

Shake Up Christmas

Aka Hard Candy Christmas

A JUKE BOX MUSICAL

Written by

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Lyrics are in blue text. Some lyrics have been altered to fit the story.



Music notes indicate start point for corresponding song.

For maximum enjoyment, play the music cues while reading the script. They are edited and cued to sync up with the dialogue and action so you can continue to read without stopping for the music.

Music can be found at:

Website: [Hard Candy Christmas Music \(nick-abdo.com\)](http://nick-abdo.com)

Dropbox: <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/o4k9n5t9i4vha9l/AAAwN2KutDYaMZ3mGxiy0Dpfa?dl=0>


A PDF with the music embedded can be downloaded at

<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/cr9ifd96lozl1dtz37tnm/Hard-Candy-Christmas-Embedded-Script-w-laurals.pdf?rlkey=ucenlwddzi0651jrc6cpg1169&st=368rdln0&dl=0>

NOTE: Download the file. Music will not play inside your browser.

MUSICAL NUMBERS

Dear Santa (Bring Me A Man This Christmas)	The Elfettes
Celebrate Me Home	Cooper, First Class
I Need a Silent Night.....	Cooper, Teresa
Merry Christmas Everybody.....	The Elfettes
Christmas This Year	Teresa, Jesse, Attendant, Shoppers
Beautiful Christmas	The Elfettes
Somewhere in My Memory	Teresa
Wrapped in Red	Maria, Teresa
All For The Best.....	Cooper, Jesse
Could I Have This Kiss Forever	Cooper, Teresa
Come On Christmas.....	Cooper, Teresa, Jesse, The Elfettes, Shoppers
Angel with A Shotgun	Parker, Cooper
Christmas Time.....	Emily, Parker
Most of All.....	Cooper
The Chipmunk Song	Cooper
Hard Candy Christmas.....	Teresa, Maria
Christmas Canon.....	Children's Choir
All I Want for Christmas Is You.....	Cooper
All I want for Christmas Is You Reprise	Cooper, Teresa
Shake up Christmas.....	Parker, Cooper, Teresa, Maria, Jesse, The Elfettes, Chorus

EXT. CHICAGO TOWN SQUARE - DAY 

An enormous Christmas tree is the main attraction of the town square. The star on the top blinks a few times with an ARCING SOUND before sparking out.

At the base of the tree, three sexy Wandering Minstrels, THE ELFETTES, revel out a Christmas story singing "DEAR SANTA (BRING HER A MAN THIS CHRISTMAS)". Everything but the twinkling lights around them is frozen.

ELFETTES

Every time, the holidays comes around/ I
want to be/ close to someone/ Someone who
cares/ someone that really understands/
I'd hold him in my arms

The action in the square comes to life.

ELFETTE #1

Hi, we're the North Pole Elfettes/ and
have we got a holiday story for you/ This
is an open letter to our boss/ And this is
for all the single ladies back home

EXT. CHICAGO STREETS - CONTINUOUS - DAY

The Elfettes wander the main street, weaving in and out of pedestrian traffic.

ELFETTES

Bring me a man, this Christmas, Dear
Santa/ I need a man (bring me a man)/
Keeping me warm (keeping me warm)

EXT. ICE SKATING PARK - CONTINUOUS - DAY

The Elfettes, without skates, glide across the frozen pond with skaters and those clinging to the sides.

ELFETTES

It's gettin' late/ so send him here
I don't think I can make it through
another year/ C'mon Santa come through
Bring me a Man...

EXT. WALMART PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS - DUSK

The Elfettes parade into the crowded parking lot as a White SUV pulls into a spot at the far end of the lot.

TERESA MENDES, twenty-three year old Hispanic, gets out of the SUV. Even void of makeup, her beauty shines.

ELFETTES (O.S.)

This Christmas/ Dear Santa/ She needs a
man (bring her a man)/ To keep her warm
(keeping her warm)

Confidence and strength is evidenced by her determined stride
as she carefully scurries across the icy lot to the store.

ELFETTES (V.O.)

The fire's out/ The chimney's clean
That girl's heart is open but/ it don't
mean a thing/ Place him under her tree,
Mr. C/ This Christmas (Dear Santa)
She needs a man (Mr. C)/ this Christmas

Losing her footing, she scrambles like a new born fawn. As
she passes a YOUNG COUPLE and their CHILDREN, she gains
control and takes a bow as if her exhibition was planned.
They all enjoy the laugh as she continues to the store where
she passes The Elfettes.

ELFETTES

Fa la la la la la la

The Elfettes float up above the rooftop. In the distance, the
imposing image of a large Sports Stadium looms. Snow
flurries.

ELFETTES

C'mon, C'mon, C'mon/ C'mon, C'mon, C'mon/
C'mon, C'mon, C'mon
Let it snow...

They float toward the stadium, picking up speed until they
are a blur and snow whites out the screen.

EXT. CHICAGO HORIZON - NIGHT

SONG CONTINUES. Traveling through space, the large Sports
Stadium quickly approaches.

ELFETTES (V.O.)

Let it snow... Let it snow...

EXT. THE UNITED CENTER - NIGHT

SONG CONTINUES. The Elfettes stand on the ledge of a large
lighted marquis that reads:

FIRST CLASS
One Night Only

ELFETTES

Let it snow, Dear Santa/ Let it snow, Dear
Santa

CHEERING overtakes the song.

INT. THE UNITED CENTER - NIGHT

Through the throngs of screaming adolescent girls, a Boy Band, FIRST CLASS, takes a bow to the sold-out crowd, then run off stage.

Although each member has his own signature style of dress, they all remain true to the group's moniker.

In the wings, a STAGE MANAGER approaches the boys who await their return to the stage.

STAGE MANAGER

Whose turn for closing remarks?

COOPER HARRIS (24), a young boy in a man's body raises his hand.

COOPER

Mine.

STAGE MANAGER

We're in Chicago.

COOPER


Yeah, I know.

STAGE MANAGER

You need to add a few special thanks tonight. First to....

COOPER

Where's the copy?

STAGE MANAGER 

There is none. Here's a list. Just ad lib it.

COOPER

No. You know I need to have a script.

JEREMY (24) volunteers for the task.

JEREMY

I'll take it.

Cooper gives him a thumbs up and the group return to the stage for an encore. They perform "CELEBRATE ME HOME".

COOPER

Home for the holidays/ I believe I've
missed each and every face/ Come on and
play my music/ Let's turn on every love
light in the place

JEREMY

It's time I found myself/ Totally
surrounded in your circles/ Whoa, my
friends

FIRST CLASS

Please, celebrate me home/ Give me your
number/ Please, celebrate me home

COOPER

Play me one more song/ That I'll always
remember/ And I can recall/ Whenever I
find myself too all alone/ I'll make
believe I'm never gone/ Cause I never know
where I belong/ Sing me home

INT. WALMART - SIMULTANEOUS ACTION - NIGHT

SONG CONTINUES. Typical Christmas Shoppers crowd the store. Teresa, a store manager, stages a decorative display when an ENRAGED CUSTOMER argues with a STORE EMPLOYEE. Teresa calmly and commandingly quiets the man. After a moment, she has him laughing and thanking her.

FIRST CLASS (V.O.)

Please Celebrate me home (oh yeah)/
Please, celebrate me home/ I'm coming home

INT. THE UNITED CENTER, BACKSTAGE - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT

SONG CONTINUES. The boys, rush off the stage. Cooper splits from the others as they head toward the exit.

FIRST CLASS (V.O.)

Please, celebrate me home/ I'll be home
for Christmas/ Please Celebrate me home
Celebrate, celebrate

STAGE MANAGER

Cooper. Where you going?

Cooper ignores the manager and continues on.

JEREMY

It's OK. He's not going with us.

EXT. THE UNITED CENTER, STAGE DOOR - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT

SONG CONTINUES. The band is ushered into a stretch limousine that slowly breaks through the screaming girls.

FIRST CLASS (V.O.)

Please, celebrate me home/ I'm coming home/ Please, celebrate me home/ Celebrate me home/ That's where I belong/ Please, celebrate me home

INT. THE UNITED CENTER, DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT

Cooper grabs a beer, then flops onto a sofa. The group's manager, BERNARD (40s), a touch flamboyant, hands Cooper keys. SONG ENDS.

BERNARD

Here. It's parked with the equipment trucks. The caravan will start in half an hour. Just get in the flow of their traffic.

Cooper doesn't respond.

BERNARD (CONT'D)

Thank you, Bernard.

COOPER

Thank you, Bernard. A white Kia Sorento? Couldn't you get something with a little more muscle?

BERNARD

I offered to get you a limo.

COOPER

I want to go incognito.

BERNARD

Hence, theKia.

(notices beer)

What are you doing? You're driving.

COOPER

It's just one beer. I'm not going that far.

BERNARD

I'm heading back to Los Angeles, and I won't be here to bail out your skinny little ass.

COOPER
I'll be fine. And I don't have a
skinny ass.

Bernard checks him out and smiles.

BERNARD
No. You certainly don't.

KNOCK on door.

BERNARD (CONT'D)
You're sure you don't need TJ to go
with you?

COOPER
I won't need a bodyguard at my mom's
house.

BERNARD
Excited about going home for
Christmas?

COOPER
No. Ran out of excuses. If I didn't
agree to visit, Mom threatened to
come on stage and drag me home.

BERNARD
And Emily would do that, too.

Bernard opens the door just enough to see several female
fans. Most of them are barely legal. Up front is BRIDGET,
early twenties.

BERNARD (CONT'D)
Sorry girls, they're gone.

BRIDGET
I was invited backstage.

BERNARD
Really? Watch this.
(to crowd)
How many of you were invited back
here?

They all scream. He closes the door.

BERNARD (CONT'D)
I wish you boys would stop giving
back stage passes to every girl you
meet.

COOPER
Any of them hot?

BERNARD
Has that ever mattered before?

COOPER
I have taste.

BERNARD
Yes. Female and... and... and that's
it. Have you no desire to find
someone special.

COOPER
Of course I do. But I've yet to meet
that special girl.

BERNARD
And what does that special girl look
like?

COOPER
I don't know. Independent. Fun
loving. Doesn't give a rat's ass
about all this.

BERNARD
Everyone wants what they can't have.

COOPER
Why can't I have that?

BERNARD
Because that kind of woman wouldn't
put up with your crap. And she won't
come knocking at the door or be
waiting for you at those clubs you
hang out in.

COOPER
I haven't been to a club since
probation.

BERNARD
Maybe if you remain a good boy, Santa
will bring you one for Christmas.
Have a wonderful holiday.

As Bernard exits, Bridget rushes in.

BERNARD (CONT'D)
(yelling out door)
Security.

BRIDGET
I have a pass.

Bridget spots Cooper.

BRIDGET (CONT'D)
Cooper, don't you remember me?

BERNARD
(yelling out door)
Security.

COOPER
It's OK, Bernie. I know her.


Bernard gives a "yeah sure" look.

BERNARD
(exiting)
Have a nice Christmas.

COOPER
So who are you?

BRIDGET
I'm your biggest fan.

Bridget snuggles up to Cooper and starts to rub her hands on his chest, then nuzzles his ear.

 She tries to kiss him, but he turns away. As she works her way down his body, he gets a vacant look on his face.

EXT. WALMART PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Snow lightly falls. Teresa and several employees exit the store ad-libbing "good-bys". She peels off toward her car in the empty lot.

TERESA
See you.

She sings "I NEED A SILENT NIGHT".

TERESA
Each year's the same's it was before/
Angry shoppers, crowded stores/ December
traffic/ Christmas rush/ makes me want to
push and shove/ Children are crying, while
mother's are trying to photograph Santa
and sleigh/ The shopping and buying and
standing forever in line/ Well what can I
say

Teresa gets in her car and takes a deep sigh.

TERESA

I need a silent night/ A holy night
To hear an angel voice through the chaos
and the noise/ I need a midnight clear/ A
little peace right here/ To end this crazy
day/ With a silent night

EXT. THE UNITED CENTER, TRUCK PARK AREA - NIGHT

SONG CONTINUES. Cooper, wearing a torn hooded sweatshirt and a pair of leopard print sweat pants, heads toward his rental car. He throws a duffle bag and his guitar in the back and a six pack of beer onto the passenger seat before lighting up a joint.

COOPER

December comes, then disappears/ Faster
and faster every year/ Did my own mother
keep this pace?/ Or was the world a
different place?/ Where people stayed home
wishin' for snow/ watching three channels
on their TV/ I'm tired now of rushin'
around/ Just wanna buy Christmas peace

Cooper slumps into the drivers seat and cracks open a beer while waiting for the caravan to start.

COOPER

I need a silent night/ A peaceful night
To hear a quiet voice through the chaos
and the noise/ I need a midnight clear
A little peace right here/ To end this
crazy tour/ With a silent night

EXT. ILLINOIS HIGHWAY/ INT. S.U.V. - NIGHT

SONG CONTINUES. Teresa fights to stay awake as she travels down the highway. SNOW lightly falls.

TERESA & COOPER

I need a silent night/ A peaceful night
To hear a quiet (an angel's) voice/ through
the chaos and the noise

EXT. ILLINOIS HIGHWAY/ INT. CAR - NIGHT

SONG CONTINUES. Cooper peacefully makes his way across the snow covered highway toking a joint. He throws an empty beer can on the passenger floor next to a couple of others.

COOPER & TERESA (V.O.)

I need a midnight clear/ A little peace
right here/ To end this crazy tour (day)
with a silent night/ To end this crazy
tour (day) with a silent night

A LIGHT FLASH breaks the moment. A PAPARAZZO pulls up along side and snaps pictures of Cooper chugging beer.

The glare blinds Cooper causing him to momentarily lose control. His acceleration leads to a CHASE.

As they head toward a curve, Cooper careens off the divider rail into a wooded area on the side of the highway.

As the car slams into a tree, the airbag deploys, cushioning Cooper's head from the steering wheel.

Cooper's cell phone flies off the passenger seat followed by the open can of beer that drowns the phone, ending its life.

The Photographer rushes to Cooper's car, snaps pictures focusing on the beer cans, then takes off, leaving a half conscious Cooper.

EXT. ILLINOIS HIGHWAY - NIGHT

Teresa fights dozing off when something suddenly appears in front of her. She slams on her brakes stopping inches from hitting Cooper.

Groggy, Cooper collapses out of her sight.

TERESA

Oh god. Did I hit him?

Teresa rises to see where he disappeared to, but to no avail.

She picks up her cell phone. NO SERVICE.

As Teresa turns to open her door, Cooper suddenly appears at the window and startles her. His body slides down smearing a spatter of blood on the window.

TERESA (CONT'D)

What do I do? What do I do?... OK,
Teresa. Let's keep calm.

She takes a deep breath and opens the door only to have it recoil as it slams into Cooper. After a few more tries, she squeezes out and assesses the situation.

TERESA (CONT'D)

Hello? Hello?

She pokes him with her foot. He groans.

TERESA (CONT'D)
Are you dead?

Cooper looks up at her.

COOPER
I must be. I... I see an angel.

He passes out.

EXT. ILLINOIS HIGHWAY/ INT. SUV - MOMENTS LATER

Teresa's car slowly drives down the icy road. She checks her phone. Still NO SERVICE.

Cooper removes Teresa's apron from his head (used to stop the bleeding) and checks his wound in the mirror. The small gash is obviously not life threatening

Cooper sees a "Hospital - Next Exit", then Teresa signaling to exit.

COOPER
No. No, no, no, no, no.

TERESA
What.

COOPER
No hospital.

TERESA
What if you have a concussion?

COOPER
I'm fine. It's just a scratch. I have a thick skull.

TERESA
You willing to take that chance?

COOPER
They'll ask questions... I'm on probation.

TERESA
Were you drinking?

COOPER
I refuse to answer on grounds it might incinerate me.

TERESA
Incriminate.

COOPER
That too. Please. Just take me home.
Hyde Park.

TERESA
I live in Englewood. That's the
opposite direction.

COOPER
It's not that far. Ten minutes.

TERESA
Twenty minutes and twenty minutes
back. I need to relieve the baby-
sitter. She has school tomorrow.

COOPER
Then take me there. I'll get a cab.

She stares at him. He puts on a puppy dog face.

COOPER (CONT'D)
Pretty please?

No response.

COOPER (CONT'D)
With sugar on top?

EXT. DESERTED HIGHWAY CROSSING/ INT SUV - NIGHT

Teresa stops at a red light at the intersection. She waits
patiently. Cooper looks in both direction and sees blackness.

COOPER
Why don't you go?

TERESA
It's a red light.

Cooper looks both ways again.

COOPER
There's nobody here.

TERESA
It's red.

COOPER
Maybe it's broken.

She doesn't move.

COOPER (CONT'D)
Just go. Nobody will know.

TERESA
It's against the law.

COOPER
What good are laws if you can't break them?

TERESA
I'll go, as soon as it changes.

COOPER
Fine. I'll sit here and bleed to death.

TERESA
Don't get any on the seat.

EXT. TERESA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Teresa and Cooper are on the front porch.

TERESA
You wait here. I'll call you a cab.

COOPER
Out here? In the cold?

TERESA
It'll help your blood coagulate.

INT. TERESA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Teresa enters. HEATHER (17), watches TV.

TERESA
How was he?

HEATHER
He was great.

TERESA
I need some change. Be right back.

Teresa goes to her bedroom. Gathering her things, Heather doesn't notice Cooper quietly walk in.

Heather turns into Cooper, screams, and then introduces her history book to his head, flooring him.

HEATHER
(yelling)
Call 911.

Teresa runs out.

TERESA
What's wrong?

She sees Cooper.

TERESA (CONT'D)
What'd you do?

Cooper groggily gets up.

TERESA (CONT'D)
(to Cooper)
I told you to wait outside.

HEATHER
You know him?

TERESA
Not really.

Cooper moves to the sofa.

TERESA (CONT'D)
Where you going? I said outside.

Heather thinks she recognizes him.

HEATHER
Do you know who you look like?

COOPER
Zac Efron?

HEATHER
Not even close. You look like Cooper
Harris. Except he's a lot cuter.

Heather pulls his hood back.

HEATHER (CONT'D)
You are him. You're Cooper Harris.

She gets excited. When excited, Heather speed talks.

HEATHER (CONT'D)
Oh my god. You're him.

She pulls out her cell phone.

HEATHER (CONT'D)
Can I take a selfie?

Without waiting for an answer, she puts her head next to his and takes a picture.

HEATHER (CONT'D)
When Stephanie sees this she's gonna die.

TERESA
Goodnight, Heather.

Teresa ushers her out the door.

TERESA (CONT'D)
Who are you?

COOPER
Cooper Harris.

No recognition.

COOPER (CONT'D)
First Class. Singing group.

TERESA
Oh... you look much better in your mug shot.

COOPER
A good hair day.

TERESA
I didn't recognize you.

He's a little hurt.

COOPER
Then why did you pick me up?

Teresa dials the phone.

TERESA
I thought I hit you, until I found out you were drinking. I couldn't just leave you stranded there. Although the thought did cross my mind.

COOPER
I never said I was drinking.

TERESA
 You didn't have to.
 (into phone)
 Don't put me on hold.

JESSE (O.S.)
 Mommy.

She hands Cooper the phone.

TERESA
 Here. Get your cab. I'll be right
 back. Don't move from that spot.
 Comprende?

COOPER
 What if I have to go to the bathroom?

TERESA
 There's a rubber band on the table.

Teresa crosses to the bedroom.

INT. JESSE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Teresa tucks her son in, giving him a kiss on the forehead.

INT. TERESA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Teresa returns to the living room to the sound of a PHONE OFF THE HOOK and Cooper asleep.

She tries to wake him, but he's dead to the world. She hangs up the phone and covers him with a nearby afghan (blanket not dog).

EXT. TERESA'S HOUSE - MORNING 

The Elfettes appear on the rooftop as the morning sun peeks over the chimney. As the Christmas lights on the house click off, they sing "MERRY CHRISTMAS EVERYBODY".

ELFETTES
 Are you hanging up a stocking on your
 wall?/ It's the time that Santa has a
 ball/ Does he ride a red nosed reindeer?/
 Load a ton up on his sleigh?
 Can the fairies keep him sober for a day?

INT. TERESA'S LIVING ROOM - MORNING

Cooper sleeps in the same position, mouth wide open, drool dripping down the corner.

A tiny hand approaches his mouth and dispenses a Cheerio, releasing an unwanted taste.

ELFETTES (V.O.)

So here it is merry Christmas/ Everybody's
having fun/ Look to the future now
It's only just begun....

SONG ENDS, as a second one launches,

TERESA (O.S.)

Jesse!!

JESSE (6), Teresa's son, stands next to the sofa, with his face as close to Cooper's as possible. Cooper stirs, opens one eye, then the other, finding himself face to face with the lad. After a brief stare out, Jesse breaks the silence, speaking with a stutter.

JESSE

A-A-Are you my fa-fa-father?

COOPER

No.

JESSE

Th-th-than who are you?

COOPER

I'm Cooper.

JESSE

I've never seen you b-b-before.

COOPER

I've never seen you either.

JESSE

(points to Cooper's head)
Wha-what happened? Hurt?

Jesse pokes the wound.

COOPER

Ow! Yes.... A lot.

JESSE

You should have Mommy k-kiss it and
make it b.. better.

Teresa enters and ushers Jesse to the table.

TERESA

Jesse, finish your breakfast. We have to go.

(to Cooper)

Your cab will be here in a few minutes. Bathroom is right there.

Cooper exits to bathroom.

JESSE

Th-th-that's my bathroom.

TERESA

It's OK.

JESSE

He b-b-better not take my Spider-man.

TERESA

Don't worry, Spidey can fend for himself.

EXT. WATSON FASHIONS - MORNING

A taxi pulls up to the building. Cooper, hood up, gets out trying to be as invisible as possible. Some PASSERS BY stare with a hint of recognition.

As he passes a BEGGAR, he hands him ten dollars.

INT. WATSON FASHIONS - CONTINUOUS - MORNING

A receptionist, MANDY (20's), sitting under a large company logo doesn't notice Cooper enter. He sneaks behind her and covers her eyes.

COOPER

Guess...

Before he can get his words out, he is greeted with an elbow to the crotch. She grabs her stapler as a weapon, then recognizes him.

MANDY

Oh. Cooper. You shouldn't sneak up on people like that.

COOPER

(groaning)

You're telling me.

MANDY

Your mother's been trying to get you all morning.

(MORE)

MANDY (CONT'D)
(into intercom)
Emily, the missing link is here.

INT. EMILY'S OFFICE - MORNING

The office is decorated with sketches and paintings of the various clothes designed and manufactured by her company.

EMILY WATSON (40's) is at a stand up desk drawing a sketch. Cooper enters.

COOPER
Hi, Mom.

EMILY
I'm so excited.

She runs and gives him a hug and dozens of rapid kisses all over his face. She pulls back his hood. A hot dog bandage covers the wound.

EMILY (CONT'D)
What happened.

COOPER
I had a fight with the makeup table.
I won.

EMILY
You look like hell. What are you wearing? All the beautiful clothes I design and give you and you wear this? What must people think?

COOPER
I tell them it's your new fall collection.

EMILY
You'd better not. I'm so glad you're home.

She gives him multiple kisses again.

EMILY (CONT'D)
Where were you? You were supposed to be home last night. Your phone goes straight to voice mail.

COOPER
It died.

EMILY
I was worried you were in jail again.

COOPER
I wasn't in jail.

EMILY
Good, then you won't be on TMZ
tonight?

COOPER
I'm sure they'll find some thing
trashy to report instead of the fact
we sold out The United Center.

EMILY
Who'd have thought that so many
people have appreciation for that
kind of music.

Used to her snide remarks, he lets it slide.

EMILY (CONT'D)
I saw you boys on AM Chicago
yesterday. You didn't get to talk.

COOPER
I had nothing to say.

EMILY
Neither does that one boy who always
hogs the conversation.

COOPER
Jeremy. It's fine, Mom. I don't care.

EMILY
Well I do. I wanted to hear your
voice.

COOPER
You're hearing it now.

EMILY
Have you had breakfast?

COOPER
Cheerios.

EMILY
I thought you hate Cheerios.

COOPER
I do.

EMILY

I'll get you some clothes and we'll go to Fontera Grill.

COOPER

I'm exhausted.

EMILY

You need to eat.

COOPER

I need to sleep. I don't have a key.

EMILY

Parker should be home, but take mine just in case. Tonight we'll have a nice dinner and you can tell me all about the tour.

EXT. WATSON ENTERPRISES - MORNING

Cooper has difficulty hailing a cab when something across the street gets his attention.

EXT. WATSON HOUSE - LATER THAT MORNING

Cooper, in a Ferrari 296 GTS speeds up the circular driveway and screeches to a halt at the front door of the Hyde Park home.

Workers putting up Christmas lights stop to admire the car.

INT. WATSON FOYER - DAY

Cooper heads up the stairs. The wall is adorned with meticulously arranged family photos.

INT. COOPER'S BEDROOM - DAY

The bedroom is still decorated as it was when Cooper was a teenager, except everything is in perfect order.

Cooper sees a new picture on the wall. It has a matte cut to frame six photos. Five of the slots are filled with mug shots of Cooper labeled with his age from 15-22. The sixth slot has no photo and the words "Coming Soon" written in it.

PARKER (O.S.)

You like it?

Cooper turns to see PARKER WATSON (21).

PARKER (CONT'D)
The third one really captures the
essence of your love for life.

Cooper stares down Parker and slowly stalks him.

COOPER
(menacing)
You think that's funny?

Parker loses his grin.

PARKER
I did.

Cooper is in his face, and draws back his fist. Parker
winces.

COOPER
So do I.

Cooper smiles and gives Parker a warm hug.

COOPER (CONT'D)
I've missed you. How's college life?

PARKER
Great. Sorry about not visiting last
summer. By the time I found an
apartment and moved in, the semester
was starting.

COOPER
Your loss. You would have loved
Italy. The chicks are the most
beautiful in the world. Except maybe
Brazil.

PARKER
When'd you get the car?

COOPER
Just now.

PARKER
Can I drive it?

COOPER
No.

PARKER
C'mon, you won't let your favorite
brother drive your new car?

COOPER
 You're my only brother. And only half
 at that.

Parker waves a baggy of cannabis in Cooper's face.

COOPER (CONT'D)
 No.

PARKER
 You're gonna need this.

COOPER
 Nah.

PARKER
 Three weeks with mom?

Cooper reconsiders.

COOPER
 OK. For my favorite brother.

He snatches the baggy and gives Parker the key.

COOPER (CONT'D)
 Be careful.

Parker runs off as Cooper smells his new treat.

EXT. ENGLEWOOD COMMUNITY CENTER - DAY

Next to the Center, a vacant lot displays a "FOR SALE SIGN".

At the center, WORKERS put up a banner inviting the locals to sign up for the "WEST ENGLEWOOD COMMUNITY CENTER CHRISTMAS EVE SOCIAL."

INT. ENGLEWOOD COMMUNITY CENTER - DAY

Teresa and her cousin MARIA (23) take measurements and draw a floor plan laying out tables.

MARIA
 Are you crazy? When I suggested you
 start dating, I didn't mean give a
 stranger a ride at midnight?

TERESA
 What was I supposed to do? He was
 injured. No cell service.

MARIA
He could be a serial killer?

TERESA
I was being a good Samaritan.

MARIA
Good Samaritans can be victims too.

TERESA
You're right. But I think I could have taken him. Besides, he's a celebrity, it would be bad press.

MARIA
Who?

TERESA
Cooper what's his name from that boy band.

MARIA
Really? The one with the
(finger quotes)
reputation.

TERESA
I guess so. It doesn't matter, it's over. I'll never see him again.

Maria points to the drawing.

MARIA
You're not setting up the tables the same as last year?

TERESA
Trying to fit more in. The homeless family population seems to grow every year. I hate turning any of them away because we reach capacity.

MARIA
We need a bigger building.

INT. WATSON DINING ROOM - EVENING

Emily and Parker sit at the table for dinner. Parker piles his plate as if he hasn't eaten in a month.

EMILY
Did you wake up your brother?

PARKER
He was already up.

EMILY
Then where is he?

PARKER
(yelling upstairs)
Cooper.

EMILY
How many times have I asked you not
to yell in the house.

PARKER
I don't know. Maybe a hundred.

EMILY
That was rhetorical. Elbows off the
table.

He complies.

PARKER
So, Mom, my roommate's going to be
alone for Christmas. Is it OK to
invite him?

EMILY
Of course, but what about his family?

PARKER
They don't get along.

EMILY
That's awful. No one should be alone
on Christmas.

Cooper enters.

PARKER
The stuff's in your car.

COOPER
Thanks, Bro. See you.

EMILY
Where you going?

COOPER
Out?

EMILY

I thought we were having a family night.

COOPER

I changed my plans.

EMILY

You mean you changed our plans.

COOPER

I'll be here for three weeks.

EMILY

Fine. If you get arrested again, I'm not bailing you out this time.

COOPER

I won't get arrested. And I don't need you to bail me out.

PARKER

No, he's got Bernard for that.

Cooper smacks Parker.

EMILY

And Bernard will call me. Cooper, you're almost twenty five years old. Don't you think it's about time to start wearing your big boy pants and act like a Watson?

COOPER

I'm not a Watson. I'm a Harris. Remember? From the first husband you threw away.

Emily glares at Cooper. Parker waits for the boom to drop.

EMILY

Go. Be a Harris.

Cooper rolls his eyes.

EMILY (CONT'D)

I took the afternoon off, to make your favorite meal and be here with you.

COOPER

I forgot about the dinner.

EMILY

I thought being on tour would help
you mature. Silly me.

(unforgiving)

Do whatever it is that's more
important than spending time with
your family that hasn't seen you in
ages.

With his eyes, Parker pleads with Cooper to make peace.

COOPER

You could have visited me.

EMILY

I never got an invitation.

PARKER

I did.

Cooper smacks Parker again.

EMILY


Go, have fun.

Emily starts eating. Cooper relents.

COOPER

(giving in)

I'm sorry. I'll stay.

He sits. 

EMILY

Elbows off the table.

EXT. CHRISTMAS TREE LOT - DAY

Families crowd the amusement park style tree lot. Teresa and
Jesse have a great time shopping for the perfect tree singing
"CHRISTMAS THIS YEAR."

TERESA

As fall rides off in the sunset/ I sweep
the snow from my doorstep/ I just can't
help but stop and grin/ It's like I'm ten
years old again/ And everywhere I go I can
feel it/ Some say it moves like a spirit

JESSE

It falls on us once a year/ Like it came
on a midnight clear

TERESA

So love this season is a gift/ when love
comes down to let us live/ Let's open up
and let our hearts embrace this moment/
For Christmas this year

JESSE

Gonna make a sound/ Gonna make it loud

TERESA

For Christmas this year

JESSE

We're gonna make some noise/ Let the world
rejoice

Jesse holds the top of the tree "helping" an ATTENDANT carry it away.

TERESA, JESSE & SHOPPERS

For Christmas this year/ For Christmas/
For Christmas this year

The Attendant ties the tree to roof of car.

TERESA

The laughter starts before the sunrise/ I
sneak downstairs at the sparklin' lights/
Oh what joy it brings to me/ A family
around a Christmas tree

ATTENDANT

And I thank the Lord for His favor/ As we
sing the songs of the Savior

TERESA & JESSE

Our Savior

TERESA

So love this season is a gift/ When love
comes down to let us live/ Let's open up
and let our hearts embrace this moment

Teresa's SUV pulls out of the lot.

TERESA, JESSE & SHOPPERS

For Christmas this year (Holy holy holy)/
Gonna make a sound/ Gonna make it loud
(god is coming near)/ For Christmas this
year

EXT. STREET/ INT. SUV - DAY

Teresa's SUV drives along the panoramic route.

TERESA & JESSE

Holy holy holy (for Christmas this year)/
God is coming near (for Christmas this
year)

EXT. TERESA'S HOUSE - DAY

Cooper's Ferrari is parked in front as Teresa pulls into the driveway. Teresa notices Cooper smoking a joint.

TERESA & JESSE (V.O.)

Unto us a savior born/ On a midnight clear

SONG ENDS. Teresa gathers her things as Cooper approaches.

JESSE

(pointing behind her)

Mommy, it's the m-m-man with the hole
in his h.. h.. head.

Teresa sees Cooper standing with a ribbon wrapped bottle of champagne and a gift box.

He is dressed in hip-hop sagging style. (Pants worn at the crotch, bunching up around the ankles).

COOPER

Hi. I just wanted to say thank you.

TERESA

It's very nice of you, but this isn't
necessary.

Teresa struggles to untie the tree.

COOPER

Yes it is. I could be road kill if it
wasn't for you.

TERESA

Don't you think that's a bit of an
exaggeration?

He extends the box to Jesse.

COOPER

This is for you.

Jesse rips into the package.

TERESA

Wait for Christmas.

COOPER
No. It's not a Christmas gift. It's a
now gift.

TERESA
What do you say?

JESSE
Th.. Thanks, man with hole in his
head.

COOPER
It's Cooper.
(to Teresa)
And this is for you.

He extends the bottle to her.

TERESA
Thanks, but I'm not much of a
champagne drinker.

JESSE
M-M-Mom look.

Jesse holds up a child's electronic keyboard.

COOPER
Then how about I buy you dinner?

TERESA
I don't think so.

JESSE
C-c-can I go too?

COOPER
Sure.

JESSE
McDonalds?

TERESA
No!

JESSE
(disappointed)
Ohh!!!

COOPER
When?

TERESA
When what?

COOPER
Dinner.

TERESA
I didn't say I'd go.

COOPER
Yeah. You just said so. Except, no
McDonalds.

JESSE
Yeah Mom. You d-d-did.

He notices her struggling with the tree.

COOPER
Oh... Let me help you.

Obviously inexperienced in manual labor, Cooper eats branches trying to assist.

As Cooper pulls on the rope to free the tree, Teresa unties it from the other side. The rope flies loose and Cooper follows it landing on his butt. Jesse finds it hilarious. Teresa fights hard to not laugh.

TERESA
Jesse. It's not funny.

Teresa gets the tree off the roof, almost dropping it. He helps her get it under control. Face to face, his stare penetrates her. As the sexual tension rises, she breaks the moment.

TERESA (CONT'D)
(flustered)
Thank you. I can handle it from here.

JESSE
Is he g-g-gonna help us d-d-decorate?

COOPER
Sure.

TERESA
No. We're not decorating till after
dinner.

JESSE
Are you h-h-hungry?

COOPER
Starving.

JESSE
M-m-me too. I'm starving, Mommy.

TERESA
I'll get you a snack.

COOPER
I thought I was taking you to dinner.
I'll drive.

She looks at his two seat sports car.

TERESA
And what about Jesse. You gonna strap
him to the roof like a tree?

JESSE
(excitedly)
Oh boy!

TERESA
(to Jesse)
Not gonna happen.

JESSE
(disappointed)
Awww.

Teresa carries the tree to the porch.

COOPER
Then you drive.
(to Jesse)
I got shotgun.

TERESA
No. We're having our traditional tree
decorating dinner tonight.

JESSE
Do you like chili?

COOPER
Love it.

JESSE
M.. M.. makes you toot.

COOPER
I can toot "Jingle Bells".

JESSE
Can you teach me?

TERESA COOPER
NO. Sure.

Teresa carries the tree into the house.

 JESSE
D-d-do you want chili?

 COOPER
Sure.

Cooper holds his hand to fist bump. Jesse just stares at it. Cooper grabs Jesse's arm, folds his hand into a fist and then bumps it.

INT. TERESA'S LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS - EVENING

Teresa puts the tree down. As she turns to close the door, she runs into Cooper, standing right behind her.

 TERESA
You're like a puppy following me everywhere.

 COOPER
I'm house broken.

 TERESA
Look, you're nice enough, but this is a special night for Jesse and me.

 JESSE
It's o-o-OK. I don't mind.

 TERESA
This isn't a very good idea.

 JESSE
Wh.. why not?

 COOPER
Yeah, why not?

 TERESA
Because.... Ahh.. I don't really know you.

 JESSE
You fixed his head.

 TERESA
Fixing his head requires professional help.

JESSE
D-d-don't you l-l-like him?

COOPER
Yeah. Don't you like me?

TERESA
You do things that I don't approve
of?

JESSE
L-l-like what?

COOPER
Yeah, like what?

TERESA
Like what you were doing in your car
when we drove up.

JESSE
G-g-give him a time out.

COOPER
Yeah, give me a time out.

TERESA
OK. Go home and have a time out.

COOPER
So you're uninviting me?

TERESA
I didn't invite you.

COOPER
(points to Jesse)
He did.

Jesse agrees, appealing to her. Cooper mimics.

TERESA
Is this a play date?

JESSE
Please.

Cooper flicks his brow.

TERESA
(giving in)
You gonna behave?

She holds up an invisible joint to her lips.

COOPER

OK.

TERESA

Not in my house. Not in my yard. Not
on my block.

COOPER

Cross my heart and hope to die.

JESSE

Hope to s-s-spit.

COOPER

Hope to spit.

TERESA

You are exhausting.

Jesse holds out his fist and Cooper bumps it.

EXT. TERESA'S HOUSE - EVENING 

The Elfettes sing "BEAUTIFUL CHRISTMAS." As they stroll by,
Christmas lights on the house slowly light up until the
facade is illuminated.

ELFETTES

Put down video games/ Pick up some candy
canes/ And hang a wreath on your door/
Hey. / Give back to those who need/ Bring
peace and harmony/ Cause that's what
Christmas is for

We can make a beautiful Christmas/ We can
make the world shine bright/ As long
friends and family are with us/ Every star
will shine tonight

INT. TERESA'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

SONG CONTINUES. Teresa prepares dinner. Cooper is a helpless
sous-chef. She hands him a peeler. He examines the foreign
object, trying to figure it out.

ELFETTES (V.O.)

We can make it... beautiful/ This
Christmas/ We can make a beautiful
Christmas/ Happy holiday, spread the love
on Christmas day,

TERESA

Have you never peeled a carrot
before?

COOPER

No.

She grabs his hands and shows him how it works. Instead of watching her hands, he stares at her face.

COOPER (CONT'D)

You smell good.

Uncomfortable, she pulls away.

Peeling the carrot, he skins his finger.

COOPER (CONT'D)

Ow. Ow. Ow.

TERESA

Don't be such a baby. I'll get you a bandage.

She crosses out.

TERESA (CONT'D)

You should travel with a first aid kit.

INT. TERESA'S LIVING ROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

Teresa, Cooper and Jesse enjoy decorating the tree. SONG CONTINUES.

ELFETTES (V.O.)

We can make a beautiful Christmas/ We can
make the world shine bright/ As long
friends and family are with us/ Every star
will shine tonight

Cooper places an ornament on the tree, but it rolls off. He recovers it and tries again. Once again it ends up on the floor. This time he takes it and stuffs it back into the branches.

ELFETTES (V.O.)

We can make it beautiful/ It's Christmas/
We can make it beautiful/ It's Christmas/
We can make it beautiful/ It's Christmas/
can make a beautiful Christmas

Happy holiday/ We can make a beautiful
Christmas.

SONG ENDS.

JESSE
It goes out h-h-here.

COOPER
It doesn't have a hook.

Teresa hands Cooper a paper clip. He examines it, not sure what to do.

JESSE
Gimme.

Jesse takes it and turns it into an ornament hook.

JESSE (CONT'D)
D.. D-didn't your mother teach you anything, or are you just d-d-dumb?

Cooper stiffens up.

TERESA
Jesse, manners.

JESSE
Sorry.

Teresa hands a Christmas topper to Jesse.

TERESA
Here.

She lifts him up, but he can't reach it.


COOPER
Let me.

Cooper puts Jesse on his shoulders for the added height. Jesse places it on top noticeably crooked.

TERESA
That's perfect.

COOPER
Oh, oh. You're getting heavy. I'm gonna drop you. Oh, no. Watch out.

Jesse playfully screams. Cooper staggers around the room almost dropping Jesse several times before crash landing on the sofa. Jesse laughs.

 Teresa pulls out an ornament and tears up. It has a photo of Baby Jesse and Teresa set in the middle.

TERESA

Jesse, look. I remember when Abuelito
took this.

Jesse stares at the ornament. He becomes very serious.

JESSE

I m... m... miss grandpa.

TERESA

Me too.

Teresa sings "*SOMEWHERE IN MY MEMORY*".

TERESA (CONT'D)

Candles in the window/ shadows painting
the ceiling/ gazing at the fire glow and/
feeling that gingerbread feeling

The ornament morphs into a similar ornament with the image of
Baby Teresa on it.

INT. TERESA'S LIVING ROOM - FLASHBACK - MORNING

SONG CONTINUES. The ornament with Baby Teresa is placed on a
Christmas tree by a very excited YOUNG TERESA (5). TERESA'S
FATHER puts her on his shoulders so she can place the topper
on the tree.

TERESA (V.O.)

Precious moments/ special people/
happy faces/ I can see

TERESA'S MOTHER takes her from Dad and cuddles. Her Father
snaps photos.

TERESA (V.O.)

Somewhere in my memory/ Christmas joys all
around me

INT. TERESA'S LIVING ROOM - FLASHBACK - MORNING

SONG CONTINUES. Young Teresa is surrounded by her Parents,
her AUNT and UNCLE and her cousin YOUNG MARIA (7). The girls
excitedly open presents as the parents take photos and
videos. Teresa excitedly shows Maria a new doll she received.

TERESA (V.O.)

living in my memory/ all of the music/
all of the magic/ all of the family home
here with me

Teresa cradles the doll.

INT. TERESA'S LIVING ROOM - FLASHBACK - MORNING

SONG CONTINUES. MATCHING SHOT. TEEN TERESA (17) cradles BABY JESSE in the same pose. Her Father snaps the photo seen on the tree ornament. Her Mother is noticeably missing.

INT. TERESA'S LIVING ROOM - FLASHBACK - MORNING

Teresa helps YOUNGER JESSE (4), open gifts as her father takes pictures. His health has obviously deteriorated as he remains in his easy chair throughout.

TERESA (V.O.)

Precious moments/ and special People/
Happy Faces/ I can see/ Somewhere in my
memory

END FLASHBACKS.

INT. JESSE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

SONG CONTINUES. Teresa tucks a sleeping Jesse in.

TERESA

all of the music/ all of the magic/ all of
the family home here with me

Teresa kisses him on the head.

INT. TERESA'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

SONG ENDS. Cooper helps Teresa put the ornament boxes in the attic through the ceiling hatch/ladder in the adjoining hallway.

TERESA

I haven't seen Jesse laugh that hard
in a long time.

COOPER

That was a lot of fun.

TERESA

I can't believe you've never
decorated a tree before.

COOPER

Well, when I was little, we used to.
But when we'd get up the next morning
we could see that my mother
redecorated it. So why bother?

They retire to the sofa.

TERESA

Maybe she thought you wouldn't notice.

COOPER

No, she just wanted it to be perfect. Like everything else in her life... except me.

TERESA

Oh, boo hoo. You're not perfect. So what? Nobody is. Not even your mother.

COOPER

Don't let her hear you say that.

TERESA

If success is an indication, I'd say you turned out OK.

COOPER

Not in her eyes.

Cooper tops off his wine glass.

TERESA

Don't you think you've had enough of that? You're driving.

COOPER

OK. Got any tequila?

She glares at him.

COOPER (CONT'D)

It was a joke.

TERESA

I think you have a problem.

COOPER

Joking is a problem?

TERESA

Substance abuse is.

COOPER

I don't abuse it, I'm quite fond of it.

She glares again.

COOPER (CONT'D)

Another joke! OK, so sometimes I over indulge. Is that a crime?

TERESA

It is in my house. Very little good ever comes from being wasted.

COOPER

Having a drink or smoking a joint just gives me a little buzz. 'Wasted' is what I was in school. Grades seven through twelve - all a blur. One of the reasons I didn't graduate.

TERESA

You dropped out?

COOPER

Technically, no. I was supposed to go to summer school to make up some classes, but never did. Mom still holds it against me.

TERESA

That's sad.

COOPER

So Miss Goody Two Shoes never got drunk in high school?

TERESA

Once. Sophomore year. My father was going away for the weekend. My cousin Maria talked me into having a party. Chips, soda and a few friends turned into beer and about fifty kids. Most of whom I didn't know.

COOPER

I've been to plenty of those. I can even remember a couple.

TERESA

I got really cooked. My father came home early to find kids sleeping everywhere, even in his bed.

COOPER

Did he click out?

TERESA

Almost, when he found a boy asleep on my bed... naked.

(MORE)

TERESA (CONT'D)

I returned from the bathroom just in time to see his bare behind jumping out my window with my father in pursuit. Nine months later Jesse was born.

COOPER

Then he went psychotic.

TERESA

Worse. Disappointed in me. Very supportive, but disappointed.

COOPER

What about the baby daddy?

TERESA

He doesn't even know about Jesse.

COOPER

Why would you keep that from him?

TERESA

I had no say in the matter. I don't know who he is. I don't even remember doing it. All I remember is a bare butt jumping out the window.

COOPER

Been there, done that.

TERESA

My father found his wallet. When we discovered I was pregnant, Daddy confronted his parents. The family was very hoity-toity and worried about their reputation. So they agreed to give us child support and set up a college fund in exchange for never revealing his identity.

COOPER

That sucks for Jesse. I know what it's like to grow up without a father. My mother threw mine out just after I was born.

TERESA

Sorry.

COOPER

So was I until I met him after our first gold record. Throwing him out was a good decision.

They stare at each other not sure what to talk about next.

TERESA
So tell me. Can you really toot
"Jingle Bells"?

Cooper mouth trumpets "Jingle Bells," amusing her.

TERESA (CONT'D)
I can burp "The Star Spangled
Banner".

COOPER
Do it.

TERESA
No. It's kind of gross.

COOPER
Please? C'mon.

Teresa belches "The Star Bangled Banner" until their laughter breaks the moment.

They stare for a beat. She senses him about to make a move.

TERESA
You know, it's getting kind of late.

COOPER
You're kicking me out?

TERESA
I wouldn't put it that way.

COOPER
Can I stay here tonight? It's too
late to drive home.

TERESA
Drive fast.

COOPER
That's against the law.

TERESA
Laws are made to be broken.

She ushers him toward the door.

COOPER
You're sure?

TERESA

Positive.

COOPER

I still owe you a dinner. How about tomorrow night?

TERESA

Look. This was very nice, but I don't think so.

COOPER

I'm not leaving until you agree.

TERESA

(gives in)

Fine. Let me see if I can get a sitter.

It's that awkward moment on a first date when both parties debate a good night kiss. She seems willing. He thinks about it, but doesn't make a move.

COOPER

Good night.

TERESA

Night.

After closing the door, she watches him through the side light windows.

EXT. TERESA'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT

Cooper heads to his car with a huge smile.

EXT. WATSON HOUSE - DAY

Establishing shot.

INT. WATSON GARAGE - MORNING

The far space of the three car garage is filled with home gym equipment. A large padded workout mat occupies most of the floor area.

Built in shelves on the wall are lined with boxes labeled with different tax years.

On the mat, Parker holds Cooper's ankles as Cooper does crunches. It is obvious from his six pack that this is a daily ritual.

PARKER
If she's so special, why didn't you
kiss her?

COOPER
I don't kiss.

PARKER
Why? It's not like she's a groupie.

COOPER
You know why.

PARKER
You gotta be kiddin'. You still have
that stupid hang-up?

COOPER
It's not stupid.

PARKER
It is stupid. You're not in sixth
grade anymore.

COOPER
You're not the one that Cynthia
Serrano said kisses like a frog. And,
spent the next two years being called
'ribbit". Everywhere I went kids made
fish lips and smooching sounds at me.

PARKER
No one's going to make fun of you
now. You're a star.

COOPER
A star that doesn't know how to kiss.
Hashtag 'can't kiss.'

Parker laughs.

COOPER (CONT'D)
I'm glad you find that amusing.

PARKER
Kissing's easy. You introduce your
lips to hers, then force your tongue
down her throat. Here I'll teach you.

Parker makes fish lips and smooching sounds and leans in to
kiss Cooper.

COOPER
Get away from me.

Cooper bats him off, they end up in a friendly wrestling match.

EMILY (O.S.)
Boys, stop fighting.

Emily enters from the house and goes to the storage shelf to file something in one of the boxes.

EMILY (CONT'D)
It's like you boys never left. The cleaning lady is coming today, so please pick up your rooms.

PARKER
Isn't that why she's coming?

Emily crosses to her car.

EMILY
She shouldn't need a hazmat suit to get in there.

Eyes roll in unison.

INT. DRESS STORE - DAY

Maria looks through a rack of dresses. Teresa comes out of the dressing room modeling an attractive but conservative outfit.

TERESA
What do you think?

MARIA
Looks nice.

TERESA
Then I'll get it.

MARIA
Nice is for kindergarten teachers. Try this one.

Maria hands Teresa a sexy red dress. Teresa looks at the price tag.

TERESA
Maria, I can't afford to buy this.

MARIA
You can't afford not to unless you want your date to end before it starts.

TERESA

It's not really a date. It's a "thank you" dinner.

MARIA

Get this one, and he'll have a lot more to be thankful for.

Teresa looks at the low cut front.

TERESA

It's too.... too....

MARIA

Revealing? That's the idea.

TERESA

I don't want to send a mixed message.

MARIA

(referring to first outfit)

Wearing that is sending a definite message... 'keep out'.

(pointing to other)

This one says 'boing boing.' Now try it on.

TERESA

I don't want to 'boing boing.'

MARIA

It's been two years since you 'boing boinged'.

TERESA

Because as soon as I mention I have a son, most guys run for the hills. And the ones that don't are boring.

MARIA

Was the serial killer boring?

TERESA

Definitely not. He makes me laugh. Although it's not always intentional. But, still, I can tell he wants to get in my pants.

MARIA


That's all any man wants. Don't you have those urges?

TERESA

Of course I do. But I don't have the time or energy for them.

MARIA

You've devoted every waking hour taking care of Jesse. It's time you take care of you. It's one night. Have some fun.

 As she sings "WRAPPED IN RED," Maria picks out various accessories for the outfit. Teresa tags along.

MARIA

Everybody's happy/ Snow is falling down/
Prayers are being answered/ Miracles all around

You need a little love too/ But never let it show/
And every year another/ December comes and goes

Maria pushes Teresa into the dressing room to change, then passes clothes to her over the slotted door.

MARIA

Always watching/ Never reaching/
But this Christmas/ You've gotta risk it all/
This Christmas/ Can't be afraid to fall

So take a chance/ enjoy your life for just one day/
Get rid of white/ let's see you like/
We've never seen you yeah/ Wrapped in red (ooh-ooh-ooh-ooh)

Teresa emerges wearing the dress. Maria adds accessories.

MARIA (CONT'D)

Blue is where you've been/ Green is boring too/
Silver bells remind us/ That mistletoe's for two

So we found a color/ That only tells the truth/
That paints a picture of the real you

Teresa likes how fabulous the outfit looks.

TERESA

This Christmas/ I'm gonna risk it all/
This Christmas/ I won't be afraid to fall/
So I'll take a chance, enjoy my life for
just one day/ Got rid of white, you'll see
me like you've never seen me yeah

TERESA & MARIA

Wrapped in red (ooh-ooh-ooh-ooh)/ Wrapped
in red (ooh-ooh-ooh-ooh)

END SONG.

INT. TERESA'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Cooper nervously taps his leg waiting for Teresa. Jesse sits next to him tinkling on his new keyboard. He pecks out EIGHT NOTES repetitively.

COOPER

Your mother knows I'm here right?

JESSE

Sh-sh-she said your e-e-early.

Jesse notices a python tattoo on Cooper's wrist.

JESSE (CONT'D)

What's that.

COOPER

A tattoo.

JESSE

Why?

COOPER

I like snakes.

JESSE

So you p-p-put it on your arm?

COOPER

Yeah. Look.

Cooper turns his arm over and shows the underside has the bottom jaw of the python making it seem like the snake is biting his wrist.

JESSE

Wow.

Jesse returns to playing his eight repetitive notes again.

As the musical monotony gets to the breaking point, Cooper takes the keyboard and puts it on the coffee table.

JESSE (CONT'D)
Hey.

COOPER
Come here.

Cooper stands Jesse in front of him facing the keyboard.

COOPER (CONT'D)
Now play it again.

As Jesse plucks, Cooper plays chords turning the monotonous notes into a pleasant melody.

Cooper puts lyrics in as he intros "ALL FOR THE BEST"

COOPER
When you feel sad/Or under a curse/
Your life is bad/Your prospects are worse

COOPER (CONT'D)
Now you do it. When you feel sad.

JESSE
Wh... when you

COOPER
Sing it don't say it.
(sings)
When you feel sad.

JESSE
When you feel sad

COOPER
Or under a curse

JESSE
Or u... u... under a curse

COOPER (CONT'D)
Sing it. Get the rhythm.
Your life is bad. Your prospects are worse

JESSE
Your life is bad/Your prospects are worse

INT. TERESA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Maria teaches Teresa how to apply makeup.

MARIA

You should have learned how to do
this ten years ago.

TERESA

I don't need makeup.

MARIA

You need to be better looking than
your date.

TERESA

It's not a date. It's...

MARIA

...a thank you dinner. I know.

TERESA

I don't even want to go.

MARIA

Yes you do.

TERESA

Would you and your date like to join
us?

MARIA

Sure. And we can bring Jesse and the
baby sitter too. How about the old
lady from next door?

INT. TERESA'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT 

Cooper and Jesse stand holding makeshift canes swaying as
they sing "ALL FOR THE BEST".

JESSE

Your mood and your robe / Are both a deep
blue / You'd bet that Job had nothing on
you!

JESSE (CONT'D)

Don't forget that when you get to Heaven
you'll be blessed! / Yes, it's all for the
best!

COOPER

This is my part.

COOPER

Some men are born to live at ease, doing
what they please, richer than the bees are
in honey / Never growing old, never
feeling cold, pulling pots of gold from
thin air!

The best in every town, best at shaking
down, best making mountains of money /
They can't take it with them, but what do
they care?

They get the center of the meat, cushions
on the seat, houses on the street where
it's sunny.

Summers at the sea, winters warm and free,
all of this and we get the rest!

But who is the land for, the sun and the
sand for?

You guessed, it's all for the best!

COOPER (CONT'D)

Now together. Fast.

COOPER (CONT'D)

Some men are born to live at
ease, doing what they please,
richer than the bees are in
honey

Never growing old, never
feeling cold, pulling pots of
gold from thin air!

The best in every town, best
at shaking down, best making
mountains of money
They can't take it with them,
but what do they care?

They get the center of the
meat, cushions on the seat,
houses on the street where
it's sunny.

Summers at the sea, winters
warm and free, all of this
and we get the rest!

But who is the land for, the
sun and the sand for?

You guessed, it's all for the
best!

Unseen by them, Teresa has entered, wearing the sexy red
dress. She applauds.

TERESA

That was fabulous.

Cooper can't help but notice how great she looks.

COOPER

No. You're the one that's fabulous.

She likes what she hears.

JESSE

Where we going?

TERESA

Cooper and I are going to dinner.
You're having Pizza when Heather gets
here.

JESSE

When you feel sad
Or under a curse

Your life is bad
Your prospects are worse.

Your wife is sighing / Crying
And your olive tree is dying
Temples are graying!
And teeth are decaying!
Credit is weighing your
purse!
Your mood and your robe.
Are both a deep blue

You'd bet that Job.
Had nothing on you!

Ah, don't forget that when
you get to Heaven you'll be
blessed!

Yes,
it's all for the best!

JESSE

Ah. It's not f-fair. I never get to eat out?

TERESA

I'll bring you a doggie bag.

JESSE

Chicken nuggets. Don't f-f-forget the toy.

EXT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Cooper and Teresa arrive in his Ferrari. The VALET greets Cooper.

VALET

Mr. Harris.

They exchange a claim ticket and a fifty dollar bill.

COOPER

Take good care of it, please.

VALET

Absolutely, sir.

VALET #2, unfamiliar with the operation of a gull wing door, almost takes his eye out opening it for Teresa.

She and Cooper head toward the entrance.

VALET (CONT'D)

This way.

The Valet ushers them to the side of the building.

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

A large private room has been decorated with one candle-lit table, placed away from the main entrance. Large plants block the view from diners in the restaurant.

Cooper and Teresa are greeted by ROBERTO (40).

ROBERTO

Mr. Harris. Madame. I'm Roberto. I'll be your host this evening.

Roberto escorts them to the table. Cooper takes a seat. Teresa stands by hers. After a prompt from Roberto, Cooper pulls out Teresa's chair.

Roberto unfolds a napkin and hands it to Teresa.

TERESA

Thank you.

Teresa places the napkin on her lap. Roberto hands a napkin to Cooper, who takes it and places it back on the table.

ROBERTO

Can I start you out with a cocktail?

COOPER

Sure.

TERESA

We'll just have wine with dinner.

COOPER

OK. Wine it is.

Roberto presents the list to Cooper.

ROBERTO

Our wine list.

COOPER

Just bring us the best bottle you have.

TERESA

May I see the wine list, please?

ROBERTO

Certainly.

Roberto hands it to her.

TERESA

You don't order wine from the price tag.

COOPER

I didn't say the most expensive, I said the 'best'.

TERESA

'Best' is subjective.

COOPER

Oh, I thought it was an adverb.

Teresa can't help but smile.

TERESA

We'll have this one, Roberto.

ROBERTO
Excellent choice.

COOPER
Well look at you. 'Miss I don't
drink' is a wine connoisseur.

TERESA
I enjoy wine. In moderation.

INT. RESTAURANT - LATER THAT NIGHT

Cooper and Teresa enjoy appetizers, as Roberto fills their wine glasses. Stepping aside to give them privacy, Roberto notices workers at the entry trying to get a glimpse of Cooper and shoos them away.

TERESA
So your mother had to basically raise
two boys alone.

COOPER
She wasn't alone. Nannies. Lots of
'em. Mom kept firing them. They never
seemed to do things exactly as she
wanted. I kept waiting for a British
lady with an umbrella to show up at
the door. But, it never happened.

TERESA
Still, it's hard for a single mother.

COOPER
Nah, she had plenty of money.

TERESA
You think that makes it easier?

COOPER
Sure. She didn't have to scrimp to
put food on the table.

TERESA
I don't scrimp. There's always food
on my table.

COOPER
I didn't mean....

TERESA
I just don't spend frivolously...
like buying a fifty thousand dollar
sports car.

COOPER
Four hundred thousand.

Teresa gasps.

COOPER (CONT'D)
And it wasn't frivolous. I needed
wheels and it was available.

TERESA
So now you'll be paying for it for
the next ten years.

COOPER
No. It's paid for.

TERESA
You're missing the point.

COOPER
What point?

TERESA
The point is that your spoiled
privileged class will spend half a
million dollars for a car when the
rest of us get one for a fraction of
that.

COOPER
It's only money.

TERESA
Money that could be spent on helping
society.

COOPER
I help society plenty.

TERESA
Yeah, how?

He is stumped for a moment.

COOPER
The valet. I gave him a fifty buck
tip. And I'll give him another one
when we leave.

She glares.

COOPER (CONT'D)
OK, so it's not on my priority list.

TERESA

What is on that priority list?

COOPER

I don't know, maybe proving to my mom that I'm no longer the total screw up she thinks I...

He stops mid sentence and just stares at her. The backlight gives her an angelic glow.

TERESA

What's wrong?

COOPER

Don't move.

TERESA

Why?

COOPER

You are so beautiful. I just want to enjoy the view.

Not used to compliments, Teresa gets modestly flustered, but then relishes it.

TERESA

Thank you.

Cooper and Teresa stare for a moment. He slowly moves his hand toward hers. She is very receptive until Roberto interrupts to serve beautifully presented entrées.

ROBERTO

For madame et monsieur. Bon appétite.

TERESA

Thank you, Roberto. This is lovely.

Cooper begins to mush his food together.

TERESA (CONT'D)

What are you doing?

COOPER

It tastes better this way. Fuses the flavors together.

TERESA

I like to enjoy the individual flavors.

COOPER
Ever had peanut butter and jelly?

TERESA
Of course.

COOPER
Can't you taste both flavors?

TERESA
Yes, but they are married intentionally. If the chef wanted us to mix these together, he would have served it that way.

COOPER
He's not the boss of me. I can eat it anyway I want.

He tastes a forkful.

COOPER (CONT'D)
Hmmm. Try it.

TERESA
No, that's OK.

COOPER
C'mon. What are you afraid of?

He holds up a forkful for her.

COOPER (CONT'D)
I dare you.

She moves toward the fork to give it a shot, then reconsiders.

TERESA
No. I'm fine with this.

INT. RESTAURANT - LATER

Cooper and Teresa finish their entrees.

TERESA
He started stuttering when my father died. I keep hoping he'll grow out of it.

COOPER
I used to stutter when I was a kid.

TERESA

What did you do to stop?

COOPER

Started drinking. It was a great disguise. Everybody just thought I shit-faced.

She glares at.

COOPER (CONT'D)

I kinda grew out of it. It comes back once in a while when I have to talk in front of groups. I guess it's my nerves.

TERESA

That's a real diagnosis. It's called glossophobia.

COOPER

It's called fear of embarrassment.

TERESA

Don't you talk to the audience when you're on stage?

COOPER

Scripted. It's part of the performance. Rehearsed. I won't even give interviews.

TERESA

Because you worry you'll stutter.

COOPER

No. I'm worried I might say something to show everyone how dumb I am.

TERESA

You're not dumb.

COOPER

High school G-P-A of one point eight.

TERESA

Maybe your reckless youth might have contributed to that?

COOPER

You think?

TERESA

You know, as long as you speak from the heart, no one will ever think you're dumb.

Roberto brings them dessert menus.

ROBERTO

Can I offer you a little dessert?

They scrutinize the menu.

COOPER

Ohhhhh, they have red velvet cake. I love that.

TERESA

So does Jesse.

COOPER

Ooh! They have butterscotch pudding.

TERESA

You do know it doesn't contain scotch, right?

COOPER

Good one.

TERESA

Oh, I wonder if the profiteroles are homemade?

COOPER

I've never heard of it.

TERESA

This sounds interesting... candied bacon and kiwi ice cream.

COOPER

Bring the butterscotch pudding, the bacon ice cream thingy and profit rolls... if they're homemade.

(to Teresa)

What about you?

TERESA

(amused)

I'll just pick at yours.

COOPER

And wrap a red velvet cake to go.

ROBERTO
 Would you care for after dinner
 drinks?

Before he answers, Cooper looks to Teresa for approval.

COOPER
 No, we're fine. Thank you.

EXT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Cooper and Teresa exit the side door and head to his car. As they turn onto the street, they are greeted by PAPARAZZI. Teresa is taken aback from the intense CAMERA CLICKS and LIGHT FLASHES. Anticipating this, Cooper covers Teresa's face with a menu he took from the restaurant. He ignores questions fired from the press.

INT. TERESA'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Teresa pays Heather as she exits.

TERESA
 Goodnight.

Cooper and Teresa stare at each other.

TERESA (CONT'D)
 Thank you. I can't remember the last
 time I had to leave a restaurant with
 a menu over my face.

COOPER
 I'm sorry.

TERESA
 No. I'm teasing. I had a wonderful
 time.

COOPER
 The best.

After an awkward moment,

TERESA
 Well, it's getting late.

He doesn't take the hint.

TERESA (CONT'D)
 I need to get to bed.

Still no response.

TERESA (CONT'D)
You need to go home.

COOPER
You're kicking me out again.

She opens the door for him.

COOPER (CONT'D)
You're sure?

TERESA
Positive.

COOPER
OK. G'night.


He can tell she is waiting for a kiss. After a couple of false attempts, Cooper decides to move in for it.

COOPER (CONT'D)
Here goes.

Before she can question him, he dives in for a kiss. He tilts his head left, her right. They both reverse action. She holds his head still and tilts hers to make contact. At first a bit stiff, but then becomes passionate.

Starting to enjoy it too much, she breaks the kiss.

TERESA
Goodnight. Thank you.

 He reluctantly steps out and she closes the door.

She leans back against the door infusing the wonderful events of the evening into her memory.

EXT. TERESA'S HOUSE - SIMULTANEOUS - NIGHT

Cooper mirrors her action and SINGS "*COULD I HAVE THIS KISS FOREVER*".

COOPER
Over and over, I looked in her eyes/ She
is all I desire/ She has captured me/ I
want to hold her/ I want to be close to
her/ I never want to let go

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. TERESA'S LIVING ROOM - SIMULTANEOUS - NIGHT

Teresa is still leaning against the door.

TERESA

I wish that this night would never end/
But I need to know

COOPER & TERESA

Could I hold you for a lifetime?/ Could I
look into your eyes?/ Could I have this
night to share this time together?

He crosses to his car. Hidden behind the sheers, she watches him through the sidelight window.

COOPER & TERESA

Could I hold you close beside me?/ Could I
hold you for all time?/ Could I, could I
have this kiss forever?/ Could I, could I
have this kiss forever?/ And ever?

Cooper hesitates to get in his car and looks longingly at the house.

COOPER

I don't want any night to go by/ without
her by my side

Teresa opens the door.

TERESA

I just want all my days/ Spent being next
to you/ Lived for just loving you/ And
baby, oh by the way

Cooper returns.

COOPER & TERESA

Could I hold you for a lifetime?/ Could I
look into your eyes? / Could I have this
night to share this night together?/ Could
I hold you close beside me?/ Could I hold
you for all time?

She welcomes him in.

COOPER & TERESA (V.O.)

Could I (could I) could I have this kiss
forever?/ Could I, could I, Could I have
this kiss forever? And ever/ Forever

They passionately kiss, and in a surrealistic moment, the room spins around them.

COOPER & TERESA (V.O.)
 Could I have this kiss forever?/ Could I
 have this kiss forever?/ Could I have this
 kiss forever?/ Could I have this kiss
 forever?

EXT. TERESA'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT

The doorway frames Teresa and Cooper in their long and
 passionate kiss.

COOPER & TERESA (V.O.)
 Could I have this kiss forever?/
 Could I have this kiss forever?

Teresa pushes the door shut with her foot. SONG ENDS.

CUT TO BLACK

INT. COOPER'S HALLWAY - EARLY MORNING

Cooper quietly crosses to his bedroom when he hears Parker on
 the phone.

PARKER (O.S.)
 I miss you.

Cooper heads in.

INT. PARKER'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS - MORNING

PARKER
 (into phone)
 I love you, too.

Parker turns to see Cooper standing there.

COOPER
 I love you too? Who was that?

PARKER
 Just a friend?

COOPER
 An 'I love you' friend?

Parker nervously chews on his lip and nods.

COOPER (CONT'D)
 C'mon. Dish.

PARKER
 There's nothing to tell.

Cooper notices Parker biting his lip.

COOPER
BS. What's the mystery?

PARKER
Nothing.

COOPER
What's she got, buck teeth? Club
foot?

PARKER
No.

COOPER
Donkey faced?

PARKER
No. He's better looking than you.

COOPER
I doubt that. Wait, what? Did you say
he?

Parker nods.

COOPER (CONT'D)
Whoa.

PARKER
My roommate.

Cooper sits silently.

PARKER (CONT'D)
Say something.

COOPER
Whoa.

PARKER
You already said that.

COOPER
Wow, when I used to call you 'homo,'
I had no idea.

PARKER
Neither did I.

COOPER
When did you... all of a sudden.

PARKER
I guess I always suspected it.
Experimented in high school, but
didn't accept it till I met Jordan.

Cooper sighs.

PARKER (CONT'D)
Do you hate me?

COOPER
No, of course not. You're still my
little turd brother.

Cooper hugs him. After a moment,

COOPER (CONT'D)
You're not getting aroused right now
are you?

Parker pushes Cooper away.

COOPER (CONT'D)
How did Mom take the news?

PARKER
She doesn't know.

COOPER
He's coming for Christmas, but you
didn't tell her.

PARKER
When Jordan told his family, they
threw him out. You know how Mom is.

COOPER
She'd never throw you out. You're the
good son, remember?

PARKER
I can't handle the drama. As far as
she's concerned, he's just my
roommate. Nothing more. Promise you
won't tell her?

COOPER
I won't tell her. You will.

PARKER
I can't.

COOPER

You have to. I'm in your corner.
Whatever you need me to do, I'm here
for you.

PARKER

Can you block her punches?

COOPER

Yeah, but gotta watch out for her
sneaky uppercut.

INT. ENGLEWOOD COMMUNITY CENTER - DAY

The CHILDREN'S CHOIR rehearse a musical number on the stage.
Jesse is among them.

Teresa and several volunteers decorate the walls and tables.
Teresa looks very tired, yet has a glow.

Maria enters and rushes to Teresa.

MARIA

No calls. No texts. How was it. Tell
me.

TERESA

The restaurant was so lovely. They
had this wonderful beef
bourguignon....

MARIA

What are you, yelp? I'm not looking
for a review. How was the date?

TERESA

It was good.

MARIA

Good. Like dinner with grandma?

TERESA

Alright. It was great. He's charming
and witty. We laughed a lot. He
seems to enjoy when I bust his balls.

MARIA

It's like pulling teeth. What
happened after dinner?

TERESA

He took me home.

MARIA

And?

TERESA

No 'and.' That was it. We kissed.

MARIA

Your mouth says nothing happened, but your face says "whoopee".

Teresa beams.

MARIA (CONT'D)

So his reputation is justified? It's good to see you finally enjoying yourself.

TERESA

I really like this guy.

MARIA

No. No, no, no. Have fun with cutie pie, but don't get emotionally involved.

TERESA

You're giving me mixed messages. 'Go out with him. Don't go out with him.'

MARIA

I didn't say don't go out, I said don't get emotionally involved. Don't let a school girl crush cloud your thinking.

TERESA

It's not a school girl crush. He's really special.

MARIA

Special because he's rich or because he's gorgeous.

TERESA

Because he treats me special. He makes me feel special. He makes me laugh. And he's not scared off because I'm a single mother.

MARIA

Teresa, use your head. After Christmas he'll be gone. He has a career. A life in a different city.

(MORE)

MARIA (CONT'D)

You'll never hear from him again.
Then how special will you feel?

TERESA

I didn't think about that.

MARIA

As soon as he goes back on tour,
you'll be just another snapped string
on his guitar. Just keep him a booty
call. I don't want to see you get
heartbroken.

TERESA

Or Jesse.

MARIA

Keep Jesse away from him. You can't
let them get attached.

This gives Teresa food for thought. Jesse comes up to them.
His pants are sagging. His stutter has lessened.

JESSE

I'm hungry.

TERESA

We're leaving soon.

As Teresa pulls up Jesse's pants, Maria notices a magic
marker drawing on Jesse's arm.

MARIA

What is that?

JESSE

A tutu.

TERESA

Are you stuttering or saying tattoo?


JESSE

Tatu. It's a s-s-snake, like Cooper
has.

Maria gives Teresa a "warning" look.

TERESA

Tattoos are for grown ups... even
though I'm not sure that Cooper has
reached that status yet.

 EXT. MALL - DAY

The Elfettes, in a reindeer drawn sleigh, head to the entrance singing "COME ON CHRISTMAS", exposing the madness know as holiday shopping.

ELFETTES

One more week to Christmas, everybody/ And
I can't wait

They are greeted by a SALVATION ARMY SANTA ringing his bell and collecting donations. The area quickly becomes populated by Christmas shoppers.

ELFETTES

Well, there's just something about this
time of year/ You can feel the excitement
in the air/ Everyone's hangin' with family
and friends/ And it's making you feel like
a kid once again

INT. MALL - CONTINUOUS - DAY

The Elfettes mingle through the Christmas shoppers who join in the DANCE NUMBER.

ELFETTES

Steal a kiss under the mistletoe/ While
old Bing sings, "Let It Snow, Let It
Snow"/ The only thing that's left on my
Christmas list is/ I'm hopin' to catch a
peek of old' St. Nick

The Elfettes catch up to Cooper, Teresa and Jesse heading through the mall. Cooper wears his glasses instead of contacts, is unshaven and has his hood up to disguise himself.

COOPER

Come on, Christmas/ I don't know why
you're taking so long, Christmas

JESSE

I've been waiting all year for you to get
here/ And I can't take another second,
can't you hear me beggin'

TERESA

Hurry up, Santa Claus/ Here's my number
just in case your reindeer get lost/ I
sure wouldn't mind, if you're early this
time

COOPER, TERESA, JESSE

So, come on, come on, come on, Christmas

Jesse points to the Santa Kiosk on the lower level and pulls Teresa and Cooper. They weave in and out of the dancing shoppers.

COOPER

Hearts are racing all around the world/
Smiling faces on the boys and girls

TERESA

Waiting just to hear those sleigh bells
ring/ Singing, come on, Christmas

JESSE

Do your thing

As Teresa and Jesse go down the escalator, Cooper is on the up side walking against the steps to keep up with them. He does a handstand on the rails, then hops over to their side.

COOPER

Come on, Christmas/ I don't know why
you're taking so long, Christmas/ Well,
I've been waiting all year for you to get
here/ And I can't take another second,
can't you hear me beggin'

ALL

Hurry up, Santa Claus/ Here's my number
just in case old Rudolph gets lost/ I sure
wouldn't mind, if you're early this time/
So, come on, come on, Come on Christmas.

SONG ENDS as they pass a fragrance store. Jesse's stutter seems to have lessened.

TERESA

I need to get something in here.

JESSE

No, Mom. Santa.

TERESA

I'll just be a minute.

COOPER

I can take him.

TERESA

(overly concerned)
I don't think so.

COOPER
It's twenty feet. What could happen?

JESSE
Yeah. C.. C... Cooper will take care
of me.

TERESA
Who's going to take care of Cooper?

COOPER
I promise I won't break any laws.

TERESA
(threatening)
You guard him with your life.

As she goes into the store, Jesse excitedly pulls Cooper.

COOPER
Slow down.

Jesse pulls hard and his hand slips out of Cooper's, sending him crashing to the ground. He scrapes his hand and cries. Cooper helps him up.

COOPER (CONT'D)
It's OK. You're not hurt.

Cooper sees blood.

COOPER (CONT'D)
OK, maybe a little bit. Come on.

INT. BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER - DAY

Jesse is sitting on the sink. Cooper washes off the scrape.

COOPER
I used to take care of my little
brother when he was your age. He was
always falling down.
(secretive)
Sometimes I pushed him, but don't
tell anybody.

He wraps a folded up paper towel around Jesse's hand as a bandage.

COOPER (CONT'D)
Good as new.

JESSE
You have to kiss it.

COOPER

What.

JESSE

To make it better.

Cooper appeases Jesse, then lifts him off the counter.

COOPER

Your mom's right, I should travel
with a first aid kit.

JESSE

My butt is wet.

Cooper holds Jesse's butt up to the hot air hand dryer.

COOPER

Listen, let's not bring up this
incident to your mom. Deal?

JESSE

Deal.

They head out.

COOPER

But just in case she asks, tell
her...

INT. MALL, SANTA'S KIOSK - MOMENTS LATER - DAY

Teresa arrives and searches for Cooper and Jesse. Panic sets in when she can't find them. She approaches one of Santa's Helpers, CHELSEA (19).

TERESA

Excuse me, have you seen a little boy
dressed in....

Cooper and Jesse come up to her.

COOPER

We're right here.

She grabs and kisses Jesse.

TERESA

Where were you? I was worried.

COOPER

The bathroom.

JESSE

Look mommy.

To Cooper's dismay, Jesse holds up his paper towel wrapped hand.

TERESA

What happened?

JESSE

I had a fight with the ground. I won.

Teresa shoots a look at Cooper.

TERESA

Makes a mother proud.

JESSE

C-Cooper made it better.

TERESA

What happened?

COOPER

Accident.

JESSE

Coo-Cooper fixed it.

Cooper takes the slightly bloodied paper towel and puts it in his pocket.

They are now at the front of the queue. Cooper points to SANTA.

COOPER

(to Teresa)

You go first.

TERESA

I'm not going to sit on Santa's lap.

JESSE

Why n-not mommy?

TERESA

I'm too old.

COOPER

No you're not.

(yells out)

Hey, Santa, is she too old?

SANTA
No, you're never too old.

COOPER
See.

TERESA
No. I'm not doing this.

COOPER
Go on.

He nudges her.

JESSE
Go on, Mommy.

TERESA
I don't want to.

Cooper picks her up, fireman style, and heads towards Santa.

TERESA (CONT'D)
What are you doing. Stop. Put me
down. Down, now.

He does. Right on Santa's lap.

SANTA
And what's your name young lady?

Cooper snaps pictures with his phone.

TERESA
(quietly)
Teresa.

SANTA
Santa forgot his hearing aid. You
need to speak a little louder.

TERESA
(not happy)
Teresa.

SANTA
Well, Teresa, what do you want for
Christmas.

TERESA
A hand mixer, a new kitchen and peace
on earth.

SANTA
Will you settle for the mixer?

TERESA
Can I go now?

Santa releases her and signals for Jesse to approach. Teresa stands nearby as Cooper continues snapping photos.

SANTA
And what's your name?

JESSE
J-Jesse Ricardo Mendes.

SANTA
Well, Jesse. Have we been a good boy?

JESSE
Uh-huh.

Cooper moves behind Santa's helpers to get a picture from that angle. CINDY (12), nervously approaches him.

CINDY
Are you Coop?

Cooper tightens his hood around his face, and puts a finger to his lips.

COOPER
Shhh.

She hands him a piece of paper and a pen.

CINDY
Can I have your autograph?

Cooper signs it as her mother takes a picture.

ANGLE ON SANTA

Teresa is close enough to hear Jesse and Santa.

SANTA
And what else would you like for
Christmas, Jesse?

JESSE
A Leap Frog Ultra.

Santa looks at Teresa who gives a subtle nod.

SANTA

I think I can handle that. Is that it?

Jesse thinks a moment, then...

JESSE

I wa-want Cooper to be my daddy.

Santa is at a loss for words and glances at Teresa who is overwhelmed.

SANTA

Well Jesse, Santa doesn't bring people for gifts.

Teresa sees that Cooper has been made. He is now engulfed by admiring fans of various ages. He obviously enjoys the attention until a TV Camera and TMZ REPORTER get in his face.

TMZ REPORTER

Cooper, how are you enjoying your stay in Chicago.

COOPER

Good.

TMZ REPORTER

You visiting family?

COOPER

Yes.

TMZ REPORTER

Who's the mystery woman you were with the other night?

COOPER

No..no comment.

TMZ REPORTER

Isn't that here over there?

COOPER

No comment.

TMZ REPORTER

Come on, your fans want to know.

COOPER

Sh.. Sh...She's nobo... No comment.

A STORE SECURITY GUARD arrives to help Cooper escape.

INT. WATSON LIVING ROOM - DAY

Cooper, off into his own world, plays the grand piano. Emily quietly enters and enjoys the classical piece. Cooper finally notices her.

EMILY

That's lovely. To think, you could have been a concert pianist.

Cooper quickly switches to rock and roll. Emily groans then goes to an intercom.

EMILY (CONT'D)

(into intercom)

Parker, I'm here.

Cooper stops playing.

EMILY (CONT'D)

Parker said you boys need to talk to me. I'm actually surprised to see you here. I thought you just showed up occasionally to sleep.

She crosses to the kitchen. Cooper follows.

COOPER

We watched a movie the other night.

EMILY

I watched. You slept.

INT. WATSON KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS - DAY

Cooper and Emily enter the kitchen.

EMILY

Have you been running around with your friend...

(distasteful)

Randy.

COOPER

No. He's not making it home for Christmas.

EMILY

Good. He'd only get you into trouble.

COOPER

I don't need him to get me into trouble.

EMILY

No, you are quite proficient at it.
So what have you been doing?

Emily goes to the refrigerator and gathers makings for her lunch. Cooper sits on a stool at the counter.

COOPER

Been hanging with a girl.

EMILY

Haven't you learned to stay away from groupies. You've already been accused of sexual misconduct four times.

COOPER

Five. False allegations. I don't have sex with groupies, and it's OK to grope according to Former President Trump.

EMILY

You're not funny.

COOPER

And she's not a groupie. She didn't even know who I was until her baby sitter recognized me.

EMILY

Baby sitter? She has a child? What else do you know about her? Where does she live? What does she do?

COOPER

She's a manager at Walmart.

EMILY

Are you kidding? You need to be with someone a little higher on the food chain. Someone like Jennifer Lawrence or Taylor Swift. Give me her name, I'll have Stephen do a background check.

COOPER

Are you nuts?

EMILY

No, but you are if you think I'm going to let you get serious with someone we don't know anything about.

COOPER

I know she's great. I really like being with her. And she likes being with me. And not because I'm a celebrity. I think I'm in love.

EMILY

You're too young. You don't want to make a mistake and be saddled with a child at your age.

COOPER

Like you did?

EMILY

Times were different back then. And although I was young, I was a responsible adult.

Parker quietly enters and sits next to Cooper.

COOPER

I'm responsible.

She throws down a magazine with cover pictures of Cooper in the crashed rental car with attention paid to the beer and joint.

EMILY

So I suppose leaving the scene of an accident and abandoning a rented car was responsible.

COOPER

It's a Korean car... they're made to be disposable.

Parker snickers. Emily shoots him a look. He immediately stops.

EMILY

Instead of some smart ass remark why don't you try taking some responsibility for your actions. I'm getting tired of always cleaning up your messes.

COOPER

I'll take care of it.

EMILY

I already did.

Emily crosses to the table.

EMILY (CONT'D)
So what do you boys want to talk
about?

Cooper looks at Parker who remains silent.

COOPER
Parker?

Parker bites his lip. Emily stares at Parker.

EMILY
Parker?

PARKER
That was it. That Cooper is in love.


COOPER
Didn't you have something to tell
Mom? About you and your roommate?

PARKER
Ahh... Ahh.... Oh, yeah. He has to
work, but will be flying in on
Christmas Eve day. See ya.

Parker slips out on Cooper's surprised look.

INT. PARKER'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER - DAY

Parker broods at his desk. He pulls out his phone and glances
at a picture of him and his roommate, Jordan. He bangs his
head on the desk several times. Cooper barges in.

COOPER 
You wuss. Get down there and tell her
now.

They sing "ANGEL WITH A SHOTGUN."

CHORUS (O.S.) COOPER
Oh yeah, Oh yeah, Oh yeah, Oh Grow a pair.
yeah.

COOPER
*Be an angel with a shotgun, shotgun,
shotgun/ Angel with a shotgun, shotgun,
shotgun*

Cooper turns Parker to face him.

COOPER

Get out your guns, battle's begun/ are you
a saint, or a sinner?/ If love's a fight,
than you should die/ with your heart on a
trigger

Parker looks at the picture on the phone.

PARKER

They say before you start a war/ you
better know what you're fighting for/ Well
baby, you are all that I adore/ if love is
what you need/ a soldier I can be

Gaining courage, Parker rises with strength and makes his way
to the door.

COOPER

Be an angel with a shotgun/ fighting til'
the war's won/ Don't matter if heaven
won't take you back

INT. COOPER'S HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS - DAY

Parker heads to the stairs.

PARKER

I'll throw away my faith, babe, just to
keep you safe/ Don't you know you're
everything I have?/ ..and I, wanna live,
not just survive/ tonight.

Parker slides down the banister.

PARKER

ooooohhhhhhhh, oooooohhhhhh

Cooper does the same.

COOPER

whoa whoa oooh whoa oooohhhh

INT. WATSON FOYER - CONTINUOUS - DAY

Pumped, Parker struts to the living room, trailed by Cooper.

COOPER AND PARKER

whoa whoa oooh whoa

INT. WATSON LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS - DAY

Parker stops at the dining room entrance. Cooper gets him to
stand up straight.

COOPER

You're an angel with a shotgun/ fighting
til' the wars won/ Don't matter if heaven
won't take you back

INT. WATSON DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS - DAY

Like Don Quixote, Parker forges on.

PARKER

I'm an angel with a shotgun fighting til'
the wars won/ I don't care if heaven won't
take me back/ I'll throw away my faith,
babe, just to keep you safe/
Don't you know you're everything I have?

COOPER

Be an angel with a shotgun

Be an angel with a shotgun

PARKER

*..and I need to live, not
just survive, tonight*

*..and I'm gonna have, have,
have my way tonight*

PARKER

They say before you start a war/ you
better know what you're fighting for/ Well
baby, you are all that I adore,

Parker triumphantly pushes the swinging door.

INT. WATSON KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS - DAY

Stronger than ever, Parker enters.

PARKER

If love's is what you need/ a soldier I
will be.

SONG ENDS.

EMILY

(on phone)

Don't give me that. He does it my way
or he's fired.

She hangs up and turns to see Parker.

EMILY (CONT'D)

(snaps)

What!

He bites his lip.

EMILY (CONT'D)
Sorry. What is it?

PARKER
(chickens out)
Jordan's plane doesn't arrive till
late afternoon, so can dinner be a
little later than usual?

He turns and walks out.

INT. COOPER'S BEDROOM - DAY

Cooper lies on his bed playing the guitar when he sees Parker sneaking past the doorway.

COOPER
Hey. Did you tell Mom?

Parker steps in.

PARKER
Yeah, of course. But don't mention it
to her. I said you didn't know. She'd
have a hissy fit if she knew I told
you first.

COOPER
I'm proud of you. I need another
favor.

Cooper hands Parker an extraordinarily large stack of hundred dollar bills. Parker's eyes bulge.

PARKER
Who do I need to kill for this?


INT. TERESA'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Jesse is playing on his keyboard. The same eight notes. Heather does her homework next to him. Teresa rushes in and kisses Jesse.

TERESA
I'm off to work.

On her way out, she retrieves a stack of mail that was put through the door slot. Before placing it on a table, she opens an envelope with the WATSON FASHIONS logo on it and removes a check.

EXT. WATSON HOUSE - DAY

 The massive yard is decorated with an elaborate display of holiday cheer. Holiday figurines resembling The Elfettes SING "CHRISTMAS TIME".

ELFETTES FIGURINES

Fa la la la la, fa la la la la la la
Fa la la la la, fa la la la la la la

INT. WATSON LIVING ROOM - DAY

The living room is overly decorated with Christmas cheer. Emily, putting the finishing touches on the decor, joins in the singing.

EMILY

When I was young every Christmas Eve
I could not sleep/ Trying to catch that
old St. Nick/ leaving presents under my
tree/ And every year I'd fall asleep
laying in my bed/ Dreaming of a million
sugarplums/ Dancing in my head

Oh how much joy it is at Christmas time/
The spirit of giving in our lives/ Oh, oh
how much joy it brings to see the ones you
love/ This year's gonna be the best
Christmas because

Emily repeatedly arranges ornaments on the tree, steps back for a view, then rearranges. Ornaments that resemble The Elfettes join in the singing.

EMILY & ELFETTES ORNAMENTS

I'll have my family and Christmas cheer
(oh ooh)/ Peace and goodwill to all men
(ooh)/ Everybody is home for Christmas/
Everybody is home

ELFETTES ORNAMENTS

Everybody is home

EMILY

Sneaking a kiss under the mistletoe/ I
want a white Christmas so let it snow

ELFETTES ORNAMENTS

Let it snow

EMILY

Everybody is home for Christmas
Everybody is home it's Christmas time

As Emily crosses to kitchen she straightens out pictures and chatskas that are askew.

EMILY & ELFETTES ORNAMENTS

Fa la la la la, fa la la la la la la
Fa la la la la, fa la la la la la la

INT. WATSON KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS - DAY

Parker, at the counter, makes a "dagwood" sandwich.

PARKER

(raps)

Open your heart now/ This is the time for
us to give/ The world needs love now/ So
live and let live/ Families all here/ The
spirit is good cheer/ The sound of
carolers ringing sweet in my ear/
everything is all fine/ You know why, it's
Christmas time, what

Emily enters.

EMILY

Oh how much joy it is at Christmas time/
The spirit of giving is in our lives/ Oh,
oh how much joy it brings to see the ones
you love/ This year's gonna be the best
Christmas because

EMILY & PARKER

There'll be family (family)/ and Christmas
cheer (oh)/ Peace and goodwill to all men/
Everybody is home for Christmas (ohh)/
Everybody is home (everybody is home)/
Sneaking a kiss under the mistletoe

I want a white Christmas so let it snow/
Everybody is home for Christmas/ Everybody
is home/ It's Christmas time

SONG ENDS

EMILY

Grandma and Gramp will be here
tomorrow. I'm so excited.

PARKER

Me too.

EMILY

Did you tell your roommate that
they'll be in the guest room and
he'll have to share yours?

PARKER
It won't be a problem.

EMILY
Did you buy a blow up mattress?

Parker gives her a kiss.

EMILY (CONT'D)
What was that for?

PARKER
'Cause I love you.

Emily smiles. Parker bites his lip.

EMILY
And I love you too. Now why are you
buttering me up?

PARKER
Just because I kiss you, you think
I'm buttering you up?

She looks at him.

PARKER (CONT'D)
Ahhh... ahhh.

EMILY
Parker.

PARKER
Promise you won't get mad.

EMILY
What is it?

Parker takes a few deep breaths, trying to get the courage to speak.

EMILY (CONT'D)
Well?

PARKER
I forgot to get the mattress and
spent the money.

EMILY
What was it you were saying about
being responsible?

PARKER
That was Coop. I'm not there yet.

She holds out more cash.

EMILY
Here. Go get one.

He can't get out fast enough. Emily notices a cell phone on the counter.

EMILY (CONT'D)
Parker, your phone.

She holds up the cell phone. He holds up his.

PARKER
Must be Coop's.

EMILY
He's here?

PARKER
In the shower.

Parker leaves. Emily looks at the phone. She decides to check the call log and finds the name "Teresa Mendes". A look of concern overcomes her. After a moment of contemplation, she dials the number.

INT. WALMART BREAK ROOM - CONTINUOUS - DAY

At the vending machines, Teresa sees her caller ID - Cooper. She answers her phone.

TERESA
Hi. I'm at work. What's up?

EMILY (O.S.)
(on phone)
Teresa?... This is Emily Watson...

Teresa's expression quickly changes.

TERESA
Mrs. Watson?

Teresa double checks the caller ID.

EMILY
We need to talk.

On Teresa's concerned look....

INT. TERESA'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Jesse is watching TV. The DOORBELL RINGS. Teresa enters from the kitchen.

TERESA
Jesse. Go play in your room.

As Jesse crosses, Teresa notices his pants pulled down to his crotch.

TERESA (CONT'D)
Pull your pants up.

Teresa waits to open the door until Jesse has disappeared. Cooper enters.

COOPER
I got your text.

Teresa leads him to the sofa.

TERESA
Have a seat.

He notices her somber look.

COOPER
What's going on?

TERESA
(sighs heavily)
Cooper, we need to stop.

COOPER
Stop what?

TERESA
Us. Me and you.

COOPER
What?

TERESA
I can't see you anymore.

COOPER
Sure you can.

He takes her head in his hands and positions it to face him.

COOPER (CONT'D)
See, I'm right here.

TERESA
I'm serious. This isn't working.

COOPER
What isn't working?

TERESA
Do I have to spell it out?

COOPER
I don't like where this is goin' and
I don't wanna to hear it.

TERESA
Well you need to.

He plugs his ears with his fingers.

COOPER
La la la la la la la la la la.

TERESA
Cooper. Grow up.

COOPER
(with attitude)
OK, I'm listening.

TERESA
I feel that it is in my best
interest... and Jesse's... that we
stop dating.

COOPER
Why?

TERESA
It's complicated.

COOPER
Then speak slowly so even I can
understand.

TERESA
I've had a wonderful time and really
enjoyed being with you.

COOPER
This has been the best time of my
life. So what's the problem?

TERESA

Look at your life style and look at mine. Different worlds. It just can't work.

COOPER

Why?

TERESA

Cooper, I saw how you loved the notoriety at the mall.

COOPER

Is it wrong to enjoy being appreciated? I've waited my whole life for it.

TERESA

Then why are you here? Just to fill the void till you return to your tour? You'll be leaving next week and we'll never see you again. And that hurts. And the longer we prolong this, the more it will hurt.

COOPER

No. You can come with me. Don't you like to travel?

TERESA

You expect us to end our lives here and become roadies? I'm not going to raise Jesse in a green room.

COOPER

Then I won't go on tour.

TERESA

Is that really an option?

COOPER

Remember on our first date, you asked what it was like in my world?

TERESA

A-ha.

COOPER

What did I say?

TERESA

You said you love performing.

COOPER

But?

TERESA

But you were exhausted and tired of living out of suitcases.

COOPER

And that I'd like to go solo and spend more time writing music and less touring. Remember?

TERESA

Yes. But you're scared to death about going it on your own.

COOPER

Teresa, I love you. I'll do whatever it takes to work this out.

TERESA

You're making this more difficult than it needs to be.

COOPER

Did you think I was just going to say 'OK, see you later?'

TERESA

Actually, I did.

She crosses to the door and opens it.

COOPER

Teresa, can we please talk about this?

TERESA

There's nothing more to say.

She turns her back to him to hide her tears.

COOPER

I don't understand.

TERESA

You don't need to. Just respect my decision and go.

COOPER

But....


TERESA
 (cut him off)
 Please. Leave.

He reluctantly steps out.

TERESA (CONT'D)
 I wish you nothing but the best.

COOPER
 You have a funny way of showing it.

She closes the door behind him.

EXT. TERESA'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS - DAY 

Cooper gathers himself, not sure if he should scream or cry, then angrily storms off.

INT. TERESA'S LIVING ROOM - SIMULTANEOUS ACTION

Teresa, still at the door, cries. She turns to see Jesse standing in the hallway. He's crying.

JESSE
 I h.. h-h.-hate you.

He runs to his room and slams the door.

INT. WATSON LIVING ROOM - MORNING

Cooper, at piano, looks like he hasn't showered for weeks, sings "ENDINGS".

COOPER (V.O.)
 Just can't believe this time is at its
 end/ Should have known better than to
 care/ Part of me's denying that the story
 ends/ There's nowhere left to go but far
 from here

A bottle of bourbon and a burning joint sit on top of the piano amid the numerous pictures that surround one of seven year old Cooper sitting on Santa's lap.

COOPER
 And the night is starting to get longer/
 It's hard to hold on till the morning/
 When did the walls begin to come down/ Why
 did they fall... without a sound/ I have
 lost someone before, but this is the
 hardest fall/ Cause I loved you most of
 all

Cooper's phone on the piano has a selfie of Cooper and Teresa on a horse drawn carriage. The image comes to life taking us into:

FLASHBACKS

CHICAGO STREETS -- Cooper and Teresa take a romantic horse drawn carriage ride through the snowy streets.

RESTAURANT -- Teresa mashes her food together and takes a bite.

LINCOLN PARK CONSERVATORY -- Teresa shares her love of The Poinsettia Show.

COOPER (V.O.)

I lay awake at night and listen to the
rain/ Falling from the sky that just won't
clear/ What I wouldn't give to stop this
thundering/ Everything would change if you
were here

DESERTED HIGHWAY - Teresa stops at the same intersection from her first encounter with Cooper. She waits patiently. She looks in both direction and sees blackness. She looks to Cooper for approval and goes against the red light. Cooper high fives her.

LINCOLN PARK ZOO -- Cooper, Teresa and Jesse enjoy the Zoo lights.

CHICAGO STREETS -- Cooper and Teresa share a horse drawn carriage ride with Jesse.

PARK -- Teresa and Cooper kiss, grossing Jesse out.

TERESA'S LIVING ROOM -- Cooper tickles Jesse.

MALL - Jesse on Santa's lap.

COOPER (V.O.)

And the nights just getting longer/ I
can't hold on till the morning/ And all
the walls just falling down/ And I'm still
here, but you're not around

ENDING AT:

INT. WATSON LIVING ROOM - MORNING

END FLASHBACKS. SONG CONTINUES. The joint has fallen from the ashtray and damages the piano.

The picture on his phone of Jesse on Santa's lap sits next to the framed photograph of Cooper and Santa. The similarities are uncanny.

COOPER

I have lost someone before, but this is
the hardest fall/ Cause I loved you most
of all/ I loved you, I loved you most of
all

EXT. WATSON HOUSE - LATER THAT DAY

Establishing Shot.

INT. WATSON LIVING ROOM - DAY

SONG ENDS. Emily enters with BURT and IRMA, her parents. She is appalled at the condition of the room.

IRMA

Looks like a hurricane hit.

EMILY

Yes, hurricane Cooper.

She goes to the intercom.

EMILY (CONT'D)

(into intercom)

Cooper. Get down here. NOW.

IRMA

Don't worry about it, dear.

EMILY

I spent all morning getting the place
perfect for you.

She sees Irma straightening the room.

EMILY (CONT'D)

No mom. You relax.

Drunk, a naked Cooper staggers down the stairs playing the guitar and singing "*The Chipmunk Song (Christmas Don't Be Late)*" in his best chipmunk voice. His low slung guitar covers his privates.

COOPER

Grandma. Gramp.

His shocked audience is dumbfounded as he bends over to hug them, exposing his rear end to Emily.

She swats it with a magazine from the table. The SLAPPING sound draws everyone's attention except Cooper's.

IRMA
(embarrassed)
Nice to... see you, dear.

EMILY
Go upstairs now.

COOPER
Make up your mind. You told me to come down here.

She holds up the magazine to swat him again.

COOPER (CONT'D)
I'm going.

EMILY
You are pathetic. You'd better get yourself together for Christmas Eve dinner.

He reprises his song as he saunters up the stairs. As he disappears, Burt breaks into laughter. Irma smacks him on the arm.

IRMA
Don't encourage him.

BURT
Maybe I should try manscaping.

IRMA
Won't help.

INT. TERESA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Teresa is sitting dejected on the sofa. Maria comes from the hallway.

MARIA
He's finally asleep. He's still not talking.

TERESA
You were right. I shouldn't have let Jesse get attached to him.

MARIA
Why didn't you just tell Cooper the truth.

TERESA 

I made a deal. I can't breach a contract. Not at the price of my son's future.

MARIA

No, at the price of everybody's misery.

TERESA

Jesse will recover.

MARIA

And how about you?

TERESA

I'll be fine. I just need to move on.

MARIA

And how are you going to do that?

Teresa gives it some thought and answers by singing "*HARD CANDY CHRISTMAS*".

TERESA

Hey, maybe I'll dye my hair/ Maybe I'll
move somewhere/ Maybe I'll sell my car/
Or I'll drive so far/ They'll all lose
track/ Me, I'll bounce right back

Maybe I'll sleep real late/ Maybe I'll
gain some weight/ Maybe I'll clear my
junk/ Maybe I'll just pig out on apple
pie/ Me, I'll be just/ Fine and dandy/

Lord it's like a hard candy Christmas/ I'm
barely getting through tomorrow/ But still
I won't let/ Sorrow bring me way down

TERESA AND MARIA

I'll (you'll) be fine and dandy/ Lord it's
like a hard candy Christmas/ I'm (You're)
barely getting through tomorrow/ But still
I (you) won't (can't)let/ Sorrow get me
(you) way down

MARIA

Maybe you can learn to sew

TERESA (CONT'D)

Maybe I should just lie low

MARIA (CONT'D)

Maybe you can hit the bars/ Maybe you'll
count the stars until dawn/ You, you must
go on

TERESA

Maybe I'll settle down

MARIA (CONT'D)

Maybe you should leave town/ Maybe you'll
have more fun/ Maybe you'll meet someone/
This might be a sign

TERESA

Me, I'll be just/ Fine and dandy/
Lord it's like a hard candy Christmas/ I
just need to get through tomorrow/ But
still I won't let/ Sorrow bring me way
down

TERESA AND MARIA

I'll (you'll) be fine and dandy/ Lord it's
like a hard candy Christmas/ I'm (You're)
barely getting through tomorrow/ But still
I (you) won't let/ Sorrow bring me (You)
way down

TERESA

Cause I'll be fine

MARIA

You'll be fine

TERESA

Oh, I'll be fine

Will she?

INT. COOPER'S BEDROOM - DAY

SONG ENDS. The room is a sty. The bed is covered with junk
food wrappers, empty liquor bottles and beer cans.

Cooper, naked, sits on the edge of the bed in fetal position,
his face buried in a pillow that sits on his lap. A KNOCK on
DOOR.

COOPER

Go away.

PARKER (O.S)

Can I come in?

COOPER

No.

Parker gingerly enters.

COOPER (CONT'D)

I said go away.

PARKER

A tree just fell on your car.

COOPER

Who cares?

Parker tentatively comes up to the bed.

PARKER

Are you crying?

COOPER

No.

PARKER

You're crying.

COOPER

Shut up and get out.

Concerned, Parker clears a spot on the bed to sit on.

PARKER

I've never seen you cry before.

COOPER

I'm not crying. I'm fine.

PARKER

If you're fine, why have you been holed up in your room for two days.

COOPER

I hate my life.

PARKER

I can see how being rich and famous could be a downer.

COOPER

I got dumped.

PARKER

Big deal. What good is locking yourself in your room and drinking yourself blind?

COOPER
It makes me feel better.

PARKER
If it makes you feel better, why are you crying?

COOPER
I'm not crying.

PARKER
I know what will cheer you up.

COOPER
A noose?

PARKER
Remember when we were little how you would get me to stop crying?

COOPER
Yeah.

PARKER
Let's do it.

COOPER
No.

PARKER
C'mon.

COOPER
I don't wanna.

PARKER
Yes you do.

COOPER
No I don't.

PARKER
(sings)
If you're happy and you know it clap your hands.

Cooper wraps the pillow around his head.

PARKER (CONT'D)
If you're happy and you know it clap your hands.

Still Nothing. Parker claps.

PARKER (CONT'D)
 If you're happy and you know it ,
 then your face will surely show it,
 if you're happy and you know it clap
 your hands.

Parker takes Cooper's hands and claps them.

PARKER (CONT'D)
 If you're happy and you know it yell
 hooray.

Parker jabs Cooper.

PARKER (CONT'D)
 Hooray?...

Nothing.

PARKER (CONT'D)
 If you're happy and your know it yell
 hooray.
 (pokes Cooper)
 Hooray!

COOPER
 (unenthusiastic)
 Hooray.

PARKER
 If you're happy and you know it, then
 your face will surely show it, if
 you're happy and you know it yell
 hooray.

PARKER (CONT'D)	COOPER (half hearted)
Hooray.	Hooray.

Cooper collapses his head back into the pillow.

PARKER (CONT'D)
 So why did she flush you?

Talking into the pillow, Cooper's answer is inaudible.

PARKER (CONT'D)
 What?

A muffled reply. Parker lifts Cooper's head by his hair.

COOPER
And... she made up some lame excuse.
I just don't get it.

PARKER
Is she worth fighting for?

COOPER
I can't remember ever being this
happy.

Cooper shows Parker a cell phone picture of Teresa and Cooper taken at the restaurant.

PARKER
So why are you sitting here?

COOPER
It's hopeless.

Cooper scans through photos on his phone.

PARKER
Weren't you the one who told me to be
an angel with a shotgun?

COOPER
Yeah.

PARKER
Then go fix it.

COOPER
I don't know what to fix.

PARKER
Well, you're not going to figure it
out by drinking.

COOPER
Look.

He shows Parker a picture of Jesse on Santa's lap taken at the Mall.

COOPER (CONT'D)
So cute.

PARKER
Yeah. You've always been cute.

COOPER
That's not me. That's Jesse.

PARKER
Kinda looks like you.
(joking)
Maybe he's yours.

COOPER
Nah. Wait. What?

Cooper stares at the picture then has an epiphany.

COOPER (CONT'D)
I think I got it.

He scrambles to the dresser to find the blood stained paper towel from the mall.


COOPER (CONT'D)
You're a genius. Thanks.

Cooper hugs Parker.

PARKER
For what?

COOPER
Solving the problem.

PARKER
Great. Now either you need to put on some clothes, or we need to break the hug.

EXT. DNA DIAGNOSTICS CENTER - CHRISTMAS EVE MORNING 

Cooper, still grungy, rushes to the front door to find a sign that says "Closed Christmas Eve". He disappointedly goes back to his car.

EXT. ENGLEWOOD COMMUNITY CENTER - CHRISTMAS EVE MORNING

A large queue of homeless families eagerly enter the center. The line overflows to the vacant lot next door, which now has a "SOLD" sign on it.

Most families consist of a single mother and children. There are a few single fathers and a few with both parents.

INT. ENGLEWOOD COMMUNITY CENTER - CHRISTMAS EVE MORNING

Homeless families populate the center as The Children's Choir assemble on stage to SING "*Christmas Canon.*"

There is a table set up with eggnog and hot chocolate.
Another has chips and dips.

A very distraught Teresa supervises the setting up of the
food serving tables.

At the check in table, Maria and VOLUNTEERS hand out numbered
meal tickets to the families.

Each child picks a number from fish bowls. Boy tickets are
blue and girl tickets are pink.

HOMELESS MOTHER

God bless you for doing this.

MARIA

It's the least we can do.

HOMELESS GIRL

(referring to her ticket)

What's this?

MARIA

That corresponds to a gift you'll get
after dinner.

The girl can't hide her excitement.

CHILDREN'S CHOIR

This night, we pray/ Our lives, will show/
This dream, he had/ Each child, still
knows

INT. WATSON GARAGE - CHRISTMAS EVE MORNING

SONG CONTINUES. Cooper pulls into the garage driving Emily's
Mercedes. As he gets out of the car, he drops the paper
towel. In retrieving it, he bumps his head on the shelf of
file boxes labeled with different tax years. He decides to
investigate.

Inside one of the boxes he finds a smaller box of cancelled
checks. He pulls out one made out to "Teresa Mendes".

CHILDREN'S CHOIR (V.O.)

On this night, on this night/ on this very
Christmas night/ On this night, on this
night/ on this very Christmas night/ On
this night, on this night/ on this very
Christmas night/

INT. WATSON LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

SONG ENDS. The Christmas Eve party is in progress. Dozens of extended family members socialize. When Cooper explodes in, Emily, the perfect host is appalled by his appearance.

EMILY

You didn't clean up.

He holds up the cancelled check.

COOPER

Explain.

Busted.

COOPER (CONT'D)

How can you play with peoples' lives like that? Who made you god?

She calmly stares as he has gotten the room's attention.

EMILY

Shall we take this to another room, or do you want to air our dirty laundry and risk embarrassment?

Cooper sees everyone staring at them and ushers her to the kitchen.

INT. WATSON KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Cooper starts in before they get settled.

COOPER

Explain this.

Emily remains her calm self.

EMILY

Sometimes parents need to do unpleasant things to protect their children.

COOPER

Maybe they don't need protecting.

EMILY

Have you looked in the mirror lately?

COOPER

You just always need everything to be neat and tidy. As long as it's your way you're happy.

EMILY

You have no idea. You think it's been easy for me? Keeping this secret from my family. Not being able to dote on my own grandchild.

COOPER

It's always about you, isn't it?

EMILY

It's never about me. It's always been about my sons. You try raising two boys alone. One that's afraid of his own shadow and the other always telling you what a piece of crap you are.

COOPER

Parker's not afraid of his shadow, he's afraid of you.

She is taken aback by the revelation.

COOPER (CONT'D)

(holding up check)

And this deception proves I'm right.

EMILY

I did what I thought was best for my son. I'm not perfect.

COOPER

Whoa. Hear that world. Emily Watson's not perfect.

EMILY

I wasn't about to let my underage son make a decision that would alter the rest of his life.

COOPER

Well I'm not underage now. And I want it to alter my life because it's sucked until now.

Cooper storms out, she's on his tail.

EMILY

And it's not always about you either.

INT. WATSON DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

She stops Cooper in his tracks.

COOPER

What?

EMILY

Jesse is not your son.

The party is once again silenced.

COOPER

Huh?

EMILY

He's not your son. He's Parker's.

He is dumfounded.

EMILY (CONT'D)

You don't have family exclusivity on screwing up.

Cooper takes a deep sigh and lets it sink in.

INT. ENGLEWOOD COMMUNITY CENTER - CHRISTMAS EVE MORNING

As the Children's Choir finish a song, a catatonic Teresa crosses to the microphone. She forces herself to be up tempo.

TERESA

Merry Christmas everyone. Welcome to this years' Christmas Eve social. Please hang on to your family ticket, you'll need that for the raffle after dessert. We're going to start serving dinner in a moment and call you up in groups by that number. While waiting for your turn, enjoy some appetizers and drinks with some holiday cheer from the Children's Choir.

As she walks away, she goes back to her depressed mode.

EXT. WATSON HOUSE - CHRISTMAS EVE DAY

The circular driveway is full of cars. Parker and JORDAN (19) cross to the front door.

PARKER

I'll introduce you to my Mom then we need to get changed and head out.

JORDAN

How are you going to introduce me? Your roommate that just happens to be gay?

PARKER
OK. I'll tell her tonight after the
party. Promise.

INT. WATSON LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The noisy party is in full swing. Cooper, now cleaned up chats with some guests. When Parker and Jordan enter, the room gets silent. Parker notices all eyes on him.

PARKER
What? What's going on?

EMILY
Kitchen.

PARKER
(to Jordan)
Be right back.

INT. WATSON KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS - DAY

Joined by Cooper, Parker follows Emily.

EMILY
Have a seat.

PARKER
You told her?

Cooper shakes his head.

EMILY
You know that the woman Cooper's been
seeing has a child, right?

PARKER
Yeah. Cooper thinks he's the baby
daddy.

EMILY
Well he's not.

PARKER
That's a relief, huh?

EMILY
You are.

PARKER
(chuckling)
No way.

EMILY

Yes. Sophomore year. Party at a house in Englewood.

PARKER

Not me.

EMILY

Teresa's father had your ID.

PARKER

I was always losing my ID. Remember? That's why you got me the wallet with a chain.

COOPER

DNA doesn't lie.

PARKER

Then it's wrong.

EMILY

We didn't do a DNA test.

PARKER

That was dumb... Sorry.

EMILY

We didn't feel it was necessary. Her father also identified the giraffe birthmark on your butt. He saw it when he chased you out of the house.

PARKER

Oh, I remember him. It took me three blocks to shake him. But I didn't have sex with her. I swear. I just passed out on her bed.

EMILY

We just assumed...

COOPER

...assumed the worst. As usual.

EMILY

So you're telling me I've been supporting someone else's child for all these years.

COOPER

Payback's a bitch, ain't it.

Cooper stops at the door before exiting.

COOPER (CONT'D)
And I can 'assume' you will continue
the support til Jesse is eighteen.

EMILY
Only until we get DNA results.

COOPER
No. You have a contract. She didn't
break it.

She considers it and nods.

EMILY
You're right.

COOPER
Great. Problem's solved. That was
easy, just like in a sitcom.
(to Parker)
I'll see you.

Cooper rushes to the garage.

EMILY
Cooper.

He stops.

EMILY (CONT'D)
I'm sorry for putting you through
this.

COOPER
Mom, you need to stop saving us.
We're old enough save ourselves... or
at least try.

She smiles.

EMILY
Yes, you are.

She hugs and kisses him which he accepts. He exits to garage
and Parker exits to the dining room.

EMILY (CONT'D)
Parker.

INT. WATSON DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Irma is setting the table. Burt reluctantly helps. Emily
stops Parker as he crosses through.

EMILY
Parker, what did you think Cooper
told me?

PARKER
Nothing.

He bites his lip.

EMILY
Parker.

Parker looks at Jordan in the living room.

PARKER
(mumbles)
That I'm gay.

EMILY
What?

PARKER
That I'm gay.

BURT
(loudly)
You're a faggala?

The living room hushes. All eyes turn to Parker. Irma hits
Burt on the arm.

BURT (CONT'D)
Well, I wouldn't be surprised if it
was Cooper.

IRMA
Burt!

BURT
Cooper was always the dramatic one
and he does get his masculinity from
his mother.

Irma drags Burt into the living room

IRMA
Burt!

BURT
Well he does.

Irma closes the door behind them.

PARKER
Jordan is more than just my roommate.

EMILY
I suspected it.

PARKER
You did?

EMILY
Remember when I told you to get your own cloud account?

PARKER
Yeah.

EMILY
Your camera videos were uploading to my computer.

Major embarrassment overtakes Parker.

PARKER
Oh, god.

EMILY
Things I can't unsee.

Parker hyperventilates.

PARKER
No. No. No. No. No. No.

EMILY
And what's with that tattoo?

He has trouble breathing.

EMILY (CONT'D)
It's alright.

She hugs him.

EMILY (CONT'D)
Calm down. I turned it off when he ripped your shorts off.

He's flabbergasted.

EMILY (CONT'D)
But telling me would have been a much nicer way to spring the news on me.

PARKER

I tried to tell you a few times, but
I was...

EMILY

Afraid? Cooper said you are afraid of
me. Is that true?

PARKER

(timid)

I just know how you like things to be
just right. And this is not part of
your game plan.

She is taken aback.

EMILY

My game plan? This how you see me?

PARKER

(biting lip)

Well... ahh... ahh...

EMILY

Don't hem and hah. Spit it out.

PARKER

Mom, you're a control freak.

EMILY

You don't have to spit that hard.

PARKER

Well, you do like to have things your
way.

EMILY

This must be national beat up mom
day.

PARKER

Mom, I know you mean well. But
sometimes you can be intimidating.

EMILY

Me? Intimidating?

PARKER

Maybe just a little.

Emily gets it.

EMILY

Alright. I'll work on that.

She hugs him.

PARKER
I really need to get going.

EMILY
Going? What about dinner?

PARKER
Just have to drop of a few gifts.
We'll be back in time for dinner.

He heads out.

EMILY
One more thing. You'll need to sleep
in Cooper's room while your friend is
here.

PARKER
Why?

EMILY
You know the rule. No premarital sex
in my house.

Parker rolls his eyes and sighs as he leaves, opening the door to find Burt with his ear to it.

INT. ENGLEWOOD COMMUNITY CENTER - DAY

Cooper enters searching for Teresa. He asks a few volunteers, but no one can help him.

He is recognized by some of the girls, and a buzz fills the room.

Cooper goes to the microphone and hesitantly picks it up.

COOPER
(into mic)
Teresa Mendes. Has anybody seen
Teresa Mendes?

Jesse sees Cooper and runs to a back room.

COOPER (CONT'D)
Teresa Mendes.

Cooper sees Jesse drag Teresa into the Center.

COOPER (CONT'D)
Teresa's.... ah... ah...

Nerves start to overtake Cooper. He looks around the room and sees everyone staring at him.

After an awkward silence, Cooper composes himself.

COOPER (CONT'D)

I... ah... I'm... I'm... I'm not good at speaking in front of people. It's called glassophobia, or somethin' like that. But someone very special told me that I can overcome this, if I speak from the heart...

His words stop Teresa's attempt to retreat to the other room.


COOPER (CONT'D)

This woman is the most inspirational person I've ever met. She's classy, kind, loving, and really, really smart. The kind of woman any man would be honored to know.

He has gotten Teresa's attention.

COOPER (CONT'D)

A woman that I want to spend the rest of my life with, and grow old with and go bald with. I don't mean she'll go bald...

Teresa smiles. 

COOPER (CONT'D)

I love Teresa Elena Mendes. And she loves me too. Even if she doesn't know it yet.

Cooper sings "ALL I WANT FOR CHRISTMAS IS YOU".

COOPER

Don't want a lot for Christmas/ There's just one thing I need/ I don't care about those presents/ underneath the Christmas tree

Teresa mouths "please don't."

COOPER

I just want you for my own/ More than you could ever know/ Make my wish come true/ You know that all I want for Christmas is you.

Cooper crosses to her as the ORCHESTRA kicks in. Everything in the room except Teresa and Cooper becomes a silent blur.

COOPER

And all the lights are shining so brightly
everywhere/ And the sound of children's
laughter fills the air/ And everyone is
singing/ I can hear those sleigh bells
ringing/ Santa won't you bring me the one
I really love/ Won't you please bring my
baby to me

Cooper reaches Teresa expecting open arms, but instead she escapes to the back room.

Although momentarily crushed, he goes after her.

INT. ENGLEWOOD COMMUNITY CENTER, BACK ROOM - DAY

Cooper stops Teresa from exiting.

COOPER

Teresa.

TERESA

Please. I can't.

COOPER

Yes you can. We can.

Cooper takes his hands, palms up and places them on her shoulders. He grunts as he struggles to raise his hands.

TERESA

What are you doing?

COOPER

Lifting that heavy weight off your
shoulders. I know everything. Your
deal with my Mother. Jesse. Parker.
You're free to break your vow of
silence.

TERESA

She told you?

COOPER

Yep. Now there's nothing standing in
the way.

TERESA

There's plenty in the way. Think
about it?

(MORE)

TERESA (CONT'D)

Family get-togethers, holidays. What does Jesse call you, Uncle Daddy?

COOPER

Wanna hear something funny?

TERESA

No. I just need to get on with my life.

COOPER

Parker's not Jesse's father.

Her face shows confusion.

COOPER (CONT'D)

Cross my heart, hope to spit.

TERESA

What are you talking about?

COOPER

Parker just passed out on your bed. He might have had sex that night, but it certainly wasn't with you.

TERESA

Why, what's wrong with me?

COOPER


Wrong plumbing.

TERESA

Then who's Jesse's father?

COOPER

I'd like it to be me.

Tears flow. She thinks about it, then smiles.  SONG RESUMES.

COOPER

I don't want a lot for Christmas/ This is all I'm asking for/ Though I just wanna see my baby standing by my door.

TERESA

I just want you for my own/ More than you could ever know/ Make my wish come true/ You know that all I want for Christmas is you.

COOPER

...is you.

TERESA

...is you.

They kiss. Jesse runs up and wedges himself between their bodies. Cooper picks him up. SONG ENDS.

TERESA

And I already knew it.

COOPER

Knew what?

TERESA

That I love you too.

Their kiss is broken by the sound of SLEIGH BELLS from the Center.

SANTA (O.S.)

(over speakers)

Ho. Ho. Ho. Merry Christmas.

TERESA

What's that?

INT. ENGLEWOOD COMMUNITY CENTER - CONTINUOUS - DAY

Parker, in an extremely baggy Santa suit, talks into the microphone.

PARKER

Is everyone having fun?

The crowd reacts. Cooper, Teresa and enter.

PARKER (CONT'D)

I almost didn't make it on time. One of my reindeer got a flat hoof, so I'm a little behind schedule. One of my elves...

He points to Jordan in an extremely under size elf outfit.

PARKER (CONT'D)

...one of my oversize elves... is going to help me pass out a little Christmas goody to each family.

Jordan and Parker hand out envelopes to each family.

TERESA

What's going on.

Cooper just smiles.

HOMELESS GIRL
What is it Mommy?

HOMELESS MOTHER
A prepaid debit card.

A WOMAN on the other side of the room lets out an excited scream. The Homeless Mother reads her card more closely.

HOMELESS MOTHER (CONT'D)
Five hundred dollars.

She jumps up and down exciting her daughter to do the same. The room fills with a joyous roar as the rest open their gifts.

Teresa kisses Cooper.

PARKER
(into mic)
Ho. Ho. Ho. It's me again. I have one more special gift here. It's for the Englewood Community Center.

Parker holds up a document.

PARKER (CONT'D)
This is the deed to the property next door. This time next year, there will be a new and improved Community Center

A shocked Teresa looks at Cooper.


TERESA
You?

COOPER
You said you needed a bigger venue.

TERESA
Ever heard of renting?

COOPER
I sold the Ferrari.

TERESA
Does that mean you need a ride home?

Sleigh bells start the song "SHAKE UP CHRISTMAS". 

PARKER

Ho, ho, ho/ Shake up the happiness/
Wake up the happiness/ Shake up the
happiness/ It's Christmas time

The Elfettes appear.

ELFETTES

There's a story that I was told/ And I
wanna tell the world/ Before I get too
old/ And don't remember it/ So let's
December it/ And reassemble it oh yeah

COOPER

Once upon a time in a town like this/ A
little girl made a great big wish/ To fill
the world full of happiness/ And be on
Santa's magic list

TERESA

At the same time miles away/ A little boy
made a wish that day/ That the world would
be okay/ If Santa Claus would hear him say

PARKER & JORDAN

I got dreams and I got love/ I got my feet
on the ground/ And family above/ Can you
send some happiness/ With my best to the
rest/ Of the people of the East and the
West and

MARIA

Maybe every once in a while you/ Give my
mother a reason to smile/ Tis the season
to smile/ It's cold but we'll be freezing
in style

COOPER

And I met a girl one day that/ Wants to
spread some love this way/ We can let our
souls run free and/ She opened some
happiness with me

ALL

Shake it up/ Shake up the happiness/ Wake
it up/ Wake up the happiness/ Come on
y'all/ It's Christmas time

TERESA

Knew you were out there/ I heard your
reindeer/ I saw the snow where/ Your boots
have been

MARIA

I'm guess I showed them/ So they would
know then/ Their love will grow when/ They
believe again

The Elfettes take over the song.

ELFETTES

Shake it up/ Shake up the happiness

Cooper introduces Parker to Teresa.

ELFETTES (O.C.)

Wake it up/ Wake up up the happiness/
Come on y'all/ It's Christmas time

Maria meets Cooper and approves.

ELFETTES (O.C.)

Shake it up/ Shake up the happiness/
Wake it up/ Wake up the happiness/
Come on y'all/ It's Christmas time

Cooper and Teresa kiss again.

EXT. CHICAGO TOWN SQUARE - NIGHT

SONG CONTINUES. As SNOW FALLS, the Elfettes make their way through the area, finally disappearing into the giant Christmas Tree

ELFETTES

Ho, Ho, Ho/ Shake it up/ Shake up the
happiness/ Ho, Ho, Ho/ Wake it up/ Wake up
the happiness/ Ho, Ho, Ho/ Come on y'all/
It's Christmas time

At the top of the tree, the burnt out Star flickers with an ARCING SOUND.

ELFETTES (O.C.)

Ho, Ho, Ho/ Ho, Ho, Ho/ It's Christmas
time

The Star arcs one final time before glowing to its full potential.

THE END