



Main Event Interpretation
Script Verification Cover Sheet

1 of 2

Please print or type the following information.

School Name:	Willard High School	State:	MO
NSDA District:	Ozark		
Coach Name:	Kathy Tobin		
Student Name:	Ethan Gambriel / Tyler Simpson		
Title of Cutting:	A Tiny Miracle With a Fiberoptic Unicorn		
Event (choose one):	<input type="checkbox"/> HI	<input type="checkbox"/> DI	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DUO
	<input type="checkbox"/> POI		

I certify that we, the coach(es), student(s), and administrator(s) directly affiliated with our NSDA chapter, have complied with the following requirements.

- I have included a word-processed manuscript of the cutting.
- I have included a highlighted copy of the original script. The pages are in the order of the cutting. If lines from one page were used more than once within the cutting, the original page was re-copied, highlighted, and inserted to show the order of the line(s) used.
- I have clearly indicated in ink any words added or changed as permitted in the rules.
- I am aware of the Transition Rule: "Failure to clearly indicate the addition of words will be subject to disqualification. Changes to the script may only be used for the purpose of transition or to eliminate profane language. Transitions may be used to clarify the logical sequence of ideas. They are not to be used for the purpose of embellishing the humorous or dramatic effect of the literature."
- The pages submitted from the original script accurately reflect the performance.

Coach Signature:	Kathy Tobin	Date:	2/21/19
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A TINY MIRACLE WITH A FIBEROPTIC UNICORN

by Don Zolidis

Kelly: Louis! Let's Go!

LOUIS: I'm coming!

Kelly: I am going to murder you if we are late!

PRESENT LOUIS: Let's freeze this for a moment. That's me. December 19th, 1986. The big question of the day was whether or not to feather my hair.

Kelly: Oh my god, what are you doing?

Louis: I'm fixing my hair.

Kelly: Here

Louis: Ah! Stop it I'm going to get cancer!

Kelly: You are not, Shut up I'm trying to help you! Fine. If I'm late to rehearsal, You're dead.

PRESENT LOUIS: Our activity at Church for December was to put on the nativity play. My sister Kelly was the director and Carolyn Warren, the hottest girl in the eighth grade was going to be Mary. Therefore I wanted to be Joseph.

KELLY: Okay I don't want to be here. You don't want to be here. But we're supposed to be honoring the birth of Jesus so we're going to get through this thing. Louis, you're going to be an ass.

LOUIS: Can I be Joseph?

KELLY: No. You are going to be an ass.

PRESENT LOUIS: This is going to be the worst week of my life. And also the best.

-----INTRO-----

T: If you're awkward and you know it clap your hands...

E: Being awkward is something that almost anyone can relate to.

T: This is something that our main character Louis realizes as he chases the girl of his dreams while coping with his crazy family.

E: As Louis looks back on his life in 1986 we see that things do not always go as planned

T: But his story is a reminder that even when things go wrong, it's up to us to find the light.

A Tiny Miracle With A Fiberoptic Unicorn By Don Zolidis

CAROLYN: Hey Louis. Sucks that you're an ass.

LOUIS: It's fine. I've got less lines, you know? Just sort of a braying. You're awesome in the play by the way.

CAROLYN: Oh thanks. I should go work on my lines.

LOUIS: Wait um... I got you a christmas present.

CAROLYN: Really? That's sweet.

LOUIS: I don't have it on me. Maybe I could um.. Give it to you sometime.

CAROLYN: Okay. See ya.

PRESENT LOUIS: Of course I didn't have a present for her, and I had five days to get it. I had to figure out how to deliver it without getting a ride from my Dad. Which brings me to the subject of my dad.

GEORGE: You will get a little brother when your daddy apologizes to mommy for the Jell-O incident. But that's all I'm gonna say about that.

PRESENT LOUIS: And my mom was generally a nice person . Except for when company was coming over.

Emily: What are you doing, George!

GEORGE: I'm cleaning the television!

EMILY: If I come in there and find that game on you're going to be mopping the floor of the garage! Okay, Kelly. Louis is staying in your room.

KELLY: Are you kidding me?! Can I stay at a friend's house?

EMILY: No. Both of you are staying here. Both of you are behaving. My god, it's four days.

GEORGE: Where is the instant replay!?

EMILY: George, you're not going to live long if you don't mop the kitchen.

GEORGE: Where's the mop bucket?

EMILY: Where it's been for the last fifteen years.

GEORGE: If you know where it is why don't you tell me?

EMILY: ALL RIGHT EVERYONE SHUT UP. I am going to have a conniption fit and drop dead on the floor of the kitchen and then you people will be forced to clean the house without me, which will be a problem BECAUSE YOU DON'T EVEN KNOW WHERE THE MOP BUCKET IS!

GEORGE: It's in the laundry room... Oh fudge, she's early.

GJ: Oh dang it, look at you all.

GEORGE: So how was your trip up mom?

GJ: Terrible. All right. So this happened to me three days ago. There was a snake loose in my backyard. A rattler. So I call the police, I've got my handgun underneath my bed just in case. The doorbell rings

GJ: It's the police. Well one cop. This lesbian.

PARENTS: Mom!

GJ: Alright so this lady police officer, who happens to enjoy the company of other lady police officers, and she's looking at me. And I'm wondering what's going on in her head. She said she couldn't do anything about it. So I said, why? And she said the snake hadn't broken any laws. So I said if you don't shoot him, I'll shoot him. And this lesbian-- excuse me, lady says Have you registered that firearm? So now I'm living in Nazi Germany where a lesbian cop can bust into my house and not shoot a snake and instead I'm the criminal?

GEORGE: Woah woah woah, what happened to the snake?

GJ: Well I can't look for it inside the house, so I'm in the backyard. I look left. I look right. I turn around. The snake is going inside my house. I fired six shots. It's dead. I hit it once.

PRESENT LOUIS: Oh yes, it was going to be a festive yuletide season.

LOUIS: Hey Kelly? Hey Kelly are you asleep?

KELLY: Yeah, I fell asleep in the ten second you shut your stupid mouth. Do not talk to me.

LOUIS: How old were you when you had your first kiss?

KELLY: I am not telling you. Wait a minute... Have you kissed anybody?

LOUIS: Define kissed.

KELLY: So you haven't kissed anybody?

LOUIS: I'm gonna kiss Carolyn Warren

KELLY: Yeah you are.

LOUIS: What should I do?

KELLY: You're asking me for advice?

LOUIS: yeah. I mean you've got like a ton of experience with guys. Like tons. Every week there's like a new guy. It's like you don't have any standards at all.

KELLY: Alright shut up. You want my advice? Give up.

LOUIS: I'm not going to do that.

KELLY: Alright look. You're a dork, you're ugly, you're stupid. I mean the list goes on and on. But underneath all of that you're a nice guy. So maybe God will smile on you, but that's the best you can hope for.

LOUIS: I love you Kelly.

KELLY: Shut up.

LOUIS: I'm going to hug you at the mall tomorrow.

KELLY: I'll knee you in the balls if you try it.

LOUIS: You're so sweet..

KELLY: Don't mention it.

LOUIS: Hey Kelly.. Do you think mom and dad are happy anymore?

KELLY: Go to sleep.

PRESENT LOUIS: At this point in time I didn't realize that my mom and dad weren't getting along. I just thought that's how adults behaved when they loved each other. But I didn't have much time to ponder that because I had just one thing on my mind: the perfect present. Which brings me to the Brookfield Mall.

Kelly: Well I'll see you guys later.

Louis: Where are you going?

Kelly: We haven't even made it out of JCPenny's yet. It's not good for me to be seen here. Meet me at the Orange Julius when you want to leave. But don't wave at me or anything.

Present Day Louis: After Two hours, the Brookfield mall held a fierce deathgrip on my soul. But then I saw it. It was a fiberoptic unicorn figurine. To give you a feeling of my wonder at the sight of this: I had never seen anything fiber optic before. It cycled through different colors, first green, then blue, et cetera ...and then back again. I bought that unicorn. And I was a hero.

CARDLYN: Hey. What are you doing here?

LOUIS: Hey. I got you a present.

CAROLYN: Really? That's so sweet. Wow.

LOUIS: Yeah, it spoke to me.

CAROLYN: It talks? That's so cool!

LOUIS: No I mean like *it spoke to me*. Like I saw it and thought of you because it's different colors and you have different colors and I thought it was cool. Do you like it?

CAROLYN: Sure...

LOUIS: So um... bye.

CAROLYN: Bye. Thanks for the present.

Present LOUIS: I looked at her and realized that she was never going to like me in the way that I wanted, it was like all that hope had just been carved out of me. Hope though is not such an easy thing to kill, especially in the face of reality.

I totally missed my chance.... But she smiled when she opened it. You don't smile for no reason... Tomorrow it's gonna be different. I'm gonna kiss her.

KELLY: Okay, so... Um.... The youth group will now present the story of Mary for your spiritual fulfillment. But first I wanna say that we used to have more actors in the show, but certain people... I'm not even gonna say their names, thought it was more important to fake illnesses than to portray the birth of Jesus. So how does it feel to have ruined Christmas for everybody?

PRESENT LOUIS: From where I was waiting in the wings, I could see the audience trying to make up their minds if this was blasphemous or merely bad. But the horrible disaster of the Nativity couldn't distract my parents for long.

EMILY: George! We're ready for dinner! Would you mind saying Grace?

GEORGE: Okay, um, let us bow our heads in prayer.... Dear lord: thank you for bringing the whole family together. And please let us remember that we love each other.. Despite difficulties... and...

EMILY: One more thing, Lord. Please let certain other people in this family not be crazy and mean and make outrageous demands during the holiday season.

KELLY: And could you please punish the people who didn't show up for the nativity play because they were liars?

GJ: And God. thanks for Jesus and for cats.

BOTH: Amen.

LOUIS: I'll get it. Carolyn? Hey everybody-this is Carolyn.

CAROLYN: Hey. Sorry I'm late.

EMILY: Not at all. Sit down.

GEORGE: Louis, here's a thought. Why don't you and Carolyn go in the basement.

PRESENT LOUIS: I took my dad's advice, and we snuck off to the basement. There was an open vent straight up to the kitchen. You could pretty much hear every word of what happened up there. And as I was sitting there with the love of my life this is what we heard:

Emily: George what are you doing in here?

George: Putting dishes away.

Emily: Well you're doing it wrong. The little bowls go inside the big bowls.

George: See I thought it was the other way around. I was trying to bend the law of physics.

Emily: You're not half as funny as you think you are.

GEORGE: That still makes me pretty funny.

EMILY: Don't just let me do it.

GEORGE: Oh God no! Just tell me!

EMILY: You don't take anything seriously. Like, we're fighting and you want to make jokes.

GEORGE: Can we just have an argument about one thing. Is it the dishes? Is it my sense of humor?

EMILY: It's all the same thing

GEORGE: Which is?

EMILY: You're not very considerate. You don't ever think of anyone else but yourself

GEORGE: Can I tell you something I've been wanting to get this off of my chest for a while.

There's this woman at work I have lunch with every day. A couple of weeks ago she said, "your wife must laugh all the time" and I said yeah. But I was lying because you don't enjoy me anymore.

EMILY: Maybe we should end this.

GEORGE: Maybe we should.

CARDLYN: I'm sorry Louis. But I have something that will cheer you up. I got you a present. Merry Christmas.

LOUIS: It's a skull

CARDLYN: It glows in the dark.

LOUIS: This is awesome.

PRESENT LOUIS: And that was my first kiss, My parents got divorced a couple months later. So that's that. My last christmas with mom and dad. As for me and Carolyn: we kissed 4 more times. Our relationship lasted nine days, but that was a pretty spectacular week and almost a half. We got to be good friends though. I'm a totally different person now than that nervous, awkward kid, although... I have managed to hold on to one thing. Because this is still awesome.

A TINY MIRACLE WITH A FIBEROPTIC UNICORN

A SOMEWHAT NOSTALGIC,
SENTIMENTAL COMEDY IN TWO ACTS

by Don Zolidis

ACT I

(The Jacobs home. A modest ranch-style home in a modest ranch-style neighborhood of a modest ranch-style suburb. Built in the 1970s. Still recovering.)

(Please be creative with the set. It must function as the house, but also needs to have room for various other locations. Most of these could be delineated with light, but the look of the show should always be somewhat soft.)

(At rise, PRESENT LOUIS is sitting on the edge of the stage, outside of the world of the play. He is dressed nicely and looks respectable. He watches as LOUIS, a boy of about thirteen, darts into the living room to check his hair. Christmas music plays.)

EMILY. *(Off-stage:)* I thought we were leaving!

LOUIS. Just a minute!

(LOUIS goes to a closet and pulls out a rather disgusting-looking jean jacket.)

KELLY. *(Off-stage:)* Louis! Let's go!

LOUIS. I'm coming!

(He checks his hair again. He tries to wet it and takes a comb from his back pocket.)

KELLY. *(Off-stage:)* I'm going to murder you if we're late!

EMILY. *(Off-stage:)* Don't say that Kelly!

KELLY. *(Off-stage:)* I'm going to maim you if we're late!

PRESENT LOUIS. Let's freeze this for a moment.

(LOUIS freezes.)

That's me. December 19th, 1986. About six forty-five p.m. I'm on my way to church. In about two minutes my mother is going to disapprove of everything I've done to get ready. The big question of the day was whether or not to feather my hair. I'm torturing myself internally over it. Michael J. Fox did it. Jason Bateman did it. Michael Jackson...well, at this point in time he was still kinda cool.

(PRESENT LOUIS walks around the set.)

We're in Brookfield, Wisconsin. A pretty ordinary place. I'm thirteen years old. And this is going to be the worst week of my life. And also the best.

(KELLY, 17, enters, sporting big hair. LOUIS unfreezes.)

KELLY. Oh my god, what are you doing?

LOUIS. I'm fixing my hair.

(KELLY snorts.)

KELLY. Whatever.

LOUIS. Does it look cool?

KELLY. Yeah Louis you look really cool. You're such a reject. Come on.

(They freeze.)

PRESENT LOUIS. 1986 was the epicenter of big hair. There was always a faint aroma of Aqua Net in the air, we inhaled the stuff daily, and my sister Kelly, she was the living, breathing, beating heart of the frizzy-haired earthquake. She was personally responsible for a hole in the ozone layer the size of eastern Connecticut. I used to think that you could trap a gerbil in her bangs.

KELLY. Here.

(KELLY produces a can of hair spray and sprays down Louis' head.)

LOUIS. Ah! Stop it I'm going to get cancer!

KELLY. You are not, shut up. I'm trying to help you.

(EMILY enters.)

EMILY. What are you doing to him?

KELLY. He's feathering his hair.

EMILY. You are not feathering your hair before we go to church. Where's your coat?

LOUIS. I'm wearing my jacket.

EMILY. You're not wearing that to church.

LOUIS. Why not?

EMILY. Louis, Jesus loves you, but he does not love you in that jacket.

LOUIS. It's not cold out.

EMILY. It's minus seven degrees outside.

LOUIS. I don't like my coat.

KELLY. God you are immature Louis.

(Imitating him in a whine:)

'I don't like my winter coat.' You're such a baby.

LOUIS. Shut up.

KELLY. You shut up.

LOUIS. You shut up.

KELLY. No you shut up first. How bout this?

(She sprays him with hair spray.)

EMILY. Kelly. Not helping. Go sit in the car.

KELLY. I'm gonna take my car to church.

EMILY. Get in the car.

KELLY. Fine. If I'm late to rehearsal, you're dead.

LOUIS. Bite me.

KELLY. What was that?

EMILY. KELLY GO SIT IN THE CAR!

KELLY. I didn't do anything! GOD!

(She leaves.)

LOUIS. Mom, can I please just wear my jean jacket?

EMILY. Why do you want to wear your jacket, sweetheart? Are you trying to impress a girl?

LOUIS. No.

(A light shines on CAROLYN, 13, looking resplendent in church attire.)

PRESENT LOUIS. One of the conditions of being thirteen is that you are continuously lying. I hadn't told my mother the truth about anything in three months. Of course there was a girl.

EMILY. Let me tell you something about the people who go to church, okay pudding?

LOUIS. Don't call me that.

EMILY. I can't even call you that any more? You used to like that.

LOUIS. When I was five.

EMILY. I carried you in my stomach for nine months, I changed five thousand diapers, and I can't call you pudding if I want to?

LOUIS. No.

EMILY. Do you understand what pregnancy does to a woman?

LOUIS. Mom. Fine.

EMILY. That's all I ask. Let me explain about the people who go to church. They're very judgmental. They see a child sit in a pew wearing a jean jacket and you know what goes through their minds? Oh that poor boy—his father doesn't have a job. I mean it's bad enough they look at Kelly and see that contraption pasted to her forehead. Okay?

LOUIS. Fine. I'll wear the stupid coat.

(He switches coats.)

EMILY. That's all I ask, pudding.

(They leave.)

PRESENT LOUIS. The girl.

(Lights shine on CAROLYN. Perhaps a breeze fans her. Something like Peter Cetera's "The Glory of Love" plays.)

Carolyn Warren was the hottest girl in the eighth grade gifted and talented class. Okay, she was the only hot girl in the eighth grade gifted and talented class. And I loved her. A mad, consuming, devouring, stomach-churning love. I dreamt about her. Carolyn Warren was my secret goddess.

(KELLY enters with LOUIS in tow.)

KELLY. Okay let's get started. Sorry I'm late I had to wait for retarded over there.

PRESENT LOUIS. Due to a trick of fate, Kelly was the leader of our church youth group. I don't know how this happened; I think maybe she was the only high school kid to come around our church. And **our activity** for December was to put on the nativity play; Kelly was going to be the director. Carolyn was going to be Mary. Therefore I wanted to be Joseph.

(KELLY addresses CAROLYN, LOUIS, and a group of imaginary kids.)

KELLY. Okay. I don't want to be here. You don't want to be here. But we're supposed to be honoring the birth of Jesus so we're going to get through this thing. Louis. You are going to be an ass.

LOUIS. What?

KELLY. Shut up. That's what they're called. Get used to it. You live in the manger with the other animals. Now we're supposed to use the Jensen baby for the baby Jesus because they just had a baby but I think their baby is gross. It looks like it got caught in the washing machine, it's got like permanent upturned nostrils. Baby Jesus did not look like that. Plus it smells. Ugh.

LOUIS. Hey Kelly can I be Joseph?

KELLY. Raise your hand if you want to speak.

KELLY. She hates us!

EMILY. She does not hate you—

GEORGE. Don't take it personally Kelly, she hates everyone.

EMILY. George!

KELLY. She's gonna complain anyway Mom! She's gonna find fault with something. She hates my hair—

LOUIS. To be honest, there's a lot a hate about—

KELLY. Shut up Louis! I don't like Grandma Jacobs I'm not cleaning the house for her! I hate it when you get like this! You don't care about me! All you want is a maid!

EMILY. Fine. Leave. I'll clean the house myself. Louis stop what you're doing.

LOUIS. I want to help, Mom.

EMILY. No. I'll do it. I'm the only one who cares, apparently.

LOUIS. Mom I want to do this.

EMILY. Give me the lights Louis.

LOUIS. Look see I'm doing a good job now.

EMILY. You sure are sweetie, why don't you go live on the streets with your sister?

LOUIS. What?

KELLY. Oh stop taking it out on him.

EMILY. Well I certainly don't want to take it out on the maid. And don't tell me what to do in my house. If you don't want to clean and just make a nuisance of yourself, fine, but don't presume to lecture me on how to be a decent person.

GEORGE. Emily—let's go in the other room.

EMILY. Not right now.

GEORGE. Let's let the kids clean up for once and we'll go in the other room.

EMILY. They won't clean right.

GEORGE. Your mother won't notice—she'll be too busy yelling at me. Let's go in the other room.

EMILY. Fine.

(EMILY and GEORGE leave. LOUIS hangs a few ornaments in silence. KELLY stews.)

LOUIS. You know what your problem is?

(No response.)

I said do you know what your problem is?

KELLY. Were you anticipating some kind of reaction to that statement?

LOUIS. Well, you and Mom are kinda the same. You're both really stubborn. That's why you fight all the time.

KELLY. Oh really. Thank you. That was genius, Louis. I'll remember that if I'm flushing my head down the toilet.

LOUIS. What?

KELLY. It's an expression.

LOUIS. You don't have to get mad **at** me. I didn't do anything.

KELLY. Whatever.

(LOUIS finishes the lights.)

LOUIS. There. What do you think?

KELLY. Sucks.

LOUIS. Seriously?

KELLY. It's okay.

(LOUIS turns on the lights. The tree looks good.)

LOUIS. That looks pretty cool, huh?

KELLY. I guess.

LOUIS. Hey Kelly? Can I ask you a question?

EMILY. KELLY GO SIT IN THE CAR!

KELLY. I didn't do anything! GOD!

(She leaves.)

LOUIS. Mom, can I please just wear my jean jacket?

EMILY. Why do you want to wear your jacket, sweetheart? Are you trying to impress a girl?

LOUIS. No.

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LOUIS. Fine. I'll wear the stupid coat.

(He switches coats.)

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(They leave.)

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Carolyn Warren was the hottest girl in the eighth grade gifted and talented class. Okay, she was the only hot girl in the eighth grade gifted and talented class. And I loved her. A mad, consuming, devouring, stomach-churning love. I dreamt about her. Carolyn Warren was my secret goddess.

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KELLY. Oh my god, what are you doing?

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KELLY. I didn't do anything! GOD!

(She leaves.)

LOUIS. Mom, can I please just wear my jean jacket?

EMILY. Why do you want to wear your jacket, sweetheart? Are you trying to impress a girl?

LOUIS. No.

(A light shines on CAROLYN, 13, looking resplendent in church attire.)

PRESENT LOUIS. One of the conditions of being thirteen is that you are continuously lying. I hadn't told my mother the truth about anything in three months. Of course there was a girl.

EMILY. Let me tell you something about the people who go to church, okay pudding?

LOUIS. Don't call me that.

EMILY. I can't even call you that any more? You used to like that.

LOUIS. When I was five.

EMILY. I carried you in my stomach for nine months, I changed five thousand diapers, and I can't call you pudding if I want to?

LOUIS. No.

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CAROLYN. Hey Louis.

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(They've run out of things to say.)

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LOUIS. Well screw you then.

KELLY. Go ahead, ask your stupid question.

LOUIS. You're a girl—

KELLY. Oh really? You figured that one out? Gold star for you.

LOUIS. No, just—can I ask my question?

KELLY. I'm waiting for you to ask your stupid question!

LOUIS. What do you think would be a good present to get for Christmas? From a guy?

KELLY. Which guy?

LOUIS. A guy who liked you.

KELLY. Like he liked me liked me or just liked me?

LOUIS. Liked you liked you.

KELLY. I don't know. I've never had a guy who actually liked me buy me a present before. Maybe something pretty with a card.

LOUIS. Like a poster?

KELLY. A poster?

LOUIS. There are these posters that have all these dolphins on them and stuff. They look cool.

KELLY. Were you dropped on your head? Actually, I know that, you were dropped on your head. That was my fault. I'm sorry. I probably knocked about 20 IQ points out of your skull. A poster of dolphins? What the heck am I gonna do with a poster of dolphins?

LOUIS. Put it on your wall and then every time you look at it you'll be reminded of the guy and you'll think about the dolphins and how they're free and live in the ocean and stuff.

KELLY. Huh. No. That's lame. You're thinking about lame things. I would want like earrings or something.

LOUIS. Where do you get those?

KELLY. At the mall.

LOUIS. When are you going to the mall next?

KELLY. What do you want, Louis?

LOUIS. I told Carolyn I'd get her a present.

KELLY. You're such a dork.

LOUIS. Can you take me to the mall?

KELLY. Have Dad do it.

LOUIS. No, I need someone to tell me what to get.

KELLY. Look, I have an image, okay? I go to the mall to be seen. And the last thing I need is to have my dorky little brother trailing me around asking me which dolphin poster looks coolest.

LOUIS. Please.

KELLY. No.

LOUIS. Please.

KELLY. Shut up.

LOUIS. I'll tell Mom what happened to that bottle of Jack Daniel's.

KELLY. All right tomorrow. But we're gonna be on separate ends. You don't know me, you have no idea who I am, you cannot speak to me. You buy what you want and I'll let you know if you need to return it. Okay?

(Lights shift.)

PRESENT LOUIS. My Mom was generally a nice person. And she was usually very sweet to us, except for one specific time: When company was coming over. When company was coming over, she turned into a demon taskmaster from the underworld—all of a sudden we were cleaning areas of the house that we didn't even know existed. We were washing baseboards, we were bleaching the grout in the basement, we were alphabetizing the books on the shelves. In later years, my Mom would hire a cleaning lady and would clean before the cleaning lady showed up because she didn't

want the cleaning lady to think badly of us. And when Grandma was coming to visit...

(EMILY enters.)

EMILY. Why aren't you doing something?

LOUIS. I'm just standing here.

EMILY. Is the drain in the tub clean?

LOUIS. Yes.

EMILY. Let's go check it together.

LOUIS. Okay, fine, I'll go clean it.

(KELLY enters as LOUIS exits.)

KELLY. Why is there a sleeping bag in my room?

GEORGE. (Off-stage:) Ah come on!

EMILY. What are you doing, George?

GEORGE. (Off-stage:) I'm cleaning the television!

EMILY. The Packers game better not be on!

KELLY. Mom, why is there a sleeping bag in my room?

(LOUIS returns.)

LOUIS. Why is there a weird blanket on my bed?

EMILY. If I come in there and find that game on you're going to be mopping the floor of the garage!

(She turns to LOUIS and KELLY.)

Okay, sweetheart. Grandma Jacobs is staying in your room.

LOUIS. Where am I staying?

EMILY. In Kelly's room.

KELLY. Where am I staying then?

EMILY. In your room.

KELLY. Are you kidding me!? Mom, he's bizarre!

LOUIS. Can I just sleep in the living room?

EMILY. The living room is for living not sleeping.

KELLY. I don't want him looking at me.

EMILY. He's your brother.

KELLY. So? I'm not responsible for the fact that he grew up weird.

LOUIS. Do you know what those aerosol fumes are going to do to my brain? Look what it did to Kelly! She used to be smart!

KELLY. Shut up, retard! Can I stay at a friend's house?

EMILY. No.

GEORGE. (Off-stage:) What! That was pass interference! PASS INTERFERENCE!

LOUIS. Can I stay at a friend's house?

EMILY. Both of you are staying here. Both of you are behaving. My God, it's four days.

KELLY. Four days!? Grandma Jacobs is staying four days?! Oh my God my life is over.

EMILY. Kelly. Settle down. Breathe.

GEORGE. (Off-stage:) Where is the instant replay!?

(KELLY heads to the side of the stage.)

EMILY. That game is going off now!

(GEORGE enters quickly.)

GEORGE. Randy Wright is dead to me. 'Hey look at me I'm the quarterback of the NFL's most storied franchise! Ah I'm a total idiot I'll throw the ball up into the air for no reason whatsoever! Oh no look it's my fourth interception of the day I suppose I'll just FALL OVER and PLAY POSSUM and maybe NO ONE WILL STEP ON ME.' Arg. He won't live long. They will hunt him down. This is a state of hunters.

EMILY. You're not going to live long if you don't mop the kitchen.

EMILY. KELLY GO SIT IN THE CAR!

KELLY. I didn't do anything! GOD!

(She leaves.)

LOUIS. Mom, can I please just wear my jean jacket?

EMILY. Why do you want to wear your jacket, sweetheart? Are you trying to impress a girl?

LOUIS. No.

(A light shines on CAROLYN, 13, looking resplendent in church attire.)

PRESENT LOUIS. One of the conditions of being thirteen is that you are continuously lying. I hadn't told my mother the truth about anything in three months. Of course there was a girl.

EMILY. Let me tell you something about the people who go to church, okay pudding?

LOUIS. Don't call me that.

EMILY. I can't even call you that any more? You used to like that.

LOUIS. When I was five.

EMILY. I carried you in my stomach for nine months, I changed five thousand diapers, and I can't call you pudding if I want to?

LOUIS. No.

EMILY. Do you understand what pregnancy does to a woman?

LOUIS. Mom. Fine.

EMILY. That's all I ask. Let me explain about the people who go to church. They're very judgmental. They see a child sit in a pew wearing a jean jacket and you know what goes through their minds? Oh that poor boy—his father doesn't have a job. I mean it's bad enough they look at Kelly and see that contraption pasted to her forehead. **Okay?**

LOUIS. Fine. I'll wear the stupid coat.

(He switches coats.)

EMILY. That's all I ask, pudding.

(They leave.)

PRESENT LOUIS. The girl.

(Lights shine on CAROLYN. Perhaps a breeze fans her. Something like Peter Cetera's "The Glory of Love" plays.)

Carolyn Warren was the hottest girl in the eighth grade gifted and talented class. Okay, she was the only hot girl in the eighth grade gifted and talented class. And I loved her. A mad, consuming, devouring, stomach-churning love. I dreamt about her. Carolyn Warren was my secret goddess.

(KELLY enters with LOUIS in tow.)

KELLY. Okay let's get started. Sorry I'm late I had to wait for retarded over there.

PRESENT LOUIS. Due to a trick of fate, Kelly was the leader of our church youth group. I don't know how this happened; I think maybe she was the only high school kid to come around our church. And our activity for December was to put on the nativity play; Kelly was going to be the director. Carolyn was going to be Mary. Therefore I wanted to be Joseph.

(KELLY addresses CAROLYN, LOUIS, and a group of imaginary kids.)

KELLY. Okay. I don't want to be here. You don't want to be here. But we're supposed to be honoring the birth of Jesus so we're going to get through this thing. Louis. You are going to be an ass.

LOUIS. What?

KELLY. Shut up. That's what they're called. Get used to it. You live in the manger with the other animals. Now we're supposed to use the Jensen baby for the baby Jesus because they just had a baby but I think their baby is gross. It looks like it got caught in the washing machine, it's got like permanent upturned nostrils. Baby Jesus did not look like that. Plus it smells. Ugh.

LOUIS. Hey Kelly can I be Joseph?

KELLY. Raise your hand if you want to speak.

(LOUIS freezes.)

That's me. December 19th, 1986. About six forty-five p.m. I'm on my way to church. In about two minutes my mother is going to disapprove of everything I've done to get ready. The big question of the day was whether or not to feather my hair. I'm torturing myself internally over it. Michael J. Fox did it. Jason Bateman did it. Michael Jackson...well, at this point in time he was still kinda cool.

(PRESENT LOUIS walks around the set.)

We're in Brookfield, Wisconsin. A pretty ordinary place. I'm thirteen years old. And this is going to be the worst week of my life. And also the best.

(KELLY, 17, enters, sporting big hair. LOUIS unfreezes.)

KELLY. Oh my god, what are you doing?

LOUIS. I'm fixing my hair.

(KELLY snorts.)

KELLY. Whatever.

LOUIS. Does it look cool?

KELLY. Yeah Louis you look really cool. You're such a reject. Come on.

(They freeze.)

PRESENT LOUIS. 1986 was the epicenter of big hair. There was always a faint aroma of Aqua Net in the air, we inhaled the stuff daily, and my sister Kelly, she was the living, breathing, beating heart of the frizzy-haired earthquake. She was personally responsible for a hole in the ozone layer the size of eastern Connecticut. I used to think that you could trap a gerbil in her bangs.

KELLY. Here.

(KELLY produces a can of hair spray and sprays down Louis' head.)

LOUIS. Ah! Stop it I'm going to get cancer!

KELLY. You are not, shut up. I'm trying to help you.

(EMILY enters.)

EMILY. What are you doing to him?

KELLY. He's feathering his hair.

EMILY. You are not feathering your hair before we go to church. Where's your coat?

LOUIS. I'm wearing my jacket.

EMILY. You're not wearing that to church.

LOUIS. Why not?

EMILY. Louis, Jesus loves you, but he does not love you in that jacket.

LOUIS. It's not cold out.

EMILY. It's minus seven degrees outside.

LOUIS. I don't like my coat.

KELLY. God you are immature Louis.

(Imitating him in a whine:)

'I don't like my winter coat.' You're such a baby.

LOUIS. Shut up.

KELLY. You shut up.

LOUIS. You shut up.

KELLY. No you shut up first. How bout this?

(She sprays him with hair spray.)

EMILY. Kelly. Not helping. Go sit in the car.

KELLY. I'm gonna take my car to church.

EMILY. Get in the car.

KELLY. Fine. If I'm late to rehearsal, you're dead.

LOUIS. Bite me.

KELLY. What was that?

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want the cleaning lady to think badly of us. And when Grandma was coming to visit...

(EMILY enters.)

EMILY. Why aren't you doing something?

LOUIS. I'm just standing here.

EMILY. Is the drain in the tub clean?

LOUIS. Yes.

EMILY. Let's go check it together.

LOUIS. Okay, fine, I'll go clean it.

(KELLY enters as LOUIS exits.)

KELLY. Why is there a sleeping bag in my room?

GEORGE. (Off-stage:) Ah come on!

EMILY. What are you doing, George?

GEORGE. (Off-stage:) I'm cleaning the television!

EMILY. The Packers game better not be on!

KELLY. Mom, why is there a sleeping bag in my room?

(LOUIS returns.)

LOUIS. Why is there a weird blanket on my bed?

EMILY. If I come in there and find that game on you're going to be mopping the floor of the garage!

(She turns to LOUIS and KELLY.)

Okay, sweetheart. Grandma Jacobs is staying in your room.

LOUIS. Where am I staying?

EMILY. In Kelly's room.

KELLY. Where am I staying then?

EMILY. In your room.

KELLY. Are you kidding me!? Mom, he's bizarre!

LOUIS. Can I just sleep in the living room?

EMILY. The living room is for living not sleeping.

KELLY. I don't want him looking at me.

EMILY. He's your brother.

KELLY. So? I'm not responsible for the fact that he grew up weird.

LOUIS. Do you know what those aerosol fumes are going to do to my brain? Look what it did to Kelly! She used to be smart!

KELLY. Shut up, retard! Can I stay at a friend's house?

EMILY. No.

GEORGE. (Off-stage:) What! That was pass interference! PASS INTERFERENCE!

LOUIS. Can I stay at a friend's house?

EMILY. Both of you are staying here. Both of you are behaving. My God, it's four days.

KELLY. Four days!? Grandma Jacobs is staying four days?! Oh my God my life is over.

EMILY. Kelly. Settle down. Breathe.

GEORGE. (Off-stage:) Where is the instant replay!?

(KELLY heads to the side of the stage.)

EMILY. That game is going off now!

(GEORGE enters quickly.)

GEORGE. Randy Wright is dead to me. 'Hey look at me I'm the quarterback of the NFL's most storied franchise! Ah I'm a total idiot I'll throw the ball up into the air for no reason whatsoever! Oh no look it's my fourth interception of the day I suppose I'll just FALL OVER and PLAY POSSUM and maybe NO ONE WILL STEP ON ME.' Arg. He won't live long. They will hunt him down. This is a state of hunters.

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EMILY. You're not going to live long if you don't mop the kitchen.

GEORGE. We're mopping the kitchen?!

EMILY. Yes we're mopping the kitchen! What do you think, we're not going to mop the kitchen?!

KELLY. Dad, Mom wants Louis to stay in my room.

LOUIS. Can I take your tent and camp out in the back yard?

EMILY. It's freezing outside!

LOUIS. I'll kill a ton-ton and climb inside its stomach.

EMILY. What the heck does that mean?

LOUIS. Didn't you see The Empire Strikes Back?

KELLY. Oh my God. Stop referencing that movie.

GEORGE. **Where's the mop bucket?**

EMILY. **Where it's been for the last fifteen years.**

GEORGE. Is it in the garage?

EMILY. Why don't you go check in the garage and see if that's where it is.

GEORGE. Is it in the garage or not?

EMILY. Check and see.

GEORGE. **If you know where it is why don't you tell me?**

KELLY. Maybe Louis can sleep in the basement!

LOUIS. I can't be in Kelly's room I'm allergic to stupid people!

EMILY. **ALL RIGHT EVERYONE SHUT UP.**

(Everyone is stunned into silence. EMILY tries to get a hold of herself.)

Kelly. Get over it. Louis. Get over it. George. The laundry room.

GEORGE. Oh, the—

EMILY. Shut up. We are going to have a wonderful Christmas week with your Grandmother.

(KELLY is about to say something.)

Kelly! I know that you do not...enjoy the company of Grandma Jacobs. But you are going to smile and be polite—I don't care if you have to draw a smile on your face with lipstick, you're going to be a sweet wonderful child while she is here. Okay? And you two are going to stop fighting like six year olds and start behaving like human beings or **I am going to have a conniption fit and drop dead on the floor of the kitchen and then you people will be forced to figure out how to clean the house without me, which will be a problem BECAUSE YOU DON'T EVEN KNOW WHERE THE MOP BUCKET IS!**

GEORGE. **It's in the laundry room.**

(She glares at him.)

Sorry.

EMILY. OKAY?!

(They freeze.)

PRESENT LOUIS. So she could be a little high-strung. At this point in time, I didn't realize that my Mom and Dad weren't getting along. I just thought that's how adults behaved when they loved each other. I used to daydream about the amazing shouting matches I would have with Carolyn after our inevitable marriage. Boy wouldn't that be wonderful? But I didn't have much time to ponder that because—

(The doorbell rings.)

EMILY. **Oh fudge she's early.**

PRESENT LOUIS. Except she didn't say fudge.

(EMILY catches herself.)

EMILY. You didn't hear that. Smiles!

(Everyone smiles.)

GEORGE. Do you think it would be more festive if we started a Christmas Carol?

(He begins singing "O Come all Ye Faithful.")

'O come all ye—'

EMILY. Stop it.

(EMILY opens the door. GRANDMA JACOBS carries one bag and a cane and shuffles in.)

Merry Christmas Mom!

GRANDMA JACOBS. **Oh dang it look at you all.**

(Lights change.)

PRESENT LOUIS. Where to begin with her?

(GRANDMA JACOBS coughs horribly.)

I have no idea.

(Lights up on the living room.)

GRANDMA JACOBS. *(Through a horrible cough, unintelligible:)* What happened to your dog?

EMILY. Are you okay Mom?

GRANDMA JACOBS. What?

EMILY. Are you okay?

GRANDMA JACOBS. Why wouldn't I be okay?

EMILY. You were just—you were—never mind.

GRANDMA JACOBS. Well?

EMILY. Well what?

GRANDMA JACOBS. What happened to it?

EMILY. What happened to what?

GRANDMA JACOBS. What's wrong with you? Have you gone deaf or something. Jesus. What happened to your dog. What was his name, Buttercup?

LOUIS. Sparky. He was my dog.

GRANDMA JACOBS. Where is he?

LOUIS. He's dead.

GRANDMA JACOBS. Really?

LOUIS. He was electrocuted. It was really kind of an ironic way to go.

GRANDMA JACOBS. Sorry to hear that. Is he buried in the back yard?

LOUIS. *(Thrown:)* Yeah?

GRANDMA JACOBS. Good. Do you remember when we had Peaches?

EMILY. I hated Peaches.

GRANDMA JACOBS. Everyone hated Peaches. He was nice to me though.

EMILY. He terrorized Danny.

GRANDMA JACOBS. Oh yeah. Your brother. He peed his pants every time that dog came around—didn't know how to deal with him—

GEORGE. Peaches was a boy?

GRANDMA JACOBS. Of course he was a boy.

GEORGE. Just seems like a feminine name.

GRANDMA JACOBS. Why does it seem like a feminine name?

GEORGE. It's fruity.

GRANDMA JACOBS. *(Eyeing GEORGE:)* Anyway, your brother was not a dog person. He didn't understand dogs—That's why the dog attacked him whenever it saw him. Peaches once jumped a six foot fence to get at him. Danny ran like the French. I loved that dog. So Kelly...

KELLY. Yeah?

GRANDMA JACOBS. What the heck's going on with you?

KELLY. What do you mean?

(GRANDMA JACOBS doesn't hear her comment.)

GRANDMA JACOBS. What?

KELLY. Huh?

GRANDMA JACOBS. What did you say?

KELLY. I didn't know what you meant.

GRANDMA JACOBS. What is wrong with you?

KELLY. (*Flabbergasted:*) I don't know.

LOUIS. No one does.

EMILY. So how was your trip up, Mom?

GRANDMA JACOBS. Terrible. All right, so. This happened to me three days ago. There was a snake loose in my backyard. A rattler.

EMILY. In Wisconsin?

GRANDMA JACOBS. I know what the snake sounds like, don't treat me like an idiot. I've been bitten by enough rattlers in my life, okay? Is that okay with you?

EMILY. I guess.

GRANDMA JACOBS. So I call the police.

GEORGE. Why did you call the police?

GRANDMA JACOBS. Because there was a rattler in my back yard.

GEORGE. Was it breaking any laws or anything?

EMILY. Quiet, dear.

GRANDMA JACOBS. I've got my handgun underneath my bed just in case.

EMILY. You have a handgun?

GRANDMA JACOBS. I have two actually.

KELLY. Where's the second one?

GRANDMA JACOBS. I'm not telling you. Can I actually tell my story? But I know if I go to my room to get my gun—

LOUIS. What kind of gun do you have?

GRANDMA JACOBS. One that shoots bullets at small children. If I get my gun, the snake is going to run away. Or slither away or whatever. So I can't get my gun. But if I get my gun I can shoot 'em. So I'm faced with a dilemma.

(*Really long pause.*)

EMILY. What did you do?

GRANDMA JACOBS. You never could shut up. So I get my gun. I come back. No more snake. But I know he's there somewhere—

LOUIS. Is your gun loaded?

GRANDMA JACOBS. Why would I keep an unloaded gun under my bed? The doorbell rings.

GEORGE. Was it the snake?

GRANDMA JACOBS. It's the police. Well one cop. This lesbian.

EMILY. Mom!

GRANDMA JACOBS. What? She was a lesbian. It was obvious. I have nothing against them.

EMILY. There are children present.

LOUIS. We learned about them in school.

EMILY. What?!

KELLY. Oh yeah. There's a whole class in it.

GEORGE. Boy high school sure has changed.

KELLY. I'm kidding Mom. God.

EMILY. I'm calling your principal.

GRANDMA JACOBS. All right so this lady police officer is there who happens to enjoy the company of other lady police officers, and she's looking at me. I mean, she's giving me the eye. Real slow. And I'm wondering what's going on in her head. I mean I'm a defenseless old woman.

KELLY. With a loaded gun.

GEORGE. Can we just have an argument about one thing? Is it the dishes, is it your Mom, now it's parenting. I just don't understand how when we get in a fight every single thing I've ever done wrong gets trotted out of that brain of yours and I suddenly have to argue against this entire litany of past wrongdoing. It's impossible!

EMILY. It's all the same thing.

GEORGE. Which is?

EMILY. You're not very considerate. You don't ever think of anyone else but yourself.

GEORGE. That is just...I can't even...you're just wrong. Okay? You're wrong.

EMILY. Fine.

(They stand quite a distance apart from each other, still seething.)

George?

(Pause.)

GEORGE. Yeah?

EMILY. I love you.

(Pause.)

GEORGE. I love you too.

(They are still apart.)

EMILY. Do you think...?

GEORGE. What?

(Silence. EMILY can't bring herself to say what's on her mind. A long pause.)

(The doorbell rings. GEORGE gets it. GRANDMA SKOLOWSKI, a small, thin, elderly woman enters. Inexplicably, she has an upper-class British accent.)

GEORGE. Mom?!

GRANDMA SKOLOWSKI. I knew I could find this house. They told me I couldn't but I said I could.

EMILY. What are you doing here?

GRANDMA SKOLOWSKI. Why I've come for Christmas. I'm on holiday.

(Lights change.)

PRESENT LOUIS. I have to say a few words here about my Grandma Skolowski. First off, in 1986 she was diagnosed with severe dementia. I have a few memories of how she was before the disease struck, and I remember her as a really neat lady. Here's the thing: she had trouble remembering things, so she just started making things up. It wasn't that she was reliving her childhood, she was somehow imagining a childhood that never happened. My grandmother was born in Pittsburgh in 1916. She was a teenager during the depression. I think she worked as a nanny for a little while in there. Her husband, my grandfather, was a second-generation American who first worked in a butcher shop before branching out and owning his own restaurant, which was eventually put out of business by Denny's, but you never wanted to get him started on that. He went to fight in the Pacific in World War 2 and got some shrapnel in his back which bothered him the rest of his life. Those are the facts of my family. Here's how she would tell it.

(GRANDMA SKOLOWSKI speaks in a very sweet, very soft voice, with a British accent acquired from Masterpiece Theater.)

GRANDMA SKOLOWSKI. When I was thirteen years old a man came up to me on the street and asked if he could see my legs. This was a very strange proposition at that time, but I thought I had wonderful legs so I showed him and he said those are some pretty stunning legs. I was quite flattered. In those days, if a man said something nice to you you were obligated to marry him. But I was thirteen so I couldn't marry him and besides he was more attracted to my brother Joseph but I didn't know there were such men at the time. And he said he could get me an audition for the Rockettes. Imagine me, dancing for the Rockettes. So I said I'd love to be in the Rockettes, so he gave me a ticket on the train and I went to New York City, and I went straight to Radio City Music Hall for my audition. And there I was in front of the producer, Howard Shulz and he said how old are you and I said thirteen and he said I was

GRANDMA JACOBS. What?

KELLY. Huh?

GRANDMA JACOBS. What did you say?

KELLY. I didn't know what you meant.

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KELLY. With a loaded gun.

GRANDMA JACOBS. I left that on the counter. Jesus. Why would I open the door with a loaded gun? So she says what seems to be the problem. Like she doesn't know. I called 911 and told them there was a snake. Why else would she be here? I tell her, there's a rattler in the backyard and she says, we don't have rattlers in Wisconsin, and I told her that I had been bitten by enough of them to know what one looked like and would she please take care of it. Guess what she said to that?

GEORGE. (*Trying not to laugh.*) She said I'm a police officer and that's a snake.

(EMILY tries to quiet him with a look.)

GRANDMA JACOBS. She said she couldn't do anything about it. So I said why? And she said because the snake hadn't broken any laws by being in my back yard. Why do we even have police? Why am I paying taxes? So I said if you don't shoot him, I'll shoot him. So how about that? And this lesbian—excuse me, lady, says she doesn't have the authority to give me permission to fire my gun. So I said fine, I'll just wait till you leave and then I'm gonna shoot that snake. And this is where the story gets weird. She says, have you registered that firearm? So now I'm living in Nazi Germany where a lesbian cop can bust into my house and not shoot a snake and instead I'm the criminal? There's no law against the snake but I can't have a gun.

EMILY. You didn't register it?

GRANDMA JACOBS. Why do I have to register it?

EMILY. Because it's a law.

GRANDMA JACOBS. So? I'm old.

KELLY. So then what happened?

GRANDMA JACOBS. She gave me a written warning and then she left. So then I took my gun and I looked for the snake.

LOUIS. You went out into the yard?

GRANDMA JACOBS. Well I can't look for it inside the house. So I'm in the backyard. I look to my left. I look to my right. I turn around. The snake is going inside my house.

EMILY. No.

GRANDMA JACOBS. I left the door open and the snake is going inside my house.

KELLY. What did you do?

GRANDMA JACOBS. I fired six shots at the snake.

(GRANDMA JACOBS has a coughing fit while continuing to tell her story. An entire sentence is unintelligible.)

So. Now I need to replace my screen door. So the next day I go down to Ace Hardware.

GEORGE. Whoah, whoah whoah. What happened to the snake?

GRANDMA JACOBS. I'm still here aren't I? It's dead. I hit it once.

PRESENT LOUIS. Oh yes, it was going to be a festive yuletide season.

(Lights shift. KELLY and LOUIS are getting ready for bed. LOUIS has an inflatable mattress on the floor. It is quite dark.)

KELLY. If you look at me, I'll kill you.

LOUIS. I wasn't looking.

KELLY. You better not snore.

LOUIS. God you're mean. I don't snore.

KELLY. You snore. I've heard it.

LOUIS. You snore.

KELLY. I do not.

LOUIS. It's like a motorcycle.

KELLY. You're a moron.

LOUIS. I love you too, Kelly.

GRANDMA JACOBS. I left that on the counter. Jesus. Why would I open the door with a loaded gun? So she says what seems to be the problem. Like she doesn't know. I called 911 and told them there was a snake. Why else would she be here? I tell her, there's a rattler in the backyard and she says, we don't have rattlers in Wisconsin, and I told her that I had been bitten by enough of them to know what one looked like and would she please take care of it. Guess what she said to that?

-GEORGE. *(Trying not to laugh:)* She said I'm a police officer and that's a snake.

(EMILY tries to quiet him with a look.)

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LOUIS. You snore.

KELLY. I do not.

LOUIS. It's like a motorcycle.

KELLY. You're a moron.

LOUIS. I love you too, Kelly.

(KELLY throws something at him.)

Ow! What was that?

KELLY. My clock radio.

LOUIS. That hurt.

KELLY. Really? I'm sorry. Let me make it better.

(She hits him with a pillow.)

LOUIS. Ah!

KELLY. Shhhh! Grandma's sleeping!

(She hits him with a pillow again.)

Don't make noise. Louis! Don't make noise!

(She pounds on him with her pillow. LOUIS escapes and fights back.)

Stop it!

(LOUIS manages to knock KELLY over with a vicious hit from his pillow.)

Ow.

LOUIS. Take that, wench!

(She fights back. The lights come on suddenly. EMILY is there.)

EMILY. What is wrong with you two?

LOUIS. She threw a clock radio at me.

KELLY. You're such a liar.

EMILY. Can you please act your age? Okay? People are trying to sleep.

LOUIS. Can you tell her not to throw things at me?

EMILY. No. I'm not going to tell her that. You have to do it yourself.

LOUIS. That's what I was just doing.

KELLY. He's got anger issues, Mom. He said that he's upset because he hasn't undergone puberty yet.

LOUIS. Shut up.

KELLY. See? It's driving him insane.

EMILY. Both of you: be quiet. Go to bed. I don't want to come in here again.

(She flips off the lights and leaves.)

LOUIS. God you're a liar.

KELLY. Have you undergone puberty?

LOUIS. Has your hair undergone puberty?

KELLY. Oh good one. Good one, Louis. You really got me there.

LOUIS. One of these days I'm gonna come at you with a match and your whole head is going to ignite.

KELLY. Errr. You're cool, Louis.

LOUIS. Ah! My head's on fire! Ah!

(KELLY throws something else at LOUIS.)

Ow!

KELLY. Go to sleep or I'm going to knock you unconscious.

LOUIS. Fine. Good night.

KELLY. Good night.

LOUIS. I hope I don't roll onto you in the middle of the night.

KELLY. I'm not talking to you any more.

LOUIS. Good night.

(Pause.)

Hey Kelly?

(No response.)

Hey Kelly are you asleep?



Main Event Interpretation
Script Verification Cover Sheet

2 of 2

Please print or type the following information.

School Name:	Willard High School	State:	MO
NSDA District:	Ozark		
Coach Name:	Kathy Tobin		
Student Name:	Ethan Gambriel / Tyler Simpson		
Title of Cutting:	A Tiny Miracle With a Fiberoptic Unicorn		
Event (choose one):	<input type="checkbox"/> HI	<input type="checkbox"/> DI	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DUO
	<input type="checkbox"/> POI		

I certify that we, the coach(es), student(s), and administrator(s) directly affiliated with our NSDA chapter, have complied with the following requirements.

- I have included a word-processed manuscript of the cutting.
- I have included a highlighted copy of the original script. The pages are in the order of the cutting. If lines from one page were used more than once within the cutting, the original page was re-copied, highlighted, and inserted to show the order of the line(s) used.
- I have clearly indicated in ink any words added or changed as permitted in the rules.
- I am aware of the Transition Rule: "Failure to clearly indicate the addition of words will be subject to disqualification. Changes to the script may only be used for the purpose of transition or to eliminate profane language. Transitions may be used to clarify the logical sequence of ideas. They are not to be used for the purpose of embellishing the humorous or dramatic effect of the literature."
- The pages submitted from the original script accurately reflect the performance.

Coach Signature:	Kathy Tobin	Date:	2/21/19
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KELLY. Yeah I fell asleep in the ten seconds you shut your stupid mouth. I am not talking to you any more. Do not talk to me.

LOUIS. How old were you when you had your first kiss?

KELLY. I'm not telling you.

LOUIS. Was it with that guy from Wilson?

KELLY. Which guy?

LOUIS. The guy with the little mustache and the rat-tail?

KELLY. No. Gross.

LOUIS. You never kissed him?

KELLY. He wasn't my first. Wait a minute, have you kissed anybody?

LOUIS. Define kissed.

KELLY. So you haven't kissed anybody?

LOUIS. I kissed Rachel Marber on the bus in sixth grade. Well...I mean, she kissed me. And then later I found out that Cass Thompson had bet her a dollar she wouldn't do it.

(KELLY snorts.)

So do you think that counts?

KELLY. No.

LOUIS. Why not? She kissed me.

KELLY. Yeah, but it was on a dare. Like, I bet you won't kiss the monkey over there. Or, I bet you won't eat a ball of cat fur.

LOUIS. Uck.

KELLY. It's not as gross as it sounds.

LOUIS. You ate a ball of cat fur?

KELLY. I got five bucks for it. Shut up. Like you've never done anything weird.

LOUIS. You ate a ball of cat fur and you kiss people and I never ate any cat fur and I never get to kiss anyone.

KELLY. Yeah, life sucks that way.

LOUIS. I'm gonna kiss Carolyn Warren.

KELLY. (Sarcastic:) Yeah you are.

LOUIS. I am. I made a pact with myself.

KELLY. (Even more sarcastic:) Oh well in that case then.

LOUIS. You don't think I can do it?

KELLY. Like, if you tie her up and knock her unconscious then you could do it. Otherwise no.

LOUIS. Why not?

KELLY. Oh come on. Carolyn Warren?

LOUIS. What about her?

KELLY. Have you seen Carolyn Warren?

LOUIS. Obviously. That's why I want to kiss her.

KELLY. Is she like freakishly weird in ways I don't know about?

LOUIS. I don't think so.

KELLY. Has she called you on the phone or anything?

LOUIS. No. I mean, yeah. One time. For math help.

KELLY. She doesn't like you, Louis. She's cute, right?

LOUIS. Yeah.

KELLY. So why would she like you? She's probably got lots of guys that like her. She doesn't have to settle for you. Not to hurt your feelings or anything.

LOUIS. (Obviously hurt:) You didn't.

KELLY. Okay, all right, all right, no need to get sad about it. It's just the way things are. Girls in junior high don't go for the smart guys.

Unless they're tall and good at sports. Smart doesn't really get a girl to like you.

LOUIS. What should I do?

KELLY. You're asking me for advice?

LOUIS. Yeah. I mean you've got like tons of experience with guys. Like. Tons.

KELLY. Thanks Louis.

LOUIS. Every week there's like a new guy. It's like you don't have any standards at all.

KELLY. All right shut up. You want my advice? Give up.

(Pause.)

LOUIS. I'm not gonna do that.

KELLY. Well why do you ask me for advice then? You're so rude.

LOUIS. Your advice is lame.

KELLY. Don't ask me then.

LOUIS. I want to know how to make her like me.

KELLY. Either she likes you or she doesn't like you; there's nothing you can do about it.

LOUIS. What if I was like, dangerous or something?

KELLY. It doesn't matter. Go to sleep. God.

LOUIS. Maybe if I—

KELLY. All right, all right. Look: you've got a lot of things stacked up against you—you're a dork, you're ugly, you're stupid, you can't dress yourself, I mean the list goes on and on. But underneath all of that, you're a nice guy. So don't try to not be a nice guy because that's the only thing you've got. Okay? And maybe, you know, God will smile on you or something and momentarily paralyze her brain and she'll kiss you. But that's best you can hope for.

LOUIS. I love you, Kelly.

KELLY. Shut up.

LOUIS. I'm going to hug you at the mall tomorrow.

KELLY. I'll knee you in the balls if you try it.

LOUIS. You're so sweet. Seriously, though. Thanks.

KELLY. Don't mention it.

LOUIS. You're the best older sister a guy could ever have.

KELLY. Go to sleep before I gouge your eyes out with a spoon.

LOUIS. Hey Kelly?

(Pause.)

Kelly?

(Pause.)

Do you think Mom and Dad are happy anymore?

(KELLY lies there. Lights change.)

PRESENT LOUIS. My plan for the mall visit hit a serious road bump.

(GEORGE enters.)

GEORGE. Hey Kelly—why don't you take Grandma Jacobs to the mall with you?

(GEORGE leaves.)

PRESENT LOUIS. There were many reasons why we didn't want to take Grandma Jacobs to the mall with us. One: she was insane. Two: there were stuffed snakes in the KB Toys that she might mistake for rattlers, and Three: we never did find out where the second gun was. Kelly, genius that she was, wasn't able to articulate any of those reasons in the moment. So, we got to take Grandma Jacobs on a sight-seeing tour of the Brookfield Mall.

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KELLY. It doesn't matter. **Go to sleep.** God.

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- GEORGE. We're mopping the kitchen?!
- EMILY. Yes we're mopping the kitchen! What do you think, we're not going to mop the kitchen?!
- KELLY. Dad, Mom wants Louis to stay in my room.
- LOUIS. Can I take your tent and camp out in the back yard?
- EMILY. It's freezing outside!
- LOUIS. I'll kill a ton-ton and climb inside its stomach.
- EMILY. What the heck does that mean?
- LOUIS. Didn't you see The Empire Strikes Back?
- KELLY. Oh my God. Stop referencing that movie.
- GEORGE. Where's the mop bucket?
- EMILY. Where it's been for the last fifteen years.
- GEORGE. Is it in the garage?
- EMILY. Why don't you go check in the garage and see if that's where it is.
- GEORGE. Is it in the garage or not?
- EMILY. Check and see.
- GEORGE. If you know where it is why don't you tell me?
- KELLY. Maybe Louis can sleep in the basement!
- LOUIS. I can't be in Kelly's room I'm allergic to stupid people!
- EMILY. ALL RIGHT EVERYONE SHUT UP.
- (Everyone is stunned into silence. EMILY tries to get a hold of herself.)*
- Kelly. Get over it. Louis. Get over it. George. The laundry room.
- GEORGE. Oh, the—
- EMILY. Shut up. We are going to have a wonderful Christmas week with your Grandmother.

(KELLY is about to say something.)

Kelly! I know that you do not...enjoy the company of Grandma Jacobs. But you are going to smile and be polite—I don't care if you have to draw a smile on your face with lipstick, you're going to be a sweet wonderful child while she is here. Okay? And you two are going to stop fighting like six year olds and start behaving like human beings or I am going to have a conniption fit and drop dead on the floor of the kitchen and then you people will be forced to figure out how to clean the house without me, which will be a problem BECAUSE YOU DON'T EVEN KNOW WHERE THE MOP BUCKET IS!

GEORGE. It's in the laundry room.

(She glares at him.)

Sorry.

EMILY. OKAY?!

(They freeze.)

PRESENT LOUIS. So she could be a little high-strung. **At this point in time, I didn't realize that my Mom and Dad weren't getting along. I just thought that's how adults behaved when they loved each other.** I used to daydream about the amazing shouting matches I would have with Carolyn after our inevitable marriage. Boy wouldn't that be wonderful? **But I didn't have much time to ponder that because—**

(The doorbell rings.)

EMILY. Oh fudge she's early.

PRESENT LOUIS. Except she didn't say fudge.

(EMILY catches herself.)

EMILY. You didn't hear that. Smiles!

(Everyone smiles.)

GEORGE. Do you think it would be more festive if we started a Christmas Carol?

(He begins singing "O Come all Ye Faithful.")

Castle, fall in love near the Swiss Colony and break up by the time we reached The Buckle. But at this time **I had just one thing on my mind: the perfect present.**

(KELLY and LOUIS enter, chagrined. They walk very slowly.)

GRANDMA JACOBS. Okay, can we stop?

KELLY. We haven't even made it out of JC Penny's yet. It's not good for me to be seen here.

GRANDMA JACOBS. Well you were the one who parked a million miles away. You should've parked in the handicapped spot.

KELLY. I'm not handicapped.

GRANDMA JACOBS. I am.

KELLY. You just have a cane that doesn't make you handicapped.

GRANDMA JACOBS. Oh I'm faking it. I've got degenerative arthritis in my right hip and I'm faking it.

LOUIS. Maybe we could get you a wheelchair.

GRANDMA JACOBS. I don't want a wheelchair I'm not a cripple.

LOUIS. Okay.

KELLY. Well I'll see you guys later.

(KELLY gets up.)

LOUIS. Where are you going?

KELLY. Like I'd spend time with you here. I've got things to do. Meet me at the Orange Julius when you want to leave. But don't wave at me or anything, okay? No one should know we're related. Bye Grandma.

GRANDMA JACOBS. You'd leave me to die in a desert, wouldn't you?

KELLY. There's plenty to drink in the mall.

(KELLY leaves.)

(GRANDMA JACOBS watches her go, then gets up.)

GRANDMA JACOBS. Thank God she left. All right, let's go to a bar.

LOUIS. I don't think there is a bar at the mall.

GRANDMA JACOBS. What the heck kind of mall is this?

LOUIS. Besides, I'm thirteen.

GRANDMA JACOBS. Louis, are you wearing girls' underpants? We used to give your mother beer in a bottle when she was one year old. Not a lot, just enough to put her to sleep. Oh she would cry and cry until she got her Stroh's.

LOUIS. You gave Mom beer when she was a baby?

GRANDMA JACOBS. She was one, she wasn't hardly a baby any more. She loved it. It was the forties, no one knew anything about anything. We didn't have seatbelts, we didn't have warning labels, you took your chances in life. If you gave a kid a present and it was full of nails, well, that's one way they learned. Now you kids are babied all the time. Next thing you know you'll have to wear a helmet to walk out of the house. I mean would it hurt you if you broke a bone doing something stupid?

LOUIS. Yeah that would probably hurt.

GRANDMA JACOBS. God you're a pansy. Fine. We won't go to a bar, we'll go to the baby store and get you a dolly. Let's go.

(They get up and begin walking.)

LOUIS. No I need to get a present for a girl.

GRANDMA JACOBS. Oh? A girl? Good. I'm sure that'll put your family's mind at ease.

LOUIS. About what?

GRANDMA JACOBS. I'll explain it to you when I'm drunk sometime. What are you gonna get her?

LOUIS. I don't know. It's gotta be the perfect present.

GRANDMA JACOBS. Did you see those talking teddy bears when we came in?

(LOUIS raises his hand.)

What?

LOUIS. Can I be Joseph?

KELLY. No. You're an ass.

(She addresses the group again:)

All right people let's get to work! Baby Jesus isn't going to birth himself! Hey! Hey Micah! Are you an idiot?! The wise men do not do that!

(She storms off-stage. LOUIS sees CAROLYN going over her script.)

CAROLYN. Hey Louis.

LOUIS. Hi.

CAROLYN. Sucks that you're an ass.

LOUIS. It's fine. I've got less lines, you know? Just sort of a braying.

CAROLYN. Well you should practice. Baaah.

LOUIS. That's a sheep.

CAROLYN. What does a donkey do?

LOUIS. They bray. Like...braaaaay.

CAROLYN. That's pretty good.

LOUIS. You're awesome by the way. In the play.

CAROLYN. Oh. Thanks.

LOUIS. Like really...you know like...I bet you're gonna be like a professional actress.

CAROLYN. Thanks.

(They've run out of things to say.)

Is that your coat?

(LOUIS is stabbed through the heart.)

LOUIS. Yeah...I uh...my grandmother...she's demented and she just gives me things sometimes.

CAROLYN. Huh. I should go work on my lines.

LOUIS. Wait um...I got you a Christmas present.

CAROLYN. Really? That's sweet.

LOUIS. I don't have it on me. Maybe I could um...give it to you sometime.

CAROLYN. Okay. See ya.

(She leaves. LOUIS watches.)

PRESENT LOUIS. Of course I didn't have a present for her. I had five days to get it, and I had to figure out how to deliver it without getting a ride from my Dad. But life was pretty good. Which brings me to the subject of...my Dad.

(GEORGE appears.)

He wasn't an orthodox father.

GEORGE. Yes, the monsters are coming to get you. They think you look tasty. And they're living in your closet. Go back to sleep. Oh by the way, I may have used some glow-in-the-dark paint to paint some eyes on your walls. But don't worry about that.

PRESENT LOUIS. He wasn't a mean man, just...continually amused.

GEORGE. You will get a little brother when your Daddy apologizes to Mommy for the Jell-o incident. But that's all I'm gonna say about that.

(Christmas music. Back to the house. LOUIS is stringing lights on a newly erected Christmas tree. GEORGE, EMILY, and KELLY sit and watch.)

EMILY. No. Those don't go there.

LOUIS. I didn't put—

EMILY. If you put them too close to the tree it will set it on fire.

Unless they're tall and good at sports. Smart doesn't really get a girl to like you.

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LOUIS. Hey Kelly?

(Pause.)

Kelly?

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(KELLY lies there. Lights change.)

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(KELLY and LOUIS enter, chagrined. They walk very slowly.)

GRANDMA JACOBS. Okay, can we stop?

KELLY. We haven't even made it out of JC Penny's yet. It's not good for me to be seen here.

GRANDMA JACOBS. Well you were the one who parked a million miles away. You should've parked in the handicapped spot.

KELLY. I'm not handicapped.

GRANDMA JACOBS. I am.

KELLY. You just have a cane that doesn't make you handicapped.

GRANDMA JACOBS. Oh I'm faking it. I've got degenerative arthritis in my right hip and I'm faking it.

LOUIS. Maybe we could get you a wheelchair.

GRANDMA JACOBS. I don't want a wheelchair I'm not a cripple.

LOUIS. Okay.

KELLY. Well I'll see you guys later.

(KELLY gets up.)

LOUIS. Where are you going?

KELLY. Like I'd spend time with you here. I've got things to do. Meet me at the Orange Julius when you want to leave. But don't wave at me or anything, okay? No one should know we're related. Bye Grandma.

GRANDMA JACOBS. You'd leave me to die in a desert, wouldn't you?

KELLY. There's plenty to drink in the mall.

(KELLY leaves.)

(GRANDMA JACOBS watches her go, then gets up.)

GRANDMA JACOBS. Thank God she left. All right, let's go to a bar.

LOUIS. I don't think there is a bar at the mall.

GRANDMA JACOBS. What the heck kind of mall is this?

LOUIS. Besides, I'm thirteen.

GRANDMA JACOBS. Louis, are you wearing girls' underpants? We used to give your mother beer in a bottle when she was one year old. Not a lot, just enough to put her to sleep. Oh she would cry and cry until she got her Stroh's.

LOUIS. You gave Mom beer when she was a baby?

GRANDMA JACOBS. She was one, she wasn't hardly a baby any more. She loved it. It was the forties, no one knew anything about anything. We didn't have seatbelts, we didn't have warning labels, you took your chances in life. If you gave a kid a present and it was full of nails, well, that's one way they learned. Now you kids are babied all the time. Next thing you know you'll have to wear a helmet to walk out of the house. I mean would it hurt you if you broke a bone doing something stupid?

LOUIS. Yeah that would probably hurt.

GRANDMA JACOBS. God you're a pansy. Fine. We won't go to a bar, we'll go to the baby store and get you a dolly. Let's go.

(They get up and begin walking.)

LOUIS. No I need to get a present for a girl.

GRANDMA JACOBS. Oh? A girl? Good. I'm sure that'll put your family's mind at ease.

LOUIS. About what?

GRANDMA JACOBS. I'll explain it to you when I'm drunk sometime. What are you gonna get her?

LOUIS. I don't know. It's gotta be the perfect present.

GRANDMA JACOBS. Did you see those talking teddy bears when we came in?

Castle, fall in love near the Swiss Colony and break up by the time we reached The Buckle. But at this time I had just one thing on my mind: the perfect present.

(KELLY and LOUIS enter, chagrined. They walk very slowly.)

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(KELLY gets up.)

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LOUIS. I don't know. It's gotta be the perfect present.

GRANDMA JACOBS. Did you see those talking teddy bears when we came in?

LOUIS. Teddy Ruxpin?

GRANDMA JACOBS. Yeah. How do they get their mouths to move like that?

LOUIS. I don't know.

GRANDMA JACOBS. You should get her one of those. They're fantastic.

LOUIS. I don't really think she would like a talking bear.

GRANDMA JACOBS. Have you asked her?

LOUIS. No.

GRANDMA JACOBS. Who wouldn't like a talking bear? The mouth moves, Louis.

LOUIS. You really think I should get a Teddy Ruxpin?

GRANDMA JACOBS. I think if you've got one chance to impress a girl, I don't know if you could do better than a teddy bear with a moving mouth.

PRESENT LOUIS. Luckily, Teddy Ruxpin cost twenty-five dollars and I only had eleven. So I managed to avoid that mistake.

GRANDMA JACOBS. You know what you should get? Chocolate. Girls love chocolate. They'll tear each other's eyes out over it.

PRESENT LOUIS. You ever look back on your life and think, there was the piece of advice I should've followed? *There* was the piece of advice I should've followed. I didn't.

GRANDMA JACOBS. You should be glad you never met your Grandfather. He wouldn't a liked you much. I don't mean that as an insult but old Jake liked things his way or no way at all. He was a bona fide class A prick. As you can imagine we took to fighting just about every night—I used to throw things at him when he turned his back on me. Course in those days it was hard to get a divorce. But that wasn't gonna stop me. You had to prove you had a reason to get divorced. So we went to court, and they said why are you divorcing this man, and I said, "cause he's an a-hole." And this judge says, "you shoulda thought of that before you married him."

(She sits down.)

PRESENT LOUIS. After two hours, The Brookfield Mall held a fierce deathgrip on my soul and was crushing the life out of me. For eleven dollars you could get the smallest diamond pendant visible to the naked eye or a t-shirt with a cat on it.

GRANDMA JACOBS. I like the t-shirt.

PRESENT LOUIS. I was resigned to utter failure.

GRANDMA JACOBS. You should get the t-shirt. It's got a cat on it. He's wearing sunglasses.

PRESENT LOUIS. The pressure was building—

GRANDMA JACOBS. Does she even like cats? If she likes cats she'd like a shirt with a cat on it.

LOUIS. I'm not getting the stupid cat shirt!!

(Pause. GRANDMA JACOBS is stunned for a moment.)

GRANDMA JACOBS. Why not?

PRESENT LOUIS. If I didn't get this present now, I was doomed. She would never love me. But then...out of the corner of my eye, accompanied by a choir of angels... I saw it.

(Choir of angels begins singing.)

Heavenly light shone upon it. All that was glorious, good, and divine in the world was contained within it. Perfection itself. What every girl wanted. I would be a hero. She would kiss me on the spot.

(Light shines on a fiberoptic unicorn figurine.)

It was a fiberoptic unicorn figurine. They sell them by the basketful at the sharper image, but we didn't have a sharper image in the mall, we just had a mysterious kiosk in the center of the aisle run by a couple of Armenian drug dealers. And they had somehow lucked into a shipment of fiberoptic unicorns. To give you a feeling of my wonder at the sight of this: I had never seen anything fiberoptic before. It cycled through different colors, first green, then blue, et cet-

era...and then back again, always changing. And it was ten ninety nine. With tax that came out to eleven fifty four.

LOUIS. Do you have a dollar?

GRANDMA JACOBS. Why would I have a dollar?

LOUIS. I don't know, cause you're an adult?

GRANDMA JACOBS. I don't have crap. You wanna piece of gum instead?

LOUIS. No, I— wait here.

(KELLY appears on the other side of the stage.)

LOUIS. Can I borrow a dollar?

(KELLY ignores him.)

Kelly. Kelly!

(KELLY waves at someone else, smile falsely, then instantly switches it to a sneer.)

Kelly.

KELLY. *(A fierce whisper:)* Get away from me. I don't know you.

LOUIS. Can I borrow a dollar?

KELLY. *(A fierce whisper:)* What did you do with Grandma?

LOUIS. She's fine. Do you have fifty cents?

KELLY. Where's Grandma?

LOUIS. Like you care where Grandma is. Do you have fifty cents?

KELLY. Did you ditch Grandma?

LOUIS. You don't have fifty cents for me?

KELLY. I don't know you—I don't give strangers money. Now get away from me, kid.

(She smiles at someone else.)

LOUIS. Kelly if you don't give me fifty cents I'm going to hug you.

(Beat. They stare at each other. KELLY reaches into her purse and shows LOUIS that she has no money. LOUIS is about to hug her.)

KELLY. I have mace.

LOUIS. I love you.

(KELLY gets out her can of mace.)

Fine. I'll get the money elsewhere.

PRESENT LOUIS. There was no elsewhere. I checked behind the arcade games. Nothing. My eyes were glued to the floor. There must have been an army of junkies scrounging the floor for loose change when we weren't looking. I would never get the fiberoptic unicorn.

GRANDMA JACOBS. Take the money out of the wishing well in front of the bank. I've seen ten kids throw pennies in there while I've been sitting here.

LOUIS. Isn't that stealing?

GRANDMA JACOBS. They're throwing the pennies away Louis. I'll cover you.

LOUIS. Okay.

(LOUIS looks shifty. He darts off-stage.)

PRESENT LOUIS. It took me fourteen trips. I got some weird looks—

GRANDMA JACOBS. *(Yelling at someone off-stage:)* What are you looking at? I'm an old lady. I'll call security.

(GRANDMA JACOBS gets up and stands near the edge of the stage, hiding LOUIS.)

What. Go away. You think I don't have a gun in my purse? You wanna find out?

(LOUIS returns, soaked, carrying a thick handful of pennies.)

PRESENT LOUIS. And I bought that unicorn.

(He exchanges it for the unicorn.)

And I was a hero.

(The soaked, filthy LOUIS and GRANDMA JACOBS approach KELLY.)

(KELLY ignores him.)

GRANDMA JACOBS. All right let's go.

KELLY. Oh my God.

(LOUIS holds up the glowing unicorn figurine.)

That's what you got?

LOUIS. Yeah, isn't it awesome?

(Beat.)

KELLY. Um...yeah. It's awesome. Let's go.

PRESENT LOUIS. She betrayed me.

GRANDMA JACOBS. Merry Christmas.

(GRANDMA JACOBS reaches into the folds of her dress and produces two boxes of chocolate.)

LOUIS. I thought you said you didn't have any money.

(She shrugs.)

GRANDMA JACOBS. Old people get things for free.

(Lights shift.)

PRESENT LOUIS. When they steal them.

(Lights up on GEORGE in the kitchen, putting away dishes. EMILY enters.)

Meanwhile, the event that was about to change my life forever was unfolding.

EMILY. Where's Mom?

GEORGE. She went to the mall with the kids.

EMILY. Really?

GEORGE. Yeah it was the darndest thing. They all just really wanted to spend some quality time together.

EMILY. Seriously?

GEORGE. No I made Kelly take her.

EMILY. How'd you manage that?

GEORGE. Honestly, I don't know. I think I just behaved as if I had the authority to make your Mom go and then Kelly just sort of accepted it. It was surreal. She actually did something I said. Made me feel like a man.

EMILY. Those bowls don't go there.

GEORGE. They don't?

EMILY. You have to stack them.

GEORGE. Oh.

(EMILY takes a look in the cabinet.)

EMILY. George. What have you been doing in here?

GEORGE. Putting dishes away.

EMILY. Why?

GEORGE. Because...when dishes are clean I like to put them away, I don't know I'm crazy that way.

EMILY. Yeah but you do it wrong. Look at this. You see, the little bowls go inside of the big bowls. It's not that hard.

GEORGE. See, I thought it was the other way around. I was trying to bend the laws of physics to make the big bowls go inside of the little bowls.

EMILY. You know, you're not half as funny as you think you are.

GEORGE. That still makes me pretty funny.

(He goes to get some more dishes.)

EMILY. Don't. Just let me do it.

GEORGE. Fine.

nineteen and I said no I'm thirteen and he said are you sure you're thirteen? And then I said I might be nineteen and he said you're hired. My parents knew nothing about this. They thought I was in Poland for girl scout camp. So I started dancing and let me tell you it was the best time of my life. Fifty girls—they were my family. We used to go skinny dipping in the East River. That was before the East River was discovered to be poisonous. We had a girl die. Esther was her name and she was from Iowa and she had huge knockers. I used to think everyone in Iowa had huge knockers until I went there one time and discovered it wasn't true, that no one in Iowa looked anything like Esther, which is why she left I suppose. Anyway, she drank some of the water and died which was a shame because she was the girl on my left. For the 1930 Christmas show we decided we were going to release live doves at the end of the dance. Don't ask me why. Well it so happened that someone forgot to feed the doves and they all died in their cages. The cages were over our heads so when they released the doves, we just heard plop plop plop as their carcasses rained from the sky. They were landing on us. I got hit in the shoulder which hurt because it was a rather large bird with talons and a beak. Mary on my right got hit right in the head and it knocked her out cold. I didn't know what to do. I started shouting, Mary's dead! Mary's dead! All the while more birds are dropping from the sky and the other girls are trying to continue the kickline. I thought that was the most absurd thing ever because if a girl is dead no one wants to see live girls dancing any more. Well maybe some people do, but I think those people are wrong. Mary lived. But we didn't use birds any more after that.

(Lights change. KELLY and LOUIS sit in the car.)

KELLY. Are you going to go to her door or not?

LOUIS. Hold on. Do I look all right?

KELLY. What do you expect me to answer to that? You look okay for you.

LOUIS. Thanks. I think. Do you think she'll like it?

KELLY. Ask her. God. Just go and get it over with. I wanna go home.

LOUIS. Okay.

(Pause. KELLY punches him.)

Ow.

KELLY. Get out of the car.

LOUIS. Fine.

KELLY. God you're retarded.

(LOUIS gets out of the car and heads to the opposite side of the stage. He waits for a moment, then looks back at KELLY, who throws up her hands in disgust and mimes strangling herself in frustration. LOUIS looks at his present, then rings the "doorbell.")

(Dogs barking loudly. We hear CAROLYN off-stage.)

CAROLYN. *(Off-stage:)* Shut up! Shut up! JARED! Come and get your stupid dog!

(LOUIS thinks about running as CAROLYN opens the door.)

LOUIS. Hi.

CAROLYN. Hey.

(She turns around and yells off-stage:)

Oh my God he peed on the floor! Are you kidding me?! JARED!

(She turns back to LOUIS.)

LOUIS. Hi. Again.

CAROLYN. **Hey Louis. What are you doing here?**

LOUIS. I just wanted to wish you good luck before the um...show tomorrow.

CAROLYN. Oh. Okay. You too.

LOUIS. Thanks! Thanks.

(Pause.)

CAROLYN. That's all you wanted?

LOUIS. I'm caroling.

CAROLYN. By yourself?

LOUIS. Yeah. It's um...better this way. Actually, traditionally, one person would do the caroling. They'd like go on ahead as like a scout caroler.

CAROLYN. I didn't know that.

LOUIS. Oh yeah because of the plague...and robbers. So if the one guy went to a house and they didn't have boils or anything, then the other carolers would know it would be safe, so they'd...go. Yeah. You know, they were crazy back in medieval times. So anyway.

CAROLYN. What are you gonna sing?

LOUIS. A medley...of Christmas favorites. Kind of my signature. Like um...

(He tries to think of a song.)

Deck the halls with balls of holly,
Fa la la la la la la la
Tis the season to be jolly
Fa la la la la la la la

(She's still watching him - he pauses for a second to remember what comes next.)

Don we now our gay apparel
Fa la la la la la la la

(Forgetting the next part of it.)

Sing the happy yuletide carol
Fa la la la la la la la

(CAROLYN claps.)

CAROLYN. That was good! You're so funny.

LOUIS. You think so?

CAROLYN. Yeah. You're like the funniest donkey in the show.

LOUIS. Actually I'm an ass.

CAROLYN. Right. Well you're a fine ass.

LOUIS. So what are you doing after the show?

CAROLYN. There'll probably be some kind of hideous scrabble marathon over here. We have these cousins in, and as soon as they get here it's like, 'break out every board game we own and play them till our eyes bleed!' Usually I have to fake a stomach cramp to get out of it.

LOUIS. Oh.

CAROLYN. Why?

LOUIS. We're having people over. You know, like a cast party thing. If you can make it.

CAROLYN. Probably not. I wish I could.

LOUIS. Okay. If you change your mind.

CAROLYN. All right.

(LOUIS can't think of anything to say.)

I'll see you later then.

LOUIS. **Hey I got you a present.**

(LOUIS produces the present.)

CAROLYN. **Really? That's so sweet.**

(He gives it to her.)

LOUIS. Open it.

CAROLYN. Shouldn't I wait till Christmas?

LOUIS. No.

CAROLYN. Okay.

(She unwraps the unicorn.)

Wow.

LOUIS. It's a unicorn.

CAROLYN. I see that.

LOUIS. It glows different colors and stuff.

CAROLYN. Cool. No one's ever gotten me a glowing unicorn before.

LOUIS. Yeah. It spoke to me.

CAROLYN. It talks? That's so cool!

LOUIS. No I mean like, you know 'it spoke to me' not that it actually spoke to me. Like I saw it and just thought of you because it's different colors and you have different colors and I thought it was cool.

CAROLYN. Oh.

LOUIS. It's fiberoptic.

CAROLYN. Cool.

(Pause.)

LOUIS. Do you like it?

CAROLYN. Sure.

(LOUIS is crushed.)

LOUIS. So um...bye.

CAROLYN. Bye. Thanks for the present.

LOUIS. Yeah.

(She leaves. LOUIS remains. Barking off-stage.)

CAROLYN. (Off-stage:) Shut up! SHUT UP! Shut up! No!

(Lights fade on her, leaving LOUIS alone on-stage.)

PRESENT LOUIS. I remember it was pretty cold that night, but I was warm until she shut that door. And then all of a sudden it was like I was freezing all over. When you're older you don't quite fall as hard as you once did. I guess you build up armor and cushions and all sorts of defenses to protect yourself against such naked hope. Because my relationship with Carolyn, which I had built in my mind, was all hope. And when it fell apart, when I looked at her and realized that she was never going to like me in the way I wanted, it was like all that hope had just been carved out of me and

I was left hollow and weightless and cold, standing alone in the dark like an idiot. The stars above me were alien and distant and the world was empty.

KELLY. Hey come on!

(No answer.)

Come on!

(KELLY comes over.)

Louis. There'll be other girls.

(She puts her arm around him and they walk off.)

LOUIS. (As they are leaving:) But I wanted this one.

PRESENT LOUIS. Hope, though, is not such an easy thing to kill, especially in the face of reality. On the way home my thoughts went like this:

(LOUIS is alone in a pool of light.)

LOUIS. She's never gonna like me. She's probably gonna go out with some guy in high school who can bench press 400 pounds and has a cleft chin. Maybe if I bench pressed 400 pounds she'd like me. I could probably do it. I'd just have to spend a lot of time in the gym. Like, every day, I'll just go to the gym every day and I won't even go to school any more, I'll just work out all the time and then I'll be huge and no one will make fun of me any more. Who'm I kidding? I got a nosebleed that time I was in the gym. I never shoulda gotten her that unicorn. But she said she liked it. She didn't like it. But why would she say she liked it if she didn't like it? She's not a liar. She's a very honest person. And she was mad at her brother when she opened the door. She even smiled when she opened it. You don't just smile for no reason. She smiled at me and she took the present and she said she liked it. And I'm gonna see her tomorrow after the show. And after the show she's gonna hug me. She hugged me twice this week. I think she likes me. I can tell by the way she hugged me, that wasn't just an ordinary hug. That was like an I like you hug and I was too stupid to pick up on it. I shoulda gone in. I shoulda said, maybe we should get some coffee

GEORGE. We're mopping the kitchen?!

EMILY. Yes we're mopping the kitchen! What do you think, we're not going to mop the kitchen?!

KELLY. Dad, Mom wants Louis to stay in my room.

LOUIS. Can I take your tent and camp out in the back yard?

EMILY. It's freezing outside!

LOUIS. I'll kill a ton-ton and climb inside its stomach.

EMILY. What the heck does that mean?

LOUIS. Didn't you see The Empire Strikes Back?

KELLY. Oh my God. Stop referencing that movie.

GEORGE. Where's the mop bucket?

EMILY. Where it's been for the last fifteen years.

GEORGE. Is it in the garage?

EMILY. Why don't you go check in the garage and see if that's where it is.

GEORGE. Is it in the garage or not?

EMILY. Check and see.

GEORGE. If you know where it is why don't you tell me?

KELLY. Maybe Louis can sleep in the basement!

LOUIS. I can't be in Kelly's room I'm allergic to stupid people!

EMILY. ALL RIGHT EVERYONE SHUT UP.

(Everyone is stunned into silence. EMILY tries to get a hold of herself.)

Kelly. Get over it. Louis. Get over it. George. The laundry room.

GEORGE. Oh, the—

EMILY. Shut up. We are going to have a wonderful Christmas week with your Grandmother.

(KELLY is about to say something.)

Kelly! I know that you do not...enjoy the company of Grandma Jacobs. But you are going to smile and be polite—I don't care if you have to draw a smile on your face with lipstick, you're going to be a sweet wonderful child while she is here. Okay? And you two are going to stop fighting like six year olds and start behaving like human beings or I am going to have a conniption fit and drop dead on the floor of the kitchen and then you people will be forced to figure out how to clean the house without me, which will be a problem BECAUSE YOU DON'T EVEN KNOW WHERE THE MOP BUCKET IS!

GEORGE. It's in the laundry room.

(She glares at him.)

Sorry.

EMILY. OKAY?!

(They freeze.)

PRESENT LOUIS. So she could be a little high-strung. At this point in time, I didn't realize that my Mom and Dad weren't getting along. I just **thought** that's how adults behaved when they loved each other. I used to daydream about the amazing shouting matches I would have with Carolyn after our inevitable marriage. Boy wouldn't that be wonderful? But I didn't have much time to ponder that because—

(The doorbell rings.)

EMILY. Oh fudge she's early.

PRESENT LOUIS. Except she didn't say fudge.

(EMILY catches herself.)

EMILY. You didn't hear that. Smiles!

(Everyone smiles.)

GEORGE. Do you think it would be more festive if we started a Christmas Carol?

(He begins singing "O Come all Ye Faithful.")

CAROLYN. Cool. No one's ever gotten me a glowing unicorn before.

LOUIS. Yeah. It spoke to me.

CAROLYN. It talks? That's so cool!

LOUIS. No I mean like, you know 'it spoke to me' not that it actually spoke to me. Like I saw it and just thought of you because it's different colors and you have different colors and I thought it was cool.

CAROLYN. Oh.

LOUIS. It's fiberoptic.

CAROLYN. Cool.

(Pause.)

LOUIS. Do you like it?

CAROLYN. Sure.

(LOUIS is crushed.)

LOUIS. So um...bye.

CAROLYN. Bye. Thanks for the present.

LOUIS. Yeah.

(She leaves. LOUIS remains. Barking off-stage.)

CAROLYN. *(Off-stage:)* Shut up! SHUT UP! Shut up! No!

(Lights fade on her, leaving LOUIS alone on-stage.)

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(No answer.)

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(KELLY comes over.)

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(She puts her arm around him and they walk off.)

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(LOUIS is alone in a pool of light.)

LOUIS. **She's never gonna like me.** She's probably gonna go out with some guy in high school who can bench press 400 pounds and has a cleft chin. Maybe if I bench pressed 400 pounds she'd like me. I could probably do it. I'd just have to spend a lot of time in the gym. Like, every day, I'll just go to the gym every day and I won't even go to school any more, I'll just work out all the time and then I'll be huge and no one will make fun of me any more. Who'm I kidding? I got a nosebleed that time I was in the gym. **I never shoulda gotten her that unicorn.** But she said she liked it. She didn't like it. But why would she say she liked it if she didn't like it? She's not a liar. She's a very honest person. And she was mad at her brother when she opened the door. **She even smiled when she opened it. You don't just smile for no reason.** She smiled at me and she took the present and she said she liked it. And I'm gonna see her tomorrow after the show. And after the show she's gonna hug me. She hugged me twice this week. I think she likes me. I can tell by the way she hugged me, that wasn't just an ordinary hug. That was like an I like you hug and I was too stupid to pick up on it. I shoulda gone in. I shoulda said, maybe we should get some coffee

or something. I just totally missed my chance. **Tomorrow it's gonna be different. I'm gonna kiss her.**

PRESENT LOUIS. Yeah. I wasn't the brightest kid.

KELLY. What are you smiling about?

LOUIS. Oh you'll find out.

(They exit.)

(Lights change. Festive music. GEORGE and GRANDMA SKOLOWSKI enter the living room.)

GEORGE. All right, who is ready to open some presents!

GRANDMA SKOLOWSKI. Oh I am.

(LOUIS enters.)

LOUIS. I've been ready. Kelly is re-adjusting her hair. Apparently exposure to the outside has damaged its structural integrity.

GEORGE. Where's your Mom and Grandma Jacobs?

GRANDMA JACOBS. *(Off-stage:)* I'm coming! I'm coming! Hold your horses!

(She slowly enters.)

I can't sit on the pot for more than five minutes without someone wondering where the heck I am!

GEORGE. Merry Christmas.

GRANDMA JACOBS. Yeah, yeah. Where's Emily?

GEORGE. I thought she was with you.

GRANDMA JACOBS. In the bathroom? Emily? EMILY! WE'RE HAVING CHRISTMAS WITHOUT YOU.

EMILY. *(Off-stage:)* Coming!

GRANDMA JACOBS. DID YOU HEAR ME?!

EMILY. *(Off-stage:)* I'm coming!

GRANDMA JACOBS. WELL SAY SOMETHING.

GEORGE. She's coming.

(GRANDMA SKOLOWSKI takes GEORGE aside.)

GRANDMA SKOLOWSKI. I hope you're not disappointed but I only got one present for you this year.

GEORGE. That's okay, Mom. We didn't even know you were going to be here.

GRANDMA SKOLOWSKI. It's for Kelly.

GEORGE. Oh.

GRANDMA SKOLOWSKI. I'm giving her everything I own.

GRANDMA JACOBS. ARE WE GONNA DO THIS OR NOT?!

(Lights fade.)

End of Act I

KELLY. Are you kidding me?! Who's going to play Joseph?!

(She hangs up. LOUIS enters.)

LOUIS. My stomach hurts.

(KELLY grabs him.)

KELLY. You are not getting out of this. Do you understand me? I will murder you in your sleep.

LOUIS. Merry Christmas.

KELLY. Yeah. Merry Christmas. Murder you.

PRESENT LOUIS. When we got to the church things weren't much better. Our leading actor, Tommy, was kept home by his mother because she didn't approve of Kelly's biblical interpretation. In the end there were just the three of us; any sane human would have called off the show.

(KELLY comes downcenter and addresses the audience as if they were a church filled with people. She is sweating bullets.)

KELLY. Okay, so...um...the youth group will now present The Nativity Story for your entertainment and...spiritual fulfillment.

(KELLY gathers herself.)

Uh...but first I wanna say that this is kind of an experimental version... We used to have more actors in the show, but certain people, I'm not even going to say their names, but they know who they are, thought that it was more important to fake illnesses than to portray the birth of Jesus. Okay? That's all I'm going to say about that. But God knows who you are and so do I. And one of those people is sitting on the left side of the church in the back row and I can see you, okay? And God sees you. And if you think you can not be in the nativity story and not get eggs thrown at your house then you got another thing coming, all right? Cause I know where you live. Amen.

(KELLY gathers herself again.)

I want you all to take a moment to mentally prepare yourself for what you are about to witness. We've all heard this story before. But have we truly seen it? Have we lived it? Think. Believe. Feel.

(KELLY produces a boombox and presses play. Some horrible cheesy 80s music plays.)

This is Mary's Story. Imagine yourself in the past. Long ago. Before television or radio. Before fish. There was a girl.

(KELLY moves off to the side as CAROLYN enters, dressed as Mary. CAROLYN is an excellent actress and does everything quite well.)

KELLY. *(As the holy spirit:)* Mary.

CAROLYN. Who's there?

KELLY. It is I the holy spirit.

CAROLYN. The holy spirit?

KELLY. You are to be blessed above all women, Mary.

CAROLYN. Me?

KELLY. You.

(KELLY assumes the role of narrator again.)

Bam! And it was so. Immaculate. And she found herself with child.

(KELLY puts another tape in the boombox. Madonna's "Papa Don't Preach" plays.)

But does anyone really know what happened between Mary and her father?

(KELLY puts on a beard. CAROLYN enters, hugely pregnant now.)

CAROLYN. Papa?

KELLY. Whoah! What the heck happened to you?

CAROLYN. It was the holy spirit, papa.

KELLY. Tell me another one! Now Joseph will never have you as a wife and I'm gonna have to hit you with rocks until you die.

KELLY. Are you kidding me?! Who's going to play Joseph?!

(She hangs up. LOUIS enters.)

LOUIS. My stomach hurts.

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LOUIS. What? I mean—well, I guess a little. It woulda been better if the other people were here.

CAROLYN. Yeah.

LOUIS. And if Kelly didn't play God.

CAROLYN. Yeah.

LOUIS. And if my grandmother wasn't booing us.

CAROLYN. That was your Grandma?

LOUIS. Yeah. She's kinda evil. I mean I think the booing was actually justified, but still...we're her only grandkids. At least it's over.

CAROLYN. My Dad has this new videocamera and he taped it.

LOUIS. That's not good.

CAROLYN. I don't think I'm ever gonna watch it.

LOUIS. Yeah. No. So...um...did you talk to your parents about tonight?

CAROLYN. What about tonight?

LOUIS. We're having that cast party thing?

CAROLYN. Oh.

LOUIS. You think you can make it?

CAROLYN. Probably not.

LOUIS. Okay.

CAROLYN. Well I'll see you later. Good job.

LOUIS. Oh—um.

CAROLYN. What?

LOUIS. Never mind.

(Short pause.)

CAROLYN. Okay.

(She leaves. LOUIS watches her as KELLY enters.)

KELLY. **How does it feel to have ruined Christmas for everybody?**

PRESENT LOUIS. But the horrible disaster of the Nativity Play could only distract my parents for so long from the other horrible disaster which was my Grandmother's present to Kelly.

(Lights up on the living room. EMILY and GEORGE pace.)

EMILY. It's not legal.

GEORGE. I really don't want to get into it.

EMILY. Why not?

GEORGE. It's what she wants.

EMILY. George, she doesn't know what she wants. She didn't even know what was in her will.

GEORGE. She told me earlier.

EMILY. She told you she was giving everything she had to Kelly?

GEORGE. Yes.

EMILY. Why didn't you say anything?

GEORGE. It didn't come up.

EMILY. What do you mean it didn't come up?

GEORGE. It just didn't, okay. I couldn't get a word in edgewise with your Mom handing out diseased cats left and right.

EMILY. How much is that land worth?

GEORGE. I don't know. A lot.

EMILY. She can't do this.

GEORGE. I don't think there's anything we can do about it.

EMILY. She's not in her right mind.

GEORGE. I know that.

EMILY. So the will isn't binding. It'll never hold up in court. We can have your Mom declared mentally incompetent.

GEORGE. I'm not doing that.

CAROLYN. Please, papa, no, you have to believe me.

KELLY. And just then—

(KELLY takes off her beard.)

It was Joseph.

(KELLY becomes Joseph:)

I love you Mary!

CAROLYN. I love you Joseph!

KELLY. And we'll raise this baby together! We don't need your parents! You see, they don't believe that two crazy teenagers can be in love. They don't believe in our love. Run away with me to Galilee.

CAROLYN. I can't. I'm grounded.

PRESENT LOUIS. I was waiting in the wings, watching the nightmare unfold. **From where** I sat I could see the faces of the audience, and I knew what they felt: hate. And they were trying to make up their minds if this was blasphemous, or merely bad.

(KELLY becomes the father again.)

KELLY. I forbid you to leave this house!

CAROLYN. You just don't understand me, Papa! Me and Joseph are running away!

KELLY. Never! You're my daughter!

(She switches back to the narrator.)

But that night God sent him a message.

(KELLY becomes God.)

Eric. ERIC.

PRESENT LOUIS. Jesus' grandfather's name was Eric?

KELLY. This is GOD. I need to talk to you. You're being a real jerk.

PRESENT LOUIS. And that's when I heard it.

GRANDMA JACOBS. *(Off-stage:)* Boo! Booooo! Booooooooooooo!

PRESENT LOUIS. They were booing God. Well, my sister playing God. So what does Kelly do?

(KELLY switches to Joseph wig and escorts CAROLYN.)

KELLY. *(Speaking louder, over the booing:)* Come on Mary, let's check out that inn!

CAROLYN. I'm feeling sick, Joseph!

KELLY. *(Patting CAROLYN's belly:)* Hold on, baby! We're gonna make it!

PRESENT LOUIS. I couldn't take it any more. I had to do something to save the show. It was okay if they booed Kelly, but Carolyn?

KELLY. Help us Jesus! Help us Jesus! Help us Jesus!

(CAROLYN is in labor. More boos.)

(LOUIS enters in a donkey costume. CAROLYN and KELLY stop to look at him.)

(Long, uncomfortable pause.)

KELLY. *(A whisper through clenched teeth:)* Get off the stage, it's not your turn yet.

(Pause.)

LOUIS. BRAAAAAAAAAAY!

(Lights change.)

PRESENT LOUIS. I saved the show.

(CAROLYN and LOUIS appear.)

Okay. Maybe not.

LOUIS. So um...you were great!

(He hugs CAROLYN.)

CAROLYN. Thanks. I thought it kinda sucked.

CAROLYN. Please, papa, no, you have to believe me.

KELLY. And just then –

(KELLY takes off her beard.)

It was Joseph.

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(Long, uncomfortable pause.)

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(Lights change.)

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LOUIS. We're having that cast party thing?

CAROLYN. Oh.

LOUIS. You think you can make it?

CAROLYN. Probably not.

LOUIS. Okay.

CAROLYN. Well I'll see you later. Good job.

LOUIS. Oh—um.

CAROLYN. What?

LOUIS. Never mind.

(Short pause.)

CAROLYN. Okay.

(She leaves. LOUIS watches her as KELLY enters.)

KELLY. How does it feel to have ruined Christmas for everybody?

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EMILY. Why not?

GEORGE. It's what she wants.

EMILY. George, she doesn't know what she wants. She didn't even know what was in her will.

GEORGE. She told me earlier.

EMILY. She told you she was giving everything she had to Kelly?

GEORGE. Yes.

EMILY. Why didn't you say anything?

GEORGE. It didn't come up.

EMILY. What do you mean it didn't come up?

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GEORGE. I don't know. A lot.

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EMILY. She's not in her right mind.

GEORGE. I know that.

EMILY. So the will isn't binding. It'll never hold up in court. We can have your Mom declared mentally incompetent.

GEORGE. I'm not doing that.

GRANDMA JACOBS. What's wrong with telling him about the dog?

EMILY. It's sick, Mom. This is Christmas.

GRANDMA JACOBS. He needs to learn about life!

LOUIS. Did Sweetie Pie get hit by a car?

GRANDMA JACOBS. Can I tell you the story? Don't you wreck it.

EMILY. Fine, tell the stupid story. I'm not listening to it again though.

GRANDMA JACOBS. You need to hear it again!

(EMILY leaves.)

So Sweetie Pie runs into the street. And I'm sitting on our front porch and I say, Sweetie Pie, no, don't run into the street! Course we never had him trained properly. He used to jump up on the kitchen table when we were having dinner. He'd go whoop up on a chair and then bam right onto the table, my father had fits, he wanted the dog dead. So, anyway, he's not trained, he doesn't listen, he's out in the middle of the road—and then I see it—there's a dead dog in the road!

LOUIS. There's a dead dog in the road?

GRANDMA JACOBS. Yeah. So Sweetie Pie runs over to the dead dog, and he starts chewing on the corpse.

EMILY. *(Off-stage:)* Oh my God Mom! Christmas!

GRANDMA JACOBS. And he's out there gnawing on this other dead dog's leg.

LOUIS. Sweetie Pie was a cannibal?

GRANDMA JACOBS. Most dogs are cannibals if you give 'em the chance. So I'm screaming, no, Sweetie Pie don't eat that dog's leg! And bam a truck runs him over! Sweetie Pie is dead.

LOUIS. Wow.

GRANDMA JACOBS. Yeah. I've been trying to make sense of that story my whole life. Basically I think it comes down to this: Don't

laugh at the misfortunes of others, because the truck might be right behind ya.

(EMILY returns with more dishes and a basket of biscuits.)

EMILY. Are you done?

GRANDMA JACOBS. Almost. So don't laugh at Schmoopy cause he's only got one eye and leukemia.

LOUIS. Because pretty soon I might only have one eye and leukemia?

GRANDMA JACOBS. Right.

(GRANDMA SKOLOWSKI and KELLY enter.)

KELLY. Hey Mom.

EMILY. Kelly you're sitting over here. And Grandma Skolowski you sit here.

GRANDMA JACOBS. I'm sitting next to Louis.

EMILY. *(Annoyed:)* Okay. Well then we just switch this.

(She calls out as she exchanges a place setting.)

George! We're ready! Where did he go?

GRANDMA JACOBS. Garage.

EMILY. What for?

GRANDMA JACOBS. I don't know, go get me some scotch on the rocks.

EMILY. I'm not getting you that.

GRANDMA JACOBS. I'm sorry, is there some kind of Christmas rule about scotch?

KELLY. There better not be.

EMILY. You're not having hard liquor with Christmas dinner and Kelly...cool it.

GRANDMA SKOLOWSKI. My father was quite a drunkard.

GRANDMA JACOBS. I'm not a drunk, I want a glass of scotch, I think I'm old enough to have a glass of scotch.

(GEORGE enters.)

EMILY. I don't want you to drink it in the house.

GRANDMA JACOBS. I guess I'll drink it out on the porch like a homeless person, is that what you want? I'll get it myself.

GEORGE. Are we gonna have dinner?

EMILY. Yes. Sit.

GEORGE. Fine.

EMILY. Mom. Stay.

GRANDMA JACOBS. Louis. Fetch. Me scotch.

EMILY. He doesn't know what it is.

KELLY. I'll get it.

EMILY. George! *Would you mind saying grace?*

GEORGE. *Okay. Um...let us bow our heads in prayer. Dear Lord: thank you for the many gifts you have given us this holiday season. Thank you for bringing our whole family together. And please let us remember that we love each other despite...difficulties. And...*

GRANDMA JACOBS. Hey God. Thanks for Jesus. And thank you for cats. And please help certain people in this family to respect their elders and get them whatever they want because they might die soon. Amen.

EMILY. *One more thing, Lord. Please let certain other people in this family not be crazy and mean and make outrageous demands during the holiday season. And let other people come to their senses.*

KELLY. *And could you please punish the people who didn't show up for the nativity play because they were liars?*

GRANDMA JACOBS. And please find it in your heart, Lord, to prevent the youth of this family from making snide comments.

EMILY. And help us remember to set good examples for our children with our behavior and not shoplift from the mall.

GRANDMA JACOBS. That's what I was talking about with the snide comments, God. *And* please help certain people in this family remember that it is not polite to rat out their elders to their elders' children.

GRANDMA SKOLOWSKI. Since we're making requests God. I'd like to ask you to help Louis with his courage and please help the special girl that he likes open her eyes to what a wonderful young man he is. Amen.

(The others mumble "Amen." They sit in silence for a moment.)

LOUIS. Thanks Grandma.

GRANDMA JACOBS. So did everyone like their Christmas presents? Kelly?

KELLY. What?

GRANDMA JACOBS. Did you like your Christmas present?

KELLY. Sure.

GRANDMA JACOBS. You must really like it.

EMILY. Mom stop it. Let's have a nice dinner and be polite.

GRANDMA JACOBS. I was polite for sixty-two years and look where it got me.

GRANDMA SKOLOWSKI. If you'll excuse me, I need to freshen up.

(She gets up from the table and exits.)

GRANDMA JACOBS. It's a load of crap, that's what it is.

GEORGE. I don't see how it's any of your business.

KELLY. What are you talking about?

EMILY. Mom. Leave it.

GRANDMA JACOBS. I just want you to know, Louis, that you are taken care of in my will.

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EMILY. Mom. Leave it.

GRANDMA JACOBS. I just want you to know, Louis, that you are taken care of in my will.

GEORGE. I'm sure all those cats are gonna come in handy.

GRANDMA JACOBS. I wouldn't forget you.

EMILY. I don't think it's a matter of forgetting—

GRANDMA JACOBS. Will you listen to yourself? Earlier today you were going on and on about declaring her incompetent and nullifying the will, and now you sit there—

KELLY. What? Mom?

EMILY. You don't hear anything else all weekend and that you hear?!

GEORGE. We're not going to do that Kelly.

EMILY. We haven't decided what we're going to do.

KELLY. You'd nullify Grandma's will?

EMILY. It's just not fair to everyone else. I mean think about Louis.

KELLY. What about Louis?

EMILY. Do you think it's fair that you get everything and he gets nothing?

KELLY. Yes. Look at Louis!

LOUIS. What do you mean, look at me?

GEORGE. I'm not going to go against her wishes.

EMILY. She couldn't pick Kelly out of a lineup. And what are you gonna do with the money anyway?

KELLY. I thought I was getting the swamp.

EMILY. It's a very valuable swamp.

GRANDMA JACOBS. It's probably full of snakes anyway.

KELLY. You just want it for yourself!

EMILY. Oh please! Well what do you think Louis?

LOUIS. Me? Um...I mean isn't a will? So doesn't that mean that no one gets anything until after she dies? So why are we acting like she's already dead?

(Pause.)

(The doorbell rings as GRANDMA SKOLOWSKI enters.)

GRANDMA SKOLOWSKI. I'll get it.

GEORGE. No I'll get it Mom.

GRANDMA SKOLOWSKI. George I can answer the door.

(She goes to the door.)

EMILY. Who would stop by on Christmas night?

(GRANDMA SKOLOWSKI opens the door. CAROLYN is standing there.)

GRANDMA SKOLOWSKI. It's the Virgin Mary!

CAROLYN. Hi. Um...is Louis here?

GRANDMA SKOLOWSKI. She's come for Louis!

(LOUIS gets up.)

LOUIS. Carolyn?

CAROLYN. Hey. I stopped by for the...party?

LOUIS. Oh. Um. Yeah. Hey everybody—this is Carolyn. She's uh...she's here for the cast party.

(LOUIS escorts her to the table.)

CAROLYN. Hi.

KELLY. Hey.

EMILY. Merry Christmas, Carolyn. Have a seat and I'll find myself another chair.

(EMILY leaves to look for another chair.)

CAROLYN. I'm sorry am I late?

GEORGE. Not at all. Sit down.

GEORGE. I'm sure all those cats are gonna come in handy.

GRANDMA JACOBS. I wouldn't forget you.

EMILY. I don't think it's a matter of forgetting—

GRANDMA JACOBS. Will you listen to yourself? Earlier today you were going on and on about declaring her incompetent and nullifying the will, and now you sit there—

KELLY. What? Mom?

EMILY. You don't hear anything else all weekend and that you hear?!

GEORGE. We're not going to do that Kelly.

EMILY. We haven't decided what we're going to do.

KELLY. You'd nullify Grandma's will?

EMILY. It's just not fair to everyone else. I mean think about Louis.

KELLY. What about Louis?

EMILY. Do you think it's fair that you get everything and he gets nothing?

KELLY. Yes. Look at Louis!

LOUIS. What do you mean, look at me?

GEORGE. I'm not going to go against her wishes.

EMILY. She couldn't pick Kelly out of a lineup. And what are you gonna do with the money anyway?

KELLY. I thought I was getting the swamp.

EMILY. It's a very valuable swamp.

GRANDMA JACOBS. It's probably full of snakes anyway.

KELLY. You just want it for yourself!

EMILY. Oh please! Well what do you think Louis?

LOUIS. Me? Um...I mean isn't a will? So doesn't that mean that no one gets anything until after she dies? So why are we acting like she's already dead?

(Pause.)

(The doorbell rings as GRANDMA SKOLOWSKI enters.)

GRANDMA SKOLOWSKI. I'll get it.

GEORGE. No I'll get it Mom.

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(She goes to the door.)

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(LOUIS gets up.)

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CAROLYN. Hey. I stopped by for the...party?

LOUIS. Oh. Um. Yeah. Hey everybody—this is Carolyn. She's uh...she's here for the cast party.

(LOUIS escorts her to the table.)

CAROLYN. Hi.

KELLY. Hey.

EMILY. Merry Christmas, Carolyn. Have a seat and I'll find myself another chair.

(EMILY leaves to look for another chair.)

CAROLYN. I'm sorry am I late?

GEORGE. Not at all. Sit down.

(CAROLYN sits gingerly.)

GRANDMA JACOBS. Why are you sitting over there? You should sit next to Louis.

CAROLYN. I'm fine here.

GRANDMA JACOBS. Here we'll switch.

CAROLYN. No that's okay.

GRANDMA JACOBS. Get up we'll switch.

(GRANDMA JACOBS is out of her chair, rapping on CAROLYN's chair with her cane.)

CAROLYN. Okay.

(She moves.)

(EMILY returns with another chair.)

EMILY. (To CAROLYN:) Oh you moved? You can sit in my seat.

GRANDMA JACOBS. I told her to switch.

EMILY. Mom.

GRANDMA JACOBS. What? She wants to sit next to Louis.

CAROLYN. I'm fine anywhere—

GRANDMA JACOBS. (Continuing:) The girl came all the way over here to be with Louis and you want to make her sit on the other side of the table! What is wrong with you?

EMILY. I was just giving her my seat!

GRANDMA SKOLOWSKI. So you're not the Virgin Mary?

CAROLYN. That was the play I was in.

GRANDMA SKOLOWSKI. What play?

GRANDMA JACOBS. The horrible play she was in. This morning? Remember? Kelly was Joseph?

GRANDMA SKOLOWSKI. Kelly was Joseph?

KELLY. It was unorthodox.

GEORGE. Remember: you were filled with shame watching it? Not you Carolyn, you were very good.

GRANDMA SKOLOWSKI. Oh right. Yes that play. I'm so sorry for you. But you came at just the most interesting time. It seems that quite a few people at this table feel that I am crazy and would be better off dead.

(Pause.)

EMILY. Would you like a roll?

GEORGE. So what kind of work does your Dad do, Carolyn?

CAROLYN. He's a lawyer.

EMILY. Oh. A lawyer?

KELLY. Don't get any ideas Mom.

EMILY. What kind of lawyer?

CAROLYN. Divorce lawyer.

(Pause.)

But he's not my real Dad. I was adopted.

GRANDMA SKOLOWSKI. It's probably better this way.

CAROLYN. I'm sure.

GRANDMA SKOLOWSKI. When I was a little girl, I had a friend who was adopted. Her name was Ludmilla and she was the most adorable little child with a button nose and a hunchback.

KELLY. Louis. Here's a thought: Why don't you and Carolyn go somewhere else?

EMILY. Don't be ridiculous, Carolyn is welcome at the dinner table.

GEORGE. You can go in the basement if you want.

EMILY. She's not going in the basement. She's staying right here with us and we're all going to have a wonderful dinner.

GRANDMA JACOBS. Well where is it? I've been sitting here for ten minutes and all I've had is a roll!

EMILY. You have not been sitting there for ten minutes!

GRANDMA JACOBS. It feels like half an hour! How long does it take to make soup?

EMILY. We're having chicken!

GRANDMA JACOBS. What are we doing having chicken on Christmas?

GRANDMA SKOLOWSKI. Oh we used to love chickens.

EMILY. We've been over this Mom — there isn't a law that you need to have turkey on Christmas.

GRANDMA JACOBS. When you were growing up, I made turkey.

EMILY. Well you can make turkey all you want I'm making chicken!

GRANDMA JACOBS. A chicken isn't even half the size of a turkey!

EMILY. What does that have to do with anything?

GRANDMA JACOBS. Jesus does not want us to have chicken on Christmas.

EMILY. Oh I'm sorry did Jesus tell you that?!

GRANDMA JACOBS. He did! And he's awfully upset about Kelly's play this morning!

KELLY. Don't drag me into it! I just want to eat something!

GEORGE. Are there any more rolls?

GRANDMA JACOBS. You know what I mean!

EMILY. No! No one knows what you mean!

GRANDMA SKOLOWSKI. *(Overlapping:)* She's the crazy one.

GRANDMA JACOBS. Well no one knows what you mean because you mumble all the time!

EMILY. You're selectively deaf!

GRANDMA JACOBS. When you were four years old you used to throw the worst tantrums that anyone had ever seen —

EMILY. *(Continuous:)* What are you talking about?!

GRANDMA JACOBS. *(Continuing:)* I remember one time in JC Penny's you threw yourself on the ground so hard you gave yourself a concussion! And this is the same thing right now!

EMILY. Just...ag...

(EMILY pulls the taser gun out of her purse.)

This is a terrible Christmas present!

GEORGE. Put it down, Emily.

(LOUIS and CAROLYN slowly get up from the table and leave.)

EMILY. You're lucky I don't pull the trigger on this!

GRANDMA JACOBS. You don't have the balls!

EMILY. I wish you would stop saying that! I'm a woman!

(Pause. They freeze.)

PRESENT LOUIS. So it was a beautiful introduction to my family. Part of me wanted to stick around to see whether or not my mother would pull the trigger. Part of me wanted a meteor to hit the house. But I took Kelly's advice, and we snuck off to the basement.

(Lights shift to the basement.)

My Dad had been quote finishing the basement since before I was born. It was one of those things that my parents fought about when they fought about who was supposed to do the dishes or something, my Dad would say, 'I was going to get to the dishes' and my Mom would say 'like you're going to get to the tile in the basement?' and things would degenerate from there. So the finished part of the basement consisted of one room, a dusty old television, and a couch which had recently been peed on by a one-eyed cat with leukemia. It was the most romantic place on Earth.

CAROLYN. This is nice.

LOUIS. Really?

EMILY. You have not been sitting there for ten minutes!

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CAROLYN. This is nice.

LOUIS. Really?

CAROLYN. You like it?

LOUIS. Yes. Thank you! This is the best Christmas present ever.

CAROLYN. I mean, it's not an old cat or anything.

(A petulant growl is heard.)

LOUIS. I think I'll manage.

PRESENT LOUIS. Another facet of the unfinished basement was that there was an open vent straight up to the kitchen. You could pretty much hear every word of what happened up there. And as I was sitting there with the love of my life holding the best Christmas present ever, this is what we heard:

(Lights up dimly on the dining room. EMILY and GEORGE are cleaning up.)

GEORGE. That was pleasant.

(No response.)

I think we should make it a Christmas tradition that someone has to pull a gun on someone else before we have turkey.

EMILY. Chicken.

GEORGE. I think we should probably have turkey from now on. Things might go better.

(EMILY sits down.)

What?

(No response.)

What.

EMILY. Nothing.

GEORGE. What is it?

EMILY. I don't want to live like this.

GEORGE. Can we talk about this later? I'm tired.

(He leaves with dishes. EMILY sits there, very still. GEORGE returns momentarily and watches her.)

Fine. Talk to me.

EMILY. No, you're tired. Go to bed.

GEORGE. I just said talk to me. Look, I'm sorry that things haven't been that great around here. You know, with my Mom and your Mom and—

EMILY. It's not that.

GEORGE. I just don't think we should challenge the will, that's all.

EMILY. Fine. She's your mother.

GEORGE. Okay. Good. That's it, then?

EMILY. What do you mean, that's it, then?

GEORGE. This...discussion.

EMILY. What?

GEORGE. Never mind.

EMILY. How can you be so dense?

GEORGE. Well you won't fricking tell me what you're upset about!

EMILY. What do you think I'm upset about?!

GEORGE. I don't know! That's why I'm asking you the question!

EMILY. If you had half a brain, you would know!

GEORGE. WHAT! I don't know, are you upset about the food or the—

EMILY. Oh my God!

GEORGE. Just tell me!

EMILY. You're like a child, you know that?

GEORGE. You're insane!

EMILY. I'm not insane, you're just so unobservant it makes my brain hurt.

GEORGE. This conversation makes my brain hurt! I'm trying to figure it out, Emily, I don't know. Every day with you I'm just try-

And I was a hero.

(The soaked, filthy LOUIS and GRANDMA JACOBS approach KELLY.)

(KELLY ignores him.)

GRANDMA JACOBS. All right let's go.

KELLY. Oh my God.

(LOUIS holds up the glowing unicorn figurine.)

That's what you got?

LOUIS. Yeah, isn't it awesome?

(Beat.)

KELLY. Um...yeah. It's awesome. Let's go.

PRESENT LOUIS. She betrayed me.

GRANDMA JACOBS. Merry Christmas.

(GRANDMA JACOBS reaches into the folds of her dress and produces two boxes of chocolate.)

LOUIS. I thought you said you didn't have any money.

(She shrugs.)

GRANDMA JACOBS. Old people get things for free.

(Lights shift.)

PRESENT LOUIS. When they steal them.

(Lights up on GEORGE in the kitchen, putting away dishes. EMILY enters.)

Meanwhile, the event that was about to change my life forever was unfolding.

EMILY. Where's Mom?

GEORGE. She went to the mall with the kids.

EMILY. Really?

GEORGE. Yeah it was the darndest thing. They all just really wanted to spend some quality time together.

EMILY. Seriously?

GEORGE. No I made Kelly take her.

EMILY. How'd you manage that?

GEORGE. Honestly, I don't know. I think I just behaved as if I had the authority to make your Mom go and then Kelly just sort of accepted it. It was surreal. She actually did something I said. Made me feel like a man.

EMILY. Those bowls don't go there.

GEORGE. They don't?

EMILY. You have to stack them.

GEORGE. Oh.

(EMILY takes a look in the cabinet.)

EMILY. **George. What** have you been doing in here?

GEORGE. Putting dishes away.

EMILY. Why?

GEORGE. Because...when dishes are clean I like to put them away, I don't know I'm crazy that way.

EMILY. Yeah but you do it wrong. Look at this. You see, the little bowls go inside of the big bowls. It's not that hard.

GEORGE. See, I thought it was the other way around. I was trying to bend the laws of physics to make the big bowls go inside of the little bowls.

EMILY. You know, you're not half as funny as you think you are.

GEORGE. That still makes me pretty funny.

(He goes to get some more dishes.)

EMILY. Don't. Just let me do it.

GEORGE. Fine.

GEORGE. I'm sure all those cats are gonna come in handy.

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EMILY. I don't think it's a matter of forgetting—

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(Pause.)

(The doorbell rings as GRANDMA SKOLOWSKI enters.)

GRANDMA SKOLOWSKI. I'll get it.

GEORGE. No I'll get it Mom.

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(She goes to the door.)

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(LOUIS gets up.)

LOUIS. Carolyn?

CAROLYN. Hey. I stopped by for the...party?

LOUIS. Oh. Um. Yeah. Hey everybody—this is Carolyn. She's uh...she's here for the cast party.

(LOUIS escorts her to the table.)

CAROLYN. Hi.

KELLY. Hey.

EMILY. Merry Christmas, Carolyn. Have a seat and I'll find myself another chair.

(EMILY leaves to look for another chair.)

CAROLYN. I'm sorry am I late?

GEORGE. Not at all. Sit down.

And I was a hero.

(The soaked, filthy LOUIS and GRANDMA JACOBS approach KELLY.)

(KELLY ignores him.)

GRANDMA JACOBS. All right let's go.

KELLY. Oh my God.

(LOUIS holds up the glowing unicorn figurine.)

That's what you got?

LOUIS. Yeah, isn't it awesome?

(Beat.)

KELLY. Um...yeah. It's awesome. Let's go.

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(GRANDMA JACOBS reaches into the folds of her dress and produces two boxes of chocolate.)

LOUIS. I thought you said you didn't have any money.

(She shrugs.)

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(Lights shift.)

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EMILY. Really?

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EMILY. Seriously?

GEORGE. No I made Kelly take her.

EMILY. How'd you manage that?

GEORGE. Honestly, I don't know. I think I just behaved as if I had the authority to make your Mom go and then Kelly just sort of accepted it. It was surreal. She actually did something I said. Made me feel like a man.

EMILY. Those bowls don't go there.

GEORGE. They don't?

EMILY. You have to stack them.

GEORGE. Oh.

(EMILY takes a look in the cabinet.)

EMILY. George. What have you been doing in here?

GEORGE. Putting dishes away.

EMILY. Why?

GEORGE. Because...when dishes are clean I like to put them away, I don't know I'm crazy that way.

EMILY. Yeah but you do it wrong. Look at this. You see, the little bowls go inside of the big bowls. It's not that hard.

GEORGE. See, I thought it was the other way around. I was trying to bend the laws of physics to make the big bowls go inside of the little bowls.

EMILY. You know, you're not half as funny as you think you are.

GEORGE. That still makes me pretty funny.

(He goes to get some more dishes.)

EMILY. Don't. Just let me do it.

GEORGE. Fine.

KELLY. She hates us!

EMILY. She does not hate you —

GEORGE. Don't take it personally Kelly, she hates everyone.

EMILY. George!

KELLY. She's gonna complain anyway Mom! She's gonna find fault with something. She hates my hair —

LOUIS. To be honest, there's a lot a hate about —

KELLY. Shut up Louis! I don't like Grandma Jacobs I'm not cleaning the house for her! I hate it when you get like this! You don't care about me! All you want is a maid!

EMILY. Fine. Leave. I'll clean the house myself. Louis stop what you're doing.

LOUIS. I want to help, Mom.

EMILY. No. I'll do it. I'm the only one who cares, apparently.

LOUIS. Mom I want to do this.

EMILY. Give me the lights Louis.

LOUIS. Look see I'm doing a good job now.

EMILY. You sure are sweetie, why don't you go live on the streets with your sister?

LOUIS. What?

KELLY. Oh stop taking it out on him.

EMILY. **Well** I certainly don't want to take it out on the maid. And don't tell me what to do in my house. If you don't want to clean and just make a nuisance of yourself, fine, but don't presume to lecture me on how to be a decent person.

GEORGE. Emily — let's go in the other room.

EMILY. Not right now.

GEORGE. Let's let the kids clean up for once and we'll go in the other room.

EMILY. They won't clean right.

GEORGE. Your mother won't notice — she'll be too busy yelling at me. Let's go in the other room.

EMILY. Fine.

(EMILY and GEORGE leave. LOUIS hangs a few ornaments in silence. KELLY stews.)

LOUIS. You know what your problem is?

(No response.)

I said do you know what your problem is?

KELLY. Were you anticipating some kind of reaction to that statement?

LOUIS. Well, you and Mom are kinda the same. You're both really stubborn. That's why you fight all the time.

KELLY. Oh really. Thank you. That was genius, Louis. I'll remember that if I'm flushing my head down the toilet.

LOUIS. What?

KELLY. It's an expression.

LOUIS. You don't have to get mad at me. I didn't do anything.

KELLY. Whatever.

(LOUIS finishes the lights.)

LOUIS. There. What do you think?

KELLY. Sucks.

LOUIS. Seriously?

KELLY. It's okay.

(LOUIS turns on the lights. The tree looks good.)

LOUIS. That looks pretty cool, huh?

KELLY. I guess.

LOUIS. Hey Kelly? Can I ask you a question?

GEORGE. Oh it will not. Put them anywhere Louis. In fact, what if we used lighters for Christmas ornaments this year?

EMILY. Don't tell him that.

KELLY. Put 'em higher Louis.

LOUIS. I can't reach any higher.

GEORGE. Try jumping.

EMILY. Why don't you go help him, Kelly?

KELLY. I'm tired.

GEORGE. Kelly. Help out.

KELLY. *(Whine:)* Dad?

GEORGE. Are you really tired?

KELLY. Yes.

GEORGE. Well you just rest then.

LOUIS. What?

EMILY. Concentrate on what **you're** doing Louis.

LOUIS. Why does she get to sit there and I have to do it?

GEORGE. Life is unfair. It's about time you learned —

EMILY. George, please.

KELLY. You said you wanted to do it.

LOUIS. No I didn't.

KELLY. Well I'm not doing it!

LOUIS. It's not fair that I have to do everything!

EMILY. Oh so no one wants to have Christmas!

LOUIS. That's not what I'm saying —

EMILY. We'll just sit here and twiddle our thumbs until the cows come home because the two kids are too lazy to care about Christmas any more. Just load up a trough of presents and have the two

little piggies gorge themselves on gifts! That's what you want? That's what Jesus died for?

KELLY. Jesus was born on Christmas.

EMILY. Kelly?!

GEORGE. Quiet, Kel.

EMILY. I guess we won't have any presents then.

LOUIS. Fine! I'll decorate the tree.

EMILY. I have been slaving away all day cleaning this house; the least you could do is fake a little enthusiasm for trimming the tree. Just fake it Louis. That's all I'm asking of you.

KELLY. Yeah, fake it Louis.

EMILY. Kelly you can do the dusting.

KELLY. What? Dad said I didn't —

EMILY. Is your father the boss of this house?

KELLY. Yes.

(GEORGE mouths the word "no.")

EMILY. Oh he is?

(GEORGE is shaking his head.)

KELLY. I'm going out.

EMILY. What did you just say?

KELLY. I'm going out.

(LOUIS and GEORGE merely stare.)

GEORGE. Kelly, maybe um —

EMILY. Sit down young lady.

KELLY. You're the one who cares about whether the house is clean. I don't give a crap.

EMILY. Grandma Jacobs is coming tomorrow —

And I was a hero.

(The soaked, filthy LOUIS and GRANDMA JACOBS approach KELLY.)

(KELLY ignores him.)

GRANDMA JACOBS. All right let's go.

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EMILY. **Don't. Just let me do it.**

GEORGE. Fine.

ing to figure out what I did wrong that pisses you off—I sit there before I make a decision, is this going to piss Emily off? Maybe. And then I think, if I do A, she'll be pissed off because I didn't do B, and if I do B, she'll be pissed off because I didn't do A. It's like I'm walking through a minefield every day around here!

EMILY. Well you're stepping on them every day! All throughout dinner—

GEORGE. Okay, here we go—

EMILY. You know what, forget it.

GEORGE. *Oh God no! Just tell me!*

EMILY. I was telling you and you interrupted me.

GEORGE. I won't interrupt. Just tell me what I did that was so horribly offensive to you.

EMILY. You know, the way you just phrased that question is the whole thing, right there.

GEORGE. I don't understand.

EMILY. *You don't take anything seriously. This is like a big joke to you. Like, we're fighting, and you want to make jokes.*

GEORGE. I'm sorry I'm funny. I can't help it.

EMILY. There you go again! You just did it right now, and that's what I'm upset about!

GEORGE. You're upset that I'm funny?

EMILY. You're not funny. You think you're funny. And all during dinner, it was just, how can I make someone laugh? You were making snide, sarcastic comments all night long, to me, to my Mom, to the kids. You've been making jokes at my Mom's expense since the minute she got here.

GEORGE. Oh come on. She got Louis a one-eyed cat for Christmas! How can I not make a joke about that!?

EMILY. Restrain yourself. Act like an adult.

GEORGE. You know, I hate this 'act like an adult' crap. All right? I am an adult. And you need to stop treating me like a child—

EMILY. Stop acting like a child and I'll stop treating you like a child.

GEORGE. I'm your husband, not your kid. I happen to have a sense of humor and a sense of fun, which you used to have, which you have misplaced somewhere, and now, whatever I do, it's "stop it, George, grow up, George, quit it, George. You fell in love with my sense of humor when we were dating—

EMILY. I tolerated your sense of humor.

GEORGE. So you tolerated me when we were dating? That's what you just said, you tolerated me? Can I tell you something? I've been wanting to get this off my chest for a while. There's this woman at work I have lunch with every day—

EMILY. Is this about Sara? Because she's—

GEORGE. I'm not having an affair. I would never have an affair. So it's like this...about eleven o'clock I start getting excited—I start getting butterflies in my stomach because I'm going to have lunch with her—and it's like I get this rush of energy, you know? And we go to whatever restaurant, it doesn't matter—and I'm just...it's like I'm the funniest guy in the world whenever she's with me. I mean we both don't stop laughing from the moment I pick her up to the moment I drop her off. And she makes me laugh and I make her laugh and we just have a good time. And I realized the other day that I'm living for lunch. A couple of weeks ago she said, and this really got to me, 'your wife must laugh all the time.' And I said yeah. But I was lying. Because you don't enjoy me any more.

(Beat. EMILY is near tears.)

EMILY. That's such crap.

GEORGE. My sense of humor is me. That's who you married.

EMILY. I don't enjoy you? You're sitting there and saying I don't enjoy you?! When was the last time you touched me?

GEORGE. I know it's been a while—

GEORGE. Can we just have an argument about one thing? Is it the dishes, is it your Mom, now it's parenting. I just don't understand how when we get in a fight every single thing I've ever done wrong gets trotted out of that brain of yours and I suddenly have to argue against this entire litany of past wrongdoing. It's impossible!

EMILY. It's all the same thing.

GEORGE. Which is?

EMILY. You're not very considerate. You don't ever think of anyone else but yourself.

GEORGE. That is just...I can't even...you're just wrong. Okay? You're wrong.

EMILY. Fine.

(They stand quite a distance apart from each other, still seething.)

George?

(Pause.)

GEORGE. Yeah?

EMILY. I love you.

(Pause.)

GEORGE. I love you too.

(They are still apart.)

EMILY. Do you think...?

GEORGE. What?

(Silence. EMILY can't bring herself to say what's on her mind. A long pause.)

(The doorbell rings. GEORGE gets it. GRANDMA SKOLOWSKI, a small, thin, elderly woman enters. Inexplicably, she has an upper-class British accent.)

GEORGE. Mom?!

GRANDMA SKOLOWSKI. I knew I could find this house. They told me I couldn't but I said I could.

EMILY. What are you doing here?

GRANDMA SKOLOWSKI. Why I've come for Christmas. I'm on holiday.

(Lights change.)

PRESENT LOUIS. I have to say a few words here about my Grandma Skolowski. First off, in 1986 she was diagnosed with severe dementia. I have a few memories of how she was before the disease struck, and I remember her as a really neat lady. Here's the thing: she had trouble remembering things, so she just started making things up. It wasn't that she was reliving her childhood, she was somehow imagining a childhood that never happened. My grandmother was born in Pittsburgh in 1916. She was a teenager during the depression. I think she worked as a nanny for a little while in there. Her husband, my grandfather, was a second-generation American who first worked in a butcher shop before branching out and owning his own restaurant, which was eventually put out of business by Denny's, but you never wanted to get him started on that. He went to fight in the Pacific in World War 2 and got some shrapnel in his back which bothered him the rest of his life. Those are the facts of my family. Here's how she would tell it.

(GRANDMA SKOLOWSKI speaks in a very sweet, very soft voice, with a British accent acquired from Masterpiece Theater.)

GRANDMA SKOLOWSKI. When I was thirteen years old a man came up to me on the street and asked if he could see my legs. This was a very strange proposition at that time, but I thought I had wonderful legs so I showed him and he said those are some pretty stunning legs. I was quite flattered. In those days, if a man said something nice to you you were obligated to marry him. But I was thirteen so I couldn't marry him and besides he was more attracted to my brother Joseph but I didn't know there were such men at the time. And he said he could get me an audition for the Rockettes. Imagine me, dancing for the Rockettes. So I said I'd love to be in the Rockettes, so he gave me a ticket on the train and I went to New York City, and I went straight to Radio City Music Hall for my audition. And there I was in front of the producer, Howard Shulz and he said how old are you and I said thirteen and he said I was

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GEORGE. Oh God no! Just tell me!

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GEORGE. Oh come on. She got Louis a one-eyed cat for Christmas! How can I not make a joke about that!?

EMILY. Restrain yourself. Act like an adult.

GEORGE. You know, I hate this 'act like an adult' crap. All right? I am an adult. And you need to stop treating me like a child—

EMILY. Stop acting like a child and I'll stop treating you like a child.

GEORGE. I'm your husband, not your kid. I happen to have a sense of humor and a sense of fun, which you used to have, which you have misplaced somewhere, and now, whatever I do, it's "stop it, George, grow up, George, quit it, George. You fell in love with my sense of humor when we were dating—

EMILY. I tolerated your sense of humor.

GEORGE. So you tolerated me when we were dating? That's what you just said, you tolerated me? Can I tell you something? I've been wanting to get this off my chest for a while. There's this woman at work I have lunch with every day—

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(Beat. EMILY is near tears.)

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EMILY. Fine.

(They stand quite a distance apart from each other, still seething.)

George?

(Pause.)

GEORGE. Yeah?

EMILY. I love you.

(Pause.)

GEORGE. I love you too.

(They are still apart.)

EMILY. Do you think...?

GEORGE. What?

(Silence. EMILY can't bring herself to say what's on her mind. A long pause.)

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GEORGE. Mom?!

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(Beat. EMILY is near tears.)

EMILY. That's such crap.

GEORGE. My sense of humor is me. That's who you married.

EMILY. I don't enjoy you? You're sitting there and saying I don't enjoy you?! When was the last time you touched me?

GEORGE. I know it's been a while—

EMILY. I'm talking a hug, a shoulder rub, holding hands, anything. When was the last time you physically touched me in any way? Do you know?

GEORGE. Um...

EMILY. It's been twenty-seven days. Do you know why I know that? It was just after Thanksgiving and I remember thinking that you never touch me any more without me touching you first. I was always the one who would hug you, or hold you, or kiss you. You never started anything. So I decided to do this little experiment where I would just not touch you and see how long it took before you noticed. I figured it would be a couple of hours. That first day it was so weird, because I had to make sure I was a couple of inches away from you all the time—like when we watched TV I just sat on the other side of the couch and in the kitchen I made sure I was just a little bit away from you all the time. And I remember that night, when we were lying in bed, and I was on my side, and I remember lying there crying because you hadn't noticed at all. To you everything was okay. You didn't even know what I was doing. So the next day I decided to do the experiment again. And I went the whole day, and then the next day, and then the next day, and it got a little bit easier each day, and I kept thinking, he's gonna notice, he's gonna notice, he's gonna notice it tonight. And you never noticed. You haven't noticed for four weeks. So when I say, I can't live like this, and you don't know what the hell I'm talking about, that's like you're pulling out my heart.

(Pause. GEORGE is still physically apart from EMILY.)

Why are we even doing this any more? Why don't you stop pretending that you love me? It is just pretend, isn't it?

GEORGE. I don't know.

EMILY. I just think you just answered my question. *Maybe we should just end this.*

GEORGE. *Maybe we should.*

(Lights up on LOUIS and CAROLYN, listening.)

CAROLYN. I think they're done.

LOUIS. ...yeah.

CAROLYN. *I'm sorry, Louis.*

(She takes a hold of his hand.)

LOUIS. It's okay.

CAROLYN. When I was eleven, my Mom moved out for a little while. It was only for a couple of months, but...I remember being in my room with the lights on the night before she was gonna go, and I thought, 'my Mom's leaving' and I just lay there and cried—I remember I had this little reading lamp right next to my bed, so it was hot right there, and I remember just being face down and hot and crying, and wondering why no one was coming in to see if I was okay. But it was all right, you know? I mean, that night was hard. But I saw my Mom all the time, and maybe that was just what my parents needed, because they got back together again. And that was like Christmas, you know? Like, wow, it was that dream you had that you never thought would come true, and then...there it is, it's really happening.

LOUIS. Thanks.

(She kisses him, then pulls apart. Freeze.)

PRESENT LOUIS. I remember shaking all over. And being scared that I was gonna screw it up. Or I was gonna wake up. Or she'd pull back and say 'just kidding I hate you.' I didn't close my eyes, because I figured if I just kept them open the whole time I could make absolutely certain that this was really happening. So I remember seeing her face, all fuzzy and out-of-focus, so close to me. And that was my first kiss. And no one even dared her.

(Lights up on EMILY and GEORGE, also frozen.)

My parents got divorced a couple of months later. They didn't get back together. And after hearing what I heard, I understood. Both of them remarried later on to great people, so it wasn't the end of the world.

(Lights up on GRANDMA SKOLOWSKI, elsewhere on stage, also frozen.)

CAROLYN. No.

LOUIS. I'm sorry you came over.

CAROLYN. It's okay. My house was going into hour six of the Trivial Pursuit Deathmarch, so this is better. At least my brother's not here.

LOUIS. Is he adopted too?

CAROLYN. Yeah. Once they got me they wanted more and once they got him they stopped.

LOUIS. Have you ever met your real parents?

CAROLYN. No. As I understand it, my Mom was real young. So what'd you get for Christmas?

(A growling, pathetic "mew" is heard.)

LOUIS. That.

CAROLYN. What is that?

LOUIS. That's Schmoopy. My Grandmother wanted to teach me about death. So she got me a one-eyed cat with Leukemia. I also got some underwear from my Mom. And...my sister got a swamp. So all in all, it's probably the worst Christmas ever. Oh and my parents have been fighting pretty much constantly.

CAROLYN. I'm sorry.

LOUIS. And I screwed up the nativity play.

CAROLYN. That was probably doomed to failure without you, Louis.

LOUIS. And I forgot to get anyone a present.

CAROLYN. You didn't get anyone a present?

LOUIS. No I was so wrapped up in...other stuff that I forgot about everyone else.

CAROLYN. You got me a present.

LOUIS. That was the other stuff. And you don't even like it.

CAROLYN. I never said I didn't like it.

LOUIS. It's a glowing unicorn, what are you gonna do with that? It's such a stupid idea. I should be shot with my Mom's stun gun.

CAROLYN. Your Mom has a stun gun?

LOUIS. Yeah it was a Christmas present from my Grandma.

CAROLYN. Which one?

LOUIS. The crazy one.

(Short pause.)

The crazy one with the cane.

CAROLYN. Oh. Your family is weird.

LOUIS. Yeah.

CAROLYN. It's okay. I like weird people. I'm in theatre after all. **But I have something that'll cheer you up. I got you a present.**

LOUIS. You got me a present?

CAROLYN. No I'm lying.

LOUIS. Oh.

CAROLYN. No I got you a present. God you're gullible. Yes I got you something. Look.

(She takes out a nicely wrapped present.)

Merry Christmas.

(LOUIS takes it and opens it slowly. It's a glow-in-the-dark skull.)

LOUIS. **It's a skull.**

CAROLYN. **It glows in the dark.**

LOUIS. Seriously?

CAROLYN. I didn't know what to get you so I asked my brother what boys liked and he said anything gruesome that glows so...Merry Christmas.

LOUIS. **This is awesome.**

EMILY. I'm talking a hug, a shoulder rub, holding hands, anything. When was the last time you physically touched me in any way? Do you know?

GEORGE. Um...

EMILY. It's been twenty-seven days. Do you know why I know that? It was just after Thanksgiving and I remember thinking that you never touch me any more without me touching you first. I was always the one who would hug you, or hold you, or kiss you. You never started anything. So I decided to do this little experiment where I would just not touch you and see how long it took before you noticed. I figured it would be a couple of hours. That first day it was so weird, because I had to make sure I was a couple of inches away from you all the time—like when we watched TV I just sat on the other side of the couch and in the kitchen I made sure I was just a little bit away from you all the time. And I remember that night, when we were lying in bed, and I was on my side, and I remember lying there crying because you hadn't noticed at all. To you everything was okay. You didn't even know what I was doing. So the next day I decided to do the experiment again. And I went the whole day, and then the next day, and then the next day, and it got a little bit easier each day, and I kept thinking, he's gonna notice, he's gonna notice, he's gonna notice it tonight. And you never noticed. You haven't noticed for four weeks. So when I say, I can't live like this, and you don't know what the hell I'm talking about, that's like you're pulling out my heart.

(Pause. GEORGE is still physically apart from EMILY.)

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GEORGE. Maybe we should.

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(She kisses him, then pulls apart. Freeze.)

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(Lights up on EMILY and GEORGE, also frozen.)

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(Lights up on GRANDMA SKOLOWSKI, elsewhere on stage, also frozen.)

Grandma Skolowski died in April of that year. Before she died I finally got to ask her why she left everything to Kelly.

GRANDMA SKOLOWSKI. Kelly? Which one's Kelly? Oh yes. I thought she could use it. And she was the only who liked that swamp. I also think her hair is brilliant.

PRESENT LOUIS. My Grandma Jacobs—

(Lights up on GRANDMA JACOBS.)

Continues to go strong to this day. And she isn't living in any damn group home. Her words. I think she's just too ornery to die. She cares for the occasional stray animal, she makes threats in bars, and basically she's just having a great time.

(Lights up on KELLY.)

My sister Kelly did indeed keep the land from my Grandmother—she actually managed to hold on to it for five years, because she did, in fact, like it. But then she sold it to developers for quite a bit of money. She put me through college, bought houses for everyone and invested the rest of it. She probably used it better than anyone could have. She's married and has two kids who are absolute brats. I spoil them rotten. When they turn eighteen I'm telling them everything. As for me and Carolyn:

(Lights focus on just CAROLYN and LOUIS and fade out on everyone else.)

We kissed four more times. Our relationship lasted nine days, but they were a pretty spectacular week and almost a half. We got to be good friends, though. You know, part of me wishes I could be that kid again, feel the way I felt that night, when the world was crashing around me, but it didn't matter because I was so...gloriously alive. And maybe you can only feel that way once, with the first person you fall in love with. But boy what I wouldn't give to feel what it was like to have a first kiss again.

(Lights fade on them, remain only on PRESENT LOUIS.)

So that's that. My last Christmas with Mom and Dad together, my last Christmas living with my sister, with both my grandmothers alive—my first kiss. Funny how time catches up with you, isn't it?

Seems almost like yesterday and yet it's almost like it happened to someone else. I'm a totally different person now that that nervous, awkward kid, although...I have managed to hold on to one thing.

(He produces the glow-in-the-dark skull.)

Because this is still awesome.

(Lights down.)

End of Play

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My sister Kelly did indeed keep the land from my Grandmother—she actually managed to hold on to it for five years, because she did, in fact, like it. But then she sold it to developers for quite a bit of money. She put me through college, bought houses for everyone and invested the rest of it. She probably used it better than anyone could have. She's married and has two kids who are absolute brats. I spoil them rotten. When they turn eighteen I'm telling them everything. **As for me and Carolyn:**

(Lights focus on just CAROLYN and LOUIS and fade out on everyone else.)

We kissed four more times. Our relationship lasted nine days, but they were a pretty spectacular week and almost a half. We got to be good friends, though. You know, part of me wishes I could be that kid again, feel the way I felt that night, when the world was crashing around me, but it didn't matter because I was so...gloriously alive. And maybe you can only feel that way once, with the first person you fall in love with. But boy what I wouldn't give to feel what it was like to have a first kiss again.

(Lights fade on them, remain only on PRESENT LOUIS.)

So that's that. My last Christmas with Mom and Dad together, my last Christmas living with my sister, with both my grandmothers alive—my first kiss. Funny how time catches up with you, isn't it?

Seems almost like yesterday and yet it's almost like it happened to someone else. **I'm a totally different person now that that nervous, awkward kid, although...I have managed to hold on to one thing.**

(He produces the glow-in-the-dark skull.)

Because this is still awesome.

(Lights down.)

End of Play