louder)  
HELLO?!!!

She tries the handle. Nope.

**LATER**

Holly SMASHES her fist against each door and tries every handle across the hallway.

**DOOR 305**

KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK

HOLLY  
Hello?!!!

Locked.

**DOOR 303**

BANG BANG BANG

HOLLY  
HELLO!!!

Locked.

**DOOR 301**

BANG BANG BANG BANG BANG BANG

HOLLY  
(screams)  
OPEN THE FUCKING DOOR, please!

Yep. Locked.

**HALLWAY**

Holly rounds a corner of the hallway, moving quickly with a renewed sense of purpose.

Her eyes dart left and right, scanning the walls -- until she finds it.

Fire alarm.

She rushes over and pulls it immediately. SNAP.

...silence.

Holly stares blankly at it.

Suddenly, her breathing quickens, only for a second or two, before she's gasping sharply.

She presses her right palm hard against her chest as she staggers back from the fire alarm.

#### **HOLLY'S DOOR**

Holly emerges from around the corner and hurries to her apartment door. It's still all lit up and Christmassy.

She squeezes her left hand into a tight fist, then releases and shakes it before SLUMPING into the door with her shoulder.

She grabs the handle.

Locked.

HOLLY  
(shaking her head)

No...

She frantically RATTLES it...

She's breathing fast and moaning in agony.

HOLLY  
(screams)

NO!!!

She SLAMS both fists against the door in utter despair. Then again, and again, messing up her lights and decorations.

She stumbles away from the door, palm against her chest.

#### **HALLWAY**

Holly falls back hard into the wall opposite her door, fighting to catch her breath.

She slides down the wall until she's sitting on the cold floor. She pulls her knees in tight against her chest and throws her head back, BANGING it into the wall.

Her breathing gradually begins to settle down as she stares at the ceiling.

HOLLY  
(cries)  
Why is this happening?!!

Eventually, she shuts her eyes and drops her head forward into her arms, defeated.

HOLLY  
(whispers)  
Why...?

#### **LATER STILL**

Holly lays motionless, curled up on the floor in a fetal position. One of the fluorescent light bulbs flickers overhead.

CRASH! The garbage chute hatch at the far end of hallway suddenly drops open.

She jerks awake, startled by the noise.

#### **GARBAGE CHUTE HATCH**

Holly stands in front of the opened garbage chute.

She's thinking about it...

#### **HALLWAY**

Holly RIPS the plexiglass cover away from a fire hose on the wall and starts pulling the hose out.

#### **HOLLY'S DOOR**

She yanks the Christmas lights off of her door.

#### **GARBAGE CHUTE DOOR**

Holly ties one end of the fire hose to the nearest door handle and pulls hard to ensure it's secure.

She plugs the lights into a nearby wall socket and feeds them down into the chute followed by the hose.

#### **INT. GARBAGE CHUTE**

Holly's bandaged right foot enters the chute followed by her left. She lowers herself into the tight conduit and carefully starts climbing down the fire hose. Her Christmas lights dangle beside her, lighting the way.

There's no room for her to use her feet for support, so it's hand over hand down the fire hose. Lower and lower.

She arrives at the next floor's garbage hatch.

Hanging on tight to the hose with one hand, she pushes against the hatch with the other. It doesn't budge.

She SMASHES her elbow into it a few times. No luck.

HOLLY  
Fucking perfect.

Holly continues down to the next hatch and tries again with similar results.

HOLLY  
(sigh)  
Yup.

She keeps going.

Eventually, she reaches the end of the lights. Only darkness beyond. She pauses momentarily before continuing on.

Finally, her feet touch...something.

Holly lets go of the hose and pulls her phone out of her pants pocket. She flips on its light and shines it down.

Garbage bags. The chute is jammed full from here down.

She can just barely make out the top of the last hatch.

Holly kicks at the trash blocking it, trying to create an opening.

She stops suddenly. Something shimmers at her feet, reflecting the light of the phone.

It looks like a small chain of some sort.

Holly squats down in an effort to reach it, but the chute is just too narrow, her fingertips still several inches away.

She stands up and tries the hook it between her toes.

After a few attempts...

HOLLY  
C'mon.

...she's got it!

Holly carefully lifts her leg up and stretches her hand down to retrieve it.

So close...

She pushes her shoulder hard into the wall of the chute, drawing blood, desperate to close the gap.

Almost there...

Her shoulder grinds into the chute and slips down one more inch. Just enough.

Her fingers finally find the chain. She snatches it up.

Holly holds the chain up to her face. Some sort of key dangles from it.

BANG!

The hatch at her feet suddenly opens! Light floods in as garbage bags tumble out through it from underneath her.

She grabs the fire hose and holds on tight.

A shadowy, claw-like hand bursts into the hatch below! It SLASHES at her legs.

Holly screams out in shock.

She puts the chain between her teeth and starts climbing.

The dark claws grab onto her ankle!

She frantically tries to kick it away but it doesn't let go.

Suddenly, its head appears through the hatch as well. A dark and horrible visage with glowing white eyes.

The thing from her room last night.

HOLLY  
(through clenched teeth)  
HELLLP!!!

The demon thing snaps its mouth open baring sharp and jagged teeth, several inches long.

It BITES down on her leg!

Holly cries out in pain without releasing the chain, still firmly between her teeth.

It still has her, its jaws locked around her calf like a rabid pit bull. Blood seeps through her pajama pants and drips down her leg to her foot.

She kicks wildly, finally breaking free!

The creature TEARS a piece from her pant leg with its teeth as it pulls away. It quickly disappears back through the hole.

The hatch SLAMS shut.

Holly's breathing is through the roof now but she still doesn't let go of the chain in her mouth.

She winces in pain and immediately starts climbing up the hose again.

#### **INT. APARTMENT BUILDING HALLWAY**

Holly's hands grab onto the edges of the hatch and she pulls herself back through, tumbling out and LANDING hard on the hallway floor.

Finally able to open her mouth, she gasps freely for air allowing the chain and key to fall to the ground.

She pulls up her pant leg to survey the damage from that thing's bite. It's still bleeding.

HOLLY

Fuck me.

Holly RIPS a long strip from her shirt and wraps it tightly around the wound.

She sees the key on the floor and picks it up to examine it more closely.

It's a small, cylindrical-shaped key with a flat square head. The type used for vending machines, coin operated washers and dryers and --

-- elevators.

#### **INT. ELEVATOR**

Holly rushes into the elevator. She's now limping even worse than before thanks to that godless thing in the garbage chute.

She immediately turns to the button panel and tries the key in the lock next to the "G" floor.

It fits...but it won't turn.

She tries floor "1" next.

Same result.

HOLLY  
I don't believe this.

She tries floor "2". Last chance...

It turns!

HOLLY  
(elated)  
Ha!

She quickly punches the "2" button. It lights up and stays lit.

The elevator doors close.

**INT. APARTMENT BUILDING HALLWAY. 2ND FLOOR**

The doors SLIDE open. Holly stands inside, perhaps a little reluctant to exit.

The 2nd floor looks identical to the 3rd. With no windows or any source of natural light, it's impossible to tell whether it's day or night.

Holly cautiously steps out into the hallway. She looks both ways, all around. No sign of trouble and nothing noteworthy that she can see.

She chooses a direction, left, and starts limping down the hall. She leaves bloody footprints on the floor behind her.

Reaching the end of the corridor, she rounds the corner...and sees...

A LITTLE GIRL (6). Just standing there. Silent. Staring.

She has long, curly brown hair and wears a beautiful white and green Christmas dress.

Holly covers her mouth and bursts into tears.

HOLLY  
 (sobbing)  
 Oh my God! Darla?!

Darla smiles ever so slightly.

Holly can't believe her eyes. She's seems to be struck by every emotion at once, unsure whether to laugh or cry. She does both.

HOLLY  
 Darla! Oh my God, Darla!  
 (sobs)  
 Is this real...?

Darla's expression doesn't change.

She slowly extends her hand.

Holly limps over to the little girl, arm outstretched...

As soon as she grasps her hand --

Darla's head BURSTS into flame!

Holly releases her hand and stumbles backward, aghast.

HOLLY  
 (screams)  
 DARLA!!!

Darla's head burns brightly but, still, her expression remains the same. Peaceful. Barely visible through the flames.

Holly can only stare in horror, her mouth agape.

Without breaking eye contact, Darla slowly lifts her left arm and points to the nearest apartment door.

Number 204.

Holly looks over at it.

HOLLY  
 W-what's in there...?

Darla says nothing. Save for the flames, she doesn't move.

Holly slowly approaches the door. Eyes on Darla.

She tries the handle. CLACK. It swings open.

It's dark inside. Nothing discernible within.

She looks back at Darla.

Still no movement. She just points into the darkness beyond the door...

Holly turns and warily enters.

**DARKNESS**

She tiptoes inside.

It's impossibly dark. The light spilling in behind her from the hallway offers no guidance.

She shivers and wraps her arms around herself. Her breath is visible. She looks back to the door.

SLAM!

Holly is totally consumed by the shadows.

HOLLY

Darla?

No response. Only pitch black nothingness.

HOLLY

(louder)

Darla!!!

Holly's breathing intensifies.

A moment later --

DARLA

...What?

**INT. A COZY FAMILY ROOM - NIGHT**

Holly opens her eyes.

A cozy living room, thoroughly decked for the holidays with a roaring fireplace, stockings and all.

A beautifully decorated Christmas tree stands tall in the corner with lots of colorful presents underneath.

Holly covers her mouth, choking back tears.

Darla, now flameless, sits on floor beneath the tree with her back to Holly. She's busy checking out gifts.

She stops abruptly and, slowly, turns to face Holly.

DARLA

What?!

Holly tries her best to keep her emotions in check.

HOLLY

Um...

(sobs)

...hi!

From Darla's perspective, Holly appears to be a child.

Unlike her adult counterpart, YOUNG HOLLY (9) is all smiles. She wears a Christmas dress as well but she's got a shorter, more tomboyish haircut than Darla.

DARLA

Hi!

Darla gestures for Holly to join her.

Adult Holly makes her way over and sits on the floor next to Darla.

DARLA

(whispers)

Tell me again what you got for Mommy.

YOUNG HOLLY

New oven mitts.

Darla excitedly raises her finger to her lips. She's adorable.

DARLA

Shhh!!!

(whispers)

She'll hear you!

Adult Holly can't help but laugh out with pure joy but tears stream down her cheeks all the same.

YOUNG HOLLY

Christmas is your favorite time of year, isn't it?

Darla looks puzzled by the odd question.

DARLA  
Of course! Isn't it yours too?

YOUNG HOLLY  
Well, it used to be summertime.  
There's just so much fun stuff to  
do outside in the summertime.

Darla gazes up at the tree.

DARLA  
That's true, I guess.

HOLLY  
(smiles)  
But now, my favorite is Christmas.

DARLA  
Yeah, mine too.

Darla reaches under the tree and selects a small, crudely wrapped gift.

She hands it to Holly.

DARLA  
Would you open mine tonight?

Sadness washes over Holly's face. She accepts it.

DARLA  
Go on. Open it!

Young Holly RIPS it open, all smiles.

It's a tree ornament. A crystal star. It sparkles as Young Holly holds it up to the lights.

DARLA  
I know how much you like stars and  
space and stuff. I saw it at Target  
and I knew I had to get it for you.  
I used the money in my piggy bank.

Adult Holly sheds a tear.

YOUNG HOLLY  
I love it. Thank you, Darla. I'll  
keep it forever.

Darla smiles sweetly.

**INT. HOLLY AND DARLA'S ROOM - NIGHT**

Adult Holly finds herself lying in child's twin bed.  
 Her childhood bed, directly across from her sister's.  
 Darla stares back at Holly, wide-eyed.  
 Their parents can be heard arguing downstairs.

DAD (OS)  
 (yells)  
 Don't you EVER call down there  
 looking for me again! Do you have  
 any idea how embarrassing that  
 is?!!

MOM (OS)  
 (yells back)  
 It's Christmas Eve, Jack! You  
 couldn't stay sober for one night?!  
 You couldn't just stay home with  
 your family for one goddamn  
 night?!! The girls have been in bed  
 for two hours!

DAD (OS)  
 (louder)  
 Fine! Get them up! Let's have some  
 quality family time!

Young Holly and Darla maintain eye contact, listening to every word.

DARLA  
 (whispers)  
 What do you hope Santa will bring  
 you the most?

Adult Holly stares back at her little sister.

YOUNG HOLLY  
 (whispers)  
 A Millennium Falcon.  
 (beat)  
 What do you want him to bring you?

DARLA  
 (whispers)  
 A Doodle Bear.

The argument downstairs rages on. It sounds like it's getting physical.

MOM (OS)  
 (screams)  
 NO! JACK! STOP IT! PLEASE!!!

The two little girls continue to stare at each other.

Adult Holly suddenly sits up.

HOLLY  
 (yells)  
 Alright! That's enough! Let me  
 out!!!

She looks around the room.

Darla just stares up at her, silent.

HOLLY  
 (screams)  
 LET ME OUUUUUTTT!!! NOW!!!

**EXT. A HOUSE IN THE SUBURBS - NIGHT**

The house is totally ablaze. A raging inferno wildly out of control.

Young Holly watches her home, her childhood, burn from the street. The ornament from Darla dangles from her hand at her side.

Chaos abounds. Fire fighters battle the blaze. The whole, awful scene is washed in flashing, red lights.

Adult Holly drops to the concrete sidewalk and pulls her knees in close to her chest.

HOLLY  
 (screams)  
 WHY?!! WHY *THIS*?!! WHY DO I NEED TO  
 GO THROUGH THIS AGAIN?!!

Closer to the house, her parents are obviously receiving terrible news from the FIRE CHIEF.

Mom collapses to the ground in utter hysterics.

HOLLY  
 (screams)  
 FUCK THIS SHIT!!!

She buries her face in her arms.

Over her shoulder, a child can be seen walking into the street, probably fifty yards away.

Darla.

Holly doesn't notice her, until --

WHOOSH

The little girl's head ignites like before.

Holly turns and looks down the street at Darla. Her flaming head cuts through the night.

She immediately jumps to her feet and charges down the street towards her.

HOLLY

I want this to stop! RIGHT NOW!

Darla just stands there with her head burning, her nearly indiscernible features disturbingly calm.

Holly's getting pissed.

HOLLY

(yells)

Do you hear me?!!! Whatever you are. I'm fucking DONE! Make it stop! NOW!!!

**INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT**

DAD

(unholy wail)

SSSSSSSSSSSSSSKKKKRRRRREEEEEEE...

Holly's dad BLASTS a godawful, high-pitched frequency from his gaping mouth. He has the same strange, grayed-out appearance as the thing in the garbage chute. His eyes glow bright yellow.

Holly suddenly finds herself on the receiving end of this auditory assault. She sits to his left at a dinner table. She's paralyzed by fear...or something else.

DAD

(unholy wail)

EEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE...

Stop.

Dad's face has suddenly switched to normal. But he's still looking straight at Holly. Certainly not smiling.

DAD

We've asked you to come here  
tonight, Holly, because we want you  
to come back to the church.

He stares straight through her.

Holly's DAD (50) is very intense looking at the best of times. Shaved head, suit and tie. If possible, his eyes are even more piercing now than when they were glowing a second ago. There's no love behind them.

Holly tries to move her head.

It works. She slowly scans left.

About fifteen middle-aged CHURCH PEOPLE surround the long dining room table. They're all staring at her with cold, judging eyes.

Holly's MOM (50) sits at the opposite end of the table. Her hair is pinned back as conservatively as possible.

She's the very picture sadness and defeat. Resigned to her own misery and now utterly compliant. Her eyes are on the fastidiously arranged table setting in front of her. She fusses with her salad fork.

Dad notices Mom's apparent detachment. He looks annoyed. He glares at her from the other end of the long table.

DAD

(clears throat)

Isn't that right, Belinda?

The church people all turn their critical eyes to Mom.

A moment of awkward silence...

MOM

Y-yes! Yes. Absolutely.

Dad watches Mom for a few too many seconds before turning his attention back to Holly.

All of the other eyes around the table follow his lead.

To them, Holly appears to be 20 years old. She's dressed appropriately for a nice dinner party and her hair is quite a bit shorter than it is now.

DAD

In the wake of that horrible night twelve years ago, the church has given us spiritual guidance. The ministry has been there to light the way and it has allowed your mother and me to begin to reconcile...our tragic loss.

Holly glances up at the staircase.

Darla stands on the steps, watching, her head burning brightly.

Holly gets up from the table and makes her way over to Darla. She sits on the step below her and watches the events unfold around the table.

20-year-old Holly remains in her seat, nodding and being generally agreeable in the hopes that this will be over soon.

20-YEAR-OLD HOLLY

I'm sorry, Dad, but...

(beat)

...I can't come back to church.

DAD

You *can't*? And why is that?

All eyes on 20-year-old Holly...

20-YEAR-OLD HOLLY

(sigh)

There's something I need to tell you.

DAD

NO! Don't say it. You're just lost. Misguided by--

20-YEAR-OLD HOLLY

(interrupts)

No, Dad!

(beat)

I'm gay.

Upon hearing the words, Dad immediately jumps up from his seat SMASHES his entire place setting against the wall!

20-year-old Holly shudders, startled by the outburst.

24 year-old Holly does not. She watches from the steps with Darla, scowling.

The church people look on, slightly surprised perhaps, but oddly aloof.

Dad rubs his eyes in frustration and turns back to her.

DAD

Get out.

20-YEAR-OLD HOLLY

I'm sorry.

DAD

(yells)

Get out of my house! You are now cut off from us! Out of our lives!

MOM

Jack. Please...

DAD

(points at Mom)

Do NOT question my judgment, Belinda! She has turned her back on us. On our church and on God himself. She has chosen to live in sin and now she must accept the consequences for her depravity.

On the stairs, Darla burns silently.

Holly stands up with rage in her eyes...

20-year-old Holly remains in her seat, shocked and in tears.

Dad reaches over and grabs her by the throat, pulling her up from her seat!

DAD

(yells)

I SAID GET OUT!

20-YEAR-OLD HOLLY

(sobs)

No! Daddy, please! Forgive me!

DAD

It's too late for that! Darla would never have forsaken us as you have chosen to do. It should have been you.

Mom stands up now.

MOM  
Jack! Stop it.

DAD  
(yells)  
SIT DOWN, BELINDA!

Mom does as she's told. She's crying now too.

Dad forces 20-year-old Holly towards the front door.

She tries to resist him but is met with a swift, backhanded BLOW to the face!

She falls to the floor clutching her jaw.

The church people just watch in stunned silence. Completely useless.

Dad grabs 20-year-old Holly by the hair and pulls her to her feet.

DAD  
(yells)  
IT SHOULD HAVE BEEN YOU! NOT HER!  
YOU!!!

She gets to her feet.

To Dad and everyone else in the room, she still appears to be 20-year-old Holly.

But to us, it's present day Holly.

Undetected by everyone but her, Holly's counterpart from the past runs out of the house in tears and holding her face, just as she would have done four years ago.

But now, present day Holly charges at Dad!

HOLLY  
AAARRGGHH!!!

She spears him full-on with her shoulder and knocks him flat on his ass. He CRASHES hard to the floor.

The church people stare, dumbfounded.

She looms over him, heaving with anger.

Holly grabs her chair drops it against Dad's throat.

She sits down backwards on it, pressing the cross spindle into his jugular.

She looks him dead in the eyes.

He struggles, gasping for air...

HOLLY

I've forsaken YOU?! That's what you said? FUCK YOU, DAD! You've forsaken ME! After Darla died you two pretty much ignored me. You got suckered into this weird fucking cult you call a church. And you dragged us into it too! Now you don't celebrate Christmas. You don't celebrate anything. And you don't talk about her anymore.

(to Mom)

You can't even say her name, Mom!

Mom sees 20-year-old Holly yelling at her.

20-YEAR-OLD HOLLY

(yells)

DARLA!

Mom recoils a little.

HOLLY

You're just fucking HIDING from it! Is this how you honor her memory? Do you think this is what she would want?

(back to Dad)

You think these fucking sheep have helped you to reconcile Darla's death? You haven't reconciled shit! You both just wallow in self pity. And you. You're still nothing more than an abusive, alcoholic prick! That's all you ever were. Even when Darla was still alive.

She sneers as she leans forward on the chair, increasing the pressure on his throat.

HOLLY

Go. Fuck yourself.

(beat)

Daddy.

Dad's face is turning blue.

Holly stands up, releasing him.

Darla waits by the door, perfectly still as always.

Holly turns and heads for the exit.

Dad jumps back to his feet and lunges at Holly from behind. He catches her by the hair and jerks her head back.

Holly spins back around and connects with a huge right HOOK to the side of his face from out of nowhere.

SPLAT!

Dad's head literally BURSTS on impact in an explosion of black gore, brains and skull fragments!!!

His now headless body CRUMPLES to the floor.

Holly is dumbfounded, trying to process what in the hell just happened. She marvels at the strange black viscera all over her still-clenched fist.

Everyone at the table, Mom included, just stares. As if they aren't watching the same occurrence at all.

She looks up at them for a second and back at what remains of her father.

Something catches her eye on the floor, in there amongst the brain matter a bone pieces of her Dad's former head...

It's another elevator key!

She immediately scoops it up. It looks just like the first key only this one has no chain.

She thrusts her arm up over her head and offers all the folks at the dinner table her middle finger before turning to exit.

CHURCH PEOPLE  
(in unison)  
SSSSSKKKKKRRRRRRRRRREEEEEEEEEEEEEEE...

Before Holly can even look back, the church people are all on their feet and rushing at her, all of them now grayed-out with the glowing yellow eyes!

Mom too.

Holly stumbles backward to the floor, scrambling to escape them.

She's almost at the door.

But the horrible church things are almost on her...

CHURCH PEOPLE  
EEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE...

Darla steps in between them.

She starts to SCREAM her own otherworldly noise. Her's is low and reverberant.

DARLA  
(louder)  
AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWW...

Holly covers her ears and watches in horror.

Darla's flames FARE UP huge engulfing the entire room!

The church demons are all quickly consumed by the fire.

Holly seizes the moment and makes her escape, BURSTING through the front door and out of the house while the fire RAGES inside.

**DARKNESS**

Back into absolute darkness with only the sound of Holly's panicked breathing...

HOLLY  
Hello...?

She starts to catch her breath.

HOLLY  
Darla? Are you still there?

No response.

HOLLY  
Darla, please!

BAM!

A door opens. The familiar fluorescent lights of her apartment building hallway shine through.

**INT. APARTMENT BUILDING HALLWAY - 2ND FLOOR**

Holly creeps through the door, out of the shadows and back into the 2nd floor hallway.

Darla is gone.

She books it around the corner toward the elevator.

**INT. ELEVATOR**

The key remains in the panel's 2nd floor lock.

Holly bounds into the elevator. She produces the new key from her pants pocket.

She tries the "G" lock first.

No dice.

HOLLY  
Worth a shot.

She tries the 1st floor next. It works.

She hits the "1" button.

The doors CLOSE. The elevator starts to MOVE.

HOLLY  
(big sigh)  
Okay.

BONG.

The doors slide open, revealing...

**INT. HOLLY'S APARTMENT - DAY**

...Holly's apartment, but it's different.

Reversed.

Holly steps into it and glances to the right, where her kitchen should be.

Broom closet.

Her kitchen is now on the left.

But it's definitely her place. The tea kettle is still on the counter. Everything is just how she left it. Only the layout is backwards.

HOLLY  
Weird.

She pads through the kitchen into the backwards living area. She turns to find...

Herself. Standing there in her Christmas underwear and t-shirt, back to her, gazing out through the window as the snowstorm rages outside.

PARALLEL HOLLY  
(whispers)  
What the fuck is this?

Holly moves a little closer to her second self.

HOLLY  
Um...hey!

Parallel Holly doesn't turn or respond.

HOLLY  
(louder)  
Holly!

Nothing.

She watches from across the room as Parallel Holly turns and makes her way into the bedroom, totally oblivious to her presence.

Holly follows her. She stops in the bedroom doorway, quietly observing herself.

HOLLY  
(smirks)  
Well, you've still got a great ass, kid. At least nobody can take that away.

Parallel Holly lays down on the bed and starts scrolling through the stations on her clock radio.

HOLLY  
Don't waste your time. I already tried that.

#### **LATER**

The two Hollys sit side by side on the couch while Parallel Holly snacks on last night's pizza.

HOLLY  
This is like deja vu on steroids.  
Or shrooms or something.

Parallel Holly just chews on her pizza, absently staring off into space.

HOLLY

Oh man. If this turns out to be  
some kind of Groundhog Day shit  
where I have to go through all of  
that again with you, so help me...

Parallel Holly suddenly stands up.

Holly watches as her counterpart finds a pair of Christmas  
tree pajama pants slung over the back of a chair and pulls  
them on.

**INT. APARTMENT BUILDING HALLWAY**

Her still-decorated door SCRAPES open.

Parallel Holly peeks through. Door CLOSES. Chain lock  
SLIDES. Door OPENS again and she creeps out. Just like  
before.

But this time, Holly follows her out into the corridor.

PARALLEL HOLLY

H-hello?

HOLLY

Christ. Save it.

**INT. ELEVATOR**

Parallel Holly enters first.

CLICK CLICK CLICK...CLICK...CLICK...

She turns and walks right back out again.

Holly watches her as she heads for the stairwell.

HOLLY

Have fun.

No reply, of course.

Holly enters the elevator. She tries "G" again just for the  
hell of it.

It works! The button stays lit up this time and the door  
closes.

She looks shocked.

**INT. APARTMENT BUILDING LOBBY - DAY**

Holly steps out into the lobby. She takes one look at the front door and sighs loudly with relief.

HOLLY

Thank God! I can't believe that worked!

She can see the blizzard raging outside.

Phil is out there shoveling the walk, wearing a winter coat, knitted mittens and a hat - complete with pom-pom on top.

A small car is idling on the street.

Marlene's car. Waiting to pick her up.

Holly immediately goes for the front door but stops just short.

She looks down.

No shoes.

HOLLY

Really, Holly? Why the hell didn't you grab some shoes up there?! Maybe even a coat? God! Stupid. Stupid...

She looks at the elevator. Could go back...

HOLLY

(points at elevator)

No. I really don't trust you anymore...

She looks outside.

HOLLY

(sigh)

Fuck it.

**EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - FRONT WALKWAY**

The wind HOWLS and whips the snow around in all directions.

Holly emerges from the building. She immediately wraps her arms around herself in a futile effort to keep warm as she tiptoes down the walkway to the street.

Phil isn't shoveling so much as just standing there, shovel in hand. His back is to her as she approaches.

She continues past without engaging him but does glance back in his direction.

He stares at her but offers no acknowledgement. He doesn't move or even blink.

She opts to disregard Phil's strange demeanor and pushes on toward Marlene's waiting car.

Her bare feet sink into the deep snow as she enters the stretch of walkway that Phil hasn't shoveled yet.

She trudges ever closer, shivering badly.

She can see Marlene in the driver seat now, thumbing through her phone while she waits.

Almost there...

Holly grabs the passenger door handle and pulls it open.

**INT. MARLENE'S CAR**

Marlene looks up from her phone.

MARLENE

Hey! Holy shit! Where's your coat?!

Holly jumps in the passenger seat without answering, her teeth CHATTERING excessively. She immediately reaches across with both arms for an embrace.

MARLENE

And your shoes?! Jesus, Holly.  
What's going on with you?!

HOLLY

(shivering)

I don't know. But I've been through  
pure hell. I think it's the box. I  
got--

CRACK! The driver side door suddenly opens.

No fewer than six arms reach in and pull Marlene out!

Holly screams.

HOLLY  
MARLENE!!!

There is a small MOB of six passersby out there, all dressed appropriately for the inclement weather.

They ATTACK Marlene on the ground, swarming her like a pack of wolves. Clawing and biting at her flesh!

Marlene's blood flies all around, staining the surrounding snow red.

HOLLY  
(screams)  
NO!!!

All six of their heads suddenly shoot up, looking straight at Holly inside the car.

Their faces are indistinct - grayed out with glowing eyes, just like the church people from before. Only these eyes glow bright red instead of yellow.

MOB  
SSSSSSSSKKKKKKRRRRRRRRRREEEEEEEEE...

They all LUNGE at Holly in unison, each clamoring to get into the car and at her first.

Holly gets her legs lifted up over the center console and starts kicking wildly at the creatures.

She manages to fight them off enough to get her hand on the driver's door.

She grabs the handle and pulls hard -- just as one of those things gets its head back through the door.

SPLAT!

She SLAMS its head in the door. It explodes in a gruesome eruption of black goo, splattering across her face.

She quickly ENGAGES the door locks.

The remaining creatures SCRATCH and CLAW ferociously at the windows from the outside, smearing Marlene's blood all over the glass.

Holly recoils with her back against the passenger door, utterly horrified.

After a moment, the demonic mob turns its attention back to ravaging Marlene's corpse.

Holly cries as she watches them tear the only person she cares about in the world to shreds.

BAM!

Something slams hard against the passenger door window right behind her head.

It's Phil, sort of.

The same black gore oozes from his eyes, nose and mouth. He peers through the window at her.

Until...he OPENS her door.

Holly fights to keep it shut but he overpowers her, YANKING the door open wide.

He reaches in for her and grabs her by the arms.

HOLLY  
(screams)  
NO! GET AWAY FROM ME!

She does her best to resist but he drags her out of the passenger seat and dumps her into the snow on the ground.

Holly can hear the creatures WAILING just on the other side of the car.

SSSSSSSSSSKKKKKKRRRRRRRREEEEEEEEEEE.....

She looks up at Creepy Phil.

He's just standing there now. Staring down at her, the black goo dripping from his face. He slowly raises his arm and points to the building.

Holly immediately scrambles to her feet and hauls ass back to the front door.

#### **INT. APARTMENT BUILDING LOBBY**

She makes it inside the first exterior door but the second security door is locked as usual.

HOLLY  
Shit!

BUZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZ...

The door buzzer unlocks itself allowing her entry. She PULLS it open and rushes through.

She turns and pushes the door CLOSED behind her, hopefully locking those things out.

She looks out to see Creepy Phil still standing in the same spot. Not pointing anymore. Just staring at his abandoned snow shovel lying on the ground.

Holly takes a step back from the door and turns --

Phil!

Holly shrieks.

He's standing right behind her. Black sludge flows freely from his face, his eyes dark and oozing.

He slowly points at the elevator.

Holly keeps her distance as she carefully slides past him.

#### **INT. ELEVATOR**

Once she's inside, the doors start closing on their own.

She keeps her eyes locked on Creepy Phil out in the lobby until the doors are totally shut.

Holly glances at the button panel. They're all unlit.

She shudders as the elevator starts to MOVE.

#### **INT. APARTMENT BUILDING HALLWAY**

This hallway is dark and bathed in an eerie, red glow.

The elevator doors open.

Holly exits and notes that all of the overhead fluorescent lights are now red.

And every apartment door is number 666.

Holly turns to find Creepy Phil looming at the other end of the hall, the black goo still flowing from his face.

HOLLY

You again.

He says nothing, of course. He's still wearing his winter coat and pom-pom hat.

She regards him warily.

HOLLY  
 So what now?! What the hell do you  
 want from me?!

No response. Just dripping black gore. It pools on the floor  
 at his feet.

Holly's out of patience.

HOLLY  
 (yells)  
 Answer me you fucking freak! Why do  
 I deserve this?! What did I do?!!!  
 I WANT OUT, GODDAM--

CREEPY PHIL  
 (interrupts)  
 AAAAAAAAAAAWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWW...

The black sludge SPEWS from his mouth as Phil emits a low  
 frequency, ear-splitting noise! Like Darla's.

Holly covers her ears, wincing in pain.

CREEPY PHIL  
 AAAAAAAAAAAAWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWW...

She squats down to the floor, arms over her ears.

HOLLY  
 (screams)  
 STOP!!! Please...

The fluorescent lights start BURSTING overhead one by one,  
 RAINING gallons and gallons of blood down all over Holly and  
 painting the entire hallway red!

She tries to shield herself from the crimson deluge with her  
 arms, but to no avail.

As the last one BURSTS, the hall goes pitch dark.

Holly can hear blood DRIP DRIP DRIPPING from the busted  
 light fixtures...

KA-CHACK!

The emergency lights kick in, casting minimal light.

Holly stands up, completely drenched in blood. She looks to  
 the end of the hall.

Creepy Phil is gone.





HOLLY  
(yells)  
C'mon you soft-headed  
motherfuckers!

Just as they reach her, she SWINGS big.

SPLAT! She smashes two of their heads into an explosion of black gore.

Holly steps backward, swinging left and right, SMASHING demon heads with savage precision.

SPLAT!

SPLAT!

SPLAT!

But there's just too damn many of them. She continues to back away, but not without a fight.

HOLLY  
(screams)  
AAAAARRRRGGGGHHHHH!!!

SPLAT!

SPLAT!

SPLAT!

The demon neighbors start to get the upper hand, CLAWING and SLASHING at her arms and face.

She backs into a closed door. The only closed door in the hallway. This one is unmarked.

Cornered and desperate, Holly grabs the door handle. It turns! She pushes it open and hurries inside.

#### **INT. SUPPLY CLOSET**

Holly DROPS the bat and throws all of her weight into the door.

It SLAMS against three of their demonic heads, SPLATTERING the black gore everywhere.

Still more arms and faces push through.

Holly quickly looks around the tiny supply room.

She spots a four-foot length of PVC pipe standing in the corner. She stretches her arm for it, trying not to let the door open any more.

Almost got it...

The demon neighbors SURGE into the door from outside, forcing it open even more.

It gives her the extra inches she needs to grab the pipe.

She instantly drops to the floor with it and wedges the pipe between the wall and the door, allowing it to open about ten inches and no further.

The opening is immediately filled, top to bottom, with SNAPPING demon heads. But the pipe prevents them from pushing all the way through.

Now able to take her weight off of the door, Holly squats down and picks up her bat.

She stands up and starts swinging.

SPLAT!

SPLAT!

SPLAT!

As soon as one head is smashed, another moves in to take its place.

Holly just keeps BASHING them one after another.

SPLAT!

SPLAT!

SPLAT!

She decimates dozens of them until, finally...

...they stop coming.

She can see a massive pile of headless bodies outside the door, so high it blocks almost all light from getting in.

Utterly exhausted, Holly DROPS the bat and collapses to the floor, gasping for breath.

As she lay on the floor, her breathing begins to level off. She holds her left hand up to her face.

HOLLY  
No panic attack. Nice!

With some effort and using the baseball bat for support, Holly manages to get back to her feet --

Creepy Phil! He's in the supply room with her!

She shrieks, definitely not expecting to find him there.

Creepy Phil extends his arm and opens his mittened hand.

An elevator key. Hopefully the one for the ground floor.

She stares at it before glancing up at his nasty face.

He just looks at her, eyes oozing black with his arm outstretched. Offering the key to her.

#### **INT. APARTMENT BUILDING HALLWAY**

The headless bodies of Holly's demonic neighbors are piled up high and tight against the supply room door.

BAM! BAM!

She SMASHES against the door from inside, gradually pushing their carcasses away until she makes an opening just big enough to squeeze through.

Holly TOSSES the bat out first before climbing out and over the mountain of headless corpses.

She tumbles down from it and lands on the bloody hallway floor. She retrieves her bat and stands up.

The corridor is an incredible mess. Black sludge, skull fragments and red blood absolutely everywhere. Bodies strewn about.

The emergency lights offer just enough illumination for her to slowly navigate the gruesome scene. Back toward the elevator.

She almost slips in the blood as she rounds the corner into the main stretch of the hallway.

She sees it immediately.

One more demon thing. Alone and cowering in the corner.

She lifts her bat and approaches it.

As she draws closer, she realizes...

This one is her.

It makes no effort to attack. Just buries its face in its arms, hanging onto its knees.

Holly stops behind it. She CRACKS the end of the bat on the floor.

Demon Holly shudders, startled by the noise, but remains seated in the corner. Scared and pathetic.

HOLLY  
(yells)  
HEY!

Demon Holly WHIPS its head around, impossibly far with a loud SNAPPING sound.

Holly is taken aback. Slightly.

Its face is gray with glowing, red eyes, opened super wide. It just stares at Holly.

Holly stares back with equal parts horror and pity...

HOLLY  
Come on. Get up!

Demon Holly looks up wide-eyed at her for a few more seconds...and slowly stands.

Holly looks her demon self in the eye, face to face.

SMASH!

Holly BASHES Demon Holly's head into the wall with her bat.

It SPLATTERS in a glorious eruption of black goo.

#### **INT. ELEVATOR**

Holly limps into the elevator, stone-faced. Totally wiped out.

She inserts the final key into the lock next to the "G" button.

It turns.

She HITS the button. It lights up, but then...

Nothing.

She looks confused.

HOLLY  
What the fuck?

CLICK. CLICK. CL-CL-CL-CL-CLICK! It's not working.

HOLLY  
Oh HELL no!

CLICK! CLICK! CLICK!!!

HOLLY  
NO you fucking DON'T!

She SMASHES her fist into the "G".

SMASH! SMASH! SMA--

The elevator doors SLAM shut, hard and fast!

Holly wasn't ready for that. It startles the hell out of her.

The elevator LURCHES downward hard, knocking her off balance and to the floor.

After a couple seconds it abruptly STOPS, equally hard, and goes completely dark. Only the illuminated "G" button is visible.

HOLLY  
(screams)  
LET ME OUTTA HERE!!!

Silence. Darkness...until...

**INT. HOLLY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT**

Lights SNAP on.

Holly is lying on the hardwood floor of her living room.

But her apartment is empty. No tree. No furniture.

Vacated.

She stands up and roams around the empty unit, looking for...something. Anything.

Some paint cans, tools and a step ladder sit in the corner. The fridge is turned off with the door wide open. Ice cube trays on the counter.

Holly makes her way to the front door.

She grabs the handle but decides to take a look through the peep hole before opening.

Someone - *something* - is out there. Dark. Looming about ten feet away. Watching the door...

A shadowy figure with indistinct features. Tall and lean, with glowing, white eyes opened impossibly wide and dozens of long, sharp teeth.

The thing from the garbage chute. It's horrifying.

Holly recoils from the door, covering her mouth so as not to alert it to her presence with her breathing.

She's trapped. She paces around slightly, shuffling from side to side.

BANG! BANG! BANG!

It's knocking now. It knows damn well that she's on the other side of the door, no doubt.

Holly's eyes are filled with dread. Pure terror. She's afraid of this thing. More so than the horde of demon neighbors. More than Creepy Phil or the church people or any of the other horrors she's encountered today.

BANG! BANG! BANG! It's knocking faster and louder now. Seemingly losing patience.

She trembles badly. Her breathing is out of control.

She clutches her chest and opens and closes her left hand. Another panic attack, like before.

HOLLY  
(gasping)  
Okay. Okay. Okay. Okay.

She steps up to the door. Peers through again.

Yep. It's still there. Closer now. Right outside.

Holly places her hands against the door and shuts her eyes tightly. She remains there for several seconds...

She takes one, deep breath.

HOLLY

Open it.

**INT. APARTMENT BUILDING HALLWAY**

Door number 304, with no trace of her Christmas decorations, SCRAPES open. Slowly.

Holly peeks out.

That thing is gone.

She creeps out into the hallway. The door SLAMS shut behind her, making her jump.

She presses her palm against her chest with a big sigh and continues on.

She cautiously approaches the elevator. Its doors are shut now.

She HITS the button.

The doors open.

Holly screams!

**INT. ELEVATOR**

It's inside. Eyes wide and glowing bright white. Something drips from its crazy, jagged teeth. Almost like it's salivating. It just stares at her.

Holly stares back at it, paralyzed with fear.

She doesn't want to, but she knows that she must...

She shuts her eyes tightly and steps inside with it.

She reaches for the button panel only to find it gone. No buttons or locks whatsoever. Just a smooth, steel wall. She awkwardly withdraws her hand.

The doors close.

She looks up at the towering monster.

It just stands there, silent. Staring down at her with its disturbingly wide eyes.

She can't help but look away from its horrifying face.

Eventually, the doors open --  
-- but this ain't the lobby.

**INT. HOMELESS SHELTER - NIGHT**

Beyond the elevator doors, a large open space with low ceilings. Like a church basement. Filled with cots. Dozens of them in rows. All occupied.

A homeless shelter.

Holly takes a second to debate with herself which is worse -- in or out.

She reluctantly steps out of the elevator and into the shelter.

She looks over her shoulder to see what that creature is doing.

Both he and the elevator are gone.

Her breathing seems to be settling down a bit now. She turns her attention to her immediate surroundings.

The room is dimly lit and cold. She can see her breath.

The cots are all full but everyone appears to be asleep.

Suddenly, she hears something. Whispering.

She makes her way toward it, stepping softly. Her bare feet make no sound against the tile floor.

She finds the source. Two MEN, whispering back and forth across the isle from their respective cots.

Holly stops just within earshot and listens.

MAN 1  
(whispers)  
Yeah. Way down in the far corner.

The first man points to the far corner of the room.

The second man lifts his head and looks in that direction.

MAN 1  
(whispers)  
I'm telling you, she won't do anything.

MAN 2  
 (whispers)  
 Really?

MAN 1  
 (whispers)  
 There's somethin' wrong with her.  
 She just lays there. You can do  
 whatever you want! She won't squeal  
 or nuthin'.

MAN 2  
 (whispers)  
 Bullshit.

MAN 1  
 (whispers)  
 I'm serious. She was in here last  
 week. She's hot too!

Holly eavesdrops on their conversation, thoroughly  
 disgusted. They can't see her standing there.

The second man sits up, gazing off to the far corner...

MAN 1  
 (whispers)  
 Go for it, man! I'll cover you.

Holly watches as the second man stands up and makes his way  
 over to the corner.

He arrives at his destination and places his hand on the  
 poor girl's back. She doesn't respond in the least.

HOLLY  
 (yells)  
 HEY! Get away from her!

Holly's voice ECHOES throughout the room but nobody seems to  
 hear it.

The second man lifts the girl's only blanket, looks her over  
 and climbs into her cot with her.

HOLLY  
 (louder)  
 HEY!!! WHAT THE FU--

SSSSSSSSSKKKKKKKKKRRRRRRRRRREEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE...

That ear-splitting noise again.

Holly covers her ears, wincing in pain.

EE...

She opens her eyes.

The occupant of every cot in the room is now sitting upright. Staring at her with gray faces and glowing, white eyes. Wailing that godawful sound.

Every cot, that is, except for the one in the corner where that sick fuck continues to have his way with the girl, unencumbered.

Holly tries to move but finds herself somehow immobilized. She can't lift her feet. She can only watch, covering her ears.

HOLLY

No! Stop this! PLEASE!

EE...

The second man rolls out of the cot, fastens up his pants and makes his way back to his own bed.

EE...

Finally, the noise stops.

All of the wailing demons have seemingly reverted back to their previous state. Fast asleep.

Holly lowers her hands from her ears. She runs over to the cot in the far corner to check on the girl.

Holly touches the girl's shoulder and gently shakes her.

HOLLY

Are you okay?

No response.

Eventually, the girl rolls over, facing her.

It's Holly.

Holly withdraws a few steps, hand covering her mouth in shock and horror.

HOLLY

(sobs)

Oh no. No. No. No. No.

FUTURE HOLLY (26) doesn't look good. She has dark circles under her eyes. Her face is gaunt and covered in sores and lesions.

Her eyes are wide open, but dead. Empty and lifeless.

HOLLY

God. What's happened to you?

Future Holly just stares right through her, oblivious to her presence.

Holly looks around.

The monster looms silently at the other end of the room, next to the exit. It's white eyes burning brightly.

Holly is fixated on the creature when Future Holly suddenly gets out of bed and starts walking toward the room's only door.

Her clothes are filthy and hang from her emaciated frame. Her marred face conveys no emotion.

Holly follows her past the shadow creature.

She keeps one eye on the monster as she exits.

#### **EXT. CITY STREET - NIGHT**

It's snowing gently outside.

An idyllic downtown Christmastime kind of night. Lights everywhere, like a movie.

Future Holly's pace quickens as she makes her way down the busy street.

She passes a large, Christmas tree in the park. A group of carolers sing 'O Holy Night' beneath it.

Holly rushes to keep up.

Lots of shoppers bustle about. Future Holly speeds past a Salvation Army Santa Claus soliciting donations and RINGING a bell on a corner. He pays her no mind.

Holly shivers and wraps her arms around herself as she goes. She reacts slightly after stepping on something sharp on the sidewalk but keeps moving regardless.

Future Holly makes a hard left turn down a dark alley.

The demon creature stands next to it, staring at Holly.  
She follows her future self into the sketchy alleyway.

**EXT. DARK ALLEYWAY**

The long alley connects to another street creating something of a shortcut between the two.

A rusty van sits IDLING on the street near the other end of the alley.

Future Holly approaches it and KNOCKS on the driver side window.

Holly hangs back about twenty feet, watching. She doesn't even notice the shadow creature standing directly behind her, its long teeth dripping.

The van window rolls down. Future Holly leans in.

FUTURE HOLLY

Hey, Jared. Think maybe you could hook me up tonight?

Holly can't see JARED's face but she can hear his voice loud and clear.

JARED

Didn't I hook you up just a couple nights ago?

FUTURE HOLLY

Um...

JARED

Do you have any money for me?

FUTURE HOLLY

No. I'm sorry. But I'm reeeally hurtin', man! I just need like half a shot. Not even. I just gotta nod out for a bit. Please!

JARED

You already owe me fifty bucks, Holly. When am I gonna see that?

FUTURE HOLLY

I'm gonna get out there and work this weekend. All weekend! I can pay you then. I promise!

JARED

(hesitates)

Alright. I'll give you half a shot  
in the arm...and a full shot in the  
mouth. But this is the last time.  
Deal?

FUTURE HOLLY

Sure. Thanks, man! You're saving my  
life. Really!

JARED

Uh huh. Get in.

Holly looks on, aghast, as her future self darts around to  
the passenger side of Jared's van and jumps in.

From her vantage point in the alley, Holly can only see the  
back of Jared's head, his attention on his guest.

Future Holly's head drops into his lap.

HOLLY

No. W-what the fuck?! I don't  
believe this. I would never--

Before she can utter the thought to herself, Jared's head  
turns in her direction.

It's the demon creature! Eyes glowing bright and grinning  
wide.

#### **EXT. CITY STREET**

Holly emerges from the dark alley in a state of shock and  
dismay. Unsure how to proceed.

She takes a seat on the cold, snowy sidewalk. Arms wrapped  
around her knees and shivering. She rocks back and forth,  
desperate to keep warm.

HOLLY

(sobs to herself)

So what? What now? What am I  
supposed to do with that? I mean,  
nobody sets out to be a fucking  
junkie, right?! It just happens.  
Sometimes...

She glances around.

The carollers are singing 'It's Beginning to Look a lot Like  
Christmas' now.



HOLLY

Oh shit.

Across the street sits Jared's van. The tall demon creature with the teeth stands in front of it, looming. Perfectly still.

The evil shoppers WAIL as they charge at Holly from all directions, abandoning their presents or whatever they may be holding.

EE...

Holly tries to brace for it but she's vastly outnumbered. The swarm takes her down quickly.

She screams hysterically as the demonic mob tries to tear her to pieces.

HOLLY

(screams)

Noooooooooooooo...

The tall demon just watches from beside Jared's van as the chaos unfolds all around. He seems to be grinning through his mass of jagged teeth.

### **DARKNESS**

Pitch black and silent, until...

...the sound of Holly's breathing. Getting faster.

HOLLY

(gasping)

Help? Help me!

SMASH! Something banging against a metallic surface.

HOLLY

What is this?!

SMASH!

SMASH!

SMASH!

HOLLY

(screams)

LET ME OUT! LET ME THE FUCK OUTTA  
HERE!!!

SMASH!

SMASH!

SMASH!

HOLLY  
 (screams)  
 SOMEBODY LET ME OUT OF HERE!  
 PLEASE!!!

**INT. MORGUE - NIGHT**

A morgue drawer SLIDES open, CRASHING loudly when it hits the end of its track.

A MORTICIAN stands at the end with his hand on the pull.

A body lies on the steel slab, covered by a blue sheet.

The mortician steps around to the head of the body. He pulls the sheet back...

Holly lays there looking up at him.

HOLLY  
 What the hell is going on?

As far as the mortician is concerned, she's stone dead. Her flesh a dreadful shade of blue.

MORTICIAN  
 Ready when you are.

HOLLY  
 I'm ready right now, asshole! Let me out!

He can't hear her.

She tries to move but finds she's now unable to...

Someone steps out from the shadows and approaches Holly's corpse.

Holly looks on, helpless from the drawer.

It's Marlene. She starts to cry immediately.

Someone else follows Marlene. A WOMAN. Holly doesn't recognize her.

HOLLY  
Marlene!!! I'm okay! Help me!  
Please!

Marlene can't hear her either.

MORTICIAN  
Is it her, miss?

Marlene hesitates before answering.

MARLENE  
Yes.

MORTICIAN  
Thank you. I'll give you a moment.

The mortician leaves the room.

Marlene gazes down at Holly's corpse. It looks terrible.  
Covered in bloody lesions and wasted away.

MARLENE  
(sobs)  
Oh, Holly. What's happened to you?

HOLLY  
Marlene! I'm alive! Help me!!!

The other woman appears behind Marlene. She wraps an arm  
around her.

WOMAN  
I'm sorry, baby. She was really  
important to you, huh?

Marlene clears her throat, fighting back the tears.

MARLENE  
Yes. She was.

Holly looks devastated.

HOLLY  
No! I still am! Just listen to me!

WOMAN  
Did you love her?

Marlene wipes her eyes on her sleeve.

MARLENE

Yes. More than she did I'm afraid.

Holly's crying now too.

HOLLY

(sobs)

Marlene! I love you! I'll always  
love you!

WOMAN

Come on, baby. Let's go.

The other woman gently leads Marlene out of the room.

Holly starts to panic.

HOLLY

(yells)

No! MARLENE! Don't leave me!  
PLEASE!

She's gone.

The room is deathly quiet.

Holly's eyes dart around the morgue. She gasps, fighting for  
her breath.

CRASH!!!

Every drawer in the morgue BLASTS fully open, all at the  
same time! Each containing a covered corpse.

HOLLY

(screams)

NO!!! HELLLLLLP!!!

The dead bodies all sit up simultaneously. Their sheets fall  
away revealing gray faces and wide eyes, glowing bright  
white.

All of them stare at Holly. They begin to WAIL.

SSSSSSSSSSKKKKKKKKKKRRRRRRRRRRREEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE...

She fights with everything she has to try and move.

It's no use. She can't cover her ears this time. All she can  
do watch. Her screaming goes unheard.

The tall demon creature SPRINGS up at the foot of Holly's  
drawer, eyes glowing and teeth dripping...

She looks down at him in sheer terror.

He seems to rise over her, almost hovering, until they are face to face.

His horrific eyes penetrate hers, staring into the depths of her very soul.

She's petrified. Frozen.

He opens his mouth incredibly wide, his long sharp teeth jutting out in all directions.

DEMON CREATURE

AAAAAAAWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWW...

The monster CHOMPS down on Holly's neck and RIPS away a good sixty percent of her throat!

Holly's eyes remain wide open so she can watch as the demon glides back to the foot of the drawer. It CHEWS and swallows Holly's jugular as it goes, her blood dripping from his jaws.

He SLAMS her drawer closed.

**INT. MORGUE DRAWER**

She's back in complete darkness, until...

WHOOSH!

Flames. Everywhere. Fully engulfing her.

Her flesh BURNS away quickly. Her legs. Her arms. And finally, her face. Her charred skin and muscle tissue melt away, right down to her bones.

Her jaw drops open and, somehow, she lets loose the most bloodcurdling scream imaginable.

**DARKNESS**

Silence...

A single, tiny point of white light. It's gradually growing larger. Getting closer...

DARLA (OS)

(whispers)

I know that you love me. I know how much. I know that you miss me and

DARLA (OS)  
that you will never forget me. I  
know.

...The light continues to get closer...

DARLA (OS)  
I take no satisfaction from your  
grief. No comfort from your pain.  
Your pain is mine. Though I can no  
longer see you, I feel you. I am  
you.

...and closer. More light than dark now...

DARLA (OS)  
I am not gone. Nobody dies. You  
will come to understand this. Do  
not grieve for me. Live for me.

...only bright, white light now. The darkness is gone.

DARLA (OS)  
Love yourself.

**INT. HOLLY'S BEDROOM - DAY**

She opens her eyes...

It's her room.

Sunlight flows freely through the window.

She turns her head toward it.

It's snowing outside.

She slowly rolls her head over to face the door.

It's closed. Tight.

Holly sits up fast. Her breathing is quickened but it levels  
off as she soaks in her surroundings.

HOLLY  
Darla.  
(beat)  
Is this real?

**INT. APARTMENT BUILDING HALLWAY**

Her door BURSTS open, too quickly to scrape this time. All of her decorations are in place again.

Holly rushes through the door in just her old Metallica t-shirt and reindeer undies. She's all smiles.

Two PAINTERS are working in the hallway. They both stop to gawk at her as she hurries past them.

She suddenly realizes that she hasn't bothered to get dressed. She laughs to herself as she quickly turns and dashes back into her apartment.

The two painters exchange amused looks.

Holly re-emerges from her door. She's still not dressed but is at least pulling on her winter coat as she books it for the elevator.

She turns her attention to them.

HOLLY

Hey! Do you guys know what day it is?

They seem a bit confused by the odd question.

FIRST PAINTER

Uh, the twenty fourth?

HOLLY

Twenty fourth. Cool.

She continues into the waiting elevator.

One of the painters calls out to her with a grin.

FIRST PAINTER

Nice ass, sweetheart!

Holly pops her head back out.

HOLLY

(big smile)

Thanks! Go fuck yourself.

She disappears inside as the elevator doors close.

The first painter's grin fades quickly as his partner laughs at him.

**INT. ELEVATOR**

Holly PUNCHES the "G" button.

It works exactly the way it's supposed to.

She literally bounces with excitement, completely elated. She can hardly contain it.

HOLLY

Ha! Still slower than all hell,  
though.

BONG

The doors open.

Holly freezes. Her smile instantly vanishes.

Sitting on the floor in the middle of the lobby --  
-- the gift.

**INT. APARTMENT BUILDING LOBBY**

She stares at it from the elevator until the doors begin to close on her. She pushes them back and steps out, never taking her eyes from the box.

It's wrapped in the same green paper and same tattered red ribbon as it was when she first found it.

Only now, it has no writing on top.

She slowly approaches the gift with great trepidation, stopping directly in front of it.

She makes no move to touch it. Just stares, processing this development.

Preoccupied with the gift's reappearance, she doesn't notice that someone else is in the lobby. Standing behind her.

PHIL

I never wanted you to open it.

Startled, Holly whips her head around in Phil's direction. She's taken aback by his presence.

Phil stands there with a mop in hand and a bucket with wheels sitting on the floor next to him.

HOLLY  
 (confused)  
 What?

PHIL  
 I never wanted you to open it.  
 (beat)  
 But...I had to give it away...to  
 someone that needed it.

Holly stares at Phil, listening intently. Struggling to make sense of his cryptic words.

PHIL  
 Now you must do the same.

Holly glances outside. The snow's really coming down.  
 And Marlene's car is waiting.

**EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - FRONT WALKWAY**

Holly emerges from the building, gift in hand.

Her pace quickens upon catching a glimpse of Marlene, waiting.

She runs barefoot through the drifting snow to the car.

**INT. MARLENE'S CAR**

The passenger door OPENS, startling Marlene.

Holly jumps in.

MARLENE  
 Jesus Christ, Holly! It's storming out! And there's probably a rule or something about wearing pants into the drug store!

Holly leans over and plants a big, passionate kiss on Marlene's lips that lasts for several seconds.

MARLENE  
 Wow. What was *that* for?

HOLLY  
 For last night. I'm sorry.

MARLENE

Aw, it's okay, esa.

(smiles)

But I still think you should go put on some pants before you go to the drug store. And maybe even some shoes?

HOLLY

(motions to apartment)

I'm never going back into that building again.

(beat)

And I'm not going to the drug store either.

MARLENE

No? Then where are you going?

HOLLY

(smiles)

With you.

**EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING**

Phil watches from the lobby window, mop in hand, as Marlene's car pulls away.

**EXT. A LARGE HOUSE ON A QUIET STREET - NIGHT**

Every house on the street is fully decked out for the holidays with multi-colored Christmas lights.

Every house but this one.

The front door OPENS.

Holly's mom. She looks down.

A beat-up, green Christmas gift with a red ribbon.

She picks it up.

Scrawled across the top in black marker...

"Merry Christmas, Mom"

She looks up and down the street.

No one in sight.

She takes the box inside and CLOSES the door.

**SUPER: ONE YEAR LATER**

**INT. BOOK STORE - DAY**

Holly sits behind a skirted table in a busy book store holding a sharpie, smiling pleasantly.

A large image of a book cover sits next to her on an easel. It features a picture of a green Christmas gift with an eerie glow surrounding it.

It reads "CHRISTMAS PRESENCE" at the top and "HOLLY PELTZER" along the bottom.

She signs a copy of her book and slides it across the table to a young FAN.

HOLLY

And there you go.

He looks thrilled with the autograph. A long line of people wait behind him.

FAN

(nervously)

Thank you! I just love the creepy superintendent character with the black goo coming outta his eyes and everything. He's horrifying! How do you come up with all this stuff?

Holly grins.

HOLLY

Blessed with a twisted imagination, I guess. Thanks so much for coming down.

FAN

Thank you!

(stammers)

Again, I mean. Thank you. Merry Christmas! Er, Happy Holidays--

HOLLY

(smiles)

Merry Christmas!

Holly takes a swig from a water bottle as the fan shuffles off with his prize.

The next person in line approaches the table holding a very large Christmas present in both hands.

Holly's mom.

Holly can't believe her eyes.

MOM  
(smiles)  
Merry Christmas, Holly.

Holly jumps up from her seat and hurries around the table.

Her mom sets the large gift down and throws her arms around her little girl.

They're both in tears...

MOM  
(sobs)  
Can you ever forgive me?

HOLLY  
(sobs)  
I missed you so much.

...and both overjoyed.

**INT. HOLLY AND MARLENE'S HOUSE - NIGHT**

Holly and Marlene's place is beautiful. Festive decorations abound and a perfect, towering Christmas tree stands in the corner.

Holly sits on the sofa with the large gift on her lap and her mom by her side.

She RIPS into it.

A Millennium Falcon.

Holly bursts into tears of joy and pulls her mother in for a long embrace.

Her mom smiles, finally at peace.

Behind them, Marlene opens the front door and greets her large family as they arrive for Christmas dinner.

**END**