

FISTMAS

Written by

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EXT. CITY - NIGHT

A beautiful snowy cityscape. Frost in the air, holly on the light posts, just complete Christmas bliss.

SMASH.

SANTA CLAUS flies through a bar window, landing with a thud on the Street. He picks himself up and rushes back into-

INT. BAR - NIGHT

Seemingly everyone in the bar is dressed like Santa, from the full, thousand-dollar costume rentals to "shoplifted from CVS" cotton beards and plastic hats. They're drunk, angry, and absolutely destroying the place.

In the back of the bar, HARRISON POWELL (late 20s) tries his hardest to shield himself from the melee.

HARRISON
Fucking SantaCon.

His cousin STEPH POWELL (late 20s) sips her beer, unbothered.

STEPH
Personally, I enjoy the spectacle.

HARRISON
We should get out while we still can.

STEPH
They'll tire themselves out.

HARRISON
I don't want to get punched!

STEPH
Good luck with that. You've just got one of those faces, you know?

Next to them, a beefy Santa power-drives a tattooed Santa through a table, then pukes all over Harrison's shoes.

HARRISON
Screw this. I'm out of here.

STEPH
How am I the tough one in the family?

Harrison gingerly makes his way towards the exit, dodging bodies and fists as he pushes through the crowd.

HARRISON

Excuse me... coming through...
please don't hit me...

He looks to his left - two Santas are going at it like animals, their beards barely holding on mid-coitus.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

Oh come on.

He spots the exit. Freedom. Just a few more feet.

SANTA CLAUS #1

...Because it's the season of
kindness, jerk!

SANTA CLAUS #2

It's the season giving, fuckhole!

The first Santa takes a swing at the second, missing him by a mile but connecting with HARRISON'S FACE.

Harrison's world slows down to a crawl as he spins, stunned. Santa #2 catches Santa #1 with an uppercut. Beefy Santa pounds a pint of egg nog. The Santa lovers loudly climax. As the world returns to normal speed, he lands on-

The lap of a beautiful woman, EMILY (20s).

EMILY

Are you ok?

Harrison looks up, lost in her big, expressive eyes.

HARRISON

Hey.

EMILY

Hey.

A real moment of connection in the middle of the scrum, despite the blood beginning to flow out of Harrison's nose.

EMILY (CONT'D)

I'm Emily.

HARRISON

I'm Harrison.

From across the bar, Steph cackles.

STEPH
Fucking SantaCon.

As "All I Want For Christmas Is You" picks up-

-- Harrison and Emily walk out of urgent care, Harrison's nose taped up. She gives him her number.

-- As Steph opens presents under her Christmas tree, Harrison texts Emily. She texts back! He smiles.

-- Harrison and Emily at dinner. They're hitting it off!

-- Harrison and Emily walk down a busy street decked out in Valentines accoutrement. He hands her a card. She opens it - a picture of a lizard with "Iguana hold your hand." She laughs, then holds his hand. Bliss.

-- Harrison and Emily watch a movie in a theater. There's a jump scare! Harrison freaks out, Emily laughs.

-- Harrison and Emily, dressed in their Patriotic finest, party with Steph and their friends.

-- Harrison and Emily are out at dinner, this time much closer. She brushes her hand against his. You can see the love on his face.

-- Harrison and Emily visit a graveyard. Harrison lays flowers at a gravestone marked COLLEEN POWELL as Emily grips his hand.

-- Harrison, dressed like Mugatu, dances with Emily, who's rocking a pretty convincing Zoolander getup, in the middle of a packed Halloween party. They kiss.

-- Harrison eats Thanksgiving dinner with Steph and her parents. He keeps checking his phone, rapidly texting with Emily. She sends a message - "Miss you." Harrison smiles.

-- Harrison and Emily make out in his apartment.

EMILY

Hey.

HARRISON

Yeah?

EMILY

Do you...want to come stay with my family for Christmas?

Harrison smiles, leans in and keeps kissing her.

INT. JEWELRY STORE - DAY

Rows and rows of rings glitter under that harsh light you only find in jewelry stores. Harrison points at a ring.

HARRISON
That one's nice.

Steph, absolutely housing a meatball hoagie, shrugs.

STEPH
Too small.

The CLERK stares daggers at her.

STEPH (CONT'D)
Hey, chief, my cousin's proposing
to a real top-shelf girl. Where do
you keep the good stuff?

The clerk departs. Harrison clocks one of the price tags.

HARRISON
Seven grand? Jesus.

STEPH
What do you expect? This place is
classy as shit.

One of the meatballs falls out of her sandwich. She quickly kicks it under a display case.

HARRISON
The ring has to be perfect.

STEPH
Totally.

HARRISON
But also less than two grand.

STEPH
I thought you loved this girl?

HARRISON
This one seems nice.

He points to a very plain ring with a very small diamond.

STEPH
Yeah, if you're getting shotgun
married before shipping off to war.

HARRISON
Not the vibe I'm going for.

STEPH
You know, you'd be able to afford a better ring if you got a raise.

HARRISON
I know. Believe me, I've been trying. It's just that-

STEPH
That's your problem, Harrison. You never stand up for yourself.

HARRISON
Do too!

Steph grabs Harrison with her non-hoagie hand, twisting him towards the ground.

HARRISON (CONT'D)
Stop, Steph! You're getting meatball on my jacket!

STEPH
Do something about it!

CLERK (O.S.)
(clearing throat)
Can I help you?

Harrison and Steph snap to attention.

HARRISON
Yes. I would like to buy one engagement ring, please.

EXT. CITY - DAY

A beautiful, classic ring. Tiffany cut, white gold. Not the biggest diamond, but a real keeper. Pull back to reveal-

Harrison, with the biggest grin on his face, looks down at the ring.

HARRISON
I think she's going to love it.

STEPH
Emily's a lucky girl.

Harrison snaps the case closed, putting it in his pocket.

HARRISON

It feels like it's happening so fast, but also like it's the right time, you know?

STEPH

Totally. I'm beating off dudes left and right.

HARRISON

With a stick, right?

STEPH

That too.

HARRISON

What if-

STEPH

Don't overthink this, Harrison. If it feels right, it feels right.

HARRISON

Thanks, Steph.

STEPH

Someone's got to look out for you.

Harrison looks sad for a moment. Steph slaps his back.

STEPH (CONT'D)

You coming over for Christmas this year? My mom keeps asking.

HARRISON

Actually, Emily invited me to spend the holidays with her family.

STEPH

Oh, cool.

HARRISON

It's the perfect time to propose. The lights, the music, the holiday cheer...

STEPH

Plus, everyone's mildly drunk for, like, the entire month.

EMILY (O.S.)

Harrison!

Emily, bundled up in her winter finest, waves at them from the end of the block. Harrison turns to Steph, hugging her.

STEPH

Be careful up there.

HARRISON

Something tells me this will be the best Christmas of my life.

EXT. MOUNTAIN HIGHWAY - DAY

SCREECH. Harrison's car whips around a blind pass as snow falls in heavy sheets. He's white-knuckling the steering wheel, but Emily is oddly serene.

EMILY

...Which is totally great for him.

HARRISON

Yeah. Uh huh.

EMILY

You ok, babe?

HARRISON

Staying focused on the road.

She rolls her eyes.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, you were saying?

EMILY

It's just that James is still in college, and he's already engaged.

HARRISON

How did your folks take it?

EMILY

Oh, they're thrilled. Daddy said he's never been prouder of him, and mom absolutely loves Isabelle.

HARRISON

Can't wait to meet all of them.

EMILY

They're the absolute best.

(beat)

And they'll love you, too. Plus, we'll be there for the pageant!

HARRISON
You guys do a Christmas pageant?

EMILY
It's so much more than that.

HARRISON
I used to do the Christmas pageant
when I was a kid. But they always
made me play the-

HOOOOONK. A SNOW PLOW careens towards them. Harrison slams
the brakes, sending the car spinning out. They come to a
stop, facing the wrong direction.

HARRISON (CONT'D)
-Asshole!

The window of the snow plow rolls down, revealing an OLD MAN
(GUS).

GUS
Watch where you're going, sonny!

HARRISON
What? You almost hit me!

GUS
Oh, a smart ass, huh?

Harrison shrinks in his seat.

HARRISON
Just...keep an eye on the road, ok?

The old man glares at him, murder in his eyes. But after a
moment, a smile creeps across his face.

GUS
Merry Christmas.

And with that, he's gone. Harrison gives Emily a look. She
shrugs.

EXT. SUMMIT VALLEY - DAY

They pass a hand-painted sign on the roadway-

"WELCOME TO SUMMIT VALLEY: THE FRIENDLIEST TOWN IN AMERICA."

The sign's not lying. Summit Valley is picturesque - Norman
Rockwell meets Whoville. The town is bursting at the seams
with holiday cheer.

They drive past a packed skating rink, a Christmas tree farm, a life-sized snow globe, even a petting zoo full of honest-to-God reindeer. Just a shotgun blast of goodwill towards men.

EMILY

We're really into the holidays up here.

HARRISON

I'm starting to understand that.

They pass a town square where bleachers are being erected. Below, a group of carolers serenade the town.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

Are those carolers? I didn't know they existed in the wild.

BZZT. Emily checks her phone.

EMILY

Do you mind if we swing by the market? My mom needs us to grab the turkey.

HARRISON

Yeah, no problem.

Harrison turns off the street, not noticing the copious MEDICAL SUPPLIES being loaded off a truck in the town square.

INT. MARKET - DAY

Harrison browses the shelves while Emily waits at the butcher counter. He flags down a sullen teenage STOCK GIRL (MAGGIE).

HARRISON

Excuse me? Ma'am?

Maggie stares through him.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

I'm looking to get something for my in-laws. Well, my future in-laws. We're not there yet, but, hey, if I play my cards right this week...

Maggie continues to stare through him.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

Uh, I'm looking for a gift. Do you have...gifts?

MAGGIE

Yeah.

HARRISON

Ok. Could you suggest a gift?

MAGGIE

Yeah.

HARRISON

What would you suggest?

She turns very, very slowly down the aisle.

MAGGIE

We've got candles.

HARRISON

Great. That's what I was thinking.
Where are they?

MAGGIE

Uh...

HARRISON

Can you point me towards them?

MAGGIE

Yeah.

HARRISON

WHERE ARE THE CANDLES?

Shoppers stop to look at the grown man yelling at a teenager.
Harrison immediately regrets it.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, I didn't mean to yell.
It's just been such a stressful
day, and-

Maggie gets the same grin as the old man in the snow plow.

MAGGIE

Aisle six.
(menacing)
Merry Christmas.

HARRISON

Yeah, you too.

MAGGIE

See you at the pageant.

Harrison gives her side-eye, walking backwards into-
EMILY, holding a large wrapped turkey.

HARRISON

Aah!

EMILY

Are you ok? I heard yelling?

HARRISON

Yeah. It's all good. I was grabbing
a gift for your folks.

EMILY

Well, hurry up. This sucker's going
to take a while in the oven.

EXT. MARKET - DAY

They walk down the busy sidewalk towards their car. A
Salvation Army Santa, propped on a stool, rings a bell down
the block.

HARRISON

I got you mom a candle. She'll like
it, right?

EMILY

She'll be happy you brought a gift.

HARRISON

That wasn't a yes.

Harrison looks in the bag at the candle - "Bird Wind."

HARRISON (CONT'D)

Hope it smells nice.

He bumps into the Salvation Army bucket, knocking it loose
and spilling coins everywhere.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

Ah, crap. My bad, dude.

The Santa stands up to-

OH SHIT HE'S JACKED.

JACKED SANTA

How about you pull your head out of
your ass, buck-o?

HARRISON
Hey, no need to get upset.

Jacked Santa takes a bell out of his belt, ringing it threateningly close to Harrison's head.

JACKED SANTA
Merry Christmas.

Harrison back away towards Emily.

HARRISON
(sotto)
I can't make a friend in this town.

EXT. BALLARD FAMILY HOME - DAY

They roll up to a beautiful ESTATE. Luxury cars litter the driveway - a Lexus, a high-end Volvo, a shiny silver Mercedes G Wagon. A bronze plaque on the side of the stone house informs them this is the BALLARD FAMILY HOME.

INT. BALLARD FAMILY HOME - FOYER - DAY

Emily opens the door, peering inside.

EMILY
Hello?

JUDITH (O.S.)
Emily! Tom, Emily's here!

TOM (60s, silver fox) enters from the kitchen.

TOM
Hello there, pumpkin.

EMILY
Daddy!

She races across the room, jumping into her father's arms.

TOM
I missed you so much.

Judith (60s, silver vixen) pops out from the family room.

JUDITH
There's my baby girl.

Emily hugs her mom.

EMILY

So good to see you, mom.

Harrison stands in the entryway, laden with bags.

HARRISON

Uh, hi! I'm Harrison!

Silence in the room for a moment. Then Tom puts on his million-dollar smile.

TOM

Mayor Tom Ballard.

Harrison shakes his hand.

HARRISON

It's so great to meet you. Emily's told me so much about you.

TOM

All nice things, I hope.

JUDITH

Wouldn't want our daughter to lie now, would you Tom?

They laugh at their clearly poll-tested bit.

JUDITH (CONT'D)

Tom was just reelected.

TOM

What can I say? The people love me.

EMILY

Dad won in a landslide.

TOM

Eighty five percent of the vote.
Not too shabby.

HARRISON

Wow. Those are, like, Eastern European dictator numbers.

Judith CHORTLES. Tom frowns for a moment, then returns to his stock politician smile.

TOM

I know what it takes to keep the town happy.

Judith offers her hand.

JUDITH
Judith Ballard.

Harrison fumbles the bag towards her.

HARRISON
So nice to meet you! I got you a
little something.

She opens the bag, giving a very small but polite smile.

JUDITH
Oh, a candle. How thoughtful.

Harrison glances at Emily, who gives him an encouraging look.

TOM
James! Come say hi to your sister.

JAMES (frat boy), accompanied by his girlfriend ISABELLE
(sorority girl), pop out of his upstairs bedroom, disheveled.

JAMES
Hey, Em.

ISABELLE
Hey girl!

EMILY
(to Harrison)
That's my brother James and his
fiancée Isabelle.

She holds out her hand, a MASSIVE DIAMOND on her ring finger.

ISABELLE
What gave it away?

EMILY
How are your parents, Isabelle?

ISABELLE
Oh, you know, thriving in
retirement.

HARRISON
What did your parents do?

ISABELLE
They were bon vivants.

EMILY
(to Harrison)
Isabelle comes from the Marchand family.

HARRISON
Wait, didn't they own-

ISABELLE
Ships. That moved people. From one continent to another.

HARRISON
Oh boy.

EMILY
(looking around)
Dad, where's Kacey?

Tom and Judith exchange a look.

TOM
She's at work.

JUDITH
You know Kacey. Always the difficult one.

Tom slaps Harrison on the back.

TOM
How about you two get unpacked?

EMILY
Come on, I'll show you to your room.

HARRISON
Don't you mean our room?

INT. BALLARD FAMILY HOME - GUEST ROOM - DAY

Emily opens the door to a beautiful, ornate guest room.

EMILY
You're lucky. The bed in here is the best one in the house.

HARRISON
Yeah. Great.

EMILY
Something wrong?

HARRISON

I just thought that, you know...

She looks at him blankly.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

I thought we'd be staying in the same room.

EMILY

My parents are super old fashioned about that sort of thing.

HARRISON

Can't help but notice your brother and his girlfriend are together in his room.

EMILY

They're engaged. That's different.

HARRISON

Ok. Got it. So I propose to you and we can be in the same room! Everyone wins.

Emily laughs. Harrison reaches into his bag. Is this it? The big moment?

EMILY

How about we take things one step at a time? You just met my parents, after all. And we haven't even been to the pageant.

Harrison drops the ring in his bag. Guess not.

HARRISON

Yeah. Totally.

EMILY

We'll have a great Christmas no matter where in the house you're staying.

HARRISON

You're right.

EMILY

Plus, you can always sneak out at night.

She gives him a wink and departs. Harrison flops back on the bed, checking out the room.

The wall across from him is dotted with family photos - and quite a few of them feature Emily with her arms around a mysterious, handsome man.

HARRISON

What the-

JUDITH (O.S.)

Harrison?

Judith sticks her head into the bedroom.

JUDITH (CONT'D)

Could you be a dear and give me a hand in the kitchen?

INT. BALLARD FAMILY HOME - KITCHEN - DAY

It's a tidy mess, scores of pots and pans with various sauces and food-related goos cooking on the stove.

JUDITH

Thank you for picking up the turkey, by the way.

HARRISON

Of course! Thank you and Tom for-

JUDITH

When I saw those wonderful teeny tiny little hands of yours, I knew I had just the job for you.

Harrison looks down at his hands.

HARRISON

They're totally normal-sized.

JUDITH

(ignoring him)

Why, they're perfectly petite enough to stuff the turkey without tearing it.

HARRISON

Above-average, even.

She pulls the turkey out of the fridge on a large chrome baking sheet.

JUDITH

Take a handful of stuffing and just go to town.

Judith opens the turkey's, for lack of a better word, butthole. Harrison stares down the chamber.

JUDITH (CONT'D)
Whenever you're ready.

A grin is plastered on her face, but her eyes are clearly saying "DO IT RIGHT FUCKING NOW." Harrison SIGHS, shoving stuffing into the turkey.

JUDITH (CONT'D)
So tell me about yourself,
Harrison. Where are you from?

HARRISON
Philadelphia.

JUDITH
College?

HARRISON
Penn-

Judith's eyes light up.

HARRISON (CONT'D)
-State.

Her expression drops.

JUDITH
What do you do for work?

HARRISON
Influencer marketing.

JUDITH
I'm sorry?

HARRISON
We pay loud teenagers to talk about
how much they enjoy Pepsi. Until
they turn into Nazis. Which happens
way more often than you'd think.

She gets behind him, shoving his arm further in the turkey.

JUDITH
How did you and my daughter meet?

HARRISON
We kind of ran into each other-

JUDITH
And your family?

HARRISON
Excuse me?

JUDITH
Tell me about your parents.

HARRISON
My dad died before I was born. And
my mom passed away a few years ago.

Judith pulls back.

JUDITH
How terrible.

HARRISON
I'm an only child, so I've been on
my own for a while.

The turkey SQUELCHES. Harrison frowns.

HARRISON (CONT'D)
My cousin keeps an eye out for me,
but it's not the same, you know?
Especially around Christmas.

Harrison pulls his arm out of the carcass.

HARRISON (CONT'D)
Not sure how much more this bird
can take.

Judith slides another bowl of stuffing towards him. As he
grabs a handful-

JUDITH
I'm just happy Emily met such a...
nice young man.

HARRISON
Well, thank you. Your daughter
really means the world to me. If
fact, I know it's kind of early,
but I was wondering if-

JUDITH
She needs a nice partner.
Especially after what happened with
Nathan.

Harrison pauses.

HARRISON

Pardon?

JUDITH

Oh, Emily's former boyfriend.
He was practically a member of the
family. But then again, if they
hadn't have broken up, you wouldn't
be here right now, would you?

HARRISON

Well, unlike him, I don't think I'd
be foolish enough to lose Emily.

Judith seems to relax, just a little. Harrison's phone
buzzes. He loudly clears his throat.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

Excuse me for a moment.

INT. BALLARD FAMILY HOME - RESTROOM - NIGHT

Harrison's barricaded in the restroom, FaceTiming with Steph.

HARRISON

They're super nice, I promise.

STEPH

I'm sensing a "but" here.

HARRISON

But they are kind of weird.

STEPH

There we go.

HARRISON

They're also, like, ridiculously
wealthy.

STEPH

Sounds like you hit the jackpot.
See if they'll buy you something
dope for Christmas, like gold bars
or a yacht.

KNOCK KNOCK.

HARRISON

I've got to go.

STEPH

Are they monitoring you? Blink twice if you need me to send the National Guard.

HARRISON

No. It's fine. I've got this.

STEPH

Love you! Don't get murdered!

Another KNOCK. Harrison hangs up, runs the faucet, then opens the door to reveal-

HARRISON

Who are you?

KACEY (30s) wipes the sleeve of her EMS jumpsuit across her sweaty forehead.

KACEY

Same question.

HARRISON

I'm Harrison.
(a blank look)
Emily's boyfriend.

KACEY

Oh. I'm Kacey.

HARRISON

Emily's sister! Nice to meet you.

He extends his hand. She clocks the moisture.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

I just washed my hands. I didn't piss on them. Don't know why I said that.

She pushes past him into the bathroom, running the faucet.

KACEY

Sorry, long day with my patients.

HARRISON

Are you a doctor?

KACEY

EMT. I run the clinic in town. Dad's not the only one in public service.

TOM (O.S.)
How nice of you to finally join us,
Kacey.

They turn to see Tom and the rest of the family waiting for them.

TOM (CONT'D)
I see you met Hamilton-

HARRISON
Harrison.

TOM
-Harrison.

KACEY
Always nice to meet Emily's
boyfriends.

She glares at her sister.

KACEY (CONT'D)
We'll see if this one sticks
around.

GONG. An ancient GRANDFATHER CLOCK chimes at the end of the hallway. The mood in the room shifts immediately.

TOM
You heard the clock, folks! Time to
get going to the pageant!

JAMES/ISABELLE/EMILY
Pageant! Pageant! Pageant!

Harrison looks at Kacey, who gives him a pitying look.

KACEY
Got to get to my next shift.

HARRISON
You're not coming?

KACEY
Not my scene. Good luck.

INT. BALLARD FAMILY HOME - GUEST ROOM - NIGHT

Harrison slips on his coat while Emily lounges on the bed.

HARRISON
Your family's nice.

EMILY

Aren't they? Daddy and mother are so warm and welcoming.

HARRISON

...Sure.

EMILY

Something wrong, babe?

HARRISON

No, nothing. Just heard an awful lot about Nathan tonight.

EMILY

Oh, him? He's no one.

HARRISON

Promise?

EMILY

Promise.

Out of the corner of his eye, he catches a glimpse of Kacey smiling bemusedly in the hallway.

EXT. SUMMIT VALLEY - TOWN SQUARE - NIGHT

The town is truly beautiful. People, dressed in their Christmas best, stream towards a large set of bleachers erected in the town square.

Tom at a podium in front of a massive, unlit CHRISTMAS TREE. Harrison, Emily and the rest of the family stand behind him.

TOM

Hello, Summit Valley!

CROWD

Hello Mayor Tom!

TOM

Thank all of you for coming out tonight. And what a night it is.

Happy murmurs from the crowd.

TOM (CONT'D)

We all know how lucky we are to not have the problems that others do. We love each other. We respect each other.

(MORE)

TOM (CONT'D)

And, most importantly of all, we
forgive each other. Take Dave and
Sandy here.

A middle-aged man and woman step out from the crowd.

TOM (CONT'D)

Earlier this year, they both came
to me. See, it turns out they
couldn't decide who owned that
beautiful old peach tree right
between their houses.

DAVE

That's my tree.

SANDY

Over my dead body!

The townspeople LAUGH.

TOM

But don't you think they should put
all that behind them? Isn't that
the spirit of the season?

The crows CHEERS as Dave and Sandy walk into the clearing.
Harrison is getting caught up in the spirit of the pageant -
it's magical.

TOM (CONT'D)

What do you say, folks? Do you want
to see them settle this silly
argument once and for all?

Much louder cheering. But this time, it's a bit more
menacing. In the clearing, Dave and Sandy HUG each other.

HARRISON

Aww.

From the crowd, Maggie, Gus and Jacked Santa all glare at
Harrison grinning on the stage like an idiot.

TOM

Well then, let the pageant begin!

Tom hits a button on his lectern. Music kicks in: a spirited
version of JOY TO THE WORLD. The Christmas tree lights up
like a Roman Candle.

And down below them, Sandy winds up and **PUNCHES DAVE RIGHT IN
HIS JAW.**

HARRISON
WHAT THE FUCK?

TOM
Merry Christmas everyone!

Dave SCREAMS, dive tackling Sandy into the frozen grass. She flips him over, pummeling his face.

SANDY
Those are my peaches you sack of
shit!

DAVE
Then you can eat them in hell!

He shoves Sandy off of him, springing to his feet. She sweeps his legs, bringing him crashing back down. The crowd SCREAMS with ecstasy as they grapple.

On the stage, Harrison's frozen in complete horror.

HARRISON
No. No no no no no.

Emily laughs, squeezing his hand.

EMILY
My money's on Sandy.

Sandy lets out a ROAR, then delivers the knockout blow.

EMILY (CONT'D)
Called it!

Harrison stands there in complete shock. His ears ring. His vision blurs. Holy fuck, what did he get himself into?

INT. BALLARD FAMILY HOME - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Harrison sits at the dining table, still shell shocked, as the Ballards tear into the bird like ravenous beasts.

JAMES
...So I tell the dean it's not
cultural appropriation, it's just a
dark tan!

The whole table laughs, except for Harrison, who looks like he saw a ghost made out of nightmares.

TOM
Harrison, you play any football at
Penn State?

HARRISON
Huh?

JUDITH
James is the captain of the Yale
rugby team.

JAMES
You should play with us sometime.

ISABELLE
Don't be silly, James. Look at him.
You guys would eat him alive.

Emily slides her arm around Harrison's shoulder.

EMILY
Nuh uh. My boyfriend could totally
hang. Isn't that right, babe?

HARRISON
Uh huh.

EMILY
See? He's totally down. Whenever,
wherever.

James WINKS at Harrison.

JAMES
Could be fun.

Harrison stares down at his food, less hungry than he's ever
been before in his life.

INT. BALLARD FAMILY HOME - GUEST ROOM - NIGHT

Harrison lays in bed, FaceTiming with Steph.

HARRISON
This town, they...

STEPH
What is it, a cult?

HARRISON
No.

STEPH
Satanic ritual?

HARRISON
No. They started-

STEPH
Fucking each other?

HARRISON
No! They were fighting. Like, fist fighting.

STEPH
Huh. That's new.

There's a loud MOAN from the next room, along with the sound of vigorous love making.

STEPH (CONT'D)
You sure they're not also fucking each other?

HARRISON
That's Emily's brother and his fiancée. It's bullshit. Her parents won't even let us stay in the same room and those two are going at it like overeducated rabbits.

ISABELLE (O.S.)
Not in my hair!

HARRISON
Jesus, how did I get myself into this situation?

STEPH
Want my advice? Leave. Like, right now.

HARRISON
Steph-

STEPH
Get your shit, pack up the car, and bail. It'll be like it was all a bad dream.

HARRISON
I wish I could.

STEPH
That's the great part. You can.

HARRISON

But I really, really like this girl.

STEPH

Stop thinking with your dick!

HARRISON

I'm not! I'm thinking with my heart AND my dick!

STEPH

You can find another girlfriend, dude. That's what the internet is for.

HARRISON

No. I love Emily.

STEPH

Yeah, and you'll love the next one even more, because she won't come from a town full of violent psychopaths!

HARRISON

Maybe I'm overthinking this. Maybe I just need to, I don't know, expand my horizons.

STEPH

They're punching each other. In the face. For fun.

HARRISON

Who am I to judge?

Steph SIGHS.

STEPH

Honestly, dude? You can do better. Trust me.

HARRISON

I don't want "better." I want her.

STEPH

I hope you know what you're getting yourself into.

HARRISON

Trust me. I do.

KNOCK KNOCK.

STEPH

For the love of God, be careful.

Harrison hangs up, crossing to the door. He lets out a deep breath.

HARRISON

It's ok. I got this.

He opens the door, revealing-

HARRISON (CONT'D)

Kacey?

KACEY

I bet you have a lot of questions.

HARRISON

You have no idea.

INT. BALLARD FAMILY HOME - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Kacey pours whiskey into two glasses. She hands one to Harrison, who's trying to bury his feelings in an ice cream sandwich.

HARRISON

So what is this?

KACEY

It's kind of complicated.

HARRISON

No shit.

KACEY

You know how this town is the friendliest town in America?

HARRISON

Yeah. It literally says that on your welcome sign.

KACEY

Well, there's a reason for that.

HARRISON

Enlighten me.

KACEY

Decades ago, Summit Valley was like any other small town.

(MORE)

KACEY (CONT'D)

People treated each other like garbage, everyone was angry. It wasn't a great place to live. Tourism cratered, downtown was falling apart, just a real death spiral.

HARRISON

So what? That happened to tons of small towns.

KACEY

The mayor - my great grandfather - came up with a solution. Instead of people being pissed off all the time, they swallowed their pride and saved any disputes they had for the three days leading up to Christmas. And then they got a chance to let out their rage. Hence, the pageant.

HARRISON

...Seriously?

KACEY

The idea was that everyone would settle their arguments and go into Christmas as happy, friendly neighbors.

HARRISON

Ok. Sure.

KACEY

But there's rules. It's not a free-for-all.

HARRISON

Oh, of course. Wouldn't want to think the neighborhood fighting tournament was uncivilized.

INT. BALLARD FAMILY HOME - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Kacey takes a sip of her whisky while Harrison fidgets nervously in an arm chair.

KACEY

Number one: the fight ends when one person admits they're wrong. Every fight needs a winner and a loser.

HARRISON
Makes sense.

KACEY
Knocking them out also counts as winning.

HARRISON
Ah jeez.

KACEY
And no weapons. You can only use what you've got attached to you. Makes it more personal that way.

HARRISON
Uh huh.

KACEY
Number two: as much as you may want to, no immediate family members. No moms, dads, brothers or sisters. Cousins are kind of a grey area.

HARRISON
Why?

KACEY
Because some wounds stick around even after the argument is settled.

HARRISON
So you've never fought James or Emily?

KACEY
Unfortunately no. Rule number three: what happens in town, stays in town.

HARRISON
Yeah, this seems like the kind of thing the outside world wouldn't exactly approve of.

KACEY
And do you think they'd believe you if you told them?

HARRISON
Nope.

KACEY

It's my dad's way of keeping the peace.

HARRISON

So this is something of a family tradition?

KACEY

Yeah. The town seems to love it. And they keep voting for him, so I guess they think he's doing something right.

HARRISON

Sounds like a real man of the people

KACEY

There's been an un-broken line of Ballard mayoral succession since our great grandfather.

HARRISON

But isn't this all...

KACEY

Insane?

HARRISON

I was going to say bugnut banana pants, but yeah, insane is much more succinct.

KACEY

It is. But it's also tradition.

HARRISON

Do you partake?

KACEY

God no. I usually try to skip town around the holidays.

HARRISON

But you're here.

KACEY

My coworkers beat me to the punch this year.

She takes a sip of whiskey.

HARRISON

You seem, and don't take this the wrong way, way too normal and smart to be here.

Kacey blushes.

KACEY

I guess I'm the only person in the county actually trying to save lives this week.

INT. BALLARD FAMILY HOME - HALLWAY - NIGHT

They stroll down the hallway, Harrison eating another ice cream sandwich.

HARRISON

And the rest of your family is into this?

KACEY

Yup. They really seem to get off on seeing their friends and neighbors kicking the shit out of each other.

HARRISON

So if I stick it out, they'll respect me.

KACEY

That's your takeaway from all this?

They arrive at his bedroom.

KACEY (CONT'D)

A little advice. You're in love with my sister, right?

HARRISON

Yes.

KACEY

Then try not to piss anyone off and maybe you'll be a part of this family sooner rather than later.

HARRISON

Uh...

KACEY

What?

HARRISON
What if I already made a couple of
enemies?

Kacey LAUGHS.

KACEY
Wow. You work fast.

HARRISON
I didn't know the rules!

KACEY
Honestly? I'm impressed.

HARRISON
Thanks. I'll take that to heart
when I'm spitting out my own teeth.

EXT. SUMMIT VALLEY - TOWN SQUARE - DAY

Tom glad-hands his constituents as the family strolls through
town.

TOM
Merle, great to see you buddy...
Keisha! That sure is one healthy
looking pup you've got... Big Nick,
coming through!

Emily and Harrison trail behind him. Harrison looks like a
wreck.

EMILY
The Silver Dollar has the BEST
pancakes. You're going to love
them.

HARRISON
Emily, listen, I-

EMILY
I was thinking about last night.

HARRISON
Yeah, me too. Couldn't stop
thinking about it, actually.

EMILY
I know it can be a lot to handle. I
should have told you about it, but-

HARRISON
Rule number three.

Emily cocks her eyebrow.

HARRISON (CONT'D)
I... heard someone talking about
it.

EMILY
I know our traditions may seem a
little strange.

HARRISON
A little?

She stops, taking both of his hands.

EMILY
And if you want to leave, I
completely understand.

Harrison considers it for a moment. He looks into her eyes -
the same eyes he fell in love with at the bar, then shakes
his head.

HARRISON
No. It's totally cool.

EMILY
Are you sure?

HARRISON
Completely. So your town comes
together once a year to beat each
other up. Is it really that
different than running with the
bulls or eating your weight in hot
dogs or any of the other insane
shit people do?

Emily squeezes his hands.

EMILY
I don't care what daddy says. I
know you're a fighter.

HARRISON
Wait, he what now?

EMILY
And you really do have the cutest
little hands.

HARRISON
They're the size of normal adult
male hands!

EMILY
(ignoring him)
I knew you were up for it.

They continue down the street.

HARRISON
Although, as long as we're on the
subject, there's a lot you didn't
tell me.

EMILY
Like what?

HARRISON
Like the fact that your parents are
loaded.

EMILY
I didn't think it mattered.

HARRISON
Such a rich person thing to say.

EMILY
I don't want people treating me
differently just because I come
from means.

HARRISON
I kind of figured it out, but you
never told me.

EMILY
How did you know?

HARRISON
When I asked you what your favorite
brand of bologna is, you said "ours
was not a luncheon meat household."

EMILY
Touché.

HARRISON
Also a very rich person thing to
say.

EXT. SUMMIT VALLEY - MARKET - DAY

A group of carolers serenade the town from a street corner.

CAROLERS

*God rest ye merry gentlemen/ Let
nothing you dismay/ For Jesus
Christ our savior/ Was born upon
this day/*

Tom exits the market with a large cup of hot cocoa, handing it to Harrison.

HARRISON

Thanks.

TOM

Acquainting yourself with our
humble little berg?

HARRISON

Yeah. It's beautiful. And normal.
Totally normal.

TOM

(laughing)

Relax, Harrison. We like to have a
little fun around here.

HARRISON

Totally.

TOM

We're the friendliest town in
America, after all.

HARRISON

Do you ever, uh, take part in the
festivities?

TOM

You know? I don't. But only because
no one ever seems to have a problem
with me.

HARRISON

That's reassuring.

TOM

Trust me, Harrison. Stick with me,
and everything will be-

MAGGIE (O.S.)
I want a piece of that little
bitch!

The family stops cold. Maggie, the teenage stock girl from the market, stares Harrison down. He looks around, unsure.

HARRISON
Did you mean Tom or-

MAGGIE
You, needle dick.

Tom gives Harrison a grin.

TOM
Already made yourself popular, I
see.

Maggie bee-lines for them.

MAGGIE
This guy was a complete jerk to me
in the store last night.

HARRISON
I didn't mean to yell at you! You
just weren't being that helpful.

MAGGIE
Are you saying I'm bad at my job?

HARRISON
Kind of? You couldn't tell me where
the candles were.

MAGGIE
I swear to God-

Tom steps between.

TOM
Woah! Hey, come on now, Maggie.
Let's settle this like reasonable
people.

MAGGIE
Yeah, sure Mayor Tom.
(to Harrison)
I'm going to eat your bones.

HARRISON
The fuck?

CAROLERS (O.S.)
O tidings of comfort and joy/

EXT. SUMMIT VALLEY - SKATING POND - DAY

A large crowd has gathered to watch the carnage. Harrison stands on one edge of the pond, Maggie on the other.

HARRISON
This is insane! I don't want to punch a girl!

MAGGIE
And I don't want to beat up a pussy, but that seems to be on my agenda today.

Harrison looks at Emily, pleading.

HARRISON
This isn't real, right? She's a teenager!

EMILY
A teenager you picked a fight with.

HARRISON
I didn't mean to!

MAGGIE
Let's get this show on the road. I have PSATs to take.

Tom steps up in front of the crowd.

TOM
Sounds like a real he-said, she-said situation folks.

Mild LAUGHTER.

TOM (CONT'D)
Well, let's get to it! You know the rules. Whoever apologizes loses.

HARRISON
Wait, I can apologize?

EMILY
Yeah, if you did anything wrong.

She stares him down. He's not wiggling out of this one.

HARRISON
I didn't.

EMILY
That's my guy.

HARRISON
(to Tom)
Question.

TOM
Yes?

HARRISON
What about them?

Harrison points across the pond to a YOUTH SKATING CLINIC.

TOM
The pond was double booked. Try and
keep your distance.

MAGGIE
Enough! I'm gonna smash his face
in!

Tom gives the crowd a winking look.

TOM
You heard the lady. Begin!

Harrison awkwardly waddles out towards center ice.

HARRISON
Look, it's just you and me out
here. We can talk about this.

Maggie looks unsure.

MAGGIE
Oh yeah?

HARRISON
I know we had a bit of a
misunderstanding, but I don't think
there's any reason we can't-

Maggie head butts him in the nose.

HARRISON (CONT'D)
Fuck!

She kicks him in the shin, dropping Harrison to the ice.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

Hey!

MAGGIE

Say you're wrong.

HARRISON

No!

She lifts her leg high, bringing her heel down hard towards Harrison's nuts. He splits his legs, her heel punching a large CRACK in the ice.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

Not cool!

Harrison scuttles back. Maggie glides across the ice, grabbing him by the hair.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

Let go of me!

She tugs hard, sending Harrison spiraling across the ice and directly towards-

The child skaters.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

Look out!

The children skate past him, fast, blades slicing up the ice. He tries his best to move out of the way. A CHILD SKATER comes perilously close to slicing off his ear.

CHILD SKATER

Watch where you're going, boomer.

HARRISON

I'm twenty eight!

Maggie slides past the kids, coming to a stop above Harrison.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

I'm not going to hit you.

MAGGIE

Great.

She starts wailing on him. Harrison looks over to Emily, who's chanting along with the crowd. Even the kids are getting in on it.

CROWD

Fight! Fight! Fight!

SKATERS
Fight! Fight! Fight!

CHILD SKATER
Eat his bones!

Harrison lightly shoves Maggie. She loses her footing, slipping backwards on the ice and banging the back of her head.

HARRISON
Oh my God. I'm so sorry! Are you
ok?

Her eyes slam open. She spins, pushing herself on her stomach towards Harrison like a murderous penguin.

HARRISON (CONT'D)
Screw this.

Harrison gets to his feet, doing his awkward best to run away from her. She pushes herself up, gaining on him.

HARRISON (CONT'D)
Shit shit shit.

He makes it to center ice but loses his footing, crashing onto his chest and sliding towards-

The crack in the ice.

HARRISON (CONT'D)
Huh.

Maggie closes the gap quickly. She lifts her heel again, going for the knockout blow. As she brings it down, he pushes himself backwards across the ice.

Her foot punches THROUGH the ice. It splinters, sending her plunging into the freezing water.

MAGGIE
Aah!

The crowd gets nervous. Tom look to Emily.

TOM
Call your sister.

On the ice, Harrison scoots towards the hole.

MAGGIE
Help me!

Harrison wedges himself against the open hole, reaching down and grabbing her hand.

HARRISON

Come on.

He HEAVES, pulling the teenager out of the pond. She flops on her back, catching her breath.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

Are you ok?

MAGGIE

Gaaaaaaah!

She lunges for Harrison one last time. He SCREAMS, kicking her back into the ice hole.

HARRISON

Sorry.

He reaches back down, pulling her out.

MAGGIE

Thank... you...

HARRISON

Do you still want to kick my ass?

MAGGIE

No.

HARRISON

We cool?

MAGGIE

Yeah. Fine. You win.

Harrison looks to Tom and Emily.

HARRISON

So what do I do-

TOM

We have a winner!

The crowd CHEERS. Harrison can't help but smile.

INT. SILVER DOLLAR DINER - DAY

Harrison sits at the head of a large table, wolfing down a stack of pancakes. He's receiving a hero's welcome - all eyes in the restaurant are on this awesome new outsider.

At the other end of the table, James is recounting Harrison's victory to Isabelle.

JAMES

...And then she was all "sploosh"
and he was all "take my hand if you
want to live!"

Harrison shakes his head at the story already spinning out of control. Tom puts his hand on Harrison's shoulder.

TOM

Great job out there, son.

HARRISON

Thanks, Tom.

Tom gives him a cock-eyed look.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

Thanks, Mayor Tom.

TOM

You're a winner. We like winners.

Harrison's heart swells as Judith slides another plate of pancakes in front of him.

JUDITH

Our little champion needs to eat
up.

Harrison leans towards Emily.

HARRISON

If I knew fighting a teenager would
win your parents over, I would have
done it much sooner.

EMILY

In all fairness, gravity and water
did most of the work.

HARRISON

Yeah, but I helped.

NATHAN (O.S.)

Well aren't you adorable.

NATHAN (late 20s), the handsome guy from so many Ballard family photos, stands at the doorway.

NATHAN (CONT'D)
You didn't tell me you had a new
boyfriend, Emily.

EMILY
What do you want, Nathan?

The diner goes silent. Nathan sizes up Harrison.

NATHAN
Is this the tough guy who beat up
Maggie?

HARRISON
I didn't actually beat her up-

TOM
Now now, Nathan, no reason to make
a fuss.

Nathan straightens up at Tom's words, clearly intimidated.

NATHAN
I was just introducing myself,
Mayor Tom. Wanted to know what I'm
up against.

He gets up in Harrison's face, menacing.

NATHAN (CONT'D)
But now that I got a look at him?
Nothing to be afraid of.

EMILY
Nathan!

Tom pats him on the back.

TOM
That's enough for now. Tell your
parents we were asking about them,
will you?

NATHAN
Yeah, sure. See you around.

He turns, slamming the door on his way out.

EMILY
Sorry about him.

HARRISON
What's his deal?

EMILY

He's been a total jerk ever since we broke up.

HARRISON

Seems like he might actually kill me given the chance.

EMILY

I wouldn't worry about it. Nathan's harmless. I mean, sure, he's bigger than you, stronger than you, he spends most of his life in the gym...

HARRISON

Really hope there's a "but."

EMILY

But he's all talk. Those muscles are for show. And anyway, even if you two did fight, you'd kick his ass.

Harrison clocks Tom and Judith watching him. Do they want him to... do something? Harrison hops up.

HARRISON

Excuse me.

He rushes for the door.

EXT. SILVER DOLLAR DINER - DAY

Harrison spots Nathan across the street.

HARRISON

Hey, prick!

Nathan stops in his tracks.

NATHAN

Can I help you, pal?

HARRISON

You got a problem with me?

NATHAN

Nothing we can't solve like civilized men.

Harrison looks over his shoulder. Emily, Tom, Judith and the rest are all pressed against the windows of the diner, watching the confrontation. Tom gives him an appreciative nod.

HARRISON

Great.

He takes a step into the street, emboldened.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

How about have a little talk?

NATHAN

I think we're beyond talking.

HARRISON

Exactly what I was thinking. You
and me-

WHOOOOSH. Harrison jumps back as the SNOW PLOW speeds past him, inches away from total obliteration.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

Fuck!

The snow plow comes to a stop. Gus rolls down his window.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

What the hell?

GUS

You again? I thought I told you to
stay out of my way.

HARRISON

You've almost killed me twice in
two days.

GUS

Maybe take that as a sign, young
man.

Harrison looks over the hood of the truck. Nathan is gone.

HARRISON

Shit.

GUS

What'd you say to me?

HARRISON

I was in the middle of something.

GUS
Yeah, the street.

Harrison' blood is pumping, testosterone coursing through his veins. It's a side of him we've never seen before.

HARRISON
You wanna go? I already beat up a teenage girl, an old man shouldn't be a problem
(sotto)
That doesn't sound great.

GUS
Gladly. How about you and me have ourselves a little conversation at-

Tom grins from the restaurant window.

GUS (CONT'D)
-The Christmas Tree Farm?

EXT. CHRISTMAS TREE FARM - DAY

A crowd of townspeople have gathered around a small clearing amidst the pine trees. Emily gives Harrison a kiss on the cheek.

EMILY
You've got this.

HARRISON
Thanks. Hey, maybe after this, maybe you and I can grab a bite to eat. Alone.

Gus, sans shirt, points at Harrison.

GUS
Come at me, baby paws!

HARRISON
What is it with people in this town commenting on the size of my hands?

GUS
It means your dick's small.

HARRISON
I got that part.

Harrison squares up.

EMILY
Demolish him.

HARRISON
Gladly.

TOM
You know the rules, fellas. First
one to yield or get knocked out
loses.

The old man spits on the ground.

GUS
By the time I'm done with you I'm
going to be wearing you like a hat.

HARRISON
That doesn't sound pleasant for
either of us.

TOM
And... begin!

Harrison inches closer to Gus, fists raised.

HARRISON
Listen, you old fuck. I'm gonna
give you one last chance to
apologize before I turn your guts
into-

Gus kicks Harrison square in the dick.

HARRISON (CONT'D)
Aaah!

Harrison drops to his knees. Gus grabs a handful of snow and
blows it into Harrison's face.

HARRISON (CONT'D)
Hey!

Harrison swings his arms, blinded. He wipes the snow from his
eyes-

But Gus is gone.

HARRISON (CONT'D)
What the...

GUS (O.S.)
Come and get me.

His voice carries from the trees. Harrison hesitates for a moment.

EMILY

What are you waiting for? Go kick his ass!

HARRISON

Aaaaaaah!

Harrison charges into the trees. Suddenly, he's alone. Isolated. Cut off. Surrounded by what seems like endless pine trees.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

Come out, old man.

He hears a CRUNCH behind him. Harrison turns -

But there's no one there.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

Where are-

SLAP. Gus' hand smacks Harrison in the face.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

Quit it!

Harrison turns, but he's still alone. He hears a RUSTLING in the branches. Hands up, he approaches a tree.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

You can't hide forever.

A branch flies out, hitting him in the nose.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

Shit!

GUS (O.S.)

You'll never catch me.

Harrison looks around. Still isolated.

WHAP.

A PINECONE hits Harrison in the forehead. He looks up. Gus is on top of a twelve footer.

HARRISON

How in the fuck?

GUS
Bombs away!

He pelts Harrison with a handful of pinecones.

HARRISON
No weapons!

GUS
They're pinecones, dipshit!

Harrison dodges, running through the trees. Branches slap him, needles tear at him.

It's hell.

And once again, he's alone. Harrison doubles over, trying his hardest to catch his breath.

HARRISON
This is it. This is how I die.
Beaten to death by an old man on a
Christmas tree farm.

A pair of hands push him backwards, causing Harrison to stumble over an exposed root. He lands on his tailbone, hard. Before he can process it, Gus is on top of him, landing blow after blow.

GUS
This will teach you... to get in my
way... when I'm trying to work!

Harrison SHOVES him off.

HARRISON
You almost killed me! And worse,
you almost killed my fiancée.

Gus looks puzzled.

GUS
You're engaged to the Mayor's
daughter?

HARRISON
I mean, not yet, but I'm working my
way up to it.

GUS
The day you marry that girl is the
day I hang up my boots.

HARRISON
Both are coming sooner than you
think.

Harrison CHARGES the old man, shoving him through a ticket of
trees.

They emerge on the other side, in full view of the crowd. The
townspeople CHEER as Harrison pile drives Gus into the
ground.

HARRISON (CONT'D)
Apologize!

GUS
Never!

Harrison raises his fist.

HARRISON
Do it!

GUS
Make me!

Harrison looks into the crowd. They're cheering him on. He's
a hero.

And then he spots Nathan in the crowd, whispering something
to Emily. She rolls her eyes, but can't hide her smile.

HARRISON
The fuck?

GUS (O.S.)
Should have finished me when you
had the chance.

He turns back to Gus, who's on his feet and grinning like a
jack o'lantern.

HARRISON
Oh come on.

BLAM. Gus clobbers Harrison with a haymaker. Harrison
collapses to the ground, world fading to black.

INT. CLINIC - DAY

Harrison GASPS, sitting upright under harsh fluorescent
lights.

HARRISON
What the- Where am I?

Kacey pops her head in from the other room.

KACEY
Oh good, you're not dead.

HARRISON
What happened?

KACEY
You got knocked out by a man who
was born during the Hoover
administration.

Harrison holds his head in his hands.

HARRISON
My head is killing me.

KACEY
Makes sense. You're concussed.

HARRISON
That's not great.

KACEY
You'll be ok in a day or so. Try
not to do any strenuous activity.
Or think too hard. Something tells
me that won't be a problem.

HARRISON
Where's everyone else?

KACEY
Back at the house.

Harrison slumps down.

HARRISON
I was so close.

KACEY
Can I ask you a question? As a
medical professional?

HARRISON
Sure.

KACEY
Why are you still here?

HARRISON
Because I love your sister.

Kacey looks at him for a moment, then bursts out laughing.

KACEY
Oh shit, you're being serious.

HARRISON
I am!

KACEY
Don't get me wrong, Emily is great
in small doses. But surely she's
not worth traumatic brain injury.

HARRISON
She is to me.

KACEY
Bullshit.

HARRISON
Hey!

KACEY
You can just leave. You know that,
right? Go home and spend Christmas
with the people who love you
instead of letting strangers treat
you like a punching bag.

HARRISON
I... I don't really have that.

Kacey pauses.

KACEY
I'm sorry, I-

HARRISON
Life's been real tough since I lost
my mom. This whole fucking month
I'm told that Christmas is about
family and the people you love. And
the fucked up thing is, even when
I'm with my cousin and her folks, I
see what they have and it makes me
miss what I lost even more. What if
the only way to get what I used to
have is to do... this?

KACEY

Well, "this" has a real chance of giving you permanent brain damage.

HARRISON

Then that's my choice to make.

The door swings open. Emily rushes in.

EMILY

Oh, babe, I'm so happy you're awake.

HARRISON

Just a little bump to the head.

Emily looks at her sister.

EMILY

Thanks for taking care of him.

KACEY

Emily, you can't let him fight anymore. For his own sake.

EMILY

He's a grown man. He doesn't need protecting.

She hugs Harrison.

EMILY (CONT'D)

Come on. Let's get dinner. You and me.

She helps him up. Kacey watches them go, a mix of sadness and worry on her face.

INT. FANCY RESTAURANT - NIGHT

A waiter pours wine as Harrison reclines in his seat.

EMILY

You look rough.

HARRISON

You should see the other guy.

EMILY

I'm proud of you.

HARRISON

Why? I lost.

EMILY

But you fought. Like, actually fought.

HARRISON

What do your parents think?

EMILY

They... appreciate your effort.

He looks at Emily - she's stunning in the candlelight. He fumbles with his jacket pocket, checking on the ring.

HARRISON

You know how much I love you, right?

EMILY

I do.

HARRISON

This has really been the best year of my life.

EMILY

Yeah, it's been pretty fun.

HARRISON

And I didn't know if this was the right time but then you invited me up to meet your parents and everything seems perfect, you know?

Emily's mouth drops.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

I want every year for the rest of our lives to be as great as this one was. And we can do that, together.

He gets out of his chair, getting on one knee. Emily GASPS.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

Emily Dianne Ballard, will you marry-

NATHAN (O.S.)

Oh my God, is he proposing?

Nathan, seated with a DATE a few tables away, wears the biggest shit eating grin.

NATHAN (CONT'D)
 Sorry. Didn't mean to interrupt.
 Interested to see how all this
 plays out.

Harrison goes beet red.

NATHAN (CONT'D)
 You might be barking up the wrong
 tree. As memory serves, Emily isn't
 really into that sort of thing.

EMILY
 Nathan!

Harrison springs to his feet, wheeling on Nathan.

HARRISON
 Seriously, dick hole. What's your
 problem with me?

NATHAN
 Just saving you the hassle of a
 rejection, bro. You don't belong
 here.

HARRISON
 I do a whole hell of a lot more
 than you do.

NATHAN
 You want a piece?

HARRISON
 Yeah, I do. You and me. Tomorrow
 morning. We're settling this.

Nathan gets right up in his face.

NATHAN
 Snow globe. 9 o'clock.

HARRISON
 Looking forward to it.

NATHAN
 Merry Christmas.

INT. BALLARD FAMILY HOME - GUEST ROOM - NIGHT

Emily kisses Harrison.

EMILY
Thanks for standing up for me.

HARRISON
You're welcome. It's kind of my thing now.

EMILY
So, about what you were going to ask me earlier...

HARRISON
God, I'm so sorry that happened. It's so embarrassing.

EMILY
It wasn't ideal.

HARRISON
But I'm going to make it up to you. I'm going to do it right. Promise.

She kisses him.

EMILY
Good night, Harrison.

HARRISON
Good night, Emily.

She departs. Harrison flops down in the bed, physically and emotionally drained.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. BALLARD FAMILY HOME - GUEST ROOM - LATER

Harrison lays in the same position in the dark, wide awake.

HARRISON
Screw this.

He hops out of bed, throwing on a sweater.

INT. BALLARD FAMILY HOME - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Harrison tiptoes through the hallway, trying to stay quiet. From down the hall, he hears a low, rhythmic THUMPING.

HARRISON
What the-

Suddenly, MOANS and SCREAMS. James is absolutely railing Isabelle in their bedroom.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

So unfair.

He creeps down the hallway towards Emily's door. At the end of the hall, a LIGHT comes on.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

Shit.

He ducks into a room, shutting the door quietly behind him.

INT. BALLARD FAMILY HOME - OFFICE - NIGHT

Tom's office is magnificently appointed. Harrison's impressed - this is a man who knows what he's doing. He spots more family photos on the walls, including one of a teenage Kacey.

In a MARTIAL ARTS GI.

HARRISON

What the-

He leans in closer to inspect the photo. It's Kacey with her parents and a massive trophy - "State Judo Champion 2010."

HARRISON (CONT'D)

Huh. Kacey, you are full of surprises.

Harrison crosses to Tom's desk, sitting down in the massive leather office chair. He feels powerful in a way he hasn't before.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

This is the life.

He spots a piece of paper jammed into the top of a shredder under Tom's desk.

PRECINCT REPORTS.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

Huh?

He pulls a paper towards him, looking closer. They're voting tabulations. But the numbers are off. Tom's not winning by eighty five percent. He's losing by twelve.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

What the...

He hears muffled VOICES from the hallway, coming towards the office.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

Ah, crap.

He spots a closet door ajar, rushing over and smushing himself in amongst the office supplies. He closes the door just as-

Tom and Judith enter.

TOM

...But I really thought he was really going to be something.

JUDITH

I like Nathan so much more.

TOM

Now there's a winner.

JUDITH

It's a shame she couldn't make it work.

TOM

That's Emily for you.

JUDITH

But this Harrison... I'm not sure he's Ballard material.

TOM

He tries hard.

JUDITH

Too hard. It's embarrassing.

Harrison holds in a tear.

TOM

And he's spending a lot of time with Kacey.

JUDITH

Maybe that's a good thing. He could bring her back into the fold.

TOM

You know our daughter. Such a mind of her own.

JUDITH

I'm afraid you're right. She always was one to stray from the flock.

TOM

That's a nice way of calling her an ungrateful little shit.

JUDITH

I always had a way with words. Maybe I should have been the politician.

Tom rummages in his desk, grabbing a blue pill bottle.

TOM

Bingo.

JUDITH

Don't be too long now.

She leaves as Tom pops a pill. He reclines in his chair-

And notices the papers sticking out of the shredder.

TOM

Shit.

He jostles the paper, feeding it into the shredder.

JUDITH (O.S.)

Whenever you're ready.

WHIRR. The shredder destroys the evidence. Tom grins, exiting the room. After a moment, Harrison falls out of the closet.

HARRISON

Oh my God.

A loud THUMPING from the next room.

ISABELLE (O.S.)

Oh my God!

HARRISON

Everyone in this house is getting laid but me.

INT. GIANT SNOW GLOBE - DAY

Harrison stands in an eerily-quiet Christmas scene. Twenty yards away from him is Nathan, grunting like a bull.

They're inside a giant plastic SNOW GLOBE, with the Ballards and the rest of the town watching from outside like hungry jackals. Tom stands in front of a DJ booth-like set-up.

TOM
(muffled)
You boys ready?

Harrison looks at Nathan, then back at Tom.

HARRISON
Yeah.

NATHAN
Hold on a second.

Nathan fiddles with his Apple watch.

HARRISON
Seriously, dude?

NATHAN
Gotta track the workout. Do you think this counts as yoga?

HARRISON
...No.

NATHAN
Wait. Found it.

He looks up from his watch, face glowing.

NATHAN (CONT'D)
HIIT.

HARRISON
God I hate you.

NATHAN
So how about I turn your face into a new asshole?

HARRISON
Woah! Too far!

TOM
(muffled)
Begin!

The carolers behind him launch into a spirited rendition of "The Twelve Days of Christmas."

CAROLERS

*On the first day of Christmas, my
true love gave to me/ A partridge
in a pear tree.*

Nathan SCREAMS, sprinting towards Harrison.

HARRISON

(sotto)

You got this.

Harrison ROARS, rushing Nathan. Nathan hops over a plastic reindeer and dodges an inflatable Santa, closing in on his prey.

NATHAN

You don't belong here!

HARRISON

I do a lot more than you!

Nathan tackles Harrison, sending him sprawling on the ground.

NATHAN

You show up, unannounced, making my
life worse.

HARRISON

I didn't know you existed until
yesterday!

CAROLERS (O.S.)

*Two turtle doves/ And a partridge
in a pear tree.*

Outside the bubble-

TOM

What do you say, folks? Should we
show them the real spirit of
Christmas?

The crowd CHEERS. Tom grins demonically, pushing a button on his console.

Inside the globe, Nathan's on top of Harrison, slapping him.

NATHAN

Give up. She still loves me. I know
it.

HARRISON

Stop slapping me!

There's a loud RUMBLE.

NATHAN

What the-

CAROLERS (O.S.)

*On the fifth day of Christmas, my
true love gave to me/ FIVE GOLDEN
RINGS.*

Nathan's blasted with a jet of SNOW, flying off of Harrison.
Harrison gets up, steadying himself in the maelstrom.

HARRISON

Hey, Nathan-

Harrison smirks.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

-Chill out.

Nathan leaps up, furious.

NATHAN

It's not fair!

HARRISON

Well, life's not exactly fair. You
think I want to be spending
Christmas in the middle of bumfuck
nowhere fighting my girlfriend's
jealous ex?

CAROLERS (O.S.)

Two turtle doves-

They're blasted by another wallop of snow. Nathan stands
firm, but Harrison stumbles.

HARRISON

I thought we weren't allowed to use
weapons?

NATHAN

We're not.
(lowers voice)
He is.

Harrison looks at Tom, having the time of his life making
their existence miserable.

TOM
(muffled)
Keep fighting!

Tom cranks a knob. A loud RUMBLE sounds from beneath them.

HARRISON
Oh what fresh hell is this?

A massive INDOOR SKYDIVING FAN whirs to life. The snow in the globe starts circulating like a blizzard as Harrison and Nathan are lifted off their feet. Harrison smacks into the side of the globe.

HARRISON (CONT'D)
This sucks so, so much.

Nathan pushes himself off the glass of the far wall, darting through the snow and knocking right into Harrison's gut.

HARRISON (CONT'D)
Fuck!

Harrison grabs Nathan by the back of the shirt, launching off the wall and dragging Nathan through the air. He THROWS Nathan towards the glass. Nathan spins, absorbing the impact with his legs.

HARRISON (CONT'D)
Expected that to work better.

Nathan RUNS up the opposite wall, making it to the top of the globe and angling himself down.

NATHAN
You're dead!

He straightens his body, dive-bombing towards Harrison. At the last moment, Harrison twists in mid-air, barely avoiding Nathan's hurtling body.

NATHAN (CONT'D)
Uh oh.

WHAM. Nathan smacks into the floor. The crowd GROANS.

TOM
How about we make this a fair
fight?

Tom turns the dial down. The fan comes to an abrupt stop.

HARRISON
Ah-

Harrison lands hard next to Nathan.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

Fuck!

Nathan GROANS next to him.

NATHAN

It doesn't stop. It never stops.
That's why I've got to fight you.

HARRISON

We don't have to fight.

NATHAN

I do. I have to prove I'm Ballard material.

HARRISON

I've been trying to do that the
past few days. They don't exactly
make it easy.

NATHAN

You understand.

HARRISON

I do.

TOM

(muffled)
Punch each other!

CROWD

(muffled)
Fight! Fight! Fight!

Another blast of snow. Harrison rises to his feet, shivering and miserable.

HARRISON

Nathan-

NATHAN

Ahhhhh!

Nathan takes one last wild, reckless lunge towards Harrison. Harrison ducks him, sweeping Nathan's leg and bringing him down to the ground. He gets on top, fist cocked, ready to knock Nathan out.

TOM

(muffled)
Finish him!

Harrison looks at his fist, then out to the crowd. He feels disgust - is this really who he is?

HARRISON

No.

NATHAN

What?

HARRISON

I'm done fighting.

NATHAN

For real?

HARRISON

Yeah, I think I am.

Harrison helps Nathan to his feet.

NATHAN

What are you-

Harrison HUGS him.

NATHAN (CONT'D)

This, uh, feels nice.

HARRISON

It's a whole lot better than getting punched in the face.

Nathan drops his fighting stance.

NATHAN

Yeah. It kind of does.

He hugs Harrison back.

NATHAN (CONT'D)

Maybe we could be friends?

HARRISON

I'd settle for "not actively trying to kill each other."

NATHAN

I understand. I don't have a lot of friends.

HARRISON

Ok. Maybe. Jesus. No promises.

Outside, the crowd starts to BOO.

TOWNIE #1
Fuck him up!

TOWNIE #2
Kill each other!

TOWNIE #3
Kiss!

Townie #2 gives her a look.

TOWNIE #3 (CONT'D)
What?

Tom looks FURIOUS. Harrison gives him a withering look, then glances at Emily.

HARRISON
It's ok, man. We all do crazy things for love.

The crowd GROANS.

EXT. GIANT SNOW GLOBE - DAY

Harrison and Nathan limp out, freezing, bloodied, but otherwise feeling amazing.

HARRISON
You know, for a guy I was pretty sure was going to stab me in my sleep, you're not that bad.

NATHAN
If I had stabbed you, it would have been to your face.

HARRISON
Really starting to re-think this decision.

Emily rushes towards them, lips pursed tight.

EMILY
Harrison, can we talk?

HARRISON
Uh, sure?

Nathan hobbles away. Emily looks like she's about to explode.

EMILY
What the hell was that?

HARRISON
What do you mean?

EMILY
What you did in there!

HARRISON
I talked to Nathan, man to man.

EMILY
Exactly!

HARRISON
I thought this whole thing was
about coming together as a town,
settling arguments.

EMILY
But neither of you won!

HARRISON
We reached an understanding. Isn't
that better?

EMILY
No! You made me look like an
asshole!

HARRISON
Emily, calm down-

EMILY
No, Harrison! You disappointed me,
you disappointed daddy, you
disappointed everyone!

HARRISON
Did you really want me to fight
another man to prove to you how
much I love you?

EMILY
Yes! Every girl wants that!

Tom storms over, looking even less enthusiastic than his
daughter.

TOM
What kind of stunt did you pull in
there?

HARRISON
I used my words instead of my
fists. That's not a bad thing.

TOM

That's not how this works. That's not how any of this works.

HARRISON

You know what, Tom? When you actually listen to people, you tend to learn a lot about them.

TOM

You insolent little shit.

HARRISON

But then again, what do I know? It's not like I keep winning office with eighty five percent of the vote.

(grinning)

Or was it thirty eight?

Tom's eyes narrow. He speaks very, very softly.

TOM

I don't know what you think you know-

HARRISON

I've been hit in the head a couple of times, so maybe my math's a little off. But thirty eight percent seems like it's a lot less than fifty.

Tom grins that politician smile, but this time he can't hide the malice.

TOM

You know how this town works, Harrison? I provide the people what they want, and they make sure a Ballard stays mayor. And sometimes they need a little help remembering how great they have it.

HARRISON

You're cheating, Tom.

TOM

I'm doing what I have to do to win, Harrison. You know, it's a real shame. I thought that you'd have figured that out by now.

Tom pulls back, putting his arm around his daughter.

TOM (CONT'D)

Your mother was right, Emily. I don't think this one is Ballard material.

Harrison looks at Emily, pleading. She hangs her head.

EMILY

He's right.

HARRISON

Fine. I know when I'm not welcome. I'm out of here.

Fighting back tears, Harrison heads for his car. Tom turns to James.

TOM

Do what has to be done.

JAMES

You got it, dad.

INT. CAR - DAY

Harrison's behind the wheel, FaceTiming with Steph. The sky above him has opened up, sending down driving snow.

HARRISON

...Which means they've been cheating for, like, decades to maintain power.

STEPH

Holy shit, Harrison.

HARRISON

I know, right?

STEPH

And here I was thinking a town-wide fight club would be the weirdest thing that happened to you this week.

HARRISON

Not even close.

A DEER leaps in front of Harrison's car. He HONKS, swerving to avoid it.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

Shit!

STEPH
What happened?

HARRISON
Almost hit a deer.

STEPH
You're supposed to drive through
them. You're more likely to die if
you swerve.

HARRISON
I don't want to kill it!

STEPH
I don't want you to kill yourself!

Lights appear behind Harrison.

HARRISON
Ugh. Some dick behind me put his
brights on.

Harrison waves his hands.

HARRISON (CONT'D)
Go around. Around!

The lights move closer.

HARRISON (CONT'D)
Asshole.

Suddenly, the lights go off. Harrison sees a giant chrome
Mercedes logo inches from him.

HARRISON (CONT'D)
Shit!

The car slams into Harrison's bumper. He grabs the wheel,
holding on for dear life.

HARRISON (CONT'D)
He hit me!

STEPH
The deer?

HARRISON
The car!

STEPH
Are you ok?

CRACK. Another direct hit.

HARRISON
No!

STEPH
Stay calm.

HARRISON
Stay calm? Someone's trying to
murder me!

The Mercedes speeds up, catching the corner of Harrison's bumper. His car SPINS, hitting a guard rail.

STEPH
Harrison!

POP. The airbags deploy, slamming into Harrison's face. The last thing he sees before he passes out is James behind the wheel of a shiny silver Mercedes G Wagon.

INT. CLINIC - DAY

Harrison comes to on an examination table. Kacey's standing above him, smiling.

KACEY
Hey, look at that, you're still
alive.

HARRISON
Why do I keep waking up here?

KACEY
I'm wondering the same thing.

HARRISON
What happened?

KACEY
You got in a wreck.

He sits up, wincing. She puts her hand on his shoulder.

KACEY (CONT'D)
You know, if you want to talk to
me, you can just come find me.

HARRISON
How long was I out?

KACEY

A couple minutes. You've really got to stop getting concussed. Two in two days is super not good for your brain.

HARRISON

How did you find me?

KACEY

Your cousin called it in. You were still on the call when you crashed.

HARRISON

Crashed...

(realizing)

I didn't crash. I was hit.

KACEY

What?

HARRISON

I think it was your brother.

KACEY

Yeah.

HARRISON

Not the reaction I was expecting.

KACEY

My brother's an idiot, but I'm sure he got the idea from my shit head father.

HARRISON

So your family's trying to kill me?

KACEY

Probably.

HARRISON

And you saved my life.

KACEY

It's my job.

HARRISON

But, why? Why do you stay in this town? Why not leave?

KACEY

Because, as much as I hate to admit it, I'm scared. My family's here.

(MORE)

KACEY (CONT'D)

And, yeah, they're crazy, but they're the only one I've got.

HARRISON

That's the thing I've learned being on my own. Sometimes, it's better to choose your own family. Tell me something.

KACEY

What?

HARRISON

Why don't you participate in the pageant? I saw you used to be a judo champion. You've got to be a decent fighter, right? I mean, you could probably kick my ass.

KACEY

A roll of paper towels could kick your ass.

HARRISON

Fair enough.

Kacey sits down next to him. Surprisingly close.

KACEY

I did judo in high school. Made it to the state championship. But when I got to my final match, right as we were about to fight, my opponent dropped to the ground. She was having a seizure, right there on the mat.

She looks shaken. We've never seen this look on her before.

KACEY (CONT'D)

I tried helping her. I was screaming and crying, frustrated that there was absolutely nothing I could do. She was helpless. I was helpless.

She looks back at Harrison, determined.

KACEY (CONT'D)

But the paramedics that showed up? They saved that girl's life. So I decided "fuck this." I wasn't going to fight anymore.

(MORE)

KACEY (CONT'D)

I was going to do what those paramedics did. Save lives.

HARRISON

Wow.

KACEY

Yeah.

HARRISON

For what it's worth, I'm starting to realize you're the only truly good person in your family.

KACEY

And I'm starting to get what my sister sees in you.

The comment hangs in the air. Kacey gives him a look. THE look. Holy shit, is this actually going to happen?

RIIIING. The phone startles them.

KACEY (CONT'D)

I need to get that.

As she gets up-

HARRISON

Thank you, Kacey.

KACEY

For what?

HARRISON

For showing me that there's something in this town worth fighting for.

As a particularly haunting rendition of O HOLY NIGHT picks up-

TOWNSPEOPLE (O.S.)

*O holy night/ The stars are
brightly shining/ It is the night
of our dear savior's birth/*

--Harrison stands with Maggie in the market. He mouths "I'm sorry." They hug. Maggie smiles.

--Harrison hands Gus a sixer of beer through the window of his truck. Gus cracks a grin, opening a beer and tipping it towards Harrison with a nod.

--Harrison and Nathan hug it out in the Silver Dollar Diner. Nathan starts CRYING. Harrison, unsure about what to do, pats him on the back.

NATHAN

Thanks, Harrison. You're my best friend.

HARRISON

You're... welcome?

EXT. TOWN SQUARE - NIGHT

All the townspeople have gathered, holding candles as flurries descend on them

TOWNSPEOPLE

Fall on your knees/ Oh hear the angels' voices/

A figure appears cloaked in shadow at the far end of the town square.

TOWNSPEOPLE (CONT'D)

O night divine/ O night/ O holy night.

Harrison steps into the candlelight, looking badass for the first and only time in his life.

HARRISON

Ballards!

Harrison steps into the middle of the town square. Now all attention is on him.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

We've got a whole lot to fucking discuss.

TOM

(to James)

I thought I told you to take care of him?

JAMES

I did! I mean, I thought he was dead. I ran him off the road.

TOM

Are you insane? I meant intimidate him, not murder him!

JAMES

Sorry, dad. You should have been more specific.

TOM

Idiot child.

Emily rushes down from the podium.

EMILY

What are you doing here?

HARRISON

Had something I needed to get off my chest.

EMILY

This isn't really a good time.

HARRISON

Why did you even invite me here, Emily? Why did you put me through all this shit?

EMILY

Because I really, really thought we could make it work. I wanted my family to like you. I believed in you. But you're just not-

HARRISON

-Ballard material. Yeah, I got the hint after I got concussed, kicked in the dick, run off the road, concussed-

EMILY

You said "concussed" twice.

HARRISON

Yeah, because I got my brains scrambled trying to prove myself to your scumbag family!

TOM

That's enough, Harrison. You're upsetting people.

HARRISON

Oh, you want to upset people? How about you come clean about how you've been winning election after election?

The crowd goes completely silent.

TOM

Choose your next words very, very carefully.

HARRISON

I saw the results, Tom. You lost, fair and square. And something tells me it wasn't the first time.

TOM

I assure you, I value the democratic process of our fine town.

HARRISON

Bullshit. You're nothing but a petty tyrant.

Harrison turns to the crowd.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

This pageant isn't about letting your rage out. It's about keeping you angry all year so you won't notice the Ballard family ruling you like kings.

Maggie, listening from the crowd, glowers.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

They don't give a shit about you.

Gus' hand tightens around a snow shovel.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

They don't give a shit who they hurt.

Nathan glances up at Emily.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

All they care about is staying on top.

HUBBUB from the crowd. Harrison's making a whole lot of sense.

TOM

Please, folks, don't listen to him. He doesn't know what he's talking about.

EMILY
You need to stop, Harrison.

HARRISON
Why?

EMILY
Because you're ruining everything!

HARRISON
Emily, I promise you, your family
ruined this town long, long before
I ever got here.

Emily SHOVES Harrison. He falls backwards, astonished.

EMILY
You want to know why you're not one
of us? Because you're a loser!

KACEY (O.S.)
Fuuuuuuuuuuck you!

SMACK. Kacey runs in, sucker punching her sister. Emily drops her candle, stumbling into a TOWNIE. The candle rolls away as the Townie loses his balance, knocking into a second townie.

TOWNIE #2
Hey, watch where you're going!

TOWNIE #1
Make me, why don't you.

Townie #2 takes a swing at Townie #1, catching him in the jaw and sending him sprawling into another one of their neighbors. The neighbor shoves Townie #1.

TOWNIE #3
Back off!

The crowd around them starts shoving.

Then throws punches.

HARRISON
That's not good.

The violence spreads like a wave, enveloping the entirety of the assembled town. Everyone is screaming decades worth of rage and resentment towards each other, punching, kicking and shoving while they do.

It's a town-wide brawl.

Emily SHOVES Kacey.

EMILY
No family, Kacey!

KACEY
Does it look like there's any rules
anymore?

She's right. It's complete madness.

EMILY
This is between me and Harrison!

KACEY
Not anymore. I've been waiting my
whole life for this.

They start grappling. A dozen feet away from them, Emily's candle comes to a stop under the Christmas tree. The flame ignites a decorative present, which quickly spreads to the tree itself. It's a fire fight.

Harrison picks himself up off the ground. He scans the crowd bathed in flickering orange light, trying to find Tom. His eyes land on James.

HARRISON
Good enough.

Harrison rushes James, fist connecting with his flawless teeth. James drops, incapacitated.

HARRISON (CONT'D)
Huh. That was easy.

ISABELLE
Aaaaaaah!

Isabells jumps on Harrison's back, tearing into him.

HARRISON
Get off me you slave owning psycho!

ISABELLE
(struggling)
They were slave SHIPS.

HARRISON
Not better!

Harrison FLIPS her off his back, bringing her down next to James with a thud. She's not getting back up. He tries to catch his breath as he hears-

JACKED SANTA (O.S.)
That one is mine!

He turns to find Jacked Santa beckoning him towards him.

HARRISON
Oh, come on.

JACKED SANTA
You and me, buck-o.

HARRISON
Can't we call a truce?

Jacked Santa RIPS a leg off his Salvation Army tripod, swinging the change-filled kettle around his body like a flail.

HARRISON (CONT'D)
I thought you couldn't use weapons?

Jacked Santa gestures to the chaos swirling around them.

HARRISON (CONT'D)
Right. Anarchy.

JACKED SANTA
I'm gonna jingle your bells.

HARRISON
Does that mean... you're gonna jerk me off?

JACKED SANTA
What? No. What's wrong with you?

HARRISON
Just, in context, that's what it sounded like.

Jacked Santa rockets the metal bucket towards Harrison, who barely dodges it.

HARRISON (CONT'D)
Fuck this.

Harrison sprints away, Jacked Santa following on his heels like a bloodhound. Harrison skids around a corner, finding himself in-

EXT. PETTING ZOO - NIGHT

Harrison ducks behind a hot chocolate stand, gasping for air.

HARRISON
This fucking town.

WHAM. The kettle obliterates the sign above Harrison's head. He dives forward, leaping into an enclosure as Jacked Santa closes on him like a yuletide Terminator.

HARRISON (CONT'D)
Why do you want to hurt me do
badly?

JACKED SANTA
You've just got one of those faces.
Time to deck the halls.

Jacked Santa takes a swing at him with the improvised mace. Harrison backs away from him, bumping into-

DONKEY
Hee-haw.

He's in a live-action nativity scene. The DONKEY he's run into rears up, KICKING Harrison towards Jacked Santa. Jacked Santa kicks him back towards the donkey, who kicks him towards Jacked Santa, who kicks him back towards the donkey.

Bad time to be Harrison's internal organs.

The donkey gives one last hard kick, sending Harrison tumbling into Jacked Santa. Santa grabs Harrison by the throat, hoisting him into the air.

JACKED SANTA
I've been waiting two whole days to
do this.

HARRISON
Hey, Santa-

He pulls the BELL out of Jacked Santa's waistband.

HARRISON (CONT'D)
Season's beatings, motherfucker.

DONG. Harrison literally rings his bell, brass connecting with temple in a thunderclap. Jacked Santa stumbles, dropping Harrison. Harrison gives him a KICK, sending Santa crashing through a gate.

Santa lands with a thud in the middle of a heard of REINDEER. The reindeer eye the interloper, then the now-open paddock. As they GRUNT and stamp their hooves-

JACKED SANTA

Oh no.

HARRISON

Run!

The reindeer stampede, chasing them out of the petting zoo and back into-

EXT. SUMMIT VALLEY - TOWN SQUARE - NIGHT

Harrison leaps out of the way as reindeer thunder around him. He takes in the scene. Neighbor is fighting neighbor. The town is literally on fire. It's a Christmas hellscape. And at the center of the town square, Emily and Kacey are rolling around, trying to get the upper hand.

EMILY

You've always been such a problem,
Kacey! No wonder mom and dad like
me more!

Kacey flips Emily, pinning her on the ground.

KACEY

State Judo champion, bitch.

Harrison is YANKED backwards by a bruised, bloodied Jacked Santa.

HARRISON

Oh for fuck's sake.

JACKED SANTA

Any last words?

HARRISON

Get out of the street.

JACKED SANTA

What?

WHOOSH. Jacked Santa is hit with a massive snow drift as Gus' snow plow careers down the street. He goes flying, landing in a crumpled heap.

HARRISON

Told you.

Gus' snow plow jumps the curb, townspeople diving out of the way as the truck slams into a tree. The engine catches on fire, slowly spreading to the rest of the vehicle.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

Gus? GUS?

Harrison runs to the cab, opening the door. Gus' face is blue. He's clutching his heart. Shit.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

Kacey!

Kacey decks Emily then looks up.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

Emergency!

She spots Gus.

KACEY

Keep him alive!

The riot around them starts to die down, everyone's attention turning to the snowplow. Harrison pulls Gus from the driver's seat, laying him on the grass.

HARRISON

Don't die on me.

Gus is looking real, real bad. Harrison starts doing chest compressions.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

Come on. Stay with us.

Gus' eyes spring open. He's alive! A loud SIREN fills the square. Kacey maneuvers her ambulance forward, crowd parting before her. She hops out, full EMT mode.

TOWNIE #1

Is Gus going to be ok?

Kacey drops down next to Harrison. She checks Gus's pulse.

KACEY

Yeah. He'll make it.

Kacey and Harrison sling Gus over their shoulders, moving him towards the ambulance. Kacey straps him in.

KACEY (CONT'D)

You saved his life.

HARRISON

Just trying to do the right thing.

Kacey gives him a warm look. She speeds off, revealing Tom, Emily, and the rest of their family.

JAMES
Do something, daddy.

JUDITH
You heard your son, Tom. Be a man.

Tom winces, SCREAMS, and runs towards Harrison.

HARRISON
Enough!

Harrison catches Tom with a punch to the stomach. The mayor hunches over, wind knocked out of him.

TOM
Listen to me, you little bastard-

HARRISON
No. Listen to me. All of you.

He faces the crowd.

HARRISON (CONT'D)
I know you guys are angry. I'm angry too. I came here because of love, but this town is drowning in hate. And this-

He waves his hand towards the burning Christmas tree.

HARRISON (CONT'D)
-Is what happens when you hold onto that hate instead of dealing with your problems.

The townspeople are hanging on his every word.

HARRISON (CONT'D)
Assholes like Tom? They thrive on hate. They keep us mad at each other so we won't notice that they have all the power.

Townie #1 gives him a nod. Harrison grins.

HARRISON (CONT'D)
So, yeah, get angry. But not at each other. Work your shit out. Compromise isn't weakness. It's the foundation of a strong community.
(MORE)

HARRISON (CONT'D)

Alone you're weak. Together you're strong.

TOWNIE #1

He's right!

TOWNIE #2

Listen to the new guy!

HARRISON

And for the love of God, stop saying Merry Christmas to each other when you really mean fuck you.

Smiles from the crowd. Townie #1 turns to Townie #2.

TOWNIE #1

Fuck you, Jerry.

TOWNIE #2

Fuck you right back, Marty. Merry Christmas.

TOWNIE #1

Love you, buddy.

Maggie turns to her BOSS.

MAGGIE

Hey, Mrs. Snyder, suck my whole ass.

Nathan gives his neighbor a big bear hug.

NATHAN

You're a gigantic piece of shit, Maurice.

The townspeople begin smiling, embracing, loudly laughing.

TOWNSPEOPLE

Go to hell, Tracy!/Gargle my dong, Mark./Get fucked on a table leg, Stanley/I love you, bro.

Tom gathers himself up, doing his best to save face.

TOM

You're right, Harrison. You've given us all a lot to think about. It's time this town-

TOWNIE #1
Hey, fuck you Mayor Tom!

TOWNIE #2
I didn't vote for you.

TOWNIE #3
Me neither!

Jacked Santa picks himself up from the ground.

JACKED SANTA
I voted for him.

Nathan kicks him in the face, sending him back to the snow.

TOWNIE #2
Mayor Tom made us do this!

TOWNIE #3
Let's get him!

Tom stumbles back towards his family.

TOM
You don't understand! We were only
doing this for your own good.

JUDITH
We?

TOM
You played your part in this,
Judith.

JUDITH
Shut up, Tom. For once in your
goddamn life, just shut the fuck
up.

TOM
Don't undermine me in public!

JAMES
Don't yell at mom!

TOM
James, I mean this with all love,
the only reason you're here is
because your mother said birth
control made her feel "too
bloated."

Judith winds up, DECKING Tom. He drops to the snow as the crowd CHEERS.

JUDITH
You'll be resigning. Effective
immediately.

Tom scrambles away as the townspeople chase him. Harrison can't help but smile. Emily approaches him.

EMILY
Harrison?

HARRISON
What?

EMILY
I'm sorry. It was really awful of
me to do, well, all of this. You
didn't deserve it.

The on-fire tree collapses into the snow.

HARRISON
I appreciate that.

EMILY
So I'll see you around?

HARRISON
Nah.

And with that, he walks away. James steps in front of him.

JAMES
Where do you think you're going?

Harrison raises his fist. James flinches, hard.

HARRISON
Merry Christmas.

He takes the car keys from James' hand, heading towards the beautiful, shiny Mercedes G wagon.

EXT. TOWN - NIGHT

Harrison's behind the wheel of the G wagon. He spots the welcome sign, swerves the car and SMASHES it. He LAUGHS, flipping off the town as he drives away.

STEPH (O.S.)
Merry Christmas!

INT. AUNT'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Steph tosses a gift towards her cousin. Her MOM and DAD sit with them in the charmingly tacky living room.

STEPH

Jesus, you look like you lost a fight with a steam roller.

HARRISON

You should see the other guys.

Harrison opens the gift - a framed photo of Harrison and his mom.

STEPH

Thought it would be nice to remind you how loved you are.

HARRISON

It's perfect.

Harrison hands her her gift.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

Merry Christmas, Steph.

She rips off the paper, revealing a MEATBALL HOAGIE.

STEPH

Harrison!

HARRISON

It's all I could find last minute.

STEPH

I love it.

DING DONG. Steph crosses to the door.

AUNT

Are you still seeing that nice girl?

HARRISON

Nah, it wasn't meant to be.

STEPH (O.S.)

Harrison? It's for you.

INT. AUNT'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - DAY

Steph's standing at the door with-

HARRISON
Kacey? What are you doing here?

SLAP.

HARRISON (CONT'D)
What the hell?

KACEY
That's for leaving without saying
goodbye.

STEPH
(sotto)
This chick rules.

Harrison rubs his jaw.

HARRISON
You were kind of busy.

KACEY
And you could have waited around a
little while longer.

HARRISON
Why are you here?

She leans in, kissing Harrison. It's absolute heaven. Steph
backs away.

STEPH
If you'll excuse me, I've got a
date with a meatball hoagie.

Harrison pulls back.

HARRISON
Merry Christmas, Kacey.

KACEY
Merry Christmas, Harrison.

HARRISON
Do you want to meet my family?

KACEY
More than anything.

She steps into the house. He closes the door behind her,
smiling, as a new, updated version Darlene Love's hit holiday
song "Fistmas (Baby Please Come Home)" plays us out.