

MIRACLE ON HOLLYWOOD BOULEVARD

written by

Tom Stohlgren

C O N T A C T S

Tom Stohlgren

Writer:

E: [tjstohlgren@gmail.com](mailto:tjstohlgren@gmail.com)

Representation:

Eleni Larchanidou, LLM

Literary & Talent Manager

E: [Managerelenillm@gmail.com](mailto:Managerelenillm@gmail.com)

P: +30-690 902 0698 GR (WhatsApp, Viber)

© CopyRight

FADE IN:

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

A classroom is filled with twenty students (9 and 10 year-olds; all types). The room is heavily decorated for the holidays (Christmas, Hanukkah, and Kwanza). In the back row is HOLLY BARRY (9). Holly is highly intelligent, but withdrawn. She ONLY SPEAKS DIRECTLY to her father (she is too shy/insecure/troubled to speak directly to others). Holly is the only child wearing a pink, fluffy snow jacket on the nice, warm L.A. day a week before Christmas. Five VOCABULARY WORDS are written on the whiteboard: Meticulous, Ridiculous, Conspicuous, Eccentric, and Impossible. A TEACHER (40, female, schoolmarm) sits at her desk, typing into her *Brand* computer. Everything she types is visible on the SCREEN IN THE FRONT OF THE CLASSROOM. We SEE and HEAR:

TEACHER

Tonight's Homework: (1) Math -- problems on pages 85 to 87 of your workbooks. Show your work! (2) Vocabulary -- *Conspicuously* study your new words *meticulously*.

The students GIGGLE, but STRUGGLE to take notes. Holly ROLLS HER EYES at the first two assignments. Holly HIDES BEHIND the student in front of her and sends a text message on her *Brand* phone to a cute girl, AMELIA (9), who sits next to Holly. The teacher is OBLIVIOUS to the texting. Another student, MALCOLM, (male, 10, black, popular, bright) RAISES HIS HAND then SPEAKS without being called upon, while Amelia READS the text message on her *Brand* phone.

MALCOLM

Math *and* vocabulary?

TEACHER

Yes, Malcolm. I'm aware of that.

MALCOLM

But there's only one more day of school before Christmas Break!

TEACHER

Thank you, Malcolm for the hourly reminder. So your last homework assignment is...

The students STARE at the SCREEN in ANTICIPATION, while getting a little WILD in their seats. Amelia LAUGHS, and playfully SLAPS Holly on the arm. Suddenly, on the screen appears the last assignment:

TEACHER (CONT'D)

Each of you will be prepared to give a two-minute speech in front of the class of what you did to get into the holiday spirit!

ALL the students CHEER in delight. They can wing it. Amelia is SPINNING in her seat with excitement. But Holly, in the back of the class is TERRIFIED. She covers her face with her hands. Amelia LEANS over to Holly to comfort her.

AMELIA

You'll be okay.

Holly CUPS her hand and WHISPERS into Amelia's ears.

HOLLY

I'll be *conspicuously* absent tomorrow.

The BELL RINGS. The students RACE out of the classroom. Holly drags her feet past the teacher. The teacher becomes OVERLY COMPASSIONATE.

TEACHER

Holly, you may turn in a written report instead of making a speech, but it will lower your grade again.

Holly CUPS her hand by her mouth. The Teacher SMILES and bends down to hear Holly WHISPER.

HOLLY

Thank you, *Mizzzzzzz...*

The Teacher STANDS UP, annoyed, no longer listening to Holly.

TEACHER

I prefer, '*Miss*'.

HOLLY

(mumbles)

Advertising your personal relationship status is not my concern, but I just don't like speaking in front of the class.

The Teacher, still not listening, LOOKS down Holly.

TEACHER

Have your father call me or come by if he has any questions.

The Teacher FUSSES with her hair, and pushes out her chest.

HOLLY  
 (mumbles)  
 Oh brother.

The Teacher is still oblivious to Holly's mumbling. Then she bends down to offer Holly advice.

TEACHER  
 Parents will be here tomorrow. For you to give your speech in front of the class is not *impossible*!

The Teacher POINTS to the word 'Impossible' on the Vocabulary Words on the Whiteboard. Holly is almost out the door when she mumbles barely loudly enough for her teacher to HEAR her.

HOLLY  
 Me, giving a speech in front of the class and parents, that's *impossible*. Imagining you and my daddy together, that's *ridiculous*!

EXT. ROADS IN HOLLYWOOD, CA - DAY

A handsome but nerdish man (LOGAN BARRY; 36) dressed in blue pants and a blue work shirt, roams the Hollywood streets in *Barry's Fresh Seafood* van. The REFRIGERATED VAN sports the company MOTTO plastered everywhere: "Fresh Fish Flown in Daily." A yellowing/aging photo of his wife, ANGELA (30; pretty, blonde) and daughter (HOLLY; blonde; then age 4; is taped to the dashboard. He makes deliveries to the back door of several fancy restaurants.

BEGIN MONTAGE - LOGAN'S SEAFOOD DELIVERY ROUTE

A) EXT. RESTAURANT #1 - DAY - Logan PARKS behind a fancy restaurant with Christmas lights around the door. He carries two boxes of seafood, KNOCKS, opens the door, and YELLS.

LOGAN  
 It's Logan. I got that oxymoron you ordered -- Jumbo Shrimp.

He WALKS right in, comes out seconds later holding a hundred-dollar bill, and DRIVES ON.

B) EXT. ROADSIDE CROSS - DAY - Logan STOPS at a small WHITE CROSS on a steep and curvy road. He delivers FLOWERS, pauses, returns to his van, and DRIVES ON.

END OF MONTAGE

ROLL CREDITS

EXT./INT. NICE APARTMENT COMPLEX - DAY

Logan PARKS his company van and RACES into a *Relay Rides* (private) BMW-owner's house. The owner is a male business major (22). He signs FORMS, Logan POSES for a PHOTO, PAYS the man A HUNDRED BUCKS and DRIVES OFF SLOWLY in the flawless, 2015 BMW 428i Gran Coupe.

EXT. MODEST HOME - DAY

The BMW rolls slowly to a stop. Holly exits the house to HUG her Dad as though he was gone for years. Around her dad, Holly still whispers, albeit more loudly. She is still wearing her pink fluffy snow jacket.

HOLLY

Daddy, Daddy! You're home!

LOGAN

Of course I'm home. I come home every day after work, silly!

HOLLY

Bring Mom flowers again?

Logan's LOOK says it all. They HOLD HANDS and SWING THEM as they walk to the front door of their modest home.

LOGAN

Hot date at Nick's tonight! Did you get your homework done?

HOLLY

Most of it, Daddy. Math and vocabulary.

LOGAN

That would've made your mom proud.  
(beat)  
What kind of fish does daddy sell?

HOLLY

Only fish from sustainable fisheries.

LOGAN

Right. What's that mean?

Holly PONDERs.

HOLLY

It's impossible to run out of fishes to sell.

LOGAN  
Is daddy meticulous in his work?

HOLLY  
Ridiculously meticulous, if you ask  
me. And borderline eccentric  
renting a BMW for one night!

Logan squats low to look Holly in the eyes.

LOGAN  
Your teacher called me. She wants  
you to give a speech tomorrow.

HOLLY  
She wants to be your girlfriend.

LOGAN  
We don't always get what we want.

HOLLY  
Exactly, Daddy!

Holly HUGS her dad, who ROLLS his eyes and SMILES.

HOLLY (CONT'D)  
(holds her nose)  
And you need a shower! O-M-G!

Logan and Holly enter the house, LAUGHING.

EXT. FREEWAY - EARLY EVENING

From a helicopter, we FOLLOW the late-model BMW slowing down  
traffic for safety reasons. We can HEAR the conversation in  
the car between Logan and Holly (whispering loudly).

LOGAN (V.O.)  
An early dinner at Nick's Café,  
then home. It's a school night.

HOLLY (V.O.)  
Uh-uh! I know why you rented the  
BMW. We're stopping at the studio  
and see your TV-star girlfriend!

LOGAN (V.O.)  
Marianne's just a friend. Her  
father, the big Producer, doesn't  
think I'm quality material. He  
prefers she sees her co-star, Les.

HOLLY (V.O.)  
He's such an Neanderthal.

LOGAN (V.O.)  
He's rich and famous. But I asked  
Marianne to the movies later  
tonight, and she said yes.

HOLLY (V.O.)  
So, that is why you rented this  
fancy car!

LOGAN (V.O.)  
It would be ridiculous to take her  
out in my work van.

HOLLY (V.O.)  
Because it smells like fish?

LOGAN (V.O.)  
I have a very respectable job.

HOLLY (V.O.)  
At school, they imitate your radio  
commercials all the time.  
(in her dad's voice)  
If your fish isn't sustainable, you  
won't have a table full.

LOGAN (V.O.)  
Speaking of fish, I have to make  
one more delivery.

HOLLY (V.O.)  
You put a box of fish in the trunk  
without refrigeration?

LOGAN (V.O.)  
One box! One more restaurant. It's  
right on the way to Nick's Café. I  
didn't want to take the van all the  
way in here for one delivery!

Logan stops at a HOME DECORATIONS store.

EXT. HOME DECORATION STORE - EARLY EVENING

Logan pulls up right in front of the store.

HOLLY  
Why are we stopping here?

LOGAN

I ordered a six-foot tall,  
decorative light-up Christmas palm  
tree, of course. On sale.

HOLLY

Why?

HOLLY AND LOGAN

You can never have too many  
Christmas decorations.

Logan RACES in the store, and returns a minute later with a  
fully assembled, light-up palm tree he JAMS in the backseat  
next to Holly. He RACES off.

EXT. FANCY RESTAURANT - EARLY EVENING

Logan ROLLS to a stop in front of fancy restaurant fully  
decorated for Christmas.

LOGAN

I hope the fish is still good.

Logan hops out pops OPENS the trunk using the car and is  
overpowered by the awful fish SMELL.

HOLLY

Ewww!

LOGAN

Uh oh! Bad batch!

HOLLY

(Holly whispers to Logan)  
Let's get out of here!

Logan SHUTS the trunk. Holly HOLDS HER NOSE as they RACE OFF.

INT. BMW - EARLY EVENING

Logan drives slowly and carefully.

LOGAN

Maybe I can dump the fish in the  
dumpster behind Nick's.

Logan GLANCES in the rearview mirror and SEES Holly wandering  
off in one of her daydreams.

In Holly's DAYDREAM, she imagines herself back in her classroom.

CUT TO:

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Holly slouches in the front of the room, too paralyzed to speak to her classmates and teacher. Holly's friend, Amelia, is next to her for moral support. The FIVE HOODLUMS (five hip singers; dressed like middle-class parents) are singing "All I Want for Christmas is You," low and slowly.

AMELIA

You can do this, Holly!

Holly remains paralyzed in fear. After a few agonizing moments, Holly walks outside the classroom door, and brings in a box of seafood to the center of the room. Holly smiles and opens the box. The SMELL sends everybody RUNNING and SCREAMING. Now, the BACKGROUND SINGERS belt out "All I Want for Christmas is You", loudly and happily.

BACK TO:

INT. BMW - EARLY EVENING

Logan GLANCES in the rearview mirror to SEE Holly smiling.

LOGAN

What are you daydreaming about now?

Holly SMILES.

HOLLY

You should wait and throw out the fish later at home.

LOGAN

(laughing)

By then it's going to smell even worse!

HOLLY

You don't want to hurt the business at Nick's any more than it is.

LOGAN

Guess you're right. Soon you'll be smelling meatloaf at *Nick's Café*.

HOLLY

Then what?

LOGAN

Early dinner at Nick's, then I'll take you home. Grandma will sit with you, while I take Marianne to the movies after she tapes her show.

HOLLY

Can we stop off real quick after dinner and see Marianne at the studio? I like her.

LOGAN

You didn't finish all your homework!

HOLLY

I just have to write an essay on what I did tonight.

Logan looks into the rearview mirror and sees Holly TEXTING.

LOGAN

I got you that phone for emergency purposes only. Who are you texting?

HOLLY

Amelia. In my class. My B-F-F.

LOGAN

Okay. Geez. Does she text back?

HOLLY

When she borrows her mom's phone. Which is pretty much all the time.

LOGAN

What do you girls text about?

HOLLY

Daydreams. Amelia has them too.

LOGAN

You have to be careful about what you daydream, because it's likely to come true!

HOLLY

Don't be silly, Daddy.

LOGAN

If you texted and daydreamed less, and you wrote more, you'd be done with your essay by now.

(MORE)

LOGAN (CONT'D)

You can write about Nick's Café  
when you get home.

HOLLY

Nothing ever happens at Nick's.

The car SLOWS on a dangerous street in L.A. There are few Christmas decorations anywhere. The car STOPS outside *Nick's Café* (the dive of all dives). The FIVE HOODLUMS (now dressed like actual hoodlums), STROLL by.

Holly DAYDREAMS that the Five Hoodlums are CAROLING AND PUTTING UP CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS. The Five Hoodlums STOP and sing "Life Could Be A Dream." Holly's daydream FADES.

EXT. NICK'S CAFÉ - NIGHT

*Nick's Café* in L.A. is an historic, '50s-style diner. Holly UNBUCKLES her seatbelt, gets out of the car, and walks into the diner with her father.

Logan looks back at his shiny, rented BMW.

LOGAN

Wait! Is that a scratch?

Logan RACES back to the driver's side hood and RUBS a light SCRATCH with his handkerchief. The Five Hoodlums SMILE and WAVE to Holly, and move on. She WAVES back and SMILES more.

HOLLY

(mumbles to the Five  
Hoodlums)

Merry Christmas!

(loudly to her dad)

Why are we dressed for snow, Daddy?  
It's L.A.

LOGAN

To get into the Christmas spirit,  
Holly.

HOLLY

We could just sing Christmas Carols  
like everybody else.

Logan cannot rub out the tiny SCRATCH.

LOGAN

The car's practically ruined.

HOLLY  
 What's with the stupid light-up  
 palm tree again?

LOGAN  
 That's a surprise for Marianne.

Holly STARES at the fake light-up Palm Tree in the back seat.

HOLLY  
 It'll be a surprise, all right!  
 What if she wanted roses or a real  
 Christmas tree?

LOGAN  
 She's hardly home anyway. You know  
 the life of a TV star.

HOLLY  
 And why are we eating here again?  
 If Marianne were here, we'd eat  
 something healthy.

Logan receives a TEXT MESSAGE: "Taping delay. Really late  
 movie t'nite? Sorry, M."

LOGAN  
 Marianne's gotta work late.

HOLLY  
 Where she solves crimes by wearing  
 a tight shirt?

LOGAN  
 She's a detective on the show, and  
 it pays her bills.  
 (beat)  
 And Mel's here. You like Mel.

HOLLY  
 (mumbles)  
 Yeah, Mel's here. Mel-nutrition.

INT. NICK'S CAFÉ - NIGHT

The door CREAKS open to a near-empty, rundown diner with  
 modest Christmas decorations and smiling MEL (60), a dead  
 ringer for Mrs. Santa Claus in a gravy-stained apron.

Holly has another DAYDREAM imagining Mel dressed as Mrs.  
 Santa Claus, in a FANCY RED SUIT WITH WHITE TRIM. Holly's  
 daydream FADES.

LOGAN

Hi ya, Mel.

MEL

Hi Logan. Hi Holly. Thanks for coming in. Business is so slow, my hubby, Nick, had to get a part-time job as a security guard.

HOLLY

(whispers to Logan)  
Tell Mrs. Tomaine. I love her  
(beat, eyeing the gravy stained apron)  
Christmas decorations.

Mel hears Holly and LAUGHS. Holly DAYDREAMS that the diner is suddenly wonderfully DECORATED and spotlessly CLEAN, with Christmas MUSIC PLAYING. She sees Mel's GRAVY STAIN again and her daydream FADES.

Mel GUIDES them to a BOOTH with two menus.

MEL

I thought the TV star was joining you tonight. What's the matter? She working late fighting crime?

HOLLY

(whispers to her dad)  
And wearing tight shirts.

Mel hears her and CHUCKLES LOUDLY.

LOGAN

(glares toward Holly)  
We'll get her something to-go for dinner.

MEL

Let's get those coats off. It must be seventy outside and in.

HOLLY

(whispers to her dad)  
Tell Mrs. Tomaine it's the spirit of Christmas to wear snow clothes.

MEL

Your father's plum nuts about the holidays, isn't he?

HOLLY

(whispers to her dad)  
Plum nuts? Tell her you rented a  
BMW to impress Marianne's father,  
so today you're eccentric.

MEL

That's a big word.

HOLLY

(whispers to her father)  
Tell her it's what they call rich  
people who are plum nuts. Third-  
grade Common Core reading standards  
are out of control.

Mel hears Holly and LAUGHS.

LOGAN

(to Holly)  
Just order your dinner, Holly.

Holly PULLS OUT her Brand phone with dexterity, and adroitly  
PERFORMS a calculation.

HOLLY

(whispers to her dad)  
Tell her that you're way too poor  
to call you 'eccentric.' So plum  
nuts it is.

Mel LAUGHS again.

Holly POINTS behind her to a poorly dressed elderly couple  
(look to be in their 70s; man and woman stunt team, made-up  
to look older) in the far booth. Logan and Mel glance  
quickly, before Mel POINTS to the menu.

MEL

Business slowed down after we lost  
the catering job at the studio, and  
they made us post the calories for  
everything on the menu.

Logan and Holly STARE at the menu. The calories are in the  
thousands.

HOLLY

(whispers to her dad)  
I've seen car prices with smaller  
numbers.

MEL

How about the special tonight?  
Meatloaf, mashed potatoes and  
gravy, with my homemade apple pie  
for dessert?

LOGAN

Sounds great. And black coffee  
please. Thanks, Mel.

HOLLY

(whispering to her dad)  
Tell her I'll have a dinner salad,  
dressing on the side, the steamed  
vegetables, and the fruit bowl for  
dessert. Thank you.

MEL

One meatloaf and one Holly Special.  
Comin' right up.

Minutes later, Logan and Holly are busy on their BRAND PHONES, when Mel brings their meals. Logan's massive meatloaf plate is smothered in greasy gravy. Holly's meal looks perfectly healthy.

HOLLY

(whispering to her dad)  
I can't believe the Dodgers want to  
trade Gonzales. He batted three-o-  
four with a hundred ribbies.

LOGAN

But he's asking for forty mil  
guaranteed, Holly.

MEL

Put your toys away and talk to each  
other and eat like normal people.

LOGAN

You're right, Mel. Hey, the  
meatloaf looks great.

HOLLY

(whispers to her father)  
That plate should come with its own  
defibrillator.

LOGAN

It's lower in calories than the  
chicken-fried whatever-it-is.

HOLLY  
 (whispers)  
 Daddy, the chicken-fried whatever-  
 it-is comes with its own casket.

MEL  
 You're so Mel-o-dramatic, Holly.  
 That's why I love you.

Logan GOBBLES UP the meatloaf, while Mel SERVES coffee to the  
 old couple in the back.

HOLLY  
 Did you ask what was in the  
 meatloaf, Daddy?

LOGAN  
 (sings)  
 Rudolf the Red-Nosed Reindeer.

HOLLY  
 Gross!

LOGAN  
 I love this meatloaf.  
 (sings)  
 You could even say it glows.

Mel returns, Holly PRETENDS to SHOCK her chest with two  
 DEFIBRILLATOR PADDLES. She ROLLS HER EYES and PLAYS DEAD.

MEL  
 I don't understand why the Health  
 Department wants to shut me down.

One of the Elderly Patrons in a far booth FALLS onto the  
 floor. They all turn to look.

HOLLY  
 (whispers to her dad)  
 Probably had the meatloaf.

MEL  
 The old couple told me they were  
 dumpster diving for food behind Le  
 Waffle Tower. Then they come in  
 here for coffee. Probably ate  
 something bad. And they want to  
 close *my* diner down!

Mel goes to help the old man back in the booth.

HOLLY

You never see *that* on the Cooking Channel.

Mel returns.

MEL

What's that about the Cooking Channel?

Holly SHRUGS her shoulders as Logan speaks to Mel.

LOGAN

I'm sure your business will pick up after the holidays, when people go off their diets.

Mel CHUCKLES, and walks to the kitchen. Holly still looks SAD. Logan's PHONE RINGS.

CUT TO:

INT. CSI STUDIO - NIGHT

We see MARIANNE DEMONET/DETECTIVE DEE DUCKSHUN, (36, beautiful, long-brown hair in a ponytail, wearing a very tight police detective outfit, belt badge, and pistol). Marianne HOLDS BACK TEARS as she speaks into her BRAND phone in the corner of the set. Behind her, in the middle of the set, two men are arguing. One is LES CANNY/CHIEF DETECTIVE GUNNER DOWNS (45-60), handsome as he is arrogant, and as shallow as a leaky gene pool. The other gentleman is HOLDEN DEMONET (60) Producer of the show (and Marianne's proud father). Holden is a bald businessman dressed in an expensive suit contrasted by a cheap toupee. He's angry all the time, but especially tonight. A beautiful Latina, KATHERINE (KAY) DAVER (25), dressed in a short skirt, tight blouse, and heels, CHEWS GUM and BLOWS BUBBLES next to Les. The Camerawoman, CARRIE DULLENS (35; professional) FOCUSES on Les and SMILES.

LOGAN (O.S.)

Hi, Marianne. How's the shoot going?

MARIANNE

Could be better. Les is still having trouble with his lines.

LOGAN (O.S.)

What's new?

MARIANNE

I might not finish in time for a movie tonight.

LOGAN (O.S.)  
(sadly)

Oh. I see.

MARIANNE

We could be very late. I'll just grab dinner with Les and the crew here at the studio.

LOGAN (O.S.)  
(burping)

Might want to avoid that rich French food from Le Waffle Tower.

MARIANNE

This is serious, Logan. Our ratings plummeted. Focus groups say our characters have no chemistry.

(beat)

Even worse, Network Executives are in Dad's conference room watching every move we make on monitors. They will decide tonight if the show is getting cancelled. Stay tuned.

BACK TO:

INT. NICK'S CAFÉ - NIGHT

Logan SHOVES IN meatloaf and listens to the phone, while Holly EATS SLOWLY AND TEXTS QUICKLY with a SADNESS on her face, while GLANCING at her dad.

CUT TO:

INT. CSI STUDIO - NIGHT

Marianne is HIDING HER PHONE BEHIND HER. She doesn't realize that her dad can see her.

LES

She distracts me, and earlier, she spilled hot coffee on our supposed corpse who screamed.

MARIANNE  
(whispering)

That was bad, I know.

HOLDEN

Les, if you quit looking down my daughter's shirt, you might focus more on your lines.

LES

This has nothing to do with the fact that she's your daughter.

MARIANNE

(whispering)

They're going to cancel the show. I know it.

LES

I'm like a kid on a candy floor. It's unnatural not to lick, look.

HOLDEN

It's a kid in a candy store.

LES

It's still unnatural.

HOLDEN

Not remembering two lines at a time is unnatural. The network will shut us down tonight if we don't get this full episode in the can!

LES

I'm doing everything in my power.

MARIANNE

Les is just having a tough night. He's better than this. Sometimes.

HOLDEN

I've got Network Executives in my Conference Room watching everything that goes on here tonight. Our frustrated Director seems to have left the set, probably to cool off. You'd better reconcile, or we'll all be fired!

MARIANNE

Me too?

Les STOMPS away. The Producer STRIDES OVER AND PULLS Marianne aside and WHISPERS more softly.

HOLDEN

Look Mare, Les loves you, and he's about to sign a three-picture deal with *Universal*.

MARIANNE

Good for him, Pop, but I like acting too!

HOLDEN

I don't want my daughter to be left high and dry if the show gets cancelled. How about our rich French Chef who's after you?

MARIANNE

Not now, Pop.

HOLDEN

We'll talk about it later. Let's get this episode in the can, huh?

Holden WALKS SLOWLY back to his Conference Room. Marianne REMEMBERS Logan is on the phone.

MARIANNE

(whispers)

Oops. Sorry you had to hear all that! Lots of pressure here, Logan. Call me tomorrow.

Marianne ENDS the call.

BACK TO:

INT. NICK'S CAFÉ - NIGHT

Disgruntled, Holly LOOKS UP from her phone and her meal with the SADDEST FACE of the night. Mel is in the kitchen.

LOGAN

What's the matter, Holly? You weren't looking up the Dodgers on your phone, were you?

HOLLY

No.

LOGAN

What were you looking up?

HOLLY

It's all over Twitter. Marianne's TV show, *Crime Scene Burbank*, might be cancelled.

LOGAN

You can't believe all that gossip on the web, except the stuff about the Kardashians. But you're too young to...

HOLLY

(interrupting)

Even Marianne's dad, mean old Mr. DeMonet, posted the show has no chemistry. What's he mean?

LOGAN

Well, dear, chemistry is the science of...

HOLLY

(interrupting)

I know all that. Third-grade Common Core science standards are out of control. I mean, Marianne gets along with everyone on the set, even that idiot, Les.

LOGAN

Maybe it's Doctor Morgan Beryum or some of the other characters.

HOLLY

No, it's Les. Dumber than a second-grader. I bet his famous wink is just a nervous twitch. Maybe even drug-related.

LOGAN

Now, Dear, you're over-reacting. Like that time at the library where their automated book check-out system failed. You went ballistic.

HOLLY

I was disgruntled.

LOGAN

Screaming about manual book checkout as a form of nineteenth-century torture?

HOLLY

I'm just worried about Marianne's TV job. She loves it, even working with that wienie.

(impersonating Les)

(MORE)

HOLLY (CONT'D)

Hi ladies, I'm hunk Chief Detective  
Gunner Downs. This is my glorious  
chest hair. This is my fat wallet.

Holly WINKS and TWITCHES hysterically. Her father LAUGHS.

LOGAN

Let's cheer Marianne up. We'll  
bring her dinner.

HOLLY

Bring the meatloaf to Les. That  
will solve the problem.

LOGAN

(yells to the kitchen)  
Mel, can I get one Holly Special  
and one meatloaf to travel?!

HOLLY

(sings)  
Rudolf the Red-Nosed Reindeer.

Mel brings out two Styrofoam boxes. Holly is lost in her own  
world TEXTING.

LOGAN

We're going to surprise Marianne  
and her father with dinner.

MEL

If you see that no-good Holden  
DeMonet, kick him in the plum nuts  
for me.

LOGAN

Because you lost the catering  
contract with the studio?

MEL

To that fancy French restaurant, Le  
Waffle Tower, and that ungrateful  
Christopher Saunt, who has the  
nerve to call himself a French  
Chef. He was my busboy for ten  
years!

Logan EYES Holly's rapid TEXTING.

LOGAN

Holly, who are you texting?

Holly SHOWS them the phone. It reads: Santa Claus.

We SEE Holly's TEXT MESSAGE: "Dear Santa, I've been good, honest. Pretty Please - For Christmas, I would like my dad to find love, Marianne to keep her job, Mel to get her catering job back, and"

LOGAN (CONT'D)

You're *texting* Santa your Christmas list?

Holly NODS, 'yes.'

MEL

What did you ask for, Dear?

LOGAN

Yes, Dear. What's on your list?

Holly shows Mel and Logan her texted LIST: "1. Dad to find love; 2. Marianne could keep her job; 3. Mel could get her catering job back so her diner survives; and (4) One more thing."

LOGAN (CONT'D)

One more thing?

Holly POINTS to the two old people at the end of the diner.

LOGAN (CONT'D)

The couple who look homeless?

MEL

(whispers)

Right.

LOGAN

Holly noticed that you don't throw them out, right?

MEL

Right.

Holly shows them her TEXT MESSAGE: "and 3. a home and food money for the people in the last booth." Mel and Logan HOLD BACK tears of sweetness.

MEL (CONT'D)

You didn't ask anything for yourself?

A quiet moment passes. Then, the elder woman of the couple in the far booth FALLS out onto the floor.

MEL (CONT'D)

I'll take care of her. You two run along.

LOGAN

Thanks, Mel. Add their check to mine.

Logan leaves a hundred-dollar bill.

LOGAN (CONT'D)

Let's go save Marianne's job.

Just before exiting the diner, Holly looks back and sees Mel HELPING the old woman back into the booth.

HOLLY

I hope it wasn't the meatloaf.

CUT TO:

INT. CSI STUDIO - NIGHT

DIRECTOR WILLIAM SUMMONS (50s), a stern Hollywood perfectionist, STORMS onto the set. Marianne and Les are PACING around Kay Daver, who is LIFELESS on the floor. Marianne and Les are getting chewed out.

DIRECTOR

I want no distractions, no stopping, know your lines, know your marks. Got it?

MARIANNE

I agree, Willy. It's an easy crime scene. She was strangled. Her boyfriend did it.

DIRECTOR

Where's the boyfriend?

LES

He's in the bathroom, losing his cookies. Nerves, I guess. Rookies!

DIRECTOR

He's got one line. "She cheated on me." How nervous could he be?

MARIANNE

(glaring at Les)

We could give him a little more time, while one of us studies *his* lines again.

DIRECTOR

Good idea. I've ordered dinner from that caterer. It's on the way.

LES

The French place with the hot babe?

DIRECTOR

(to Les)

Forget the curves, and learn your lines.

MARIANNE

I hope that creepy Chef doesn't hit on me again.

DIRECTOR

Christopher Saunt. Nice fellow, and rich, too!

MARIANNE

His sauces are rich. He's an idiot.

LES

How can sauces be rich?

DIRECTOR

Just learn your lines. Take thirty minutes, everyone.

BACK TO:

INT. HOLLYWOOD BOULEVARD - NIGHT

Logan DRIVES toward the TV studio on a slow-moving, BUSY HOLLYWOOD BOULEVARD with Holly BUCKLED in the back seat. The light-up palm tree takes up much of the room.

LOGAN

How was school today?

HOLLY

I feel a cold coming on.

LOGAN

No, you're going to school. It's the last day before Christmas vacation, parents can pick their kids up, and I'm coming for you.

HOLLY

And to see the schoolmarm? She likes you.

LOGAN

Holly! She's a very nice *teacher*.

HOLLY

I prefer schoolmarm -- prim, prudish, and old-fashioned. She still uses a laptop instead of tablet. That's so *pre-K!*

LOGAN

Pre-K?

HOLLY

Pre-kindergarten.

LOGAN

So, are you going to write a report or give a speech?

HOLLY

(sad)

Write a report. I'll get a 'B' instead of an 'A' and probably end up washing dishes at Nick's Cafe, or...

LOGAN

(interrupting)

Working for your dad selling fish.

There is a moment of awkward silence as Logan GLANCES at Holly in the rearview mirror.

HOLLY

I'm sorry, Daddy. I didn't mean it like that. It's just not easy to talk out loud.

LOGAN

Doing a pretty good job with me.

Holly's phone RINGS that it RECEIVED A TEXT MESSAGE.

LOGAN (CONT'D)

You're getting a text message?

Holly's eyes LIGHT UP.

HOLLY

It's probably Santa.

LOGAN

Uh. Huh. Who is it, really, Sweetheart?

HOLLY  
I don't know yet.

LOGAN  
Come on, Holly. I'm serious. Who is  
texting you?

Holly's phone glows a BRIGHT RED!

HOLLY  
It's from Santa. Honest, Daddy. He  
got my text message! And we're on  
Hollywood Boulevard where wishes  
come true! There is true magic in  
wishing for others!

LOGAN  
You're daydreaming again! Hand me  
your phone.

HOLLY  
No texting while driving!

LOGAN  
Come on. Hand it over.

Logan REACHES his right arm behind him. The car SWERVES into the right lane, traveling less than five miles per hour in heavy traffic. Holly RELUCTANTLY hands him her phone. The car SWERVES again. Before LOGAN can read the text message, he SWERVES and scrapes a light pole (slowing the car down), he SLOWS to a stop on the sidewalk, and barely nudges an old man (NICK TOMAINE, 70, twin to Santa Claus) dressed in a security guard uniform. Holly SCREAMS.

EXT. HOLLYWOOD BOULEVARD - NIGHT

Holly DAYDREAMS that she HEARS SIRENS and that an AMBULANCE arrives to cart them to the hospital. She HEARS a TAP on the driver's side window, and her daydream FADES.

A POLICEWOMAN (45; black) TAPS the driver's side window, again. The car is SCRAPED AND DENTED, but no one is hurt. A minute later, the policewoman is writing Logan a ticket.

POLICEWOMAN  
Are those snow jackets?  
(observing the crash)  
Who were you texting?

HOLLY  
(whispers to her dad)  
Santa Claus. Gotta thank him!

POLICEWOMAN

Sir, have you been drinking?

LOGAN

No. Not a drop. Holly, are you sure you're okay.

Holly NODS 'yes.'

HOLLY

(whispers to her dad)

Tell her you only drink coffee. Too much coffee. And you have terrible food habits. But we were lucky tonight! You only had one helping of meatloaf.

POLICEWOMAN

You were lucky. Strong bumper and slow driver, but it looks like those silly, puffy snow jackets absorbed the crash.

LOGAN

Is the old gentleman okay?

POLICEWOMAN

He's shaken up, but not a scratch. It's a miracle. Now, license and registration, please.

LOGAN

It's a rental car. I've got a date later.

POLICEWOMAN

(sarcastically)

Lucky you.

LOGAN

We're only a few blocks from the studio, too. That was very stupid of me. I'm so, so sorry.

POLICEWOMAN

Don't tell me. Tell your daughter, who you could have killed. Less traffic, higher speed, Whammoh!

LOGAN

I wasn't texting. I was taking her phone away. She's become too dependent on it. That was wrong. Holly, I'm so sorry.

Holly DROOPS her head.

POLICEWOMAN

The ticket won't be expensive, but the forty-hour driver safety class might sting.

LOGAN

I'll do it. I'm so sorry.

HOLLY

(whispers to her dad)

We got a second chance, Daddy.  
Mommy didn't get a second chance.

Logan HOLDS Holly's hand, and both DROP THEIR EYES.

LOGAN

You are absolutely right, Holly. I need to apologize to the old man, too.

POLICEWOMAN

Mind if I look in the trunk?  
Something don't smell right.

Logan and Holly get out and OPEN the trunk for the officer. SPOILED FISH abound. The SMELL is terrible.

LOGAN

I'm a fish salesman. They're from my company, Barry's Fresh Seafood?

POLICEWOMAN

*Fresh* Seafood? I should arrest you for false advertising! Rental car crash? That smell? Date later? You're not lucky and you're not getting lucky.

The policewoman gives him a TICKET as an INSURANCE CLAIMS OFFICER (30, slim Asian woman, well dressed) arrives. She is seen by Holly (another DAYDREAM) as one of Santa's ELVES in an elf suit) as she TAKES PHOTOS, and FILLS OUT FORMS on a Brand Tablet. Holly's daydream FADES, and she begins TEXTING.

We SEE Holly's text message. "Santa, my dad may need the name of a reliable car repair shop."

Logan RACES over to the old gentleman, Nick, who has his back to them.

LOGAN

Hi, I'm Logan Barry, and this is my daughter, Holly.

Nick TURNS. Holly sees Nick and her JAW DROPS. Holly whispers very loudly and happily.

HOLLY

It's Mr. Tomaine.

LOGAN

Hi, Nick. I'm so sorry!

They HUG as old friends. Holly DAYDREAMS Nick is Santa Claus in his full glory, GETTING HIT by a BMW in SLOW MOTION, while the Elf/Insurance Claims Officer PULLS Santa from harm's way. Her daydream FADES.

NICK

Hi Logan. Hi Holly. Mel tells me you stopped at the diner.

LOGAN

We wanted to be sure you were okay.

NICK

I'm fine. Don't worry about me. Glad you went to the diner. Business has been slow. I'm just late for my second job.

LOGAN

Where you headed? We'll take you. You sure you don't need a doctor? How can we make this up to you?

NICK

(to Holly)

Holly, have you been a good girl? Not like that driving and texting daddy of yours?

HOLLY

I eat better than my father too. He had the meatloaf again.

LOGAN

(surprised)

Holly, you spoke directly to Nick? Good for you.

NICK

I love that meatloaf. Potatoes smothered in gravy, rolls with so much butter you can slip out of the booth. Could eat it all-year-long.

HOLLY

(mumbles to her dad)  
He looks like Santa.

LOGAN

Where are you headed, Nick?

NICK

I was just assigned the night shift at the CSI Studio where we used to cater. Yep. That's it.

Nick produces a small piece of paper with "CSI STUDIO, 4024 Radford Avenue, Studio City, CA 91604."

LOGAN

That's where Marianne is right now. Hop in. Be there in a minute.

INSURANCE CLAIMS OFFICER

Sir, if you have any valuables in the car, I'd get them out now. Smells like you were hit by a tuna boat.

LOGAN

It's a rental. I return it tomorrow.

INSURANCE CLAIMS OFFICER

That light-up palm tree reeks! There aren't enough air fresheners in the world.

Logan SIGNS the Tablet form, and HUGS Holly. Nick is CHATTING off to the side with the Insurance Claims Officer.

LOGAN

Don't tell Marianne about this, okay?

HOLLY

(sniffing the fish smell)  
Yeah. She'll never know.

Logan and Nick get in the battered BMW. It REEKS!

LOGAN

It's funny. I don't care about the rental car. My little girl is safe.

NICK

B-M-W. Great safety record. Pretty dumb driving mistake. Could have ended up with squashed berries. Get it. Logan and Holly berry?

LOGAN

Berry jokes, again, Nick? DeMonet studios. Here we come!

The radio is BLASTING "Here Comes Santa Claus" sung by the Five Hoodlums.

INT. BMW - NIGHT

Logan DRIVES VERY SLOWLY. The windows are DOWN, and their HEADS ARE HANGING OUT for fresh air.

LOGAN

Won't Marianne be surprised to see us?

Holly HOLDS HER NOSE.

HOLLY

Yes, and smell us.

We SEE Holly's next TEXT MESSAGE: "Santa, my dad needs an air freshener or two."

LOGAN

Nick, how did you get this particular gig?

NICK

The TV shoot went late, and the Day Guard had to punch out. Union rules.

LOGAN

How long is your shift?

NICK

Long as it takes! Over time. O.T.

HOLLY

Actually, *over time* means over a span of time, while overtime - all one word - means an employee worked more than forty hours in a week.

NICK

(laughs)  
Just 'O' then. 'Til they wrap the episode.

Logan ROLLS to a stop at a STOPLIGHT. A *Mercedes E400 Cabriolet* convertible next to them contains TWO YOUNG COUPLES (20s). They SMELL the spoiled fish and plug their noses.

HOLLY

(whispers to her dad)  
Maybe we should clean up first.

The convertible RACES ahead when the stoplight changes.

LOGAN

Don't be silly. Once we leave the car, we won't smell too bad.

NICK

Might be a good idea to pick up a few air fresheners.

HOLLY

Must have gotten my text.

Nick and Logan LOOK PUZZLED.

EXT./INT. NAPA AUTO PARTS STORE - NIGHT

Logan runs in the store and exits a minute later with a dozen pine tree air fresheners.

Holly is busy TEXTING. We SEE: "Thanks, Santa!" Logan, Holly, and Nick CREEP away in the BMW.

EXT. CSI STUDIO SECURITY GATE - NIGHT

They PULL UP to the CSI STUDIO GATE watched carefully by a uniformed GUARD (55; mean-looking). Logan CARRIES the Palm Tree with several air fresheners hung on it. Holly CARRIES the take-out meals.

GUARD

Identification and person visiting?

Logan hands his IDENTIFICATION to the guard. The guard EXAMINES and SMELLS it, and looks at a list and SHAKES HIS HEAD 'no'.

GUARD (CONT'D)

Not on the list. Sorry. Closed set.  
Can't let you in.

LOGAN

We need to see Marianne DeMonet.  
Please! This meatloaf won't last  
forever.

HOLLY

(whispers to her dad)  
Actually, it might.

NICK

(to the guard)  
Dougy Wilson? Is that you? You  
haven't written lately?

The guard LOOKS UP at Nick with a huge, child-like SMILE.

GUARD

Nick, is that you? I haven't seen  
you in years. Night shift, huh?

HOLLY

(whispers to her dad)  
Dad, tell him it's imperative that  
we bring Ms. DeMonet her dinner.

LOGAN

It's a school night. We'll just be  
a minute.

NICK

They're with me, Dougy. I know  
you've been good all year, but just  
this once?

GUARD

Anything for you, Nick.

Holly DAYDREAMS that the guard is a SWEET LITTLE BOY (9) who WAVES them through the security gate.

SWEET LITTLE BOY  
(winks)

Text me.

Holly's daydream FADES.

INT. CSI STUDIO - NIGHT

The Producer, Holden, is giving a tour of the studio to three Network Executives: MR. SONG, a stuffy, sharply dressed Asian man (60), MR. HAGAN a tall and goofy Australian man (50), and MS. REBEL, a bossy redheaded woman (55) in a dressy pantsuit and pearls. The four of them are touring the CRIME SCENE. We see a BODY OUTLINE IN CHALK, and YELLOW CRIME TAPE.

Logan, Holly, and Nick ENTER the set from the back, and they HEAR everything. The Producer doesn't see them enter. They set down the light-up Palm Tree in the corner of the set, and decorate it with more air fresheners (but it STINKS of fish).

HOLDEN

This is the actual set for tonight's episode.

MS. REBEL

(snarls)

And the Director gave them a thirty-minute break for no reason.

HOLDEN

Oh, an actor, the Killer Boyfriend, with one line was too nervous to go on, so the studio is sending a replacement.

Logan HEARS Holden.

MR. SONG

This series has been beset with many such problems.

Holden turns and sees Logan, Holly, and Nick.

HOLDEN

Sorry folks. This is a closed set.

LOGAN

(nervous)

I'm, I'm Logan Barry, the Killer Boyfriend the studio sent over.

HOLLY

(whispers to her dad)

Marianne never mentioned you?

HOLDEN

What's that awful smell?

LOGAN

Pine air fresheners?

MS. REBEL  
I don't think so.

MR. HAGAN  
Who's this darlin' little girl?

LOGAN  
I couldn't get a sitter on short notice. This is my daughter, Holly.

MR. HAGAN  
Why don't you join us on the tour, Holly?

MS. REBEL  
(mumbles)  
I'm sure your father needs makeup, defumigation, and a car wash.

NICK  
I'm Nick Tomaine, night security guard. Union rules.

HOLDEN  
Nick, I want a complete lockdown of the studio until this episode is in the can. No one gets in or out.

NICK  
Got it. I'll notify the front gate.

LOGAN  
You gonna be okay, Holly?

HOLLY  
(whispers)  
I'd love a tour. Something to write about. Finally!

Nick makes the CALL. Logan SEEKS AND FINDS Marianne's dressing room. He KNOCKS on the door.

MARIANNE (O.S.)  
Come in.

Logan RUSHES in to see Marianne and Les NOSE-TO-NOSE. Les SMILES.

MARIANNE (CONT'D)  
Logan. What are you doing here?

LOGAN  
Brought you dinner.

Logan HOLDS UP two take-out BOXES.

MARIANNE

Les this is Logan. Logan, this is Les. We were going over his lines.

LES

I was working on her curves, if you know what I mean.

MARIANNE

Logan, you shouldn't have come. We may be here all night.

LES

All night? That's like thirty-hours more, isn't it?

LOGAN

In doggy hours, maybe.

MARIANNE

Logan, I'm sorry. I've got a lot of work to do tonight.

LES

You heard the lady. Who do you think you are?

LOGAN

I'm the Killer Boyfriend.

Les LUNGES at Logan and WRESTLES HIM TO THE GROUND. They ROLL around. Les PUNCHES Logan several times, while Marianne tries to separate them.

MARIANNE

Stop it, Les.

LES

He said he was the Killer Boyfriend.

LOGAN

I'm filling in for the guy who quit earlier today. One line. Any idiot can do it.

(to Marianne)

I didn't mean that, Marianne.

Les and Logan SEPARATE and STAND. Les SMELLS Logan's clothes.

LES

Eeeew! What's that smell?

LOGAN  
I took a little of my work home  
with me, I guess.

LES  
You clean septic tanks?

LOGAN  
I deliver fish.

LES  
Old, stinky fish tanks?

LOGAN  
Sustainable fish to prosperous  
culinary establishments.

LES  
(angry)  
Big words upset me!

LOGAN  
Like fish?

Les is ready to punch Logan.

MARIANNE  
We have to be on the set in a few  
minutes, Les. Logan, can you leave  
us alone? I'm sorry.

Logan EXITS, PULLS the door SHUT, and COLLAPSES to the floor  
in SADNESS.

CUT TO:

INT. FRENCH CHEF'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

CHRISTOPHER (CHRIS) SAUNT (30; handsome, lousy French Chef  
with a fake French accent, CRACKS EGGS POORLY, SCRAMBLES IN  
THE SHELLS, and DRINKS WINE while he cooks. He mispronounces  
every French word). His gorgeous black assistant, SUSAN (SUE)  
FLAY (25, exotic French beauty) follows with a cookbook,  
*Mastering the Art of French Cooking* while avoiding her  
womanizing boss. Chris's OPEN PILL BOTTLE sits dangerously  
close to the BULLION CUBES at his cooking station.

CHRIS  
It is I, Christopher Saunt, Head  
Chef at Le Waffle Tower, the finest  
French Restaurant in all of  
Burbank. Bono Par-tee.

SUE  
Practicing for tonight?

CHRIS

I'm sure DeMonet studios will call.  
My friend, the security guard, says  
they are working late again.

Chris is happy. He tries to SPLASH wine into his sauce, but he MISSES.

SUE

You are after that girl?

CHRIS

My little creep, Marianne.

SUE

That's crêpe. Like ape.

CHRIS

She is not an ape at all. More of a  
beautiful French marr-in-goo.

SUE

You mean, meringue?

Chris TURNS to SCOLD Sue as he continues cooking. He GRABS his medication pill bottle instead of the bullion cubes, and adds six pills by accident. We see a warning on the pill bottle: "Affects balance. May cause nausea."

CHRIS

You say potato, I say toma-tillo. I  
say Marr-in-goo, you say meringue.

SUE

(mumbles)

What a meringue-a-tan.

CHRIS

What's a meringue-a-tan?

SUE

It's a lemony crêpe from Borneo.

CHRIS

You don't have time to make a new  
dish. You gotta finish the Coke-  
kill-us Saint Jackie.

SUE

That's Coquilles Saint-Jacques.

CHRIS

Yes, what you said. And I have to  
finish the veal.

SUE  
The Blanquette de Veau?

CHRIS  
Yes, what you said. And please do not hit on the Director or Chief Detective Gunner Downs again.

SUE  
I don't plan to work here my whole life. You're gonna kill somebody the way you cook.

Chris SPLASHES more wine toward the sauce, but he MISSES. He CHUGS WINE defiantly.

Sue ROLLS HER EYES in disgust.

BACK TO:

INT. CSI STUDIO - NIGHT

Holden, on his tour and comes to the CHALK BODY OUTLINE.

HOLDEN  
This is where our Chief Detective Gunner Downs solves the crimes.

HOLLY  
(mumbles)  
If he can remember his lines.

The Network Executives HEAR Holly.

HOLDEN  
This is where the actress playing the body should be lying.

HOLLY  
(mumbles)  
Where is she now?

HOLDEN  
Katherine Daver is with the Director. All the actors are studying their lines.

HOLLY  
(mumbles)  
Your dead body, Katherine Daver, has lines? Kay-Daver? Really?

HOLDEN  
Moving on to the Examiner's Table.

The crowd MOVES over to the Examiner's Table and Lab.

MR. HAGAN

Where your Director doubles as  
Doctor Morgan Beryum.

HOLDEN

So that he can save us money.

HOLLY

(mumbles)

He likes gorgeous female bodies.

Holden HEARS Holly.

HOLDEN

Such a cute little girl. Why don't  
you go find your father?

Holly shrugs and walks away to find her daddy.

HOLDEN (CONT'D)

Now, we'll see the Control Room,  
and then we'll head back to our  
Conference Room, where you'll see  
everything that goes on out here.

Before they move on, Holden SEES Nick making his rounds.

HOLDEN (CONT'D)

Nick, is it?

NICK

Yes, Sir, Mr. DeMonet.

HOLDEN

Are we in total lockdown?

NICK

Yes, Sir. No one gets on the lot,  
and no one enters or leaves.

HOLDEN

Good man. Until this episode wraps.

NICK

Got it, Sir. Closed up tighter than  
a Producer's checkbook.

EXT. CSI STUDIO SECURITY GATE - NIGHT

A very ANGRY ACTOR (35; brutish male) is SCREAMING, while  
showing his copy of the script to the Guard.

PASSERS-BY (6, various ages, genders; interspersed with the Five Hoodlums DRESSED AS BUSINESSMEN) hear the conversation.

ANGRY ACTOR

But I'm the Killer Boyfriend!

GUARD

I don't care. No one gets in. Even killers. Boss's orders.

ANGRY ACTOR

There won't be a Christmas murder without me!

GUARD

The holiday will never be the same.

ANGRY ACTOR

She can't strangle herself!

GUARD

She was wearing skimpy clothes. Maybe she'll die of pneumonia?

ANGRY ACTOR

Without me, that Kay Daver will remain alive and well!

GUARD

The Director might like that, from what I hear.

ANGRY ACTOR

I don't think you understand the gravity of the situation. Nobody's going to die here tonight!

GUARD

Crying shame, Sir. They'll just have to live.

INT. CSI STUDIO - NIGHT

Holden continues his tour. They pass the STINKY light-up Palm Tree, and everyone ALMOST FAINTS.

HOLDEN

That smell probably is there to make the murder scene more realistic.

MS. REBEL

It's clear something died here.  
(shivers)  
And why is it so cold in here?

HOLDEN

I did see people in snow jackets.  
I'll call maintenance.

MR. HAGAN

Tell 'em to fix your show!

HOLDEN

Our Conference Room is warmer, and  
it smells much better, and you'll  
see everything on monitors.

The Network Executives SURROUND Holden.

MR. SONG

These actors better have good  
chemistry tonight, or we're  
cancelling this show.

HOLDEN

Don't worry. The show will be  
great. They *love* each other.

MR. HAGAN

It's not clear they *like* each  
other.

MS. REBEL

I've seen enough. Let's go.

HOLDEN

Wait! Give us one more chance. We  
have a great French Chef on call.  
I'll order us all some dinner.

MR. SONG

Don't try to bribe us, Holden. If  
this episode bombs, we're pulling  
the cold, stinky plug. Tonight!

INT. CSI STUDIO - NIGHT

Before the actors and Director return, Holly is following  
Nick as he **CROSSES THE SET** on his rounds. They're both  
**SHIVERING**. Holly finds she can talk directly to Nick.

HOLLY

Why's it so cold in here?

NICK

It's freezing. The air conditioning has been stuck on 'high' since I got here.

Holly DAYDREAMS that Nick is SANTA (fully costumed) and it is SNOWING on the set. The daydream FADES.

HOLLY

I'm glad Daddy and I have snow jackets on.

They STOP. Nick inspects the air vents with his FLASHLIGHT.

NICK

Come on, Holly, we'd better check the thermostat.

Nick and Holly walk away.

INT. CSI STUDIO CONFERENCE ROOM - NIGHT

Holden and the Network Executives stare at FOUR TV MONITORS showing every part of the set: CRIME SCENE, LAB AREA, EXAMINER'S TABLE, and DIRECTOR'S AREA. Holden POINTS to the CRIME SCENE MONITOR.

HOLDEN

This is where you'll see our crime scene detectives at their best.

MS. REBEL

We'd better!

Holden IGNORES the comment. He POINTS to the Examiner's Table monitor.

HOLDEN

And over here is where Doctor Morgan Beryum provides more biology than a science fair.

MR. SONG

And the lab?

HOLDEN

More solutions than a mathematics conference.

MR. HAGAN

You've described the geography, biology, and mathematics of the set, but we need to see chemistry.

HOLDEN  
You'll see it. You'll see it.

MS. REBEL  
We'd better!

INT. CSI STUDIO - NIGHT

The actors and the Director gather at the CRIME SCENE. Les acts COCKY and SUPERIOR to the others. No one pays attention to Logan. Nick and Holly re-enter and stand back by the Palm Tree. The Network Executives are WATCHING from Holden's Conference Room. The Director WHISPERS his directions.

DIRECTOR  
You've had time to get your lines down. Don't mess up. The Network Executives are watching every move from Holden's Conference Room.

The Director NOTICES Logan.

DIRECTOR (CONT'D)  
(to Logan)  
Who are you?

LOGAN  
(mumbles)  
The Killer Boyfriend.

DIRECTOR  
You're not on until the last scene.

LOGAN  
(mumbles)  
I'm getting my motivation.

Marianne ROLLS HER EYES. Logan SMIRKS and BACKS AWAY.

LES  
This is *my* show! Don't forget it!

INT. CSI STUDIO CONFERENCE ROOM - NIGHT

The Network Executives SHAKE THEIR HEADS in DISGUST.

MR. SONG  
They're at each other's throats.

MS. REBEL  
Or pants.

HOLDEN  
I'm sure there's a perfectly  
reasonable explanation.

INT. CSI STUDIO - NIGHT

Les and Marianne HOVER over Kay who is LIFELESS.

DIRECTOR  
Let's do our best work, people!  
Action!

MARIANNE  
Cause of death, Chief Detective  
Canny? You think she was strangled?

LES  
I'm guessing ass-fixation.

DIRECTOR  
Cut!

MARIANNE  
It's asphyxiation.

LES  
That's hard to say. Can something  
else kill her?

MARIANNE  
Bludgeoned?

LES  
What's that?

MARIANNE  
(pointing to Les)  
Killed by a dull, blunt, heavy  
object.

LES  
I didn't do it.

DIRECTOR  
Just say your lines, Les.  
(beat)  
Take it from the top.

They take their places. Logan, Holly, and Nick WATCH from the  
Palm Tree.

DIRECTOR (CONT'D)  
Roll 'em.

MARIANNE

Cause of death, Detective Canny.  
You think she was strangled?

LES

I'm guessing she was dungeoned to  
death.

HOLLY

(mumbles)

Now, that's a dull, blunt, heavy  
object.

Logan, Holly, Nick CHUCKLE.

DIRECTOR

Cut! Bludgeoned, Les. *Bludgeoned*.  
Maybe you can remember *strangled*.

The Director PRETENDS to STRANGLE Les.

LES

Willy, the main thing is, she's  
dead, but she's still hot.

(beat)

I mean, her body's still warm.

Les WINKS at Kay. She WINKS back.

DIRECTOR

Les, your upcoming movie deal might  
be dead on arrival if you can't do  
your lines.

LES

The movies want me for action-  
adventure, not acting. Ya know,  
like Sylvester Stallone, Arnold  
Schwarzenegger, and Meryl Streep.

DIRECTOR

Just do your lines!

(whispers)

The Network Executives are  
watching!

The actors take their places.

DIRECTOR (CONT'D)

Okay. Action!

MARIANNE

Cause of death, Chief Detective  
Canny? You think she was strangled?

Les looks NERVOUSLY into the camera.

LES  
I'm guessing ass-fixation.

DIRECTOR  
Cut!

LES  
It's hard to concentrate in here.  
It's so cold.

MARIANNE  
I'm putting on a coat.

DIRECTOR AND LES  
No tight shirt?

Marianne replies as she STOMPS off the set.

MARIANNE  
Know your lines, Les, not my  
curves.

INT. CSI STUDIO CONFERENCE ROOM - NIGHT

The Network Executives SHAKE THEIR HEADS in DISGUST. They MARCH OUT of the Conference Room and across the set BICKERING toward the studio door. Holden CHASES AFTER THEM. Nick and Holly BLOCK the EXIT.

MR. SONG  
I think I've seen enough.

HOLDEN  
Marianne's just putting on a coat.  
They'll resume shooting soon.

MR. HAGAN  
They have a higher probability of  
shooting each other.

MS. REBEL  
Oil and water. Not the chemistry we  
were hoping to see.

HOLDEN  
Les and my daughter are actually  
very close. Practically engaged.

Logan and Holly DROP their CHINS.

MS. REBEL

Are you going to let us out of here  
or not?

NICK

The studio's in lockdown. No one  
gets in or out.

The studio door is PUSHED OPEN, KNOCKING Nick and Holly out  
of the way. Chris and Sue from Le Waffle Tower BARGE in with  
a WHEELED CART packed with French-American food.

CHRIS

It is I, Christopher Saunt, Head  
Chef at Le Waffle Tower, the finest  
French Chef in all of Burbank. Bono  
Par-tee.

HOLLY

(mumbles)

It's bon appétit. Every kid with  
Third-grade Common Core foreign  
language skills knows that. And  
Chris-saunt? You've got to be  
kidding.

SUE

And I am Susan Flay, the assistant  
to the finest French Chef in  
Burbank.

NICK

(mumbles)

Sue Flay?

HOLLY

(mumbles)

Oh brother. Even caterers have  
stage names in Burbank.

Nick SHUTS and LOCKS the DOOR behind them.

MR. HAGAN

I thought you said no one gets in  
or out.

HOLDEN AND LES

(in unison)

Everybody's got to eat.

MR. SONG

Let us out of here.

MS. REBEL  
Is that Coquilles Saint-Jacques?

CHRIS  
Straight from Paris, or as the  
French say, Gay Paris.

MR. SONG  
And Blanquette de Veau?

CHRIS  
My veal rag-out is trace trace  
bono.

MS. REBEL  
(flirting with Sue)  
Très très bon! What do you call  
this dish?

Sue EDGES CLOSER to the Director. Kay Daver gives Sue a  
JEALOUS GLARE. Marianne reenters the set with a tight jacket  
on, and sees Les give Kay an ELBOW in the ribs, while  
DROOLING at SUE. Meanwhile, Chris and Sue SET UP the Honey  
Wagon Table.

HOLDEN  
You see. Maybe we can all have a  
bite to eat, the actors can refresh  
their bodies and their lines, and  
we can quickly shoot the last  
scenes of the episode, and everyone  
will be one big happy family.

Nick SAUNTERS over to Chris and BUMPS into him.

NICK  
(whispers)  
Aren't you the rat who stole my  
wife's catering job for this  
studio? You're going down, Pal!

Logan LUMBERS over to Holly and WHISPERS.

LOGAN  
I guess Marianne and Les are  
practically engaged.

The Director BUMPS into Kay and WHISPERS.

DIRECTOR  
I saw you wink at Les. What's that  
about?

Marianne BUMPS into Les and WHISPERS.

MARIANNE

Kay Daver is dead to me, and I'm about to flatten that cheesy Sue Flay.

And Holden BUMPS into Sue and WHISPERS.

HOLDEN

Were you putting the moves on my Director?

DIRECTOR

(upset, yells)

Okay people, Honey Wagon time. Thirty-minute dinner break, then it's back to work!

HOLLY

(smirks, mumbles)

One big, happy family.

Everyone is GRUMBLING as they FILL THEIR PLATES.

EXT. CSI STUDIO SECURITY GATE - NIGHT

The very Angry Actor is still SCREAMING and WAVING his script at the Guard.

ANGRY ACTOR

You let the caterer in!

GUARD

They gotta eat. No one else gets in. Even a Killer Boyfriend. Boss's orders.

The Angry Actor GOES BERSERK.

ANGRY ACTOR

If I don't kill Kay Daver, who will?

GUARD

Who's on first.

ANGRY ACTOR

What?

GUARD

What's on second.

ANGRY ACTOR

Listen, buddy, I'm going to find a way into that studio if it's the last thing I do!

GUARD

I don't know.

GUARD AND ANGRY ACTOR

He's on third base.

The Angry Actor SCREAMS and STOMPS around like a madman.

ANGRY ACTOR

I'm getting into that studio and I'm going to kill somebody.

The Angry Actor STOMPS AWAY, then SNEAKS toward the side of the building.

INT. CSI STUDIO - NIGHT

Everyone FILES BY a GARBAGE CAN, HAPPILY TOSSING in their paper plates and paper cups, while Chris and Sue box up leftover food OBLIVIOUS to their comments.

DIRECTOR

Let's get this episode in the can. First, I gotta use the can. Places in five minutes, people!

HOLDEN

Mr. Song, Mr. Hagan, and Ms. Rebel, we'll watch from my Conference Room again.

MR. SONG

(whispers)

I hope your Doctor Morgan Beryum can get me antacids.

MR. HAGAN

(whispers)

I hope he can get me a stomach pump.

MS. REBEL

I've gotta take a toxic waste dump.

KAY DAVER

It won't be hard to play dead now.

Les's plate is spotlessly CLEAN. He dumbly SMILES.

LES

I didn't see French fries, but I had seconds on the veal.

NICK

Not as good as Mel's meatloaf from our diner.

MARIANNE

Glad I had the veggie plate and salad from Nick's. Thanks, Logan.

LOGAN

My pleasure. I tried the veal. Not bad, except for the chunky sauce. How can Nick's Café compete with a fancy French Chef?

Nick SLOWS as if suddenly very SICK and about to SPEW. Holly, Chris, and Sue RUSH to him.

HOLLY

(mumbles)

Hope it wasn't something he ate!

INT. CSI STUDIO AIR VENT - NIGHT

The Angry Actor CLIMBS a fire escape and SNEAKS into a HEATING VENT, which is FREEZING. He CRAWLS along, SHIVERING and CURSING.

INT. CSI STUDIO - NIGHT

Holly, Chris, and Sue attend to Nick, who is CRAMPING UP.

HOLLY

(whispering to Nick)

Mr. Tomaine, are you, okay? Are you okay?

SUE

What if it was something in the food? Or in a sauce?

The Director is walking past them to the rest room. He DOESN'T NOTICE Nick is ill.

CHRIS

(whispers to Sue)

We can't afford to be accused of food poisoning. Maybe we should stick around to see if anyone else gets, you know...

The Director RETURNS from the Rest Room and HOBBLER over to Chris and Sue.

DIRECTOR

You'll have to stick around now.  
The studio is in lockdown again.  
Nick, no one gets in, and no one  
gets out!  
(yells)  
Ten seconds, people!

Marianne and Les HOVER over Kay Daver, LIFELESS on the floor. Logan is standing slightly out of camera view (close to Les). Carrie POSITIONS the camera tripod.

DIRECTOR (CONT'D)

Action!

MARIANNE

Cause of death, Chief Detective  
Gunner Downs? You think she was  
strangled?

LES

I'm guessing ass-fixation.

The Director COVERS HIS EYES and SHAKES HIS HEAD IN DISGUST. Logan IMPERSONATES Les's voice.

LOGAN

I'm guessing asphyxiation.

The Director LOOKS UP HAPPILY as Les turns ANGRILY at Logan.

MARIANNE

Looks like you're right again,  
Gunner. That's why you're the Chief  
Detective.

Les TURNS toward Kay Daver.

LES

I'd like to get a second diag-  
nosey.

LOGAN

(impersonating Les)  
I'd like to get a second diagnosis.

Les SPRINGS UP and DIVES at Logan, ready to kill him, but Logan suddenly FALLS DOWN and Les FLIES past him. Then, Les DIVES ON Logan and they WRESTLE.

Marianne CLUMSILY TRIPS and FALLS onto the body (Kay).

DIRECTOR

Cut!

INT. CSI STUDIO CONFERENCE ROOM - NIGHT

The Network Executives are STANDING CLOSE to the monitors, BEWILDERED.

MS. REBEL

What the heck is going on here?

HOLDEN

That "actor's process" is so hard to explain.

INT. CSI STUDIO - NIGHT

The Director PEELS Les off Logan.

LOGAN

I was trying to speed things along.

DIRECTOR

Les, we can dub his voice over yours. He's a dead ringer.

LES

He's dead, all right.

MARIANNE

It's okay by me, if we get out of here earlier.

DIRECTOR

(to Logan)

Who are you, again?

LOGAN

Logan Barry. The Killer Boyfriend.

DIRECTOR

I'll have a few more forms for you to sign, and maybe a few extra bucks for dubbing work. Places everyone. Ten seconds.

The actors RETURN to their marks.

DIRECTOR (CONT'D)

Action!

MARIANNE

What should we do next, Gunner?

LES

I think we ought to take her to the morgue and bury her.

LOGAN

(imitating Les, with more  
zest)

I think we should take her to  
Morgan Beryum!

MARIANNE

Good idea, Gunner Downs. That's why  
you're the shining star of the  
Burbank Police Department.

DIRECTOR

Cut and scene! Let's get over to  
the Examiner's Table. Carrie, get  
set up, while I change into the  
Doctor.

The Director RACES off the set. Carrie SMIRKING, REPOSITIONS  
the camera tripod. Les is FUMING!

LES

(to Logan)

You touch my lines again and I'll  
kill you.

MARIANNE

Les, he's saving us time. Chill.

Marianne clumsily STUMBLES into the Examiner's Table.

LES

I can do it myself. I'm getting  
that three-picture deal soon.

MARIANNE

Just say your lines, Les.

They take their places around the Examiner's Table. Logan  
SQUATS below the table, out of camera view. The Director  
RACES IN wearing THICK-RIMMED GLASSES, a WHITE LAB COAT, and  
carrying an oversized MAGNIFYING GLASS STARING at Kay's short  
skirt.

DIRECTOR

I'm Doc Beryum people. Ready!  
Action!

(as Dr. Beryum)

(MORE)

DIRECTOR (CONT'D)

Just what I thought. Taraxacum officinale. Found only in Malibu Canyon.

LES

I saw that same polyp grain at her boyfriend's house in Riverside, Doc!

LOGAN

(imitating Les)

I found that same pollen grain at her boyfriend's house in Riverside, Doc!

Les is FURIOUS. Holly STARES at her phone and CHUCKLES from the Palm Tree. Everyone HEARS Holly.

MARIANNE

(laughs)

We have to stop and change this.

DIRECTOR

Cut! Why are we stopping, Marianne?

MARIANNE

There's no way even the great Chief Detective here could see a pollen grain at a crime scene. They're too small.

Marianne clumsily KNOCKS the MAGNIFYING GLASS off the Examiner's Table. Holly SNEAKS OVER to her dad.

HOLLY

(whispers to her dad)

I looked up Taraxacum officinale. It's a dandelion, the most common weed in the world. It doesn't narrow down the crime.

The Director and Les HEAR Holly.

LES

Just shut up, Kid!

LOGAN

(upset)

Mister Canny, that's no way to talk to my daughter.

DIRECTOR

Besides, the kid is right. Let's do it over with another plant.

HOLLY

(eyeing her phone)

Dad, tell them to use Malibu phlox, a rare plant only found in Malibu.

The Director HEARS Holly.

DIRECTOR

Thanks, Kid. Now keep quiet. Please. Take it from the top, people. Action!

The actors HIT THEIR MARKS.

DIRECTOR (CONT'D)

Just what I thought, Malibu phlox, Found only in Malibu Canyon.

LES

I saw that same polyp grain at her boyfriend's house in Riverside, Doc!

LOGAN

(imitating Les)

I found that same pollen grain at her boyfriend's house in Riverside, Doc!

LES

That proves the boyfriend did it!

Holly CHUCKLES again.

DIRECTOR

Cut! What is it now, Kid?

LES

If that kid doesn't shut up, we'll be here all night.

HOLLY

(whispers to her dad)

Anyone who has ever visited Malibu could have picked up pollen grains on their pants. That's millions of people who could have killed her.

The Director DOESN'T HEAR Holly this time.

DIRECTOR  
What? Any suggestions, Kid?

HOLLY  
(whispers to her dad)  
Hire better script writers?

MARIANNE  
We could establish the Killer  
Boyfriend's means, motive, and  
opportunity.

LES  
Or better yet, I could have a  
hunch.

Les suddenly GRABS his stomach, and BENDS OVER in PAIN.

LES (CONT'D)  
I need a bathroom break. I think  
it was the French veal-stuff.

Les RACES off the set.

Chris WHISPERS to Sue.

CHRIS  
You find out how sick he is, and  
I'll find out who ate the veal. We  
can't afford a food-poisoning  
scandal.

Sue LOOKS WORRIED, and FOLLOWS Les to the bathroom.

The TEMPERATURE in the studio is suddenly extremely HOT.

DIRECTOR  
It could be heat stroke. Can  
someone check the thermostat? It  
must be a hundred in here.

NICK  
I'll check it. Come on, Holly.

Holly and Nick EXIT. The Director and Kay WALK AWAY fanning themselves.

We SEE the Angry Actor stuck in the HEATER VENT, SWEATING PROFUSELY, and CURSING.

Marianne and Logan are alone on the set. They WHISPER knowing that Holden and the Network Executives might hear them.

MARIANNE

That daughter of yours is something special. You should be very proud.

LOGAN

She's a great kid. Keeps everyone on his or her toes. She has shyness issues, but she's a great kid.

MARIANNE

She uses her phone like a classroom.

LOGAN

She talks to it a lot. Too much sometimes. Like a surrogate mother.

MARIANNE

She must really miss her mom.

LOGAN

Her mom's voice. She cries into her phone at night. She doesn't know I hear her.

MARIANNE

That's so sad.

LOGAN

Oh. She acts tough on the outside, but around the holidays, it's especially tough on her.

MARIANNE

What do you do?

LOGAN

I take her to Nick's Café.

MARIANNE

Not for the meatloaf.

LOGAN

So she can hear a woman's voice up close. Mel always talks to us for a long time. She knows what's up.

MARIANNE

And me?

LOGAN

She *loves* to hear *your* voice. She likes you.

(MORE)

LOGAN (CONT'D)

She talked to her phone for a month after the first time we all went to Nick's.

MARIANNE

You didn't tell me.

Logan HANGS his head in sadness.

LOGAN

I know your dad wouldn't approve of me. A fish salesman.

MARIANNE

He's never met you. Ha! He'd die if he knew who you were tonight!

LOGAN

(smiles)

I won't tell him if you won't.

MARIANNE

But, Logan, I have to warn you; I'm still in sort of a relationship with Les. He's improving as an actor. He really is.

LOGAN

I understand.

MARIANNE

And if he gets the three-picture deal, it will be in New York.

(beat)

I told him I'd go with him. Partly to get acting opportunities without my dad's help. You understand.

LOGAN

(sadly)

I understand.

Marianne SMILES and REACHES OUT HER HAND to him. Nick and Holly return to SEE Marianne and Logan HOLDING HANDS. Holly SMILES and resumes her place by the Palm Tree.

The Director, Kay, and Les return to the set. Les looks healthy, but DISGRUNTLED SEEING Marianne and Logan holding hands.

Sue SHAKES her head CONFUSED and SHRUGS HER SHOULDERS as she approaches Chris off-set. They WHISPER.

CHRIS

How is he?

SUE

I didn't follow him *into* his dressing room. He came out fine. How many people ate your Blanquette de Veau?

CHRIS

My what?

SUE

Your veal!

CHRIS

I wasn't watching, but no one touched your dish. My veal was much more popular for I am the finest French Chef in all of Burbank.

SUE

We're in big trouble.

The actors GATHER in the LAB portion of the set. We see flasks with COLORFUL liquids and a LASER BEAM pointed at one of the flasks. Logan DUCKS behind the LAB TABLE out of view.

DIRECTOR

Okay. This is the shortest scene we have tonight. No excuses. Know your lines and your marks. Ready in thirty seconds.

The Director/Doctor Morgan Beryum LOOKS at a COMPUTER SCREEN. Les and Marianne STARE over his shoulder at the screen. Kay is LIFELESS on the Examiner's Table.

DIRECTOR (CONT'D)

Action!

(beat)

The swab tests from the victim's mouth show three different types of saliva.

MARIANNE

What do you think this means, Gunner?

Les FALLS DOWN unexpectedly, but he POPS UP like nothing happened. Chris and Sue ARE STUNNED off-set. They LOOK WORRIED.

LES

If my suspicions are correct, it means our victim was a philanthropist.

Everyone FREEZES. The Director WAITS for Logan to impersonate Les with the correct word, while Marianne CRINGES. But Logan bites his tongue. Holly looks equally SURPRISED.

DIRECTOR

Cut! Les, the word is *philanderer*.

LES

(angry)

Philanthropist, philanderer. Same thing. They're both big words. Nobody knows for sure what they really mean.

Les GRABS his stomach and STORMS off the set again. Sue RACES after him.

Marianne CRINGES again and RACES after Les. The Director GRUMBLES as he LOOKS INTO THE CAMERA.

INT. CSI STUDIO CONFERENCE ROOM - NIGHT

Holden and Network Executives GRUMBLE.

HOLDEN

We're all a little unhappy about our performance tonight, but things will improve.

MS. REBEL

(to Mr. Song and Mr. Hagan)

Should I tell him?

HOLDEN

Tell me what?

MS. REBEL

We're disappointed in the performances, yes. But we are also here to evaluate Mr. Lester Canny's individual performance for his three-picture studio deal in New York.

HOLDEN

New York? That's on the other side of the country. My little girl.

MR. SONG  
Don't worry, Mr. DeMonet.

Mr. Hagan FALLS DOWN unexpectedly, but he POPS UP as if nothing happened.

MR. HAGAN  
That's right, Mr. DeMonet.

Ms. Rebel FALLS DOWN unexpectedly, but she POPS UP as if nothing happened.

MS. REBEL  
It looks like nobody's going  
anywhere, except maybe down and up.

HOLDEN  
If you'll excuse me for a moment. I  
suddenly don't feel so well.

Holden EXITS.

INT. CSI STUDIO - NIGHT

The Director PEEKS around the Lab Table at Logan.

DIRECTOR  
You didn't impersonate Les that  
time. Wanna be here all night?

LOGAN  
No, Sir. It's a school night. I'd  
like to help any way I can.

DIRECTOR  
When, and if, Les gets out of the  
bathroom, help him out with his  
lines, so we can all get home.

LOGAN  
Yes, Sir.

DIRECTOR  
Your one line is in the last scene.  
You better not mess it up either!

LOGAN  
Yes, Sir.

The Director FALLS DOWN unexpectedly, but he POPS UP as if nothing happened. Chris LOOKS WORRIED just off-camera.

DIRECTOR  
I'll get Les back here.

The Director goes to FETCH Les. Holly walks over to her dad, who is alone by the Palm Tree.

HOLLY

Dad, why didn't you help him? You knew the word was 'philanderer.' Marianne isn't going to like you.

LOGAN

Holly, she may not like me anyway. I hope you're not too disappointed if we're not meant for each other. I know how much you like her.

Holly is SPEECHLESS. She SULKS back to the Palm Tree. Logan RACES after her.

LOGAN (CONT'D)

Why don't you write your essay that's due tomorrow morning? I'll do my one line, and we'll go home to sleep. Maybe we'll go to Nick's diner tomorrow night and I won't order the meatloaf!

HOLLY

Can we go home, Daddy? I just want to be alone.

LOGAN

I'm so sorry, Sweetie. I promised the Director and Marianne that I would do my one line for the show.

HOLLY

And help that idiot Les steal Marianne away from us?

Holly starts TEXTING again. Logan thinks she is typing her essay. We SEE the text: "Dear Santa, My dad has an emergency here at the studio."

INT. CSI STUDIO - NIGHT

The Director, dressed as Doctor Morgan Beryum CALLS everyone to the set in a LOUD VOICE. Holly and Logan stand way over by the Palm Tree.

DIRECTOR

Okay, everyone. The Producer and Network Executives are giving us one last chance to do it right.

LES

I'd like to do all my lines over,  
without any help. I can do this.

Everyone is taken aback by Les's CONFIDENCE and POISE.

MARIANNE

Way to go, Les. Take command.

DIRECTOR

Okay. Let's shoot the crime scene  
one more time. Kay, you're dead!  
Ready in thirty seconds.

The actors take their marks. Marianne and Les HOVER over the  
LIFELESS Kay.

DIRECTOR (CONT'D)

Action!

MARIANNE

Cause of death, Chief Detective  
Gunner Downs? You think she was  
strangled?

LES

I'm guessing asphyxiation.

Marianne and the Director SMILE.

MARIANNE

What should we do next, Gunner?

LES

I think we should take her to  
Doctor Morgan Beryum!

MARIANNE

Good idea, Gunner Downs. That's why  
you're the shining star of the  
Burbank Police Department.

DIRECTOR

Cut! Print. Moving on! You were  
perfect, Les.

Marianne and the Director SMILE. Les PRANCES LIKE A PROUD  
PEACOCK over to the Examiner's Table. Marianne and Kay appear  
INFATUATED with Les. Logan and Holly appear STUNNED. Kay  
FLIRTS with Les, which Marianne SEES.

DIRECTOR (CONT'D)

Five Seconds.

(beat)

Action!

The Director INSPECTS a pollen grain with his magnifying glass.

DIRECTOR (CONT'D)

Just what I thought, Malibu phlox.

The Director FALLS DOWN unexpectedly, but he POPS UP as if nothing happened. Chris and Sue LOOK WORRIED.

DIRECTOR (CONT'D)

Found only in Malibu Canyon.

LES

I saw that same plant species used  
as an indoor plant at her  
boyfriend's house in Riverside!

MARIANNE

Amazing botanical recollection,  
Gunner. You're terrific.

(to Kay)

Apparently, this girl got around  
like a common, trampy weed.

LES

That proves the boyfriend did it!

MARIANNE

Or boyfriends!

The Director, as Doctor Morgan Beryum, and Kay SCOWL at Marianne.

DIRECTOR

Cut! We can cut that last line out,  
Marianne. Just stick to the script.

KAY DAVER

Please stick to your lines,  
Marianne, so I don't have to hold  
my breath all night.

Marianne REACHES DOWN and starts to CHOKE Kay. Holly and Logan GASP!

MARIANNE

Might be an improvement.

LES

Stop that, Marianne. You'll kill her.

DIRECTOR

Okay, Ladies. Break it up. Les, you were perfect again. I like what you did with the plant species line.

LES

Thanks, Willy. I'm feeling inspired.

The other actors fail to see Kay STAND UP, then FALL DOWN unexpectedly. She POPS UP as if nothing happened. Chris and Sue LOOK WORRIED.

DIRECTOR

You're acting inspired, Les.

The Director puts his arm around Les, as they RACE to the LAB set up.

DIRECTOR (CONT'D)

Here we go. Ready in thirty seconds.

The Director/Doctor Morgan looks at a COMPUTER SCREEN. Les and Marianne STARE over his shoulder at the screen. Kay is LIFELESS on the Examiner's Table. Logan is off-stage POISED to RACE IN.

DIRECTOR (CONT'D)

Action!

(beat)

The swab tests from the victim's mouth show three different types of saliva.

MARIANNE

Spitting image of a tramp, Gunner?

DIRECTOR

Cut! Do the line as written, Marianne. Ready in ten seconds.

MARIANNE

All right, but we all know she's a tramp!

DIRECTOR

Action!

(beat)

(MORE)

DIRECTOR (CONT'D)

The swab tests from the victim's mouth show three different types of saliva.

MARIANNE

What do you think this means, Gunner?

LES

If my suspicions are correct, it means our victim was a philanderer.

MARIANNE

I'll bet one of the saliva tests matches your mouth. What do you bet, Gunner?

LES

I bet *that's* not in the script!

DIRECTOR

Cut!

LES

You're holding me back, Marianne.

The Director PUTS HIS ARM AROUND Les and LEADS him to the side of the set.

DIRECTOR

Don't worry, Les, we'll cut around her. You and Kay were perfect!

Kay STANDS and takes a BOW. Marianne LUNGES at Kay again, but Kay suddenly FALLS DOWN and Marianne MISSES her.

INT. CSI STUDIO CONFERENCE ROOM - NIGHT

Holden and Network Executives are suddenly HAPPY, even as they WATCH Marianne and Kay on a MONITOR, WRESTLING on the Examiner's Table.

MR. SONG

It is good to see Mr. Les Canny perform so well.

MS. REBEL

(to Mr. Song and Mr. Hagan)

It's uncanny.

MR. HAGAN

He might just get that three-picture deal after all.

HOLDEN

My daughter isn't usually this clumsy.

MS. REBEL

Yes she is. We've seen all the episodes.

HOLDEN

I mean, she seems a little off-kilter tonight.

MR. SONG

Don't we all, but that right punch she threw was on target.

MR. HAGAN

Their chemistry never has been right. Your daughter and Mr. Canny.

HOLDEN

Their chemistry is fine. They're practically married.

They are all GLUED to the MONITOR, where Les is COMFORTING Kay, as Marianne STORMS off the set.

MS. REBEL

It looks like Les is putting the moves on the dead body.

HOLDEN

If you'll excuse me for a moment. I need to check in on my daughter.

Holden EXITS.

INT. CSI STUDIO - NIGHT

Holden RACES to Marianne, just as Logan and Holly get to Marianne's side.

HOLDEN

Darling, I don't know why you can't get through your lines without tripping over a dead body, or worse, breaking a magnifying glass.

MARIANNE

I'm just having a tough day.

LOGAN  
 (to Marianne)  
 I've seen all your work, and I  
 think you're marvelous.

HOLLY  
 Me too. You can do this!

Logan and Marianne realize that Holly spoke to Marianne in the presence of Holden. Their eyes open widely. Logan and Marianne SMILE at Holly.

HOLDEN  
 May I have a moment with my  
 daughter?  
 (beat)  
 Alone.

Logan LEADS Holly back to the PALM TREE.

LOGAN  
 I'm so proud of you, Holly.

Holden WHISPERS to his daughter.

HOLDEN  
 Les is looking better for the movie  
 deal, but you're not helping your  
 cause here, darling. And he loves  
 you.

MARIANNE  
 He also likes Kay, the girl with  
 the French caterer, two of the  
 cleaning ladies, and four or five  
 of this season's murder victims.

HOLDEN  
 But you're special.

MARIANNE  
 (sarcastically)  
 Like the meatloaf special at Nick's  
 Café?

Suddenly, Nick FALLS OFF his BAR STOOL in the corner. Logan and Holly leap to Nick's side. Nick lays LIFELESS.

LOGAN  
 Nick, are you okay? Are you okay?

HOLLY

Mr. Tomaine, they already have someone to play the body. You don't have to.

Nick slowly REGAINS CONSCIOUSNESS.

NICK

I must have fainted.

LOGAN

Maybe nobody saw you.

The Director STRUTS OVER.

HOLDEN

We can't afford to have lapsed security on a closed set.

NICK

Someone must have polished the seat. Ho! That's a good one.

Nick SHINES his FLASHLIGHT at the HEATING VENT, where we SEE the Angry Actor PUSH BACK so he ISN'T DETECTED by Nick.

HOLDEN

Check all the doors again. I want this place locked up tighter than prenuptial agreement in Hollywood.

NICK

Yes, Sir. Come on, Holly, let's go on my rounds.

Nick and Holly walk away, as the Angry Actor CRAWLS away in the vent. The Director has his arm around Les as they return to the set. When the Director sees Logan, he YELLS at him:

DIRECTOR

Hey you, the Killer Boyfriend!

The Angry Actor HEARS the Director and CRAWLS QUICKLY back to the air vent grate above the set. He SEES Logan, the target of his revenge. He CURSES quietly.

LOGAN

Yes, Sir?

DIRECTOR

Go study your line. You're in the next scene.

LOGAN

It's one line. I got it, Sir.

DIRECTOR

You heard me. Go study it off-set.

Logan WALKS SLOWLY away. Marianne is POUTING on the set.

DIRECTOR (CONT'D)

(whispers to Les)

There she is. Go talk to her.

The Director LEAVES the set. Les STRUTS over to Marianne.

LES

Why the glum look, Little Lady?

MARIANNE

Just having a bad day. You've had them, and maybe a bit more frequently than I.

LES

Not today. I heard that my three-picture deal is green-lighted.

MARIANNE

Congratulations. You and your little Sue Flay, or the two cleaning ladies will like New York.

LES

I was gonna ask you!

MARIANNE

Finding acting work in New York is like finding trustworthy men.

LES

You wouldn't have to work.

MARIANNE

So crowded there, you have to make reservations for McDonald's.

LES

We could eat at my new penthouse. Maybe order in French food.

Holly STARES at the Palm Tree. Les FALLS DOWN and HOPS BACK UP like nothing happened.

MARIANNE

No palm trees in New York.

LES

We'll steal that light-up palm tree  
in the corner.

Marianne LOOKS SADLY at the light-up Palm Tree. Logan is SLUMPED beneath it. Nick and Holly join him. Holly HUGS her daddy so tight, that she and Marianne SHARE a DAYDREAM.

The Palm Tree MORPHS MAGICALLY into a beautiful CHRISTMAS TREE with all the trimmings. Nick becomes SANTA CLAUS, and Holly and Logan SMILE among dozens of WRAPPED PRESENTS.

The FIVE HOODLUMS suddenly appear as PERPLEXED ANGELS by the Christmas tree singing a few stanzas of Kelly Clarkson's "Underneath the Tree."

The Christmassy moment is ruined when Les REACHES OUT to HUG Marianne, who is SHOCKED by the move, but nobody sees her face.

Holly, Logan, and Nick STARE SADLY at Les HUGGING Marianne.

The Hoodlums stop singing and STOMP off the set complaining:

HOODLUM #1

Uh-uh. That ain't right.

HOODLUM #2

Man, everybody's out to make a buck.

HOODLUM #3

We're out of here.

HOODLUM #4

I'm not sticking around for this.

HOODLUM #5

We ain't angels anyway.

Instantly, the DAYDREAM FADES for Marianne and Holly. The Director INTERRUPTS EVERYONE with his LOUD VOICE.

DIRECTOR

Okay, people. It looks like you're all daydreaming! Take your places for the ending back at the crime scene. One minute.

Marianne and Les return to the crime scene part of the set. A CHALK OUTLINE of Kay is in place of the body. Logan stands just off the set POISED to charge in.

INT. CSI STUDIO CONFERENCE ROOM - NIGHT

The Angry Actor, COVERED IN DIRT AND GRIME, is dropping down from an AIR VENT in the Studio Conference Room. He STARTLES Holden and the Network Executives.

ANGRY ACTOR

Maintenance! Just cleaning the air vents. Don't be alarmed.

HOLDEN

Boy, you guys are thorough!

ANGRY ACTOR

You should see us with backed-up toilets.

The Angry Actor gestures with his ARM TWISTING UP A PIPE.

MS. REBEL

Disgusting.

ANGRY ACTOR

I'll slip out quietly through the studio. You'll get my cleaning bill.

INT. CSI STUDIO - NIGHT

The Director is seated, and the actors are just off the set in their places. The Camerawoman, Carrie Dullens, focuses on the CHALK OUTLINE.

DIRECTOR

Ready in five seconds. Action!

Logan SNEAKS UP on the CHALK OUTLINE. Les attempts to TACKLE LOGAN, but Logan FALLS DOWN and Les FLIES PAST HIM, before JUMPING ON LOGAN. LES HOLDS LOGAN DOWN as Marianne BURSTS on the scene with her PISTOL DRAWN.

LES

I got him.

MARIANNE

Good work, Gunner! You're the best.

LES

They always return to the scene of the crime.

LOGAN  
(staring at Marianne)  
She cheated on me!

The Director SMILES. The scene is going perfectly. Then, the Angry Actor CHARGES at them and DIVES on Les and Logan. The men roll around FIGHTING. Marianne STEPS BACK.

ANGRY ACTOR  
That was my line. My big break.  
I'll kill you!

DIRECTOR  
Cut! Security!

Nick JUMPS on the Angry Actor and SUBDUES HIM.

ANGRY ACTOR  
That was my line! Look, I have  
proof. The studio sent me here!

The Angry Actor WHIPS OUT his Brand phone with a TEXT MESSAGE from the studio.

DIRECTOR  
He's right.  
(to Logan)  
Then who sent you? Who are you?

LOGAN  
I'm Logan Barry. I sell fish.

Logan HANDS the Director a business card.

LOGAN (CONT'D)  
Barry's Fresh Seafood.

DIRECTOR  
I don't think so.

Marianne PUSHES her way in.

MARIANNE  
He's a friend of mine. So is his  
daughter, Holly. I invited them.

DIRECTOR  
Look. I'm going to finish this last  
scene if it kills us. Security,  
take Mr. Barry and his daughter  
over by that stinky palm tree.

NICK  
Yes, Sir.

Nick ESCORTS Logan and Holly to the Palm Tree.

DIRECTOR  
 (to Nick)  
 See that we're not disturbed.  
 (to the actors)  
 Actors, hit your marks. Take it  
 from the top. Ten seconds.

The Angry Actor SNEAKS UP on the CHALK OUTLINE. Les TACKLES HIM and HOLDS HIM DOWN as Marianne BURSTS on the scene with her PISTOL DRAWN. Holly and Logan look on sadly.

LES  
 I got him.

MARIANNE  
 Good work, Gunner! You're the best.

LES  
 They always return to the scene of  
 the crime.

ANGRY ACTOR  
 (Staring at the camera,  
 emotionless)  
 He cheated on me?

DIRECTOR  
 (angry)  
 Cut! It's 'She.' Our victim is a  
 woman. You have one line! One Line!

ANGRY ACTOR  
 I knew that. I just got nervous.  
 This is my big chance. I can do it.  
 'She cheated on me.' 'She cheated  
 on me.' See, I can do it.

DIRECTOR  
 From the top.

The actors back away. The Angry Actor SNEAKS UP on the CHALK OUTLINE. Les TACKLES him and HOLDS HIM DOWN as Marianne BURSTS on the scene with her PISTOL DRAWN.

LES  
 I got him.

MARIANNE  
 Good work, Gunner! You're the best.

LES

They always return to the scene of  
the crime.

ANGRY ACTOR

(panics)

She cheated on you?

DIRECTOR

Cut! Tranquilizer break. Take ten  
everyone.

(to the Angry Actor)

You, take twenty!

The Director THROWS DOWN his script and STOMPS off the set.

Over by the Palm Tree, Logan CONSOLES his daughter.

LOGAN

I've ruined everything. Marianne is  
going to New York with idiotic  
Chief Detective Gunner Downs, and  
you didn't get your report written.

Logan CHECKS THE TIME on his PHONE. Holly SMILES at Marianne,  
who SMILES back from across the set. Logan is sad.

LOGAN (CONT'D)

And it's way past your bedtime, and  
the studio is in lockdown.

HOLLY

(consoling Logan)

I'm having fun, Daddy, and it's  
Christmas. Anything can happen! And  
I'll have a lot to write in my  
report.

LOGAN

You're such a daydreamer. And that  
won't get your report written by  
tomorrow morning!

Holly is sad, and busy TEXTING SANTA. It reads: "Dear Santa,  
next year, I'm asking for a bicycle."

INT. CSI STUDIO - NIGHT

Holden and the Network Executives are SIGNING PAPERS in the  
Studio Conference Room. The Network Executives look HAPPY and  
HEALTHY. Chris and Sue are PEEKING in the door and TAKING  
NOTES on everyone's health.

On stage, Les and Marianne are working with the Angry Actor on his one line.

Logan and Holly SULK, alone by the Palm Tree.

LOGAN

I'm sorry, Holly. Nothing went right tonight.

HOLLY

Will Marianne lose her job?

LOGAN

I think so. I heard her dad talking to the big Network Executives.

HOLLY

And Mrs. Tomaine didn't get her catering job back.

LOGAN

The French food was bad, but it didn't kill anyone. I saw you talking directly to Nick and Marianne. That's good.

HOLLY

But it's bad I can't talk directly to many other people, right?

LOGAN

I wish you could. There's nothing to be afraid of.

HOLLY

You're afraid to fight for Marianne.

LOGAN

Holly, that's personal.

Holly walks around to the far side of the stinky Palm Tree.

HOLLY

You don't know what it's like.

Logan RACES to HUG Holly.

LOGAN

I know what it's like to lose a loved one. My wife. Your mother.

HOLLY

You don't know what it's like to look at every unmarried woman, even old ones, and wonder what they would be like as your mommy.

Logan is STUNNED.

LOGAN

You do that?

HOLLY

Every single woman. Some married women, too. But none of them are good enough. They are *never* good enough.

LOGAN

I'm so sorry, Holly. It hasn't been easy for either of us. But we have to move forward. I haven't been very good at that myself. But it doesn't help that you don't talk to people.

HOLLY

I talk to people.

LOGAN

You talk and whisper to me and Mr. Tomaine and Marianne, but you mumble to everyone else. Even your teacher. She lets you hand in written reports because you won't speak up. And you still haven't worked on your written report tonight. I'm disappointed.

HOLLY

Kids can be disappointed, too, Daddy.

Holly STOMPS away, which Marianne SEES and quickly RACES to Holly. She SQUATS down to Holly's eye level.

MARIANNE

Holly, can we talk?

Holly SHRUGS.

MARIANNE (CONT'D)

I don't mean mumble or whisper. I mean talk. Girl-to-girl.

Holly LOOKS BACK at her dad, then to Marianne.

HOLLY

I guess so.

MARIANNE

Wow. Good. Now, what's the tragedy?

HOLLY

You might lose your job.

MARIANNE

That's not a tragedy. It's bad, like Le Waffle Tower's French food, but it's not a tragedy. Losing your mother was a tragedy.

HOLLY

You know about that?

MARIANNE

Your dad didn't tell you?

HOLLY

Tell me what?

MARIANNE

We were both struggling actors, and friends, when you were born. I knew your mom, too. I loved her. She was the kindest, sweetest person on earth. When she... When she passed, your dad quit being an actor, so he could babysit *and* work.

HOLLY

That's why he started Barry's Fresh Seafood?

MARIANNE

Exactly! He had to stop acting as a job, so he could better act as a parent. He loved you that much. And still does.

HOLLY

But you love Les Canny?

MARIANNE

(laughs)

Who told you that?

HOLLY

You're moving to New York with him?

MARIANNE

I might move to New York for acting jobs, but not for Les. I'd sooner eat Le Waffle Tower French food all year long!

Hogan and the three Network Executives RACE across the set toward the bathrooms, HOLDING THEIR STOMACHS, each FALLING DOWN AND POPPING UP at different times, but asking questions as they pass.

MR. SONG

Anybody got any *Tums*?

MR. HAGAN

*Roloids*?

MS. REBEL

A stomach pump?

Holly WALKS up to Holden with Marianne in tow, and shows him a LIST of names on her PHONE. It Reads: "Everybody who ate the French veal lost their balance or got sick: you, my dad, the Network Executives, Kay, the Director, Nick, and Les. Everybody who didn't eat it is fine: me, Marianne, the camerawoman, and the Angry Actor. Based on my Third-grade Common Core health class, I suspect a psychotropic medication."

MARIANNE

Now that's good detective work, Holly!

HOLDEN

Bright kid. Wait 'til I find those French caterers. They're fired!

Holden and the Network Executives exit. Chris Saunt and Sue Flay RACE to pack up their food. Chris FALLS DOWN for no apparent reason. As soon as he POPS UP, Sue FALLS DOWN. They SCRAMBLE to the exit, FALLING DOWN and POPPING UP. Chris and Sue WHISPER to each other.

SUE

It's your medication. You mixed it in the sauce of the veal.

CHRIS

That's impossible.

SUE

Loss of balance? Everybody here is falling down! Nausea? Impossible?

(MORE)

SUE (CONT'D)

Like when we catered the old folks' home Christmas party.

CHRIS

I thought they were just infirm.

SUE

And you needed to refill your prescription the next day because all your pills were gone.

CHRIS

Uh. Oh. Let's get out of here!

Holly TURNS back to Marianne.

HOLLY

But you and my dad are just friends?

MARIANNE

We've seen each other a couple of times a year since your mom died.

HOLLY

That's not very much.

MARIANNE

I knew your dad sometimes needed somebody to talk to.

Holly is very QUIET.

MARIANNE (CONT'D)

We're friends.

HOLLY

(sad)

I know.

MARIANNE

I *don't* know. My job requires very long hours. I get caught up in life.

HOLLY

That's better than me.

MARIANNE

What do you mean?

HOLLY

Maybe I get caught up in death.

MARIANNE  
Remember how your mom died?

HOLLY  
Drunk driver crashed into us.

MARIANNE  
That was a terrible tragedy. But  
you still have your dad.

HOLLY  
He's a wonderful daddy.

MARIANNE  
He loves you very much.

HOLLY  
I know.

MARIANNE  
Everybody needs friends. Will you  
be my friend and talk to me more  
often?

Holly DROPS her eyes.

HOLLY  
Yes. I will.

MARIANNE  
Not text. I mean really talk. Girl  
to girl.

HOLLY  
Yes, I will.

MARIANNE  
And remember, if you're good, Santa  
gets you everything on your  
Christmas list.

HOLLY  
This I gotta see.

Holly RETURNS to her dad and HUGS him DEEPLY. She CRIES.

HOLLY (CONT'D)  
I'm sorry, Daddy. I didn't know you  
were an actor, or that you quit  
being an actor for me.

LOGAN  
I don't regret it for a minute. I  
couldn't leave you alone.

HOLLY  
Which may explain my single-parent  
dependency.

LOGAN  
Your what?

HOLLY  
Third-grade Common Core psychology  
standards.

LOGAN  
I put you in that big safe car seat  
to take you on my fish deliveries.

HOLLY  
I remember the smell like it was --  
today.

LOGAN  
(excited)  
Marianne! You were actually talking  
to her! A lot!  
(sad)  
She told you everything?

HOLLY  
The real question is: Why didn't  
you tell me everything?

LOGAN  
Too painful, I guess.

HOLLY  
Involuntary memory suppression.

LOGAN  
Common Core standards again?

HOLLY  
No. Doctor Phil. On an infomercial.

LOGAN  
I'm so sorry, Sweetie!

Logan and Holly HUG and HUG.

Holden, still in stomach pain, RACES back onto the set.

HOLDEN  
Can I have your attention,  
everyone?

(MORE)

HOLDEN (CONT'D)

The bad news is the Network  
Executives are in my Conference  
Room. Not feeling too well.

The Director, cast, and crew gather around Holden. Les is  
GRINNING ear-to-ear.

LES

Tell 'em, Boss. Tell 'em the news!

HOLDEN

The Network Executives want to  
cancel this last episode of the  
season and put a re-run in its  
place. You all might be fired, but  
at least you can go home.

LES

Except me. I got the three-picture  
deal in New York. The Network  
Executives see no future in TV  
dramas. Lucky me!

Les unexpectedly FALLS DOWN, POPS UP, and DUSTS himself off.

CARRIE DULLENS

We're laid off? Right before  
Christmas?

MARIANNE

(sadly)

All of us, I suppose.

HOLDEN

The Network Executives didn't see  
any way to save the series. No  
chemistry, they said. Sorry.

Logan, Holly, and Nick are STUNNED.

NICK

Should I clock out?

HOLDEN

I guess that's a wrap.

LOGAN

I'm so sorry for all of you.

The Director TURNS ANGRY. He paces across the set.

DIRECTOR

I'm going to go give those Network  
Executives a piece of my mind.

HOLLY

Hope it's not too big a piece.  
Oops. I'm sorry, Mr. Summons.

DIRECTOR

I deserved that, Kid.

The Director RACES off, with Holden and Les CLOSELY BEHIND. Everyone remaining is STUNNED. Their heads HANG DOWN. Holly, who LOOKS saddest of all, begins texting. We SEE the text: "Dear Santa, Things just aren't turning out the way I daydreamed. I'll have to think of something myself."

LATER

Logan, Marianne, Holly, and Carrie MOPE around the Crime Scene.

The Angry Actor ANGRILY approaches Logan, but he SOFTENS.

ANGRY ACTOR

Sorry for tackling you.

LOGAN

I'm sorry I took your line.

ANGRY ACTOR

You took my whole job.

LOGAN

I'm sorry I took your job.

ANGRY ACTOR

You did it better than me. Maybe I'm not cut out for dramatic acting.

HOLLY

Maybe he should try comedy.

MARIANNE

That's it! Holly, you're a genius!  
The world needs laughter. *Crime Scene Burbank should be a comedy.*

Marianne WHIPS OUT and PUTS ON a pair of heavy-rimmed GLASSES. She is not the least bit clumsy with glasses on.

LOGAN

You're exactly right, Marianne. You wear glasses?

MARIANNE

Can't see a thing without them, and contacts give me a headache.

LOGAN

You look breathtakingly beautiful in glasses.

Marianne SMILES at Logan, then at Holly who is smiling from ear to ear. Marianne TURNS to Carrie.

MARIANNE

Carrie, how about shooting some scenes for us?

CARRIE DULLENS

I'd be honored.

MARIANNE

Logan, you play Gunner Downs. And Holly, you can play a talkative kid.

Marianne WINKS at Logan.

HOLLY

You mean out loud?

MARIANNE

It's just play-acting. You can do this! Your daddy did, years ago.

LOGAN

Come on, Holly. Just for giggles. No one's going to see this.

ANGRY ACTOR

What about me?

CARRIE DULLENS

(flirting with Angry Actor)

I saw some raw talent there, Marianne.

MARIANNE

Funny, I saw some Angry Actor issues. What's your name?

ANGRY ACTOR

Angus Hoctiere.

MARIANNE

I bet that doesn't help. What have I seen you in?

ANGRY ACTOR

I played a dead zombie in "The Zombies of Bakersfield." No lines to speak of. No pay either, but they let me keep the merchandising T-shirt.

MARIANNE

Perfect. Would you mind being our dead body?

Angry Actor LIGHTS UP with happiness.

ANGRY ACTOR

I can do that.

CARRIE DULLENS

(flirting with Angry Actor)

That's so cool. They let you keep the T-shirt?

ANGRY ACTOR

(to Carrie)

I could show it to you someday.

HOLLY

(rolls her eyes)

Oh, brother.

Logan is STUNNED that Holly spoke aloud.

LOGAN

You can say that again.

HOLLY

(loudly)

Oh, brother?

Holly REALIZES she spoke out loud. Her EYES are HUGE. Logan HUGS Holly like an Olympic champion.

MARIANNE

Okay, places everyone. From the top. The crime scene.

The Angry Actor lies down, but he is OBVIOUSLY BREATHING.

Carrie moves close to Marianne to WHISPER.

CARRIE DULLENS

Your pop, the Director, and the  
Network Executives will all see  
this on the monitors.

MARIANNE

I know!

LOGAN

This will take me back in time.

MARIANNE

Don't forget product placement.  
Ready. Roll 'em.

INT. CSI STUDIO CONFERENCE ROOM - NIGHT

The Director, with his back to the monitors, is UPSET.  
Holden, Les, and the Network Executives look PUZZLED at the  
MONITORS.

INT. CSI STUDIO - NIGHT

LOGAN

So, Chief Detective Dee Duckshun, I  
heard the body was found by the  
train station in a drainage ditch.

MARIANNE

Drainage ditch? Maybe it was a  
sewercide.

LOGAN

Did he leave a note?

Logan suddenly FALLS DOWN and POPS UP like nothing happened.

HOLLY

He left one note! It looks like a  
"B" Flat.

LOGAN

Except for one thing.

They ROLL OVER the Angry Actor who has a RUBBER KNIFE IN HIS  
BACK.

MARIANNE

The rubber knife in his back.

LOGAN  
(holding up the knife)  
Not just any knife.

MARIANNE AND LOGAN  
(in unison)  
The *RuberMade* brand is a cut above.

HOLLY  
That means he was murdered.

LOGAN  
But what was the motive.

MARIANNE  
He was found by our train station.

Logan suddenly FALLS DOWN and POPS UP like nothing happened.

LOGAN  
Ah ha!

MARIANNE  
That's right. So, Junior Detective  
Holly Barry, what was the motive?

HOLLY  
If it was *our* train station, it  
must have been a local-motive.

The Angry Actor GROANS at the silly pun.

MARIANNE  
We'll need to examine the body.

LOGAN  
Morgan Beryum?

HOLLY  
No, just examine him.

MARIANNE  
Quick, let's get him over to the  
Examiner's Table.

(beat)  
Cut! Okay all, let's get over to  
the table.

INT. CSI STUDIO CONFERENCE ROOM - NIGHT

The Director, Holden, and the Network Executives are GLUED to  
the monitors and LAUGHING, but Les LOOKS UPSET.

INT. CSI STUDIO - NIGHT

Marianne, Logan, and Holly (leaning against the table) all STARE at the Angry Actor (on his back, but still obviously breathing) on the Examiner's Table.

LOGAN

The doctor's not in. We'll have to do the autopsy ourselves. Let's turn him over.

The Angry Actor turns over on his own to reveal the RUBBER KNIFE IN HIS BACK.

MARIANNE

Ah-topsy-turvy.

HOLLY

Is this where we search for clueses in the bruises?

MARIANNE

If wounds could talk, what would they say?

LOGAN AND HOLLY

Ow, Ow, Ow?

Marianne finds a NOTE in his back pocket.

MARIANNE

What's this?

LOGAN

Maybe he made a bucket list.

HOLLY

He does look a little pale?

LOGAN

Good one, Sweetie.

MARIANNE

I'm hoping we can deduce his occupation.

Marianne EXAMINES the body's clothes with a MAGNIFYING GLASS.

LOGAN

What did you find, Chief Detective?

MARIANNE  
Just as I suspected. His clothes  
are filthy, and his wallet was  
empty.

LOGAN  
So you think he was...

MARIANNE  
(interrupting)  
That's right. He was a...

LOGAN, HOLLY, AND MARIANNE  
(in unison)  
A struggling actor.

The Angry Actor POPS UP off the table and DUSTS OFF, and lays  
back down.

INT. CSI STUDIO CONFERENCE ROOM - NIGHT

The Director, Holden, and the Network Executives are  
LAUGHING, but Les is MORE UPSET. The Network Executives are  
feeling much better.

LES  
You have to stop this nonsense!

MR. SONG  
They're so clever.

MR. HAGAN  
Their timing is impeccable.

MS. REBEL  
That's what I call chemistry!

Les STOMPS out of the Conference Room.

INT. CSI STUDIO - NIGHT

Marianne, Logan, and Holly STARE at the CHALK OUTLINE OF THE  
BODY. The Angry Actor is just off-set.

LOGAN  
What do you think, Chief Detective?  
Who killed him?

MARIANNE  
Probably a deranged killer.

Holly SEES Les across the set COMING TOWARD THEM.

HOLLY

A big, tall, ridiculously stupid,  
deranged killer?

MARIANNE

How do you know he's ridiculously  
stupid?

HOLLY

They're the only ones who *really*  
return to the scene of the crime.

LOGAN AND MARIANNE

So we think it was...

Just then, Les CHARGES toward LOGAN and DIVES at him. But Logan FALLS DOWN before Les reaches him. Then, the Angry Actor TACKLES LES, and he is easily subdued by Logan, Marianne, and Holly.

MARIANNE

It's Les Canny, returning to the  
scene of the crime.

LOGAN

No one else could be less canny.

HOLLY

It only proves our point.

MARIANNE

Yes, he'd put a knife in anybody's  
back to advance his own career.

(beat)

You, on the other hand, Detective  
Logan Barry, are genuinely sweet,  
full of compassion, and very smart  
and funny.

LOGAN

(into her eyes)

I've felt the same about you for a  
long time.

MARIANNE

I think I'm falling *in love* with  
you. And I absolutely *love* Holly.

Marianne KISSES Logan. The kiss lasts an ABSURDLY LONG TIME,  
where neither party wants to separate. Holly HUGS them both.

Les SNARLS.

INT. CSI STUDIO CONFERENCE ROOM - NIGHT

The Director, Holden, and the Network Executives are CHEERING.

DIRECTOR  
How's *that* for chemistry?

HOLDEN  
That's my daughter!

MR. SONG  
This show is much better as a comedy.

MR. HAGAN  
(to Holden)  
You had better be able to sign them, or your services will no longer be required.

HOLDEN  
My daughter can be stubborn. And the father-daughter team are comic geniuses. This might be difficult.

MS. REBEL  
(to Holden)  
You have our permission to offer them a multi-year deal. They're phenomenal. If you can't sign them, keep walking!

Holden FALLS DOWN and POPS UP like nothing happened.

HOLDEN  
I'll give it my best shot.

Holden RACES out of the Conference Room.

EXT/INT. NICK'S CAFÉ - NIGHT

The WRECK of a stinky BMW pulls in front of Nick's Café. Logan, Mel, Holly, and Nick exit the car LAUGHING and SMILING. Marianne is busy talking to Holly.

LOGAN  
Nick, how did you know the security guard at the studio?

NICK

Coached him in youth basketball.  
His parole office comes into the  
diner a lot. He's been good all  
year, really!

As they enter the diner, they are AMAZED with BOUNTIFUL CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS (similar to Holly's daydream earlier). The diner is PACKED with joyful Customers (various types). The FIVE HOODLUMS are now WAITERS, SINGING AND DANCING their way to tables with food and coffee. Logan and Marianne are sitting across from Holly in a cozy booth.

LOGAN

I'm so proud of you, Holly, for  
learning to speak up.

MARIANNE

That's a big part of growing up.

HOLLY

You both helped me a lot tonight.  
So did Mister and Mrs. Tomaine.

Nick STROLLS by the table. Holly DAYDREAMS that Nick is DRESSED LIKE SANTA, and remains so. Mel comes by with coffee, DRESSED AS MRS. CLAUS.

MEL

How was your evening? Uneventful?

HOLLY

Amazing!

Mel is STUNNED when Holly talks to her directly. She yells.

MEL

One eggnog milkshake for my  
talkative friend, on the house!

HOLLY

Thank you, Mrs. Tomaine, or should  
I say Mrs. Claus.

Holly and Mel GIGGLE like school girls. Mel departs to pour coffee for others.

Holly SMILES at her dad and Marianne.

LOGAN

You had four wishes on your Santa's  
list.

HOLLY

I asked Santa for you to find love  
and to let Marianne keep her job.

MARIANNE

And your daddy and you got acting  
jobs with me.

LOGAN

I can afford to get that rented BMW  
fixed. Ha!

MARIANNE

Did you have anything else on your  
Christmas list, Holly?

LOGAN

You asked for Mel to get her  
catering job at the studio back.

HOLLY

Yes.

MARIANNE

And my pop fired the French Chef  
and his little helper from the Le  
Waffle Tower.

Mel RACES up to refill the coffee. Holly LOOKS BACK to see  
Nick dressed like Santa Claus.

MEL

And we got hired back minutes  
later. Your dad just called,  
Marianne. And business picked up  
around here like crazy!

LOGAN

And you wished for a home and food  
money for that old homeless couple  
in the far booth.

MEL

(to Logan)

And that Angry Actor, Angus, was so  
happy you made him a partner in the  
Barry's Fresh Seafood business, he  
took the old couple into his home  
and hired them to manage the  
office.

LOGAN

Holly, you got all four things on  
your Christmas list!

HOLLY  
I guess I did.

MARIANNE  
Maybe daydreams do come true!

Logan goes over and HUGS and KISSES Holly, then returns to his side of the booth and surprises Marianne with a HUG and another UNCOMFORTABLY LONG KISS.

LOGAN  
Oh my gosh. Look at the time. You have to be at school in a few hours.

HOLLY  
I know. The night flew by.

Mel SWINGS BY with an EGGNOG MILKSHAKE for Holly.

LOGAN  
What do you suppose happened to the finest French Chef in all of Burbank?

CUT TO:

INT. FRENCH CHEF'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Chris and Sue are answering questions from a HEALTH INSPECTOR (60; very businesslike) with a clipboard and camera. He SNAPS a photo of an empty PILL BOTTLE next to bullion cubes.

HEALTH INSPECTOR  
Is this your pill bottle?

CHRIS  
I refuse to answer on the grounds that it may intimidate me.

HEALTH INSPECTOR  
Excuse me?

CHRIS  
You know, I'm taking the fifth dimension.

HEALTH INSPECTOR  
I don't think so.

BACK TO:

INT. NICK'S CAFÉ - NIGHT

Holly is finishing her milkshake.

MARIANNE

What about that written report you have to turn in on your exciting night?

LOGAN

It's too late to type it up.

HOLLY

I'll have to get in front of the class and say it out loud.

Logan, Marianne, and Holly GULP.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

A classroom is filled with the same twenty Students. Holly's Teacher has difficulty controlling the Students, as Malcolm finishes his speech. Amelia is next to Holly in the back of the room sending text messages to each other. About 20 PARENTS (30-40; Various types; but including the Five Hoodlums) are in the back of the classroom when Logan, Marianne, Mel, and Nick arrive late. The teacher GLARES at Marianne, who is holding hands with Logan.

MALCOLM

So that was it. Basically, I got home from school, did my homework, took the dog for a walk, ate dinner, watched TV, played video games, read a baseball story in my book, and went to sleep.

The students are LIFELESS. The parents CLAP POLITELY.

TEACHER

Thank you, Malcolm. We all loved your speech on how you spent last night getting in the holiday spirit. And I'm glad so many parents, grandparents, and guardians are here.

The Teacher GLARES at Logan, who HUGS Marianne.

TEACHER (CONT'D)

So glad you were all able to join us on the last day before the holiday break.

The Teacher looks at her list. She sees Holly in the back of the class with her FACE DOWN.

TEACHER (CONT'D)  
Okay, last is Holly.

HOLLY  
Uh-huh.

The students GASP.

TEACHER  
Yes, class, Holly has decided to do an oral report this time. It's her first time, so please be courteous.

The students remain STUNNED.

Holly slowly walks to the front of the room. She turns to face the class, but her head is still DOWN.

TEACHER (CONT'D)  
You can do this, Holly.

HOLLY  
(mumbling; looking down)  
I, I, I'm not used to this.

TEACHER  
Begin again, Dear. Louder please, so they can hear you in the back.

Holly PAUSES. Amelia gives Holly a thumbs up, then turns to the class.

AMELIA  
I told Holly that it's damn-well time she speaks up!

The class LAUGHS, while the Teacher REPRIMANDS Amelia.

TEACHER  
Amelia, we don't talk like that.

Holly GAINS A LITTLE COURAGE from Amelia, but Holly is still having trouble getting out her words.

HOLLY  
You're right, Amelia. It's time.  
(low voice)  
It started off like every other day after school. My dad came home from work late, and it was going to be a boring night with my grandma watching me, after we went to Nick's Café for dinner.

The teacher goes over to HUG Holly.

TEACHER

You don't have to do this, Holly.  
You can turn in a written essay  
instead.

HOLLY

And receive a lower grade? I don't  
think so! Which version of the  
story would you like me to tell  
you: the one that really happened  
(students are silent)  
or my daydream story with Santa,  
Mrs. Claus, Elves, and Five  
Hoodlums singing Christmas songs?

The students ERUPT with CHEERS, SMILES, and CALLS for the  
Santa version. Amelia is particularly HAPPY.

TEACHER

Quiet down. Let's give Holly a  
chance to tell her wild daydream  
story!

HOLLY

(excitement builds)  
Okay. Here we go! It all started  
after school when I saw my dad came  
home from selling fresh sustainable  
fish to fancy restaurants. Except  
for one box of stinky fish!

Holly begins to relive her entire evening. Her energy,  
courage, and enthusiasm BUILD with each sentence. She  
increases her volume and gestures as her tale goes on. A  
MONTAGE of a RECAP of HOLLY'S DAYDREAMS from the previous  
twenty-four hours fills the classroom with excitement. The  
students are CAPTIVATED, CHEERING, and in complete AWE of  
Holly as her story continues.

WE SEE Logan USING A BROOM to shut the trunk of the BMW.

HOLLY (V.O.)

My rather *eccentric* dad likes to  
drive a sporty BMW on occasion, and  
this was just such a night.

We SEE the BMW SKID UP to Nick's Café with the Five Hoodlums  
singing in the b.g..

HOLLY (V.O.)  
 Nick's Café was flowing with  
 Christmas decorations, and I was  
 positive that I saw Santa and Mrs.  
 Claus running the place.

We SEE a fully decorated diner with Nick as Santa and Mel as  
 Mrs. Claus serving meals to the old homeless couple. The  
 students CHEER!

HOLLY (V.O.)  
 Amelia wasn't answering my text  
 messages, so I texted my three  
 Christmas wishes directly to Santa.  
 (beat)  
 I made for simple Christmas wishes:  
 for my dad to find love, for my  
 dad's girlfriend to keep her job,  
 for Mr. and Mrs. Tomaine at Nick's  
 Café to get their catering job  
 back, and for a homeless couple to  
 find a home.

The parents and students are MESMERIZED and SMILING. The  
 teacher is BEWILDERED and OVERJOYED to see Holly speaking to  
 the class for such a long time.

A MONTAGE of HEAVILY EMBELLISHED SCENES from Holly's memory  
 serves as a backdrop to Holly who is VERY ANIMATED as she  
 retells the story in V.O..

BEGIN MONTAGE

1. The CAR CRASH, picking up Santa (Nick), Elves, stopping at  
 the Napa Auto Parts Store for air fresheners (mini-Christmas  
 trees), and driving to the studio with their HEADS OUT the  
 windows.

HOLLY (V.O.)  
 My dad swerved his BMW to miss  
 hitting Santa. We ended up giving  
 Santa a ride to the TV studio. We  
 stopped at one of Santa's local  
 workshops for mini-Christmas trees  
 as personal decorations. We hung  
 our heads out the window to  
 experience the Christmas season in  
 all its glory.

2. How Santa gets them into the studio.

HOLLY (V.O.)

It was *impossible* to get into the studio, but Santa was there to remind the security guard that he should be a good little boy, especially before Christmas.

3. How the stinky light-up Palm Tree transformed into a beautiful Christmas tree with angels (Five Hoodlums) SINGING and SNOW FALLING.

HOLLY (V.O.)

Once inside the TV studio, our light-up Palm Tree magically became a magnificent Christmas tree, with snow falling, and angels singing with the most beautiful voices you ever heard!

4. Taping the TV show with Les as a total idiot, he's hitting on all the women, Marianne is the star, and her dad filled in perfectly as a great actor.

HOLLY (V.O.)

Watching the taping of a TV show gives you nothing but respect for all the highly skilled, professionally trained actors, and their *meticulous* attention to detail.

5. How the Producer, Director, and TV Network Executives LOOK so disgruntled and unhappy.

HOLLY (V.O.)

Seeing the happy faces of the Director, Producer, and TV Network Executives is the greatest reward for the holidays.

6. How the French Chef's veal made everyone falling down unexpectedly, but the meatloaf at Nick's prompts Holly to do her impression of a defibrillator.

HOLLY (V.O.)

The catering was legendary, though it isn't quite as good as the healthy selections at Nick's Café.

7. Les and the Angry Actor keep TACKLING everyone, but the Angry Actor turns out to be a nice guy.

HOLLY (V.O.)  
 Meeting new people filled with the  
 Christmas spirit is always a  
 pleasure.

8. How Marianne GOT THE IDEA of a comedy TV show, Logan FALLS  
 DOWN A LOT, and Holly helps.

HOLLY (V.O.)  
 Marianne and my dad were terrific  
 together on TV, even if my dad fell  
 down a lot. He ate the veal.

9. Where Marianne FALLS IN LOVE with Logan and KISSES him.

HOLLY (V.O.)  
 I didn't ask Santa for my dad to  
 fall in love. You can't just  
 daydream or wish for love. You have  
 to earn love, or it isn't real.

END MONTAGE

HOLLY  
 But that was the best Christmas  
 present of all was when Marianne  
 and my daddy fell in love.

Logan STARES into Marianne's eyes in the back of the room.

HOLLY (CONT'D)  
 It was Christmas magic, despite  
 their *conspicuously* long kisses.

We SEE clips of the LONG KISSES. In the back of the  
 classroom, the Five Hoodlums begin singing "All I Want for  
 Christmas Is You," in a LOW VOLUME AND SWEET.

HOLLY (CONT'D)  
 (yells)  
 It's *okay* to daydream! But be  
 careful about what you daydream,  
 because it's likely to come true!  
*Ridiculously* true! The End.

Holly SMILES. The STUDENTS GIVE HER A STANDING OVATION. The  
 Teacher HUGS Holly, and Holly HUGS Amelia. The students keep  
 CHEERING, and the Teacher cannot quiet them down. The  
 Students throw papers in the air like confetti, and CHEER.

The Parents and Students all sing "All I Want for Christmas  
 Is You," -- this time, it's LOUD AND FUN. Everyone DANCES.

The Teacher tries in vane to MAINTAIN CONTROL, but Christmas Cheer rules the day.

FADE OUT.

THE END