

HOME SHOPPED HOLIDAY

screenplay by

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Based on the screenplay by

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INT. MICHAEL WINTERS HOUSE - NIGHT

CHRISTMAS MUSIC fills the air. The familiar, feel good JINGLES, BELLS, and MELODY of holiday cheer.

MARY WINTERS, 29, practical by form, a dreamer by function, holds a set of porcelain angels. They CLINK in her hands.

Her father, MICHAEL, 60s, wrestles with a string of lights. Underneath it all is the very faint sound of the TELEVISION.

MARY

Dad, how is it I can set up the Christmas angels and create their winter wonderland, yet you're still battling with tangled lights?

MICHAEL

It's not a very fair fight.

MARY

They were ziptied.

MICHAEL

Not very nice, Mary.

MARY

In separate boxes.

MICHAEL

You're on the verge of naughty. Besides, you have an incentive.

MARY

Please, en-lighten me.

MICHAEL

Clever girl. See, if you didn't set up the angels your mother might tangle you. And I think Peppermint Angel should be closer to the candy shop.

MARY

Focus on your lights, mister, and leave Christmastown to me. Hey, maybe we should ask its angelic residents to help you. How about-- ooh, Evergreen Angel! Perfect. The patron saint of, well-- the--

MICHAEL

(skeptical)
Mmm-hmm.

MARY
(trying)
Evergreen trees with a burning
desire to illuminate our home for
the holidays?

CORA WINTERS, 50s, WALKS in.

CORA
Let's not talk about trees with a
burning desire for anything,
sweetheart. Without our tree, Oscar
won't have bulbs to break.

OSCAR, their cat, MEOWS.

MARY
Now, here, drink this. Homemade hot
cocoa to the rescue.

Michael takes a SIP.

MICHAEL
Delicious. Now I can do anything.

CORA
Of course you can, dear. Oh, Mary,
let's move Peppermint Angel closer
to the candy shop.

MARY
Not a word, Dad.

Cora turns the TELEVISION VOLUME up.

CORA
Mary, come on, it's up next.

MARY
Ooh, duty calls.

MICHAEL
You two and your--

MARY
Shh!

CORA
Shh!

Michael LAUGHS.

Cora and Mary are mesmerized with a home shopping show. The
host, JULIANA, 30s, is all white teeth and sparkle. A natural
talker. You can't not like her.

JULIANA

(on television)

All right, welcome back to Home Shoppers Dream! Or, as we like to call it this time of year, Home Shoppers Holiday! Now for all of you out there getting ready for a holly jolly Christmas-- and that's all of us, right!!-- you know them, you love them, and they are back for their 28th year, can you believe it?

CORA

Yes!

MARY

Yes!

JULIANA

(on television)

The Christmas Angels! From the very first North Pole Angel to last year's hit, The Reindeer Angel, I don't like to play favorites-- oh, of course I do!-- but this set truly is the perfect, enchanting way to celebrate your holiday. A wonderful window to Christmases past, these beautiful items are illuminated, they move, and they're rechargeable so no pesky cords ruining your Christmas villages.

MARY

Hear that, Dad? No cords!

MICHAEL

Definitely naughty.

MARY

There it is, there it is!

Mary and Cora are GIDDY with excitement.

JULIANA

(on television)

And now the moment you've all been waiting for, the two-thousand twenty limited-edition piece is-- The Poinsettia Angel.

MARY

Ooooooh.

CORA

Ohhhh!

CORA (CONT'D)
Mary, the phone. Get ready--

JULIANA
(on television)
And remember, when this beautiful
piece is gone--

MARY	CORA
She's gone.	She's gone.

JULIANA
(on television)
For good. And it goes on sale--
Now!

Cora DIALS furiously. Telephones RING from the television.

CORA
Hello! Yes! I'd like to order The
Poinsettia Angel. Cora Winters.

JULIANA
(on television)
As expected, the orders are coming
in faster than Santa can deliver--
wait a moment, we're going to take
a call. Many of you watching will
know-- Cora, hello!

CORA
Happy Holidays, Juliana!

JULIANA
(on television)
Happy holidays to you as well.
Happier now that you'll be taking
home the latest Angel.

CORA
Oh, and she's just so beautiful!

JULIANA
(on television)
Isn't she? Just look at the
detailing on that bouquet. And the
reds and greens are simply glowing.
Cora, you've been collecting these
from the very first piece. Tell us,
which is your favorite?

MARY
All of them!

JULIANA
 (on television)
 I hear another happy voice.

CORA
 My daughter, Mary. And she's
 actually connected to my favorite.
 It's the Noel Angel. My husband
 Michael bought it for me when Mary
 was born. Every piece has a memory,
 and that's what it's all about.

JULIANA
 (on television)
 All right, all right, if you keep
 going I'm gonna cry-- Oh, I already
 am! Thank you, Cora, and Mary, and
 Michael for being a part of our HSD
 family.

A joyful HOLIDAY SONG plays Juliana out. The music turns to
 something else. Still Christmas, but a bit melancholy.

EXT. KEVIN REYNOLDS HOUSE - DAY - ONE YEAR LATER

The front door OPENS. KEVIN REYNOLDS, 30s, is with his
 daughter, NATALIE, 12. He's got a big smile and warm heart.
 She's the perfect morsel of a moppet.

KEVIN
 It's cold out here, Natalie.

NATALIE
 That's winter, Dad. Happens every
 year. Surprise.

KEVIN
 Just humor me. The list. One more
 time. Before I freeze.

NATALIE
 I don't wanna go over the list.

KEVIN
 (feigns mopey)
 All right, fine. I just thought--

NATALIE
 (relenting)
 Okay, let's go over the list.

KEVIN
 Pushover. Math homework?

NATALIE

Check.

KEVIN

Book report?

NATALIE

On the drive.

KEVIN

Cell phone-- which we never, ever
use while in class.

NATALIE

Check and, really, Dad? Reluctant
check.

KEVIN

Lunch money?

NATALIE

In your pocket, hand it over.

KEVIN

You're a tough negotiator. Here.
Have a good day. I love you.

NATALIE

I love you, too.

Kevin gives her a KISS on the forehead.

KEVIN

Say goodbye, Felix.

FELIX, their golden retriever, BARKS as a CAR pulls up to the
curb. MUSIC plays, it's loud.

Kevin's sister, LORRAINE, gets out. No-nonsense, yet
effervescent in her demeanor. The car door CLOSES.

LORRAINE

Hey, hey, there's my favorite
niece!

Natalie walks, CRUNCHING on the snow toward the car.

NATALIE

Hi, Aunt Lorraine.

KEVIN

Make good choices, Natalie!

Natalie SIGHS. Oh brother. Lorraine hugs her.

NATALIE

Was my dad always so weird?

LORRAINE

You have no idea. Hop in. The weirdo, I mean your dad, needs me.

Natalie LAUGHS and SHUTS her door. Lorraine walks to Kevin.

KEVIN

Thanks for driving her today, sis.

LORRAINE

You're welcome. And I drive her every day.

KEVIN

You do, don't you? Hey, has Natalie hinted at what she wants for Christmas? I've tried, but she's a vault. I'm desperate. I did see a Tickle Me, Elmo at the store.

LORRAINE

You know your daughter's not in preschool, right?

KEVIN

Of course?

LORRAINE

And that it's not 1996?

KEVIN

(sighs; wistful)
What a great year.

LORRAINE

C'mon, big bro, you got this.

KEVIN

It's just that Jenny was the expert at all of this. She chose, she bought, she wrapped.

LORRAINE

And you did--?

KEVIN

I helped Natalie tear everything open Christmas morning, of course.

LORRAINE

Of course. Listen, it's only been a year. Give it time. You're doing great. And, remember, the perfect present comes from the heart. Jenny knew that and I know you do, too.

KEVIN

You're right. I'll figure something out. It's gonna be-- great.

LORRAINE

Just remember the perfect present for me is sparkly. Dangly. Golden?

KEVIN

Don't make me return your Tickle Me, Elmo.

LORRAINE

You wouldn't.

The car window opens and MUSIC pours out. Natalie yells--

NATALIE

Some of us have school today!

LORRAINE

She gets that from you.

KEVIN

Bye, sissie. And do some digging. My daughter. Presents.

LORRAINE

Yes, sir.

LORRAINE (CONT'D)

I'm coming, Natalie. It's not easy being the cool aunt who has to solve everyone's crises.

MICHAEL

Can still hear you!

Lorraine ENTERS the car, SHUTS the door, and DRIVES OFF. The MUSIC fades.

INT. MICHAEL WINTERS HOUSE - DAY

Light CHRISTMAS MUSIC plays. Toast POPS OUT of the toaster. Mary POURS a mug of coffee.

Michael enters with a BIG YAWN.

MARY

Morning, Dad. Toast and coffee,
made to order.

MICHAEL

I thought I smelled the best part
of waking up. You know you don't
have to do this.

MARY

But it's such fun fighting off all
the other people clamoring to make
you breakfast at the crack of dawn.

MICHAEL

It's 8:03. Dawn cracked half an
hour ago. And I can run a toaster.

MARY

I see no evidence of such a thing.

She puts the PLATE and MUG on the table.

MICHAEL

I do love toast. And you being
here. I just don't want you to feel
like you have to be here.

MARY

Where else would I be?

MICHAEL

Mary, I don't mean to pry.

MARY

But you're about to pry.

MICHAEL

If you had that special someone--

MARY

Dad, how about this? I promise you
the moment the special someone
Christmas miracle comes along
you'll be the first to know.

MICHAEL

I'm just saying. It's the holidays.
Love is in the air. You just have
to be open to it. Breathe it in.

Mary takes a DEEP BREATH in. Lets it OUT.

MARY

See, breathing. But, no miracle.

MICHAEL

Okay, okay.

(lightly)

I see you put up the angels. Maybe you'd like to go wild tonight and help me set up the tree?

MARY

Do you think we need one? Maybe we keep it small this year.

MICHAEL

I think your mother would've wanted a tree, don't you?

MARY

Dad--

(softens)

I miss her. But-- you know, you're right. She would have. She wanted a lot of things.

MICHAEL

She sure did, sweetheart. And I'm pretty sure another thing was you helping me with lights.

MARY

You and your tangled web are the true nightmare before Christmas. I'll handle everything else. I know just-- just how Mom liked things.

DING DONG! The doorbell. Michael WALKS to the door.

MICHAEL

Saved by the bell. A Christmas miracle?

Michael OPENS THE DOOR the door. It's a neighbor, GRETA, 60s. Sweet, and charming to the end.

GRETA

Good morning!

MICHAEL

Greta, hello.

(calls into the house)

Mary, it's Greta!

MARY
 (yells out)
 Hi, Greta!

MICHAEL
 And cookies?
 (calls into house)
 She brought cookies!

MARY
 (yells out)
 Then let her in!

Greta LAUGHS.

MICHAEL
 You heard the lady.

Greta WALKS IN as Mary is on her way out.

MARY
 Nice to see you, Greta. I'm glad
 you and Dad can spend so much time
 together.

GRETA
 Oh, it's nothing.

MICHAEL
 Oh, it's nothing.

Greta and Charlie LAUGH like school kids.

MARY
 Okay, you two have fun. I've gotta
 get to the school. First day.

GRETA
 Molding young minds is so
 admirable. And important.

MARY
 I don't know how much molding I'll
 accomplish, but I'll make sure they
 look at their books at least as
 much as their phones. Dad, you
 good?

MICHAEL
 Toast, coffee, cookies, and
 company. I'm better than good.

MARY
 Greta, lovely to see you. Dad, I
 love you. Don't forget to sign for
 the restaurant supply order.

(MORE)

MARY (CONT'D)

Also, no pot pie-- it's not Monday.
Oh, and start untangling. Bye!

The door SHUTS.

GRETA

She's a whirlwind. Now, what's this
about being tangled?

MICHAEL

Don't ask.

INT. LORRAINE'S CAR - DAY

The sound of the CAR DRIVING is mixed with RADIO MUSIC.

NATALIE

Ooh, we have a new student teacher.
When that happens it's like a free-
for-all their first day.

LORRAINE

For reals?

NATALIE

Did you just say "for reals?"

LORRAINE

Cool aunt, remember? And I'm not
sure that's how school works.

NATALIE

Things are different then they were
in the fifties, Aunt Lorraine.

Lorraine blurts out a LAUGH.

LORRAINE

I'm going to pretend I couldn't
hear that and not because I'm too
old. Okay, down to business. What
are you getting your dad for
Christmas?

NATALIE

Since he's not really a toolbox
kind of guy, no idea yet. Does any
kid know what their dad wants?

LORRAINE

Well, you are your mother's
daughter and she was the world's
best gift-giver. For reals.

NATALIE
I've created a monster.

LORRAINE
Seriously. Every Christmas a present from your mom would be something I never knew I needed, but that I couldn't live without.

NATALIE
That's pretty awesome.

LORRAINE
Natalie, you're gonna figure out something wonderful, I just know it. Now, what is it you want?

NATALIE
I dunno. Nothing, I guess.

LORRAINE
Wrong guess! Come on, there's gotta be something. What kid doesn't have a Christmas list?

NATALIE
I'm lucky. Dad already spoils me.

LORRAINE
Well let me know if you think of anything, okay? I don't like to mention this, but they say I have a direct line to Santa.

NATALIE
Okay, I'll keep you posted.

LORRAINE
Time for school. Go, be free, learn.

The car STOPS, a door OPENS, and Natalie HOPS OUT.

NATALIE
I'll do my best. And, you know, thanks for what you said about my mom. And me.

LORRAINE
I call 'em like I see 'em. Bye, sweetie.

Natalie WALKS off. Lorraine STARTS THE CAR and DRIVES AWAY.

INT. MICHAEL WINTERS HOUSE - NIGHT

Mary watches television. The sound of her FLIPPING THROUGH CHANNELS is heard. SPORTS, LAUGHTER, SCREAMS, you name it.

MICHAEL (O.C.)
I'll be down in a few minutes!

MARY
No problem, Dad!

MICHAEL (O.C.)
You're gonna be so surprised when you see how I stored the lights!

MARY
Proud of you!
(to herself)
A hundred channels and nothing is--

Then, she SUCKS IN BREATH.

JULIANA
(on television)
--part of the twenty-nine year tradition here at Home Shoppers Dream. They're here. They're back. And now, to make your holiday complete, introducing the two-thousand twenty limited-edition Snow Angel.

MARY
Awww. Oh, Mom. I wish you were here.

She SNIFFLES.

MARY (CONT'D)
Oscar, she's gorgeous. Mom would've loved that angel. There's nobody else who could want it more.

Oscar MEOWS in agreement.

INT. KEVIN REYNOLDS HOUSE - NIGHT

Natalie is sitting on the couch, watching HSD.

NATALIE
Felix, that angel is super pretty. Mom would've loved her if she were here. I wish she was here.

JULIANA
(on television)
And remember, no cords! To make her
arms and legs move in that
signature, take-you-back-to-
childhood way.

Felix BARKS in agreement. Kevin THUMPS DOWN THE STAIRS.

KEVIN
Hey, kiddo, what'cha watchin'?

NATALIE
Dad, look. Remember when Mom would
just drop down and make us make
snow angels with her?

KEVIN
All the time!

NATALIE (CONT'D)
All the time!

KEVIN (CONT'D)
I sure do, kiddo.

NATALIE
The angel reminds me of her.

KEVIN
Oh, my sweet girl.

INT. MICHAEL WINTERS HOUSE - NIGHT

MARY
All right, Oscar, hand me the
phone. We have got to be ready.

JULIANA
(on television)
They say angels are messengers, and
this is saying it's time for her to
come home to you and make your
holidays brighter.

MARY
No, really, Oscar, don't get up.
I'll get the phone.

Oscar MEOWS.

INT. KEVIN REYNOLDS HOUSE - NIGHT

KEVIN
Wow. Those things are selling fast.

NATALIE

I guess lots of people need a good message this time of year.

KEVIN

They do, Natalie. And I think the message I'm getting-- yes, could it be-- it's time to brush your teeth.

JULIANA

(on television)

--Once these are gone, they're gone. And, wow, are they going!

NATALIE

It's not bedtime. I'm not seven.

KEVIN

True, but while you're upstairs perfecting that gorgeous smile that years of brushing-- and braces-- have created, I'm going to, uh, I'll-- Felix. Needs to go out. I'm going to take Felix out. Outside.

NATALIE

Wow. You're so super weird.

KEVIN

And you're so super awesome. Now get up there and brusha, brusha, brusha.

Kevin KISSES Natalie on the forehead. Natalie RUNS upstairs.

KEVIN (CONT'D)

Seriously. Awesome! I mean it!

NATALIE (O.C.)

Can't hear you! Brushing my gorgeous smile!

KEVIN

I'll be up soon to check!

(quietly)

All right, Felix, we've got work to do.

INTERCUT MARY AND KEVIN ON PHONE. Their TELEVISIONS are on.

MARY

Here we go-- Yes, Home Shoppers Dream? Hi, I'd like to order the Snow Angel--

KEVIN

It's for my daughter. Wait, what--

MARY

The last one and I got it? Oscar, we did it! Don't tell your father. My father. This is wonderful!

KEVIN

Gone? How can they be gone?

He turns his TELEVISION UP.

JULIANA

(on television)

That's right, everyone! The Snow Angel has sold out! And in what might be record time. All you lucky buyers are going to be thrilled with this piece of holiday heaven.

KEVIN

You don't understand, that holiday heaven was for my daughter. You're sure they're all gone?

MARY

This would have meant the world to my mom. It's our first year without her and we have all the angels. She used to call in every Christmas-- Cora. Cora Winters.

JULIANA

(on television)

Oh, what a treat. It seems that we have a familiar voice on the line--

MARY

Really, I'd rather not go on air--

MICHAEL (O.C.)

Almost done! You'll never believe the things I've found! Listen to this!

The sound of JINGLE BELLS rings from upstairs.

MARY

Thank you. Very much. Goodbye. Thank you.

She HANGS UP the phone.

MARY (CONT'D)
 Saved by the bells, Oscar.
 (calling out)
 That's great, Dad!

JULIANA
 (on television)
 Cora! Happy holidays! We thought we
 wouldn't hear from you this year.

INT. KEVIN REYNOLDS HOUSE - NIGHT

KEVIN
 Cora? Who? Hello?

JULIANA
 (on television)
 Who is this?

KEVIN
 Who is this?

JULIANA
 (on television)
 Juliana at Home Shoppers Dream. But
 you don't sound like Cora.

She LAUGHS.

KEVIN
 Who's Cora?

INT. MICHAEL WINTERS HOUSE - NIGHT

Oscar MEOWS.

MARY
 Yeah, Oscar, good question. And
 I'll raise you an, "uh-oh."

INT. KEVIN REYNOLDS HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

KEVIN
 I'm confused.

JULIANA
 (on television)
 It seems there's a little on-air,
 call-in mix up, folks, but that
 never stopped us before! Welcome to
 HSD. Thanks for joining us.

KEVIN

Thank you. I mean, you're welcome.
On air. Wait, I'm on air!?

JULIANA

(on television)

That's right, caller. So, what's
your name?

KEVIN

(to himself)

For the life of Riley--

INT. MICHAEL WINTERS HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

MARY

Oscar, this is getting good.

Oscar MEOWS as Mary watches.

JULIANA

(on television)

It's wonderful to talk to you,
Riley. Were You calling about the
Snow Angel?

INT. KEVIN REYNOLDS HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

KEVIN

Riley? Who's Ri-- yes, Riley. I'm
Riley. That's me. Snow Angel? No. I
mean, yes. It's for my daughter. I
live in Buffalo. I can even come to
the studio to pick it up.

JULIANA

(on television)

Now that's dedication! But no need
for that. Our shipping is fast and
friendly. I'm so glad you were able
to get one. She's going to love--

KEVIN

That's the thing. I didn't get one.
I was trying to order, but it
sounded like they were all gone? My
daughter saw it and couldn't keep
her eyes off it. So, I sent her
upstairs. She's brushing her teeth
and has no idea I'm doing this.

JULIANA

(on television)

Wow, Riley, that's a lot of infor--

KEVIN

The thing is, her mom always found the perfect Christmas presents. And this is our first Christmas without her so I need to make it extra special. Seeing how much she wanted the angel made me realize what a positive thing it could be for her, and for me. You know, something good to focus on instead of the loss. And until now I had no idea what to get. I even asked my sister, but she wasn't much help. Although she does drive the kids to school every day--

JULIANA

(on television)

Uh, Riley, that's quite a--

KEVIN

But my daughter saw the snow angel and just lit up and I realized she really wanted it, even if she didn't come out and say she really wanted it. I mean, kids, you know?

JULIANA

(on television)

I'm not exactly sure I do, Riley--

KEVIN

And her aunt, my sister, is right. But don't tell her I said that!

Juliana is LAUGHING, trying to make this call work.

KEVIN (CONT'D)

She's twelve. My daughter, not my sister. And it's not 1996. I can't get her a Tickle Me, Elmo and say "Merry Christmas!" I mean, I guess I could, but you know what I mean.

JULIANA

(on television)

We're all on this sleigh ride together, so--yes?

KEVIN

So-- you're really sold out?
Really, really sold out? There's no
way I can get one?

INT. MICHAEL WINTERS HOUSE - NIGHT

MARY

Oh, Oscar. I feel so bad for Riley.
And his daughter. His sister sounds
fun, though.

INT. KEVIN REYNOLDS HOUSE - NIGHT

JULIANA

(on television)

I'm so sorry, no. But we do have
many other, lovely pieces. There's
the AngElf--

Kevin is SHOCKED.

KEVIN

Oh, my! Ooh, wow-- is that an Elf
and an angel? Are they dancing?
Wait, what are-- it looks like one
is eating the-- You know what,
never mind. Thank you, though. Bye,
now.

He HANGS UP the phone.

KEVIN (CONT'D)

Now what, Felix?

The dog WHIMPERS.

JULIANA

(on television)

Well, that was certainly less than
a holly jolly Christmas story. But,
Riley, we here at Home Shoppers
Dream do hope you're able to make
your Christmas wishes come true.

KEVIN

Yeah, me too.

NATALIE (O.C.)

Dad! Sometime this century!

KEVIN

Duty calls, Felix. But don't get too down. I'm going to find a way to get that angel. Just watch.

Felix BARKS in agreement. Kevin TURNS OFF the television.

INT. MICHAEL WINTERS HOUSE - NIGHT

MICHAEL

How's Juliana?

Mary YELPS.

MARY

Oh! Dad, I didn't see you! How long were you standing behind me?

MICHAEL

Long enough to know you ordered the Snow Angel.

MARY

Well, it's tradition, you know? And it feels like a small way I can still hold on to her. Every time I see it, I'll be reminded of our time together.

Mary TURNS OFF the television.

MICHAEL

Honey, I think that's wonderful. She'd have really loved it. Poor Riley, on the other hand--

MARY

I know! He must've called right after me. It had me thinking about what Mom used to say-- it isn't the thing, but what the thing means. Maybe this year someone isn't getting one who really needs one.

MICHAEL

I wish I knew, sweetheart. What I do know is there is a tree that needs us. And, look-- lights!

MARY

Ooh, let me see these. Dad! Untangled? Check.

(MORE)

MARY (CONT'D)

Color-coordinated? Check. Impressed daughter? Check.

MICHAEL

Then why does your impressed face look more like your plotting face?

MARY

This is not my plotting face. It's just-- my face. I'm just thinking about-- school tomorrow. The kids. There's a field trip.

MICHAEL

Mmm-hmmm. Let's go. By the way, I invited Greta over. You know, in case we need some help.

MARY

The more the merrier. Truth be told she's probably better at stringing lights than Oscar.

Oscar MEOWS.

MICHAEL

You'd be surprised.

Mary and Michael LAUGH.

INT. SCHOOL - CLASSROOM - DAY

KAREN WALSH, 30, a born teacher, SHUFFLES PAPERS. The sound of KIDS can be faintly heard in the hallway.

KAREN

I've been teaching kids for almost a decade, Mary. I know a plotting face when I see one.

MARY

Karen, have you been talking to my father?

KAREN

Fine, so you're not plotting. Your-- thinking of tracking him down. Am I right? I'm right.

MARY

You're ridiculous. And your emphasis on him is completely unwarranted.

(MORE)

MARY (CONT'D)

Besides, do you have any idea how many Riley's there are in Buffalo?

KAREN

I don't, actually, but--

MARY

One hundred twenty, give or take. There's also a street. Now, if we include the surrounding area--

KAREN

As hopeless romantics are wont to do.

MARY

This is about an angel, not a relationship. And I prefer hopeful romantic.

KAREN

Of course. So why don't we save some of that hope for today's activity. The kids are clamoring to get on the buses. About a hundred of them. Give or take.

MARY

Now you're just making fun.

The two women LAUGH.

EXT. SCHOOL - PARKING LOT - DAY

The kids are EXCITED. Their PARENTS CHAT. Bus engines IDLE. The noise surrounds Mary and Karen.

KAREN

David, slow down, please! And Julia, where should that trash go?

MARY

You're so good with them. And they listen to you. My first day felt like a free-for-all.

KAREN

They'll warm up to you. Just be glad it's field trip day. Kids have fun, parents get involved, and there's nothing to grade.

A YOUNG STUDENT RACES by them.

STUDENT
Hi, Miss Winters!

KAREN
See? Warmer already. To the buses.
Now, Mary, can I ask-- what happens
if you do find this Riley and he's,
well, not what you're expecting?

MARY
Bah, humbug.

KAREN
Go with me on this. What if he
doesn't have a kid? What if he's
just a strange man who lives alone,
collecting mechanical angels-- and
the tears of the women who are
roped into his "please find me
because I'm so sad" scheme?"

MARY
Karen, that turned so, so fast. And
was shockingly specific and
frightening in many ways.

KAREN
Just saying. Either way, it sounds
like you two were meant to be.

MARY
Thanks? Aside from the fact that I
do believe his story-- don't ask me
why-- I do not believe in fate.
Besides, I have to get to my bus.

Kevin is RUSHING, STUMBLING through the crowd of kids.

KEVIN
Sorry, sorry. Excuse me, sorry!

Oh!	MARY	Oh!	KEVIN (CONT'D)	*
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I'm so sorry!	KEVIN (CONT'D)	Pardon me!	MARY (CONT'D)	*
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KEVIN (CONT'D)
I didn't mean to bump into you.
I've just been running around-- I'm
looking-- do you--

MARY
It's no problem. Really, we were
both running, not looking--

KEVIN
The right bus.

Mary SOFTENS, becomes more personal. You can hear the smile.

MARY
Hi, I'm Mary.

Kevin takes a DEEP BREATH. Smiles as he speaks, too.

KEVIN
Kevin. I'm Kevin. Hi. Mary.

KAREN
(whispered)
Mary, um, what was it you were just
saying about fate?

MARY
Not now, Karen. Is that a bus I
hear calling for you?

KAREN
I'll be back.

KEVIN
So, um, which one is yours?

MARY
The big yellow one.

KEVIN
Wait, what-- Oh, the bus. I get it.
I meant the kids. I assume you're
here for yours. Or, you just really
like field trips.

MARY
They are fun.

KEVIN (CONT'D)
They are fun.

They both LAUGH.

MARY (CONT'D)
I'm actually new. Student teaching.

KEVIN
Oh, how nice. I'm-- wait. Natalie!
Over here!

Natalie RUNS over.

NATALIE

Dad, you're here? You came? Miss Winters, make sure he stays on mission and does not embarrass me.

KEVIN

Oh, you're Natalie's new student teacher? How about that. Fate.

MARY

Lucky me. I mean, that you're on my team. I mean my chaperone. I mean a chaperone.

KEVIN

I should warn you I like to wander.

MARY

Noted.

A LOUDSPEAKER squawks with a MALE VOICE.

BLUME (O.C.)

Attention students, please find your buses. They're big and yellow. We'll be leaving shortly. Remember-- less talking, more walking.

MARY

That's my cue. I better find Karen so we can do our head count. The zoo waits for no one. Well, technically it's always there. Waiting, I guess--

KEVIN

Of course, duty calls. By the way, their not just yellow. The buses. They're actually, officially National School Bus Glossy Yellow.

MARY

Wow, okay then, good to know.

KEVIN

I'll see you later?

MARY

You just might. Nice to meet you, Kevin.

She WALKS OFF.

NATALIE
She's super cool.

KEVIN
Yeah.

NATALIE
And so pretty.

KEVIN
Yeah.

NATALIE
You totally blew it, Dad.

KEVIN
Yeah. Wait, what?

NATALIE
I gotta go. I have to get on the--
kill me now-- National School Bus
Glossy Yellow thing. Later, weirdo.

Natalie RUNS OFF.

INT. BUFFALO ZOO - DAY

There is the light din of TALKING as well as ANIMAL sounds.
Mary, Kevin, and Natalie stand near one another.

MARY
Everyone, stay in your group. Your
friends in another group will still
be your friends.

KEVIN
Is that a promise, Miss Winters?

MARY
Why, yes it is, Mister Reynolds.
(aside, to him)
And you can call me Mary.

KEVIN
I get it. Code names.

She LAUGHS. He's silly.

MARY
All right, now who is ready to have
some fun?

KEVIN
 (the lone voice)
 I am!
 (realizing)
 Oh, sorry, I'm just super excited.

NATALIE
 Dad, mission fail. You're single-
 handedly losing me friends.

KEVIN
 It's kinda my job description.

Natalie SIGHS.

NATALIE
 Can I switch groups, please? Or,
 you know, leave the planet?

MARY
 I have a feeling you'll survive.
 Now let's try that again, kids. Who
 is ready to have some fun?

KIDS
 I am!/Me!/We Are!

MARY
 That's way better. Okay, who wants
 to tell me what we should see fir--

KEVIN
 They have arctic foxes!?

The kids squeal with LAUGHTER.

NATALIE
 Dad! Grip, get one.

KEVIN
 But, it's arctic foxes. Miss Wint--
 I mean, Mary, I'd just like to
 point out they're kind of totally
 awesome.

MARY
 Who am I to stand in the way of
 such enthusiasm. Lead the way.

KEVIN
 Thank you. Come on, Natalie. Kids.
 To the Arctic!

NATALIE

Miss Winters, let the record to state nothing my father says or does reflects on me. Or my grade.

MARY

He's not so bad. But, duly noted. Now go, all of you!

Kevin leads the CHATTERING kids off. Karen WALKS over.

KAREN

Well, hello.

MARY

Don't say it, Karen.

KAREN

I just said "hello."

MARY

Yes, but behind that "hello" I'm pretty sure I heard a faint, "Isn't Kevin the greatest and maybe you should run away together and live happily ever after."

KAREN

You said it, not me. Besides, what about Riley? You stole his angel.

MARY

I didn't steal it! Well, not on purpose. Wait, don't you have a group to watch? I have to go! The arctic foxes are waiting for me.

KAREN

I bet he is.

MARY

Goodbye, Karen!

INT. BUFFALO ZOO - ARCTIC FOX HABITAT - DAY

There is a MURMUR of voices as Mary, Kevin, Natalie, and the others watch the animals.

ZOO ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

The arctic fox is mainly found in arctic and alpine tundra, usually--

The voice FADES.

NATALIE

Their fur is crazy fluffy and white.

MARY

It's also crazy warm. It can tolerate temperatures as cold as ninety-four degrees below zero.

NATALIE

Talk about Frozen.

MARY

The color also changes twice a year. It's white in the winter and dark gray or brown to black in the summer.

KEVIN

How arctic runway.

NATALIE

Please stop talking. Please stop talking.

MARY

Their dens also have multiple entrances and some have been used for centuries by generations of foxes.

NATALIE

Did you know that, dad?

KEVIN

(didn't know it)
Of-- course--

Mary LAUGHS.

NATALIE

Maybe the most interesting thing is that the male parent stays with the cubs, but there is sometimes a female from the previous year that helps out.

NATALIE (CONT'D)

Did you hear that, Dad? You, me, and Aunt Lorraine are basically a bunch of animals.

KEVIN

I will not argue with nature,
sweetheart.

NATALIE

You? Not arguing? Miss Winters,
that's my cue to leave before he
changes his mind. See ya.

KEVIN

Love you, too.

Natalie RUNS off.

KEVIN (CONT'D)

Temperature this, den that, family
ties? Oldest trick in the book.

MARY

In the interest of full disclosure,
I used to be a docent here.

KEVIN

You're secret is safe with me. So,
not always a would-be school
teacher?

MARY

I have a variety of past lives, all
about sharing things with people.
Especially with kids. They're still
so excited about-- everything.

KEVIN

It is fun watching Natalie discover
something, obsess over it, then
latch onto something totally new.
And don't get me started on the
music.

MARY

Seems like you're keeping up quite
well. And she always has friends
for the "too cool for Dad" stuff.

KEVIN

She has her too cool for school
Aunt as well. My brother-in-law is
deployed overseas, so my sister and
I help each other out. When we
aren't driving each other crazy.

MARY

Do you chaperone a lot of field trips?

KEVIN

It's hard with my practice-- I'm a doctor. But I know Natalie loves the zoo. She might love it more when I'm not around, but deep down I like to think she's glad I'm here.

MARY

That's really sweet. And I'm sure she is. Kids feel a lot more than they say.

KEVIN

I sort of thought of it as an early Christmas present for her. I've been trying to spend more time with her since her mom died.

MARY

I'm very sorry to hear that.

KEVIN

Thank you. It's been especially hard this time of year.

MARY

I understand. My mom-- she died right after the holiday last year. Christmas was her-- our-- favorite. Now when I look around this time of year I just see memories of her.

KEVIN

Natalie's mom loved Christmas, too. All the decorating and the shopping. She always found the perfect Christmas presents and--

MARY

What did you just say?

KEVIN

What?

MARY

Sorry, you said she always found the perfect Christmas presents.

KEVIN
Yeah, she did.

MARY
It just-- you sounded-- never mind.
It sounds nice. Come on. Looks like
everyone is starting to head over
to our last stop, the gift shop.

KEVIN
Awesome. Fragile items and a bunch
of pre-teens. What could go wrong?

Mary LAUGHS as they walk off.

ZOO ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
As you head out of the Arctic, be
sure to--

KAREN
Hey, Natalie.

NATALIE
Hi, Miss Walsh.

KAREN
I hope you and your friends had fun
to-- what are you looking at?

NATALIE
My dad. And Miss Winters. I haven't
seen him smile and look this happy
in a long time.

KAREN
She's great. It's pretty cool they
get along so well, huh?

NATALIE
(an idea percolating)
It is, isn't it?

INT. BUFFALO ZOO - GIFT SHOP - DAY

The kids shuffle around, LAUGH, TALK. Mary walks to Natalie.

MARY
Are we shopping for ourselves?

NATALIE
My dad. He's hard to buy for.

MARY

Oh, I understand. I have friends who seem to have everything. My go-to is HSD.

NATALIE

The shopping show?

MARY

My mom and I loved watching it. I still do. You can get anything from HSD. But in your case how about making your dad something? Homemade presents are always a hit.

NATALIE

Dad says I bring enough art projects home to start a gallery.

MARY

Okay, what about-- an experience?

NATALIE

What do you mean?

MARY

Well, your dad said chaperoning this trip was sort of a Christmas present for you, and won't you remember this for a long time?

NATALIE

For a number of reasons, yes.

They both LAUGH.

MARY

All right, now we're getting somewhere. So, think-- what makes him laugh? Smile? What's caught his eye that he'd never get himself?

NATALIE

(realizing)

Laugh and smile and he'd never get himself, huh? I think I might have it. Thanks, Miss Winters.

MARY

My pleasure. Have fun. I better check on the other animals. And I can't wait to see what you get him.

Mary WALKS OFF.

NATALIE
(plotting to herself)
Maybe I won't get him a what. Maybe
it will be a who.

INT. LORRAINE'S HOUSE - DAY

Kevin and Lorraine CLEAN UP DISHES. HOLIDAY MUSIC plays.

LORRAINE
I still say you're glowing, Kev.

KEVIN
It's amazing what a day without the
scent of Betadine can do.

LORRAINE
You sure it was just fresh air that
got your heart racing?

KEVIN
I'd like to remind you I am too old
to be teased about a girl.

LORRAINE
I'm your little sister. It's my
job. A little birdie tells me you
and the student teacher spent a lot
of time together?

KEVIN
Yes, because that's how chaperoning
works. You stay with your group to
make sure no one gets eaten by
lions. In our case, arctic foxes.

LORRAINE
Nice work, if you can get it.

KEVIN
Mary, that's her name, is
wonderful. But I'm not looking for
love. I just want to make sure
Natalie is taken care of.

LORRAINE
All I'm--

KEVIN
I'm not ready. Not ready, ready.
Not yet.

LORRAINE

Good, because love doesn't show up when you're ready. It shows up when you're almost ready. She flipped the switch on romance. I can tell. I know my Oprah.

KEVIN

That's my cue to leave. Thanks for letting Natalie spend the night. She's up to something, I think.

LORRAINE

Shocker. She's twelve. 'Night, bro.

KEVIN

'Night, sissie.

INT. KEVIN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The DOOR OPENS and SHUTS. Kevin PLOPS on the couch.

KEVIN

All right, Felix, it's just you and me. Let's do this.

Felix BARKS. Kevin turns on the TELEVISION. FLIPS through channels. Lands on--

JULIANA

(on television)

You've seen the set time and time before, but we know you just can't get enough of The Christmas Angels. And, don't forget, we still have the AngElf.

Kevin DIALS the phone.

JULIANA (CONT'D)

(on television)

This little guy really-- really-- needs a home. He may be-- wait a second, we have a caller.

KEVIN

Hi, this is-- it's Riley. I'm the guy who called last night about the Snow Angel.

JULIANA

(on television)

Riley, yes! For your daughter.

KEVIN
 You remember? Wow. Okay. Wait, am I
 on the air?

INT. MICHAEL WINTERS HOUSE - NIGHT

INTERCUT WITH MARY AND MICHAEL

MARY
 Oscar, he's back, he's back!

Oscar MEOWS.

JULIANA
 (on television)
 On the air, indeed!

KEVIN
 How does this keep happening?

JULIANA
 (on television)
 We've had quite a reaction to your
 story, Riley. It touched a lot of
 hearts.

KEVIN
 It did?

MARY
 I'm melting.

KEVIN
 I'm calling because I thought-- was
 hoping-- maybe you found another
 Snow Angel in the warehouse or
 something. Anything.

JULIANA
 (on television)
 I'm sorry, no--

MARY
 Oscar, I've got it! The phone!

Oscar MEOWS as Mary reaches over him. DIALS the phone.

MARY (CONT'D)
 Oops, sorry! Just gimme a min--
 Yes! Hello! I'm calling about
 Riley. The Snow Angel. Well, both.

JULIANA

(on television)

Oh, Riley, I wish we did. But the Angels are limited-edition and when they're gone, they really are gone. We've had dozens of callers trying to find one.

KEVIN

I understand. Thought I'd try again. It's just my daughter. This Christmas is gonna be tough for her and I really wanted-- you know-- sorry. Never mind. Thanks.

He hangs up the phone and TURNS OFF the television

KEVIN (CONT'D)

No luck, Felix. How about you? Can you give me a Christmas miracle?

BACK WITH MARY

JULIANA

(on television)

How much do we love Riley, everyone? Wait, we have another familiar voice on the line. Cora, are you there?

MARY

This is Mary, Cora's daughter.

JULIANA

(on television)

How wonderful. Is Cora there, we'd love to say hello.

MARY

No, she-- she passed last year.

JULIANA

(on television)

Oh. Mary, all of us at HSD are so, so sorry to hear that.

MARY

Thank you. That means a lot. She loved watching. We both did.

JULIANA

(on television)

How can we help you today, Mary?

MARY

I ordered a Snow Angel and I'd--
well, I wanna offer it to Riley.

JULIANA

(on television)

My goodness! Tears! Am I right,
everyone? What an amazing holiday
gesture. Riley, if you're still
watching-- and you should be-- call
us back! It looks like you have
your own angel looking out for you
and your daughter. Come on, Riley.

MARY

Where is he, Oscar?

JULIANA

(on television)

Nothing yet? Okay, that's fine.
We're here for you, Riley!

MARY

At least until bedtime, which--
(she YAWNS)
Is imminent.

INT. MICHAEL WINTERS HOUSE - DAY

Mary listens to MUSIC as she POURS coffee. Toast POPS up.

MICHAEL

Morning, sweetheart.

MARY

Dad, you're already dressed.

MICHAEL

I can't just sit around in my
pajamas all day, can I?

MARY

No, it's just-- something's
different. Never mind. Here you go--
one order of toast and coffee.

MICHAEL

Thanks, but I'm going out for
breakfast.

MARY

With who?

The doorbell RINGS.

MICHAEL
You're very good at that.

Michael OPENS the door.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
Greta.

MARY
Greta?

GRETA
Morning you two.

MARY
Okay, well, have a great time.

MICHAEL
We will. Any luck with the Riley
fellow?

MARY
They won't give me any of his info.

MICHAEL
To a complete stranger over the
phone? How dare they.

GRETA
Everyone's pulling for you. It's a
very sweet thing you're doing.

MICHAEL
That reminds me! Your package came.
It's on the table.

MARY
Oh, great. Bye you two.

The door SHUTS.

MARY (CONT'D)
Not over the phone. Not over the--
phone.

INT. MARY'S CAR - DAY

Mary is DRIVING. She talks on speakerphone.

MARY
Am I crazy?

KAREN
(on phone)
Rhetorical.

MARY
Karen!

KAREN
(on phone)
Oh, you mean the HSD thing? Yes.
Big yes. Huge.

MARY
I'm gonna walk in there, say I
heard Riley on air, they wouldn't
give me his info, I couldn't find
him on the internet, I have this
Angel, and-- sound like a superfan
lunatic who stalks the callers.

KAREN
(on phone)
You had me at superfan lunatic.
Give it a try. Call me back and let
me know how it goes.

MARY
I will.

KAREN
(on phone)
But not if you're in jail.

MARY
Goodbye, Karen!

INT. KEVIN'S CAR - DAY

Kevin is DRIVING. He talks on speakerphone.

KEVIN
It's not crazy, Lorraine.

LORRAINE
(on phone)
They said they didn't have any
more. Sold out. Limited-edition.
They have that elf thing, though.

KEVIN
Don't remind me. The angel is for
Natalie. I have to try.

LORRAINE
 (on phone)
 Don't end up in jail, okay?

KEVIN
 I love you, too. Bye.

He HANGS UP.

KEVIN (CONT'D)
 This is gonna work. This is gonna
 work. This is never gonna work.

INT. HSD - DAY

Light holiday MUSIC plays. Phones RING.

RECEPTIONIST
 HSD, can you please hold? HSD, can
 you please hold? HSD? One moment.

A door JINGLES. Mary enters.

RECEPTIONIST (CONT'D)
 Good morning, can I help you?

MARY
 Hi, this may seem strange. I'm one
 of the callers from the other
 night. Actually, we-- my mom and I
 call in-- well, we used to call in
 every year. My name is Mary and--

RECEPTIONIST
 Cora's daughter, Mary?

MARY
 That's really weird, but yes.

RECEPTIONIST
 We're so sorry to hear about your
 mother. And what you're trying to
 do for Riley--

MARY
 Yes! That's why I'm here. I have
 this angel. Still wrapped--

RECEPTIONIST
 Hold that thought. Let me tell
 Juliana you're here.

The receptionist WALKS OFF.

MARY

Oh. Oh! You mean she's-- okay. I'll wait. This is crazy.

The door JINGLES. Kevin enters.

MARY (CONT'D)

Kevin?

KEVIN

Mary?

MARY

What are you doing here?

KEVIN (CONT'D)

What are you doing here?

MARY (CONT'D)

I-- see-- a friend-- I was-- an application. I need an application.

KEVIN

You want to work at HSD? You're leaving the school?

MARY

Just a side thing? For fun?

KEVIN

Are you asking me or telling me?

MARY

I love knick knacks. Who doesn't love knick knacks?

KEVIN

Are you all right?

MARY

Me? What? Yes. Fine! Gotta go!

KEVIN

Mary, wait.

MARY

What?

KEVIN

You forgot your-- knick knack?

MARY

Thank you. I'll see you at school. I mean, I'll see-- tell hello I said Natalie. See ya!

KEVIN

Okay? What am I doing here? I hate it when you're right, sissie.

The door JINGLES as he leaves. The receptionist and Juliana WALK INTO the room.

JULIANA

I am thrilled to be meeting Cora's-- daughter-- there's no one here.

RECEPTIONIST

She left? She seemed frazzled.

JULIANA

Hmmm. Maybe it wasn't her. You know how those superfan lunatics can be.

RECEPTIONIST

Should lock the door.

JULIANA

Don't be silly. Should we?

EXT. HSD - DAY

Mary's footsteps CRUNCH in snow as she approaches her car.

MARY

"Who doesn't love knick knacks?"
What was I thinking?

She UNLOCKS the car and OPENS the door. Then--

KEVIN

I like knick knacks.

Mary SCREAMS. Kevin YELPS.

MARY

Kevin, you scared me.

KEVIN

You know what they say? It's Christmas, we're all entitled to one good scare.

MARY

Really, do they? Say that?

KEVIN

You know, that's probably Halloween.

MARY
You think?

KEVIN
So, where you headed?

MARY
Right now?

KEVIN
Let me check my watch. Yep, right now. Big plans? Gotta fill out that application?

MARY
About that--

KEVIN
Hot cocoa.

MARY
Excuse me?

INT. CAFE - DAY

The door chime RINGS, there is CHATTER from patrons, and the CLINKING of forks. Kevin and Mary sit in a booth.

MARY
This place is great. I've driven by a few times, but never stopped.

KEVIN
It's Natalie's favorite. Cocoa, dessert, decorations, far enough so her friends won't see her with her dad, what's not to love?

MARY
Agreed. Well, here goes.

They CLINK mugs.

KEVIN
To the holidays.

They take SIPS.

MARY
Ooh, that's good cocoa. Really good.

KEVIN
Homemade. It's the little
marshmallows that give it that
extra zing.

MARY
They put so many in. Yum!

KEVIN
(confident)
It's my special off-the-menu order.
They know me.
(realizing)
Yep, I probably come here too much.

Mary LAUGHS at his charm.

KEVIN (CONT'D)
Okay, okay. So, besides visiting
the HSD studios, what will you and
your dad do for the holidays?

MARY
We keep things pretty low-key. Even
when Mom was here, we'd stay around
the house. Christmas Eve mass, open
one present-- just one-- then go to
bed and wait for the magic of the
morning. What about you?

KEVIN
We'll spend the day with my sister.
They're not sure when her husband
will be home next.

MARY
It's nice to have family around
this time of year.

KEVIN
I don't know what I'd do without my
sister helping with Natalie.

MARY
She's a great kid. Good artist.

KEVIN
The best. I just worry, you know,
am I doing this right? Her mom
always knew exactly what to say and
do. I guess that's what Moms do.

MARY

True. But dads are good at it, too. My dad is. And you are, I can tell. It's really wonderful the way you interact with her. It's special.

KEVIN

Thanks. Shoot, speaking of, I promised Natalie we'd go shopping. She needs a secret Santa gift.

MARY

You know, I'm available. To babysit, I mean. To watch her. I know you work long hours, so if you ever need help and your sister, you know-- I can help.

KEVIN

I'd love that-- she'd love that. About as much as we love the cocoa.

MARY

Cocoa. Good to know. Now, where do you stand on pot pies?

KEVIN

Oh, honestly, I can stand on pot pies just about anywhere, really.

MARY

My dad has got to have his pot pie every Monday night. I'm trying to get him to cut back. They're not good for his heart.

KEVIN

They're good for the soul.

MARY

They are, huh? My dad would like you. You should come to his restaurant sometime. He'll tell you all about his secret family recipe that's no-so-secret.

KEVIN

I'd love to meet him.

MARY

Then we'll have to make that happen. Bye, Mister Reynolds.

KEVIN
Goodbye, Miss Winters.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Kids CHATTER. Mary stands in front of the class.

MARY
All right, let's settle. I recently had a conversation with someone that coming up with Christmas presents can be hard. So my advice, and what we're going to do today, is make things, because a home made gift comes right from the heart. Now, in an orderly fashion everyone will come up, get supplies and wrapping paper, and knock the socks off everyone on your list. Ready? Let's go.

The kids RUN, SHUFFLE, and GRAB supplies.

MARY (CONT'D)
So, Natalie, what are you going to create?

NATALIE
Hey, no peeking.

MARY
Oh, of course. Christmas rule number one. Is it for your dad?

NATALIE
Nope, but I do know what I'm gonna get him.

MARY
That's wonderful. Can I ask what it is? I'm very good at secrets.

NATALIE
It's an experience. Like you said.

MARY
How nice! What is it?

Natalie LAUGHS.

NATALIE
You'll see.

MARY

Well, all right then. Carry on. And I promise-- no more peeking. I ran into your father the other day, by the way.

NATALIE

Cool! I mean, that's nice. Did you ask him for medical advice? Everyone always does.

MARY

Not that I recall. But we did talk hot cocoa. Oh, and pot pie came up.

NATALIE

Pot pie?

MARY

My father owns a small restaurant. Pop's Place. And every Monday night the special is pot pie.

NATALIE

Do you like pot pie?

MARY

I never miss it.

NATALIE

Good to know. Well, I better get back to work on my project.

MARY

Of course. Have fun. All right, everyone, remember to put lots of love into your creations!

EXT. TOWN - NIGHT

The streets are alive with MUSIC. There are CAROLERS. Cars DRIVE by. Store door bells JINGLE.

Kevin is on the phone as he walks with Natalie.

NATALIE

Dad, I'm gonna run ahead and look at the window display at Sattlers.

KEVIN

(to Natalie)

I'll catch up! Aunt Lorraine says--

(to Lorraine)

(MORE)

KEVIN (CONT'D)

She's gone. Yes, sissie. No, sissie. I tried. Online auctions are hard! Fine, I got outbid. I just have to figure something out, and fast. Natalie wanted to go out for dinner. We're trying something new. It's a surprise. I'm catching up to her. Gotta go.

INT. POP'S PLACE - NIGHT

DINERS are EATING. A fireplace CRACKLES. Light MUSIC plays.

KEVIN

(suspicious)

Pop's Place. Monday Night pot pie. Natalie?

NATALIE

We gotta eat, right? You like pot pie. I like pot pie. Don't get me wrong. Your spaghetti surprise is great, but when the surprise is kale we have a problem. It's time you knew.

Mary WALKS over.

MARY

Kevin? Natalie? What are you doing here?

KEVIN

Avoiding kale. Don't ask. I heard through the twelve year-old grapevine this is the place to feed the soul.

MARY

You heard right. It's so nice to see you-- both of you. Come, sit. So, what'll it be, chicken or beef?

KEVIN

Beef.

NATALIE

Chicken.

MARY

You got it.
(yells out to kitchen)
One moo and one cluck!

KEVIN

Wow, that's-- uh-- what was that?

MARY
Dad's restaurant, my rules.

Michael WALKS up.

MICHAEL
She likes to believe that. Hi, I'm Michael. You must be Kevin. And, you, precious, must be Natalie.

KEVIN
Nice to meet you. What a great place. I'm hoping whatever Mary said to you about us was good.

MARY
Eh, fifty-fifty.

MICHAEL
I'd take those odds if I were you!

A bell DINGS!

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
Looks like your order is up. Let me grab those.

MARY
I'll let you two enjoy.

NATALIE
Wait! Don't you wanna have dinner with my dad? I mean, us?

KEVIN
Yeah, I-- us-- would love that.

MARY
That's sweet. And I would, but I already ate and two pot pies in one night is considered dangerous in these parts. But, tell you what, after I help in the kitchen, I'll come back. How about that?

NATALIE
Cool. Thanks, Miss Winters.

A change in background patron MURMURS tells us it's LATER.

NATALIE (CONT'D)
That was crazy good. Dad, from now on, the only surprise we need for Monday dinner is pot pie.

KEVIN

My ego says, "No way," but my stomach says, "you're right."

Mary and Michael WALK over.

MICHAEL

Those plates are so clean, I think I see clear through to the table.

KEVIN

So delicious, Michael. Thank you.

MICHAEL

Natalie, with your dad's permission, what do you say to a tour of the kitchen. See just how those pots get pied?

NATALIE

Ooh, can I, Dad? Please. It'll be an-- experience.

Natalie GIGGLES.

MICHAEL

I've got my best sous chef, Greta, back there with me. She'd love to meet you.

KEVIN

Okay, go. But don't touch anything!

NATALIE

Yes!

Natalie and Michael WALK off. Mary sits down.

KEVIN

That was nice of your dad. And Greta.

MARY

Full disclosure-- Greta's not the sous chef. She's my dad's neighbor. But she makes great cookies.

KEVIN

I shan't tell a soul.

MARY

It's just nice to see him smiling again.

(MORE)

MARY (CONT'D)

The first year is the hardest.
That's what everyone says, anyway.

KEVIN

And how are you? Are you smiling?

MARY

Now and again, yes.

KEVIN

That's good. It's a nice smile.

MARY

Thank you.

KEVIN

Okay, um, now is when you tell me I
have a nice smile, too.

MARY

Is that how this works?

KEVIN

Now and again.

MARY

You know, right about now, my mom
and I would be playing HSD. Yes,
she'd pretend to call in and I'd
pretend to answer. I'd have to sell
her whatever was closest to me.
Leftover, ratty tinsel at the
bottom of our Christmas bin was
always the toughest.

KEVIN

Did she buy it?

MARY

Every time. It's one of my favorite
memories of her.

KEVIN

Okay, then, sell me something.

MARY

What?

KEVIN

Come on, show me what you got. Sell
me-- aha-- sell me a used napkin.

MARY

You're jok--

KEVIN

Hello, HSD? This is Kevin and I'm calling about the used napkin I saw. Hello? Oh, all right, I guess I'll just go with paper towels--

Mary can't help it.

MARY

Oh, no, Kevin, there's no need for that. You see, what's great about our used napkin is that it's environmentally friendly, made of the finest quality linen, has gorgeous hand-stitched edging, comes with a homemade pot-pie scent and, if you play your cards right, will turn a lovely shade of pink when you accidentally throw it in the laundry with a red shirt.

KEVIN

Sold!

MARY

Not even a challenge. Now give me the napkin. It's pretty gross.

They share a LAUGH.

MARY (CONT'D)

You know, my mom always said Christmas isn't just about things. It's what you do with them, how you share them, and what they mean to you and those you love.

KEVIN

She sounds like a wise woman. And this year, more than ever, I see how much Natalie means to me.

MARY

Speak of the Christmas Angel--

Natalie RUNS over.

NATALIE

Dad, it's huge back there! They have a freezer you walk around in!

KEVIN

Wow. You know we have that, too. It's called the backyard.

Mary LAUGHS. Natalie lays it on thick.

NATALIE

Dad, you're so funny. Isn't he funny, Miss Winters?

MARY

Now and again.

KEVIN

Speaking of freezing and home, we should get going, kiddo.

NATALIE

But, don't you and Miss Winters want to keep talking?

KEVIN

I-- well--

MARY

Oh, well-- I

MARY (CONT'D)

It's getting late. And it's a school night. Even for student teachers.

KEVIN

Well, I'll see you around?

MARY

Sold.

NATALIE

Yes! I mean, goodnight.

MARY

Goodnight.

Natalie and Kevin leave. The bell over the door JINGLES.

INT. KEVIN REYNOLDS HOUSE - DAY

Kevin TYPES on a laptop. Felix YAWNS.

KEVIN

I know it's late, Felix, but what can I do? Even Aunt Lorraine struck out on Ebay. So that leaves us with Craigslist. Someone, somewhere, has to be able to help me make a Christmas wish come true, right? Okay, here goes.

More TYPING. Kevin READS as he writes.

KEVIN (CONT'D)

"To whom it may concern"-- ugh, that sounds like a business letter. "Hi." That's better. "Looking for a Home Shoppers Dream limited-edition Snow Angel. They are sold out, but it's the one thing my daughter really, really, really"-- What do you think, Felix? Too many really's? Okay. "My daughter really wants one for Christmas. Please help me make her one holiday wish come true. Sincerely"-- No, um. "All my best?" Weird. Ah, "Thank you, Kevin." That was easy. Wait. "Thank you, Riley." Okay, ready, Felix? You're asleep, so I'll take that as a yes. Sending. And-- sent. Now, we wait. And hope. And, apparently, sleep.

INT. MICHAEL WINTERS HOUSE - NIGHT

Mary SHUFFLES papers. Light music PLAYS.

MARY

Oscar, if a student teacher has this much homework, what can I expect when I'm a teacher-teacher?

An alert BINGS. Mary looks at her phone.

MARY (CONT'D)

Yes! Oh, my gosh. Yes!

Michael WALKS in.

MICHAEL

Oh, my gosh, what?

MARY

Riley! From HSD. I created an alert in case he posted online, he did, it binged, and I found him!

MICHAEL

You can do that?

MARY

You can. I can. I did! I have to write back. Right now.

She starts TYPING.

MICHAEL
 Goodnight, sweetheart. Don't sprain
 your thumbs.

INT. KEVIN REYNOLDS HOUSE - NIGHT

Kevin SIGHS.

KEVIN
 You know, Felix, it's not like I
 expected a response right away or--

An alert BINGS.

KEVIN (CONT'D)
 A response. I got a response! Here
 we go--
 (reading)
 "Hello, Riley! I have your angel."
 This is amazing. "I'm in Buffalo,
 too. I've been looking for you."
 Yes! This is fantastic news, Felix.

The dog just HUFFS.

KEVIN (CONT'D)
 Man's best friend. Hmph. All right,
 I'm going to respond-- "Amazing,
 thank you, can you meet tonight?"
 Sent. Now we wait.

BING!

KEVIN (CONT'D)
 She said-- yes! It's all falling
 into place.

He grabs his phone and DIALS.

KEVIN (CONT'D)
 (whispering)
 Lorraine? I found it. The angel!

LORRAINE
 (on phone)
 Kev, that's fantastic!

KEVIN
 I just have to pick it up.

LORRAINE
 (on phone)
 Great!

KEVIN

Tonight.

LORRAINE

(on phone)

Not so great.

KEVIN

What do you mean "not so great?" I don't like "not so great."

Lorraine JINGLES her keys.

LORRAINE

(on phone)

Hear that? Car keys. I'm getting ready to meet a client whose quarterly taxes are both a disaster and overdue.

KEVIN

Grrr. It took forever to find this thing and I can't let it slip away.

LORRAINE

I'm really sorry, big bro.

KEVIN

If you rescheduled to help me the IRS would understand, right?

LORRAINE

Sure, I'll just tell my client this holiday season he can enjoy the scent of evergreens-- and an audit. Is there anyone else you can call?

KEVIN

No. I don't know-- wait. You're a genius.

LORRAINE

I am? I am.

KEVIN

Go save your client. Love you, bye!

Kevin hangs up the phone. DIALS again. The phone RINGS.

INTERCUT WITH MARY IN MICHAEL'S HOUSE

MARY

Hello?

KEVIN

Mary, it's Doctor Reynolds. I mean, it's Kevin. Natalie's dad.

MARY

I know all three of you. How are you? It's late. Everything okay?

KEVIN

Remember when you said if I ever needed help with Natalie? Well, I have an errand to run and I need someone to sit. Just for an hour--

MARY

(pained)

I'm sorry, Kevin. I can't. I have plans.

KEVIN

Oh. Of course. I shouldn't have called.

MARY

No, I'm glad you did. It's just-- something I can't get out of.

KEVIN

It's okay, really. Thanks, anyway. I'll definitely keep you on the list of people to call when I need a last-minute late night favor, though. Is that okay?

MARY

Definitely.

KEVIN

Talk soon.

MARY

I hope. Good night.

They both hang up their phones.

Mary pets Oscar, who MEOWS and PURRS. Then, BING!

MARY (CONT'D)

Another message from Riley. Oh, no. He can't make it.

(an idea; happy)

Wait, he can't make it?

She DIALS her phone. There is RINGING. Kevin answers.

KEVIN
Hello, Doctor Reynolds.

MARY
The Doctor Reynolds aka Kevin aka
Natalie's dad?

Kevin LAUGHS.

KEVIN
When I said talk soon, I guess you
took it to heart.

MARY
My plans canceled.

KEVIN
Really?

MARY
Really. I'll be right there.

KEVIN
You're a lifesaver.

MARY
Then I guess that makes two of us.
Bye.

INT. KEVIN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

KEVIN
Felix, she's coming over. This is
it. The start of our Christmas
miracle. Okay, let's see.

He starts TYPING.

KEVIN (CONT'D)
(reading as he types)
"I take it back. I can still meet.
Please let me know where. Thanks
again!" Come on. Bing. Ding.
Answer. You're really going to just
sit there, Felix?

INT. MARY'S CAR - NIGHT

The car IDLES. Soft MUSIC plays as Mary talks to herself.

MARY

Okay, here we go. Be yourself. Be charming.

(super happy)

"Hi Kevin! I got here as fast as I could!" Ugh, because sounding like a desperate monster is definitely the way to go.

(too laid back)

"Hey, Kev, what's shakin'?" What is this, the seventies? Snap out of it, Mary. You'll just be a girl, standing in front of a boy-- talking to herself and quoting romantic comedies. Kill me now.

EXT. KEVIN REYNOLDS HOUSE - NIGHT

Mary KNOCKS on the door. It OPENS. Kevin stands, bummed.

MARY

Hi. I'm just a girl standing who got here as fast as she could what's up Kev?

(realizing)

That wasn't only in my head, was it?

Kevin LAUGHS.

KEVIN

No. No, it wasn't. But I'm kind of glad because I needed the laugh. I guess you didn't get my message.

MARY

I didn't.

KEVIN

My errand evaporated. I don't need you tonight. Wait, that sounded terrible.

MARY

No. I get it. Okay. Um--

KEVIN

I'm really sorry. It's just this thing I'm trying to do for Natalie--

MARY

It's fine. Maybe I could-- no-- I mean--

KEVIN MARY (CONT'D)
Would you like to come in? It's late, I should go.

 MARY (CONT'D)
Maybe next time?

 KEVIN
Yeah. Yes. Definitely.

 MARY
Okay, then. Good-- I'll see you
around. Goodnight.

 KEVIN
Goodnight, Mary.

She walks away. He SHUTS the door.

 MARY
 (to herself, defeated)
Why are you like this?

INT. MICHAEL WINTERS HOUSE - NIGHT

The door OPENS and then CLOSES. Michael sits on the couch.

 MICHAEL
Sweetheart, I thought you went out.

 MARY
I did, then I didn't, then I did,
then-- I have no idea.

 MICHAEL
I see. Riley?

 MARY
Yes.

 MICHAEL
And Kevin?

 MARY
Yes.

 MICHAEL
Well, now what?

 MARY
It's too late for the hard
questions, Dad. But, honestly? I
don't know.

MICHAEL

It sounds like you have some thinking to do. Come on, Oscar, let's go upstairs and let Mary figure things out.

The cat MEOWS when Michael picks him up.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Goodnight. Don't stay up too late.

MARY

'Night, Dad.

Michael goes upstairs.

MARY (CONT'D)

Figure things out. Right. Where are those cookies?

EXT. KEVIN REYNOLDS HOUSE - DAY

Lorraine's car IDLES. She steps out and CLOSES her door. Natalie RUNS past.

NATALIE

Morning, Aunt Lorraine.

LORRAINE

Hey, kiddo. Hop in. I'll be right there. I need your dad for a sec.

NATALIE

'kay.

Natalie gets in the car and CLOSES the door. Lorraine walks up to Kevin on the porch.

LORRAINE

I can't believe you didn't get it.

KEVIN

Shhh!

LORRAINE

Natalie is safely ensconced in the soundproof Suburban. Details. Now.

KEVIN

No, I didn't get it. Whoever had it never got back to me. They probably went to the next buyer. So I lost the angel and the girl.

LORRAINE
I'm sorry, the girl?

KEVIN
Mary. She seemed pretty-- I'm not sure. But not happy.

LORRAINE
I didn't realize we were that interested in her feelings about us or that she was yours to lose.

KEVIN
We-- you and I-- really need to discuss the definition of "we." I just didn't want her to leave, I don't know, not happy.

LORRAINE
Sounds like you didn't want her to leave period.

KEVIN
You know what I mean.

LORRAINE
Maybe you should make sure she knows, too. Just a little advice. You know, from me to we. Us.

KEVIN
Get off my porch and take my daughter to school before she's almost late. Again.

LORRAINE
Okay, okay. Bye!

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Mary helps Karen. There is the sound of STUDENTS in the hall.

KAREN
Help me understand, Mary. You got played twice? In one night? By someone you know and someone you-- don't.

MARY
What was I thinking, trying to meet someone from Craigslist?

KAREN

They make horror movies about that.

MARY

I don't wanna know. And Kevin seemed-- simultaneously happy and disappointed. I just don't get it.

KAREN

So what's the plan with the one you don't know and then the one you do?

MARY

That's the thing. There's Riley. He's mysterious and has an amazing way with words. And his desire to go to crazy lengths to make his daughter happy is so endearing. It's what my mom would've done. And then there's Kevin who's goofy and sweet and endearing and charming--

KAREN

That's a lot of "and's."

MARY

And hard to read. I feel like I have a better grip on the one I don't know than the one I do?

KAREN

Or, maybe you're putting things on the person you don't know to avoid getting hurt from the one you do. So, I ask again, what are you going to do?

MARY

I've got it. It's so obvious. I'll just avoid him. Until I work out my feelings, I'll keep my distance. I mean, how hard can it be?

INT. MICHAEL WINTERS HOUSE - DAY

Mary WALKS in. Michael is watching TELEVISION.

MICHAEL

Hi, pumpkin. You stayed at the toy drive pretty late. Or should I say, hid in the back room?

MARY

Dad, I wasn't hiding. And I went to the hardware store.

MICHAEL

If you say so--

MARY

Shh! Turn the TV up!

Michael turns up the VOLUME.

KEVIN

Hi, yep, it's me. Riley. I was calling to-- did you put me on the air again?

JULIANA

(on television)

We sure did, Riley! It's nice to have you back! And, you're in luck.

KEVIN

I am?

JULIANA

(on television)

A woman called in last week and said she had an angel for you!

KEVIN

She did? She does!?

JULIANA

(on television)

Our viewers are the best. Now, while we don't have it here in the studio, she did say you could have hers. Isn't that the sweetest?

Mary, in Michael's house, frantically DIALS the phone.

RECEPTIONIST RECORDING

Thank you for calling Home Shoppers Dream. Your call is--

MARY

Important yes. This is important. So, come on, come on, come on!

MICHAEL

Should I get some popcorn for this show, because it's getting good.

MARY
Not now, Dad!

JULIANA
(on television)
--which is really incredible. These items are just impossible to find. What anyone out there can find, though, is the cute AngElf--

KEVIN
Juliana, whoever does have one, please tell her she is my own, personal Christmas angel.

MARY
(flattered)
Awww.
(back to business)
Come on, pick up!

KEVIN
Is there any way to reach her?

MARY
I'm calling right now!

RECEPTIONIST
(on phone)
Hello, thank you for calling HSD--

MARY
Hello! Yes! It's me. Mary. Cora's daughter, Mary. I have the angel.

RECEPTIONIST
(on phone)
Oh! Yes! I mean, please hold.

JULIANA
(on television)
Riley, everyone out there watching, we have a special treat-- we have your Christmas miracle on the phone right now!

KEVIN
Hello? Thank you! I can't thank you enough! You're saving Christmas--

JULIANA
(on television)
All right you two--

MARY

I'm so happy I can help. I heard
your story and had to do something

JULIANA

(on television)

This is just--

KEVIN

You have no idea how crazed I've
been trying to find this angel,
trying to find you--

JULIANA

(on television)

Okay, this is getting--

MARY

Email me at--

JULIANA

(on television)

Not on the air!

MARY

HSDsuperfan96@gmail.com

KEVIN

Emailing you now. Thank you!

JULIANA

(on television)

No--

MARY

Can't wait!

Mary and Kevin HANG UP.

JULIANA

(on television, flummoxed)

--Problem. Live television. There's
nothing like it.

INT. MICHAEL'S HOUSE - DAY

MICHAEL

This sounds like it's getting
complicated. Are you sure about--

BING! Mary gets an alert on her phone.

MARY
He already binged! Eee!

Then, BING! BING! BINGBINGBING! Alert after alert.

MICHAEL
He must be more desperate than you
thought.

MARY
Oh, no. No!

MICHAEL
Oh, no, what?

MARY
It's just email after email from
different people about the snow
angel.

BING! BING! BING! It doesn't stop.

MARY (CONT'D)
Dad, help!

MICHAEL
Sweetheart, it sounds like things
have gotten a bit-- tangled for
you.

MARY
Dad!

MICHAEL
You want my advice? Next time you
think about giving your email out
on television, send yourself a
message first to stop.

MARY
Thanks, I'll remember that next
time. Oh shoot-- I'm gonna be late
for work.

BING!

MARY (CONT'D)
Ahhh!

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Karen and Mary talk while they work. Kids in the hallway
TALK, RUN, and LAUGH.

KAREN

Mary, hand me those push pins. The kids made very Christmas wreaths.

MARY

There were hundreds of them, Karen! I'll have nightmares to the sound of "Bing!" I mean, how am I supposed to screen all of them? Well, except for the one's that spell Riley with three "e's" and no "y." And they're still coming in.

KAREN

You gave your email out on the air.

MARY

I was excited. I could finally--

KAREN

Meet Riley?

MARY

Help his daughter, thank you. Meeting him would just be a byproduct of my-- Christmas miracle-ness.

KAREN

Tape, please. Dare I ask how are things with Kevin? Are you still avoiding-slash-bumping into him at every turn?

Mary LAUGHS. She's smitten, and she knows it.

MARY

It's kind of funny. He's sweet. But there's no way every time we see one another it's a coincidence, right?

KAREN

Maybe you should ask him.

MARY

Oh, Karen. I have this wonderful guy in front of me that I'm pretty sure likes me and I'm pretty sure I like him. But then there's this mysterious guy that just does-- something to me that I can't shake. What am I doing?

KAREN
Maybe you should ask yourself.

MARY
It's shocking you're not a guidance counselor.

KAREN
Stapler. You want my advice? Don't let a great idea get in the way of a great guy.

MARY
Why must you be so--

Karen punctuates the remark with loud STAPLING.

KAREN
Right?

MARY
Right.

INT. KEVIN REYNOLDS HOUSE - NATALIE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Natalie sits with Felix. He BARKS.

NATALIE
Of course it'll work, Felix. I just switched my name in Dad's phone to his practice, so when I text him there's an emergency meeting he'll think it's from the office and go.

Felix WHINES.

NATALIE (CONT'D)
Stop worrying. And I agree, it is sneaky.

Felix makes a low HOWLING sound.

NATALIE (CONT'D)
Have some faith, Felix. All right, here we go. Sending text-- now.

The text WHOOSH sounds. Felix lets out a few WHIMPERS.

NATALIE (CONT'D)
 Listen, Dad's gonna call Aunt Lorraine, but I already know she has plans to go out with work friends. So, Mary's gotta come over. It's so perfect. Right?

Felix YAWNS. There is a KNOCK at the door. Kevin ENTERS.

KEVIN
 Hey, kiddo.

NATALIE
 Hi Dad, what's up? I'm just here with Felix, we're talking, hanging out, nothing's happening, what's happening?

KEVIN
 Okay. Thanks for the incredibly detailed rundown. Sweetheart, I got called in to work.

NATALIE
 Really? Wow. Who'd have thunk?

KEVIN
 Yeah, just some meeting. I shouldn't be too long. I'm gonna call your Aunt. That okay?

NATALIE
 Oh, for sure. Definitely call her.

Kevin DIALS. The phone RINGS.

LORRAINE
 (on phone)
 What's up?

KEVIN
 Any chance I can pawn Natalie off on you for a bit? I have to run to the office.

LORRAINE
 (on phone)
 Oh, Kev, I would, but I have plans with the girls. I'm on my way now.

KEVIN
 Shoot.
 (to Natalie)
 Honey, Aunt Loraine is busy.

NATALIE
Oh, darn. Bummer, huh, Felix?

Felix GRUNTS.

LORRAINE
(on phone)
It's just I planned this big going
away dinner for Mackenzie.

KEVIN
Of course. Have fun. Tell her I
said hi. And, goodbye, I suppose.

LORRAINE
Will do. Bye.

KEVIN
Bye, sissie.

Hen HANGS UP. He thinks. SIGHS.

KEVIN (CONT'D)
I'll tell the office I can't go.

NATALIE
No! I mean, you probably should.

KEVIN
Well, it won't be long. You're
twelve. That's old enough to stay
home for a bit by yourself, right?

NATALIE
No! I mean, it's just-- I could
show you the statistics on the fire
hazards of Christmas lights,
holiday break-ins, and cars
hydroplaning into living rooms.

KEVIN
All frighteningly specific. What do
you suggest?

NATALIE
Gosh, I don't know. You could call--
how about Mary? She did offer to
babysit any time.

KEVIN
I'm not sure that's--

NATALIE
Cars. Black ice. Living rooms.

INT. KEVIN'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The doorbell RINGS. Kevin OPENS the door.

MARY

Hi, Kevin.

KEVIN

Mary, thank you for coming so-- you look really nice.

MARY

(feigning indifference)
Oh, this? It's nothing. Just something I already had on. Not like I changed three times when you called or anything. So, where's Natalie?

KEVIN

She's upstairs. I'm sorry I've gotta run. I won't be long.

MARY

Take your time. I'm available. I mean, all yours. I mean--

Kevin LAUGHS. Mary does, too.

MARY (CONT'D)

I'm here for you both.

KEVIN

Lifesaver. Help yourself to anything in the fridge. And, Mary? Thank you.

MARY

Oh! Hugs. I-- like hugs.

KEVIN

Me too. Okay, I'm off. Stay safe. Oh, Natalie's been on a holiday accident kick tonight. If she mentions black ice, just nod.

Mary LAUGHS as Kevin LEAVES. The door SHUTS.

NATALIE

Did my dad leave?

MARY

Hey, Natalie. Cute pajamas. Love the Christmas trees.

NATALIE

Thanks.

MARY

All right, it's just you and me, kiddo. What do you wanna do? Watch a movie? Do some crafts? We could make brownies.

Natalie pulls off a just believable enough YAWN.

NATALIE

I'm actually really tired. I think I'll just head upstairs to bed.

MARY

Really? I thought we could--

NATALIE

Goodnight, Mary.

MARY

Oh, okay. Goodnight, Natalie.

Natalie WALKS UPSTAIRS.

NATALIE

And good luck!

MARY

Huh. All right, looks like it's just me and-- something to eat.

INT. KEVIN REYNOLDS HOUSE - NATALIE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Natalie talks with Felix.

NATALIE

It totally worked, Felix! Mary's here, so I-- Dad's office, I mean-- texted that the meeting is cancelled. So, he'll come back. She's here. He'll be here. See, perfect.

INT. KEVIN REYNOLDS HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Mary sits down as the front door OPENS. Kevin WALKS in.

MARY

Kevin, you're back? That was fast.

KEVIN

Wires got crossed at the clinic, I guess. I'm sorry you came over here for nothing.

MARY

I got to help out in a jam. That's not nothing.

KEVIN

Yeah, you're right. So--

MARY

So--

KEVIN

Did you want to stay for something to eat?

MARY (CONT'D)

There's a frozen pizza in the oven.

They both LAUGH.

MARY (CONT'D)

If you leave it in for ninety seconds after the timer goes off it gets the perfect crisp.

KEVIN

Then I guess you better stay to make sure it turns out just right.

MARY

To the kitchen.

INT. KEVIN REYNOLDS HOUSE - KITCHEN

The timer DINGS. Kevin OPENS the oven and takes the pizza out as Mary GETS PLATES. They serve and start eating.

KEVIN

Can I ask you something?

MARY

Anything. Unless you try to make me sell you more napkins.

KEVIN

Later, maybe. It's about Natalie, actually. How does she seem to you?

MARY

Fine. Do you think she's coming down with something?

KEVIN

Nothing like that. It's just when her mom died we were both devastated, of course. I guess because she's getting older, growing up without a mom, it's-- I don't know.

MARY

Kevin, you're a wonderful father to a wonderful, beautiful little girl. She's really one of the kindest, brightest, most thoughtful kids I've met.

KEVIN

I just worry.

MARY

That's what dads do. But don't. She has you, and for that she's incredibly lucky. Now, what you should worry about is the cheese and sauce on your face.

They LAUGH.

KEVIN

Oh, gosh, let me just wipe--

MARY

No. To the left.

KEVIN

Wait, there, I think I--

MARY

Nope, you're-- here, let me--

KEVIN

Thank you.

MARY

You're welcome. By the way, I wanted to tell you that your Christmas tree is beautiful. I love all the homemade ornaments.

Kevin SIGHS. Melancholy. Remembering.

KEVIN

That's all Natalie and her mother. Every year they'd set aside an entire weekend to make things.

(MORE)

KEVIN (CONT'D)

The house would be full of egg cartons, construction paper, paint, glue, glitter--

MARY

Glitter. An adult's mortal enemy.

KEVIN

So much glitter, but it did make the ornaments sparkle. I think it made the two of them sparkle, too. Now it's something I try to do with Natalie each year. If you look closely you'll be able to see which ornaments are mine. They're more glue than glamour.

MARY

Glamour is overrated. And that's a wonderful memory. It's very special to keep those traditions going.

KEVIN

The next one Natalie wants to start is getting a real tree. She's so excited about the idea. Me? I just see needles. Everywhere.

MARY

They're not so bad. Some water and TLC are all they need. And you can't beat the scent of a fresh tree.

KEVIN

Have you two been talking? Maybe next year. So-- have you finished Christmas shopping?

MARY

Oh, yes. What about you?

KEVIN

Oh, no.

Mary LAUGHS.

MARY

I like to start early. But that doesn't stop me from enjoying the tradition of my mother and me watching HSD all season long. It's like window shopping, but the window is in your living room.

KEVIN
You and your HSD.

MARY
Don't knock it til you shop it.

KEVIN
That's pretty good. Juliana would love that.

MARY
A-ha! You do watch.

KEVIN
I might have dabbled here and there. Speaking of, have you-- were you watching when-- I mean-- do you know about that, uh, Riley character?

Mary drops her pizza on the plate with a loud THUNK. Her fork RATTLES, too. She CLEARS HER THROAT, rattled as well.

MARY
Riley? Ri-- who?

KEVIN
Yeah, he's apparently looking for one of the Christmas angels. They're impossible to find. I think he should give up.

MARY
No! He can't! I mean-- oh, you think so? What about the lady who called in?

KEVIN
Wait, you do know about it then?

MARY
I mean, well, yeah. Who doesn't?

Mary nervously LAUGHS. Takes a BITE of pizza.

KEVIN
It doesn't sound like she ever replied to him.

MARY
(mouth full of pizza)
If she didn't I bet there is a perfectly valid and understandable reason.

KEVIN

Is there also a reason you're brandishing your pizza like a weapon?

Mary stops, puts her pizza DOWN.

MARY

Sorry. I take my HSD very seriously.

KEVIN

Your not-so-secret is safe with me.

MARY

It's just, it's Christmas, the angels are special-- well the AngElf is, you know--

KEVIN

Right!? They're really pushing that thing.

MARY

And then there's the romance of it. Put it all together--

Kevin COUGHS on his pizza a bit.

KEVIN

Uh, romance?

Mary is caught. She takes a bite of pizza.

MARY

What?

KEVIN

Who's--

MARY

Wow, this is really good pizza? Where's it from again?

KEVIN

My oven.

MARY

Yum!

KEVIN

You make me laugh Miss Winters.

MARY

A good slice will do that.

KEVIN

Good company, too.

MARY

Well, I better get going, but
thanks for the pizza. And
conversation.

KEVIN

It's my pleasure.

MARY

Kevin, I have an--

KEVIN (CONT'D)

Mary, would you like--

They LAUGH.

KEVIN (CONT'D)

You first, I insist.

MARY

It's just, I have an idea. Do you
trust me?

KEVIN

Why does that always sound like a
trick question?

MARY

Good. Be ready tomorrow at 10am.
I'll pick you up.

KEVIN

For what?

MARY

Guess you'll have to trust me.

KEVIN

10am it is.

EXT. KEVIN REYNOLDS HOUSE - DAY

Natalie and Kevin stand on the porch.

NATALIE

I don't know why you won't tell me
where you and Miss Winters are
going.

KEVIN

I wish I could tell you,
sweetheart. It's a surprise, and
not just from you. From me, too.

NATALIE

I want a full report.

Lorraine pulls up and HONKS the horn.

KEVIN

Have fun with Aunt Lorraine. Sled
fast! But be safe. Actually sled
medium and tell yourself it's fast.

NATALIE

Are you sure we're related?

Kevin gives her a HUG and a KISS. She runs to the car.

KEVIN

Say goodbye, Felix.

Felix BARKS.

KEVIN (CONT'D)

I can't wait to see the decorations
you put up when I'm back!

The car door CLOSES. The car DRIVES AWAY.

KEVIN (CONT'D)

All right, Felix, she'll be here
any moment. How do I look?

Felix GRUNTS.

KEVIN (CONT'D)

I like this shirt.

Felix WHINES.

KEVIN (CONT'D)

Fine. I'll change. Tough crowd.

Christmas MUSIC plays.

EXT. KEVIN REYNOLDS HOUSE - DAY

The doorbell RINGS. Kevin OPENS the door, then SHUTS it. He
turns to see Mary.

MARY

Good morning, Kevin.

KEVIN

Wow, Mary, right on the dot.

MARY

The pitfall of being a teacher--
punctuality. Are you ready?

KEVIN

Yes. For what, I have no idea.

MARY

Well, plaid is perfect for our
excursion. I like your shirt.

KEVIN

What? This old thing? I just
grabbed it. Barely gave it a second
thought--

MARY

Yeah, yeah, yeah. Come on.

EXT. TREE LOT - DAY

Soft holiday MUSIC plays as Mary and Kevin stroll through a
tree lot. The area bustles with PEOPLE TALKING, LAUGHING.

KEVIN

I feel like I should have known.

MARY

Well, the tree lot has been here
for a few weeks. We're just getting
to it now.

KEVIN

Natalie is going to be over the
moon. If I can choose one. What
about a Douglas Fir?

MARY

Hmm, it's not my tree, but I had a
boyfriend in eighth grade named
Douglas. It didn't end well.

KEVIN

Far be it from me to dredge up the
painful split.

MARY

How about a Virginia Pine?

KEVIN

Sounds like a secretary in one of those pulpy detective novels.

MARY

Okay, I think we're overthinking this.

KEVIN

You think?

They LAUGH. Mary walks around, looking.

MARY

I mean, my mom always told me that you don't choose a tree. It chooses you. You can just tell when it's right. The feeling. The energy. The connection. The tree isn't just to hang ornaments, it's to present gifts. And showcase the love of a family.

KEVIN

Wow. That's beautiful. You're--

MARY

This. This is the one. Branches not too big, but full and strong.

KEVIN

Yeah. Yeah! Strong enough to hold all of our ornaments. All of our--

KEVIN (CONT'D)

Memories.

MARY

Memories.

KEVIN (CONT'D)

(quieter; serious)

Mary, I have to tell you something--

MARY

(hopeful)

Yes?

KEVIN

This-- is a Douglas Fir.

Mary stops. Starts to LAUGH to relieve the tension.

MARY
Well, he was a football player.

KEVIN
All right. We'll take this one!

INT. KEVIN REYNOLDS HOUSE - NIGHT

The door OPENS as Kevin and Mary enter.

KEVIN
You sure you don't mind coming in?

MARY
Wow.

There is sweet Christmas MUSIC playing.

MARY (CONT'D)
The house looks incredible. The decorations are beautiful. Natalie did all this?

Natalie WALKS down the stairs.

NATALIE
I had some help from Aunt Lorraine, but yeah.

Felix BARKS.

NATALIE (CONT'D)
You too, Felix. Hi, Dad. Hi Miss Winters.

KEVIN
Sweetheart, this is awesome. I feel like I'm at the North Pole. And I have another surprise for you. Mary, would you, please?

MARY
Of course.

She OPENS the door. Natalie GASPS.

NATALIE
A real tree!? Seriously!? Dad, I love it! I love you!

Natalie BEAR HUGS her father.

KEVIN

Thank Miss Winters here. She kidnapped-- I mean convinced me.

Natalie RUNS to Mary.

MARY

Oh! Hugs are a theme, I see.

NATALIE

Thank you, Miss Winters. This means so much to me. You mean so much to me. To both of us.

MARY

I don't know what to say.

NATALIE

I do. Have fun transferring all the ornaments from our old tree to this one. And you're on needle duty.

NATALIE (CONT'D)

I'm glad you're here to witness the insanity, Miss Winters. And, oh, I wanted to give you this. I made it myself.

Natalie GRABS a present and hands it to Mary.

MARY

If you made it, then I already love it. But, if you don't mind, I'll wait until Christmas to open it. You know, tradition.

NATALIE

You got it. Oh, wow, look at that. Eight-thirty already? Time for me to go upstairs? 'Night kids.

Natalie RUNS upstairs.

MARY

Goodnight, Natalie.

KEVIN

Goodnight, sweetheart. I'll check in later.

KEVIN (CONT'D)

I have a weird daughter.

MARY

You have a wonderful daughter.

KEVIN

Do you have to get back right away?

MARY

That depends.

KEVIN

Would it help to point out you are surrounded by what might be every decoration we've ever had, the scent of a real tree, and the sounds of the holiday?

MARY

It certainly doesn't hurt.

KEVIN

Perfect. So, tell me, ensconced in this most wintry of wonderlands, what is it you want for Christmas?

MARY

This isn't too bad, actually.

KEVIN

Everyone should get their Christmas wish, right?

MARY

Yes, they should.

Their voices get QUIETER.

KEVIN

Mary--

MARY

Kevin--

Then, just as quickly, they pull back.

MARY (CONT'D)

I-- should really go check on my dad.

KEVIN

Yeah, of course. Uh, I should probably go check on Natalie.

Mary GATHERS her things.

MARY

Oh, I can't forget her present.

KEVIN

Shoot! I have to get Natalie's present. I have to email the-- I have to figure it out.

MARY

I'll let you get to it. I can see myself out.

KEVIN

Thank you for a wonderful day.

MARY

Thank you for a wonderful evening.

The door OPENS, Mary leaves, and CLOSES the door.

KEVIN

Kevin Reynolds what are you doing?

Mary is ON THE PORCH. A care DRIVES by. She SIGHS.

MARY

Mary Winters, what are you doing?

She WALKS to her car, CRUNCHING in the snow. She OPENS her car door, starts the ENGINE.

MARY (CONT'D)

Wait, I know what I'm doing.

(searching her phone)

Craigslist, Riley, Riley where are-- a-ha. Here we go.

(reading as she types)

"Hi there. I don't know what happened last time we tried to meet, but something is telling me to try again. If you're still looking for an angel, let me know."

INT. KEVIN REYNOLDS HOUSE - NIGHT

Christmas MUSIC faintly plays. Kevin is CLEANING up dishes.

BING!

KEVIN

Felix, did you hear that? Hand me my phone. No, wait, don't touch it.

He grabs his phone and looks.

KEVIN (CONT'D) (CONT'D)
It's her! Shhh, it's her. She still
has the angel.

(reading as he texts)
"Can we meet tomorrow?" This is it,
Felix, I can feel it. Okay, now go
finish the dishes. Go on. Please?

Felix YAWNS.

INT. MICHAEL WINTERS HOUSE - DAY

Mary RUSHES from upstairs.

MARY
Ooh, I'm running late. Today's the
day, Dad! Oh, hi Greta.

MICHAEL
I know you're in a hurry, honey,
but can I-- we-- talk to you for a
minute?

MARY
Well, sure. Is everything-- why are
you holding Greta's hand? Is she
okay? Are you okay?

MICHAEL
Oh, yes, sweetie, yes! I'm fine.
Were both fine. Great, actually.

GRETA
Really great.

MICHAEL
Really great-- together. Do you
understand?

Mary SLIDES a chair out and sits.

MARY
Wow. Together together. Okay. How
long has this been going on?

MICHAEL
A few weeks.

MARY
I can't believe I didn't see it.

GRETA

Well, dear, you had your mind on other things. And, perhaps, other people?

MARY

You're right about that. Weeks, really?

MICHAEL

Mmm-hmm. And you're okay?

MARY

Oh, Dad. I just want you to be happy? Are you happy?

MICHAEL

Really happy.

MARY

And, Greta?

GRETA

Really, really happy.

MARY

And you'll still make those delicious cookies?

GRETA

Nothing could stop me.

MARY

Dad, all this time I thought I'm keeping you company, but I was--

MICHAEL

The third wheel?

MARY

It sounds so much worse when you say it.

GRETA

Leave the girl alone. She has her own relationships to figure out.

MARY

Don't remind me. That reminds me! I'm running late. I'm giving Riley to the Angel. Wait, oh, you know. Bye, Dad!

She KISSES him on the forehead.

MARY (CONT'D)
 Goodbye, Greta! I'll see you later.
 I'm sure. For dinner. Looking
 forward to it! No more sneaking!

She stops quickly.

MARY (CONT'D)
 By the way, I'm really, really
 happy for you both, too.

She RUNS off, leaves the house and SHUTS the door. Greta
 takes a SIP of coffee.

MICHAEL
 What do you suppose will happen
 between them?

GRETA
 I don't know, but I hope they both
 find their Christmas miracle.

EXT. PARK - DAY

Mary WALKS through the park. Kids PLAY, LAUGH, SING. Then--

MARY
 Kevin?

KEVIN
 Mary?

MARY
 What are you doing here?

KEVIN
 I could ask you the same thing.

MARY
 Touche. I'm meeting someone.

KEVIN
 Funny, me too. I don't come to this
 park often. It's nice.

MARY
 It is nice.

KEVIN
 So.

MARY
 So.

Awkward SILENCE.

KEVIN MARY (CONT'D)
Mary, I've-- Kevin listen--

They LAUGH. So them.

MARY (CONT'D)
You first this time. I insist.

KEVIN
Okay, good.

He takes a DEEP BREATH in. Lets it out.

KEVIN (CONT'D)
Who. So, heres the thing. I've
been thinking a lot. About us.

MARY
You have? Me, too. But Kev--

KEVIN
The past few weeks have been, well,
perfect. As perfect as things like
this can get, I think. And I
haven't seen Natalie this happy in
such a long time. Since her mom,
you know--

MARY
I do, really. But--

KEVIN
I also have to admit that I didn't
know that I could feel this good.
This happy. This light. The way we
laugh, and the things we have in
common. I don't know what's gonna
happen tomorrow, or a week from
now, or next Christmas, but I think
we'd be crazy not to give this a
shot. To see if this goes where I
think-- we think-- it can go. Is
everything-- wait a second. Am I--
way off base here?

Mary SNIFFLES. Wipes her nose.

MARY
No. Yes. Oh, I don't know.

KEVIN

Is it me? Is it something I did?
Said?

MARY

No, no, it's--

KEVIN

Is there someone else?

MARY

Yes. No. Maybe. I don't know.

KEVIN

Wow. I had no idea.

MARY

That makes two of us.

KEVIN

I'm a little confused.

MARY

Join the club.

KEVIN

Why didn't you say anything?

MARY

Because you were perfect.
Everything was. And it wasn't. And--
I don't know.

Kevin STANDS up.

KEVIN

I don't want to-- Mary, look--
Sorry, I don't really know what to
say. You know what? That's not
true. I do know. I just want you to
be happy. Really happy.

MARY

There you go, being perfect again.

KEVIN

It's what you deserve. Now I don't
know what else to say. I also don't
know how to tell Natalie. But
that's for me to figure out. What's
in the box? Oh, wait. It's for him,
isn't it. You're meeting him.

MARY

Sort of. Yes and no. It's not a gift, really. More of a favor.

KEVIN

You know what, you don't have to explain. I just hope he appreciates it. I do.

MARY

Kevin, I'm sorry. I never meant to hurt you, or Natalie, or anybody. Everything has been so crazy and wonderful and unexpected. But this is just something I have to do. To see for myself. To know for sure. Can you understand that?

KEVIN

I think-- I just need a little time to think about it. By myself.

MARY

Kevin, wait.

KEVIN

I'll call you.

Kevin gets up and WALKS AWAY. Mary SIGHS.

INT. MICHAEL WINTERS HOUSE - DAY

Karen and Mary are talking. Christmas MUSIC plays. The CRACKLE of a fire is alive, too.

KAREN

Hand me those ornament hooks. Then what happened?

MARY

Well-- he left.

KAREN

Ouch. And Riley never showed up?

MARY

Nope. If he did, he probably saw the cloud of darkness and ran.

KAREN

I need more garland. What about Kevin? Who was he waiting for?

MARY

Dunno. I never asked, but they never showed, either.

KAREN

So not only did Riley ditch you again, but--

MARY

I let the great fantasy guy get in the way of the great reality guy.

KAREN

Aww, honey, come here. The student has finally become the teacher!

MARY

You're strangling me with garland.

KAREN

Sorry.

MARY

That's okay. You can make it up to me by telling me what to do?

KAREN

Oh, no. Lesson plans, field trips, and decorating, you got it. But matchmaking? I'm sorry to say, honey, you're gonna have to figure this one out on your own.

MARY

Bah, humbug.

The door OPENS. Greta and Michael ENTER.

MICHAEL

It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas! Oh, hi, ladies!

MARY

Hi, Dad. Hi, Greta.

MICHAEL

What are you up to?

MARY

Ruining lives.

KAREN

She is, Mister Winters. I'm decorating.

GRETA

Be careful, dear, or your likely to
get lost in Christmas bins,
wrapping paper, and--

MARY

Oh, that reminds me. Natalie gave
me gift. I put it down-- here it
is!

KAREN

Wow, it's like the universe is
trying to make you feel bad.

MARY

Not helping, ghost of Christmas
present.

KAREN

Well, are you gonna stare at it or
open it?

MARY

I told Natalie I'd wait until
Christmas.

KAREN

It's Christmas Eve.

MARY

I don't know. Dad?

MICHAEL

Sweetheart, you and your mother
always opened one, very special
present on Christmas Eve. I'd say
this fits the bill.

Mary takes a BIG BREATH. She RIPS off the wrapping paper.

MARY

Wow. It's a portrait. Of me.

KAREN/GRETA/MICHAEL

Oh. That's wonderful. So pretty.

GRETA

That little girl drew this picture
of you? It's perfect.

MARY

If only I could find the confident,
wonderful woman she sees in me.

MICHAEL

You don't have to find her. She's right here.

KAREN

I'm literally crying right now.

They all LAUGH.

INT. KEVIN'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Lorraine sits on the couch with a forlorn Kevin. They have MUSIC playing as well, but it's melancholy.

Natalie puts final touches on some decorations.

LORRAINE

Natalie, how many ornaments are you gonna put on that poor tree? I think there's enough Christmas cheer in the house already.

KEVIN

Yeah, whee.

Kevin lets out a big SIGH.

LORRAINE

Sorry, buddy.

KEVIN

It's probably for the best.

NATALIE

It's for the best that Mary dumped us? Nice, Dad.

KEVIN

Sweetie, come here. That's not what I meant. And Mary didn't dump anyone.

NATALIE

Is that supposed to make it hurt less?

KEVIN

I wish it did.

NATALIE

She was good for you. She brought you back. She made us "us" again.

KEVIN

She did, but that's not going away.
Were still here. Together.

Natalie STANDS UP and backs away, UPSET.

NATALIE

Aunt Lorraine, you're always saying
how weird Dad is. Can't you, like,
reason with him?

KEVIN

Wait, what?

LORRAINE

Natalie, Mary made her choice. I'm
sorry, honey. And you'll still see
her at school.

NATALIE

But she doesn't have the whole
story.

KEVIN

What are you talking about?

NATALIE

Duh. Love, Dad. It's about love.
And when you feel it so strongly
you're going to burst, you have to
come out and say it. If you don't,
you can lose it forever.

Natalie RUNS upstairs.

LORRAINE

Out of the mouths of babes. Kev,
you're raising her to be an amazing
young woman.

KEVIN

I'm doing my best.

LORRAINE

You'll get through this.

A little MUFFLED as they still embrace.

KEVIN

Did you tell my daughter I'm weird?

LORRAINE

There, there, just let it out.

EXT. KEVIN REYNOLDS HOUSE - BACKYARD

Cars DRIVE by. Kids PLAY. Felix Barks.

NATALIE

There's no time for a real plan,
Felix. It's Christmas Eve.

Felix BARKS twice.

NATALIE (CONT'D)

Just because I'm only twelve
doesn't mean I can't do this. And
you're going to help me.

Felix WHINES.

NATALIE (CONT'D)

Just keep an eye out and make sure
they think I'm home while I ride my
bike into the sunset-- and snow--
to fix this.

Felix HOWLS.

NATALIE (CONT'D)

Well, when you say it like that--
Felix, just wish me luck, because
this is it. Last chance for a
Christmas miracle.

Natalie RIDES off. Felix GROANS.

INT. MICHAEL'S HOUSE - DAY

HSD plays on the television.

MARY

Just look at it all, Oscar. There
for the taking. Maybe if we're
lucky HSD'll start selling love for
the low, low price of 19.95.

The television VOLUME GOES UP.

JULIANA

(on television)

--are also limited-edition--

MARY

Ha! What isn't?

JULIANA
 (on television)
 --and once it is gone, it is gone.

MARY
 Preach, sister.

JULIANA
 (on television)
 --Don't forget it's Christmas Eve!
 Here we are together, surrounded by
 the ones we love, ready to make our
 Christmas wishes come true. All you
 have to do is believe.

MARY
 It's that easy, huh?

Greta CALLS out from the kitchen.

GRETA
 Mary, sweetheart, why don't you
 come in here and help us decorate
 the cookies?

She SIGHS. Thinks on it, then--

MARY
 Thank you, Greta, but I'm just not
 in the Christmas spirit right now.
 (to herself)
 Just believe, huh?

INT. KEVIN REYNOLDS HOUSE - NATALIE'S ROOM - DAY

The DOOR opens. Lorraine enters.

LORRAINE
 (calls out)
 Natalie's not in her room, either!

Felix BARKS. Kevin RUSHES into the room.

KEVIN
 Her bike is gone!

LORRAINE
 Oh, Kev. She wouldn't.

Felix BARKS twice.

KEVIN

She said Mary didn't have the whole story.

LORRAINE

You're right. She would.

KEVIN

Stay here in case she comes back.

LORRAINE

You got it. Now, go!

Kevin RUNS downstairs.

KEVIN (O.S.)

Ahh! Where's my phone!?

LORRAINE

Felix, you have some explaining to do.

Felix lets out a WHINE.

INT. MICHAEL WINTERS HOUSE - DAY

Mary watches HSD.

JULIANA

(on television)

And don't forget, The AngElf is still available. It's on sale. Actually, the sale is on sale. He's looking for a home. It could be yours! Please, let it be yours.

MARY

Oscar, even my mother had trouble buying that one. I think I had to dial the phone for her. But it's not so bad, is it?

Oscar WHINES. Greta comes in the room.

GRETA

Cookies are done-- what is that thing?

JULIANA

(on television)

The AngElf? He's smart, he's sweet, and he'll help make your Christmas wishes come true!

GRETA
 Can she hear me?
 (whispers)
 It looks like a Christmas nightmare
 if you ask me.

Mary LAUGHS. There is then a bit of COMMOTION on the screen.

JULIANA
 (on television)
 Oh, sorry, sweetie-- wait a moment,
 everyone-- can someone help this
 little-- honey, I think--

NATALIE
 (on television)
 It's Christmas Eve, and I believe,
 so all I need is a Christmas
 miracle!

JULIANA
 (on television)
 I think you might be looking for
 Santa--

NATALIE
 (on television)
 My friend says that you can get
 anything on HSD.

JULIANA
 (on television)
 Your friend is very smart. What's
 their name?

NATALIE
 (on television)
 Miss Mary Winters.

What!?

MARY

What?

GRETA

GRETA (CONT'D)
 Michael get in here! Mary, what--
 how?

Mary's phone RINGS. She answers.

MARY
 I'm watching, Kevin. Natalie. Right
 now.

KEVIN

(on phone)

Thank goodness. I'm glad she's with you because--

MARY

With me? She's not here.

MICHAEL

(on phone)

You said you were watching her?

MARY

Yes, along with most of Western New York. Turn on HSD!

KEVIN

(on phone)

No.

MARY

Big yes. Big. Huge!

JULIANA

(on television)

Okay, sweetheart, tell us. What's your Christmas miracle?

NATALIE

(on television)

It's my dad, Kevin.

KEVIN

(on phone)

This can't be happening. I'm going over there!

He HANGS up.

NATALIE

(on television)

And his friend, Miss Winters.

MARY

What!?! Did she? No.

NATALIE

(on television)

They're perfect for each other. Everyone sees it. Now, we need them to see it, too. And if I know Miss Winters, she's watching right now.

GRETA

Michael, get your coat. You're going over there.

MICHAEL

Okay. Wait, I'm what?

GRETA

Someone's got to drive so Mary can keep watching. I don't wanna miss this. Michael, coat and keys. Mary, start streaming!

They RUSH OUT of the house. The door CLOSES.

INT. HSD - NIGHT

JULIANA

This is quite a story, young lady. If the looks of the crew are anything to go on, I think you need to tell us here, and everyone at home, more!

NATALIE

It was super cute. They met at the zoo on a school field trip.

CREW

Aww.

NATALIE

Oh! And one time my dad invited her to share some pizza. That's, like, huge.

CREW

Aww!

JULIANA

All right, if Miss Winters is watching right now, what do you really want to tell her.

NATALIE

Miss Winters, Mary, my dad loves you. I love you. The whole class loves you! So, please, will you help me make my Christmas miracle come true?

Mary BURSTS in through the door. She RUNS to the set.

MARY
I'm here! I'm here!

NATALIE
Mary! I knew it!

Kevin BURSTS in to the set next.

NATALIE (CONT'D)
Dad!

MARY
Kevin?

KEVIN
Mary?

JULIANA
This is all live, folks!

KEVIN
Juliana, hi again, big fan. Well, I wasn't, but-- no, I mean I am. A fan. I just-- I called, but it wasn't me-- no, it was me, but--

MARY
Kevin, are you okay?

KEVIN
Mary, Juliana, everyone at home. My name is Kevin, but you might know me as-- uh-- it's sorta funny really-- Riley. I'm Riley.

The crew GASPS.

MARY
Riley. You're Riley. You're Riley!?

KEVIN
This all started because Natalie saw the Snow Angel. It made her so happy I thought if I could get one it would be the best present ever and help keep us happy the first Christmas without her mother, but I didn't mean for any of this to happen and then things sort of spun out of control--

MARY
Sort of?

KEVIN
I don't know what I was thinking.

MARY
So, you're Riley. It's nice to meet
you, Riley. I'm-- HSDsuperfan96.

The crew GASPS even louder.

JULIANA
I smell an Emmy.

KEVIN
Mary, you?

MARY
I was the one trying to get the
angel to you the whole time. It all
makes sense now. Meeting here, at
the park, you asking me to watch
Natalie, but when I could go, you
couldn't. I was so blind. It was
you all along.

KEVIN
And it was you.

MARY
Right in front of me.

KEVIN (CONT'D)
Right in front of me.

*

JULIANA
This is so Superman, Clark Kent,
Lois Lane!

MARY
Kevin, I'm sorry. I was waiting for
this person on the other end of the
phone who said all the right
things, even though you were there
doing all the right things. I just
wondered if there wasn't a way they
could all be wrapped up into one
person and-- here you are. All
because of a snow angel.

JULIANA
That's how amazing those items are,
folks. Even the AngElf! Someone,
please, give those things a home.

KEVIN
I don't know what to say.

MARY

Say you'll forgive me for being so--
me. Say you'll give me-- us-- a
second chance.

NATALIE

Dad, come on.

Kevin SIGHS. This is awkward. This is love. This is life.

KEVIN

Yes.

The crew let's out a sound of RELIEF.

KEVIN (CONT'D)

But--

NATALIE

Don't blow this, Dad.

KEVIN

I know, sweetpea. Mary, of course I
forgive you. And I never want you
to be anything but you. As for the
rest, the us, I just don't know.
Isn't it all too crazy? Too
complicated? I'm the one who's
sorry. I started this whole thing.

There is a depressed SIGH from the crew.

NATALIE

Weirdo, you're totally blowing it.

KEVIN

Natalie, it's time to go. We can
talk at home. I'm sorry, Juliana,
everyone. I need time to--

Kevin and Natalie WALK away. Natalie is UPSET.

MARY

A heart! One heart, Kevin. It's a
little messy. Sometimes it's
careless. It makes bad decisions.
It holds on to things it shouldn't,
and lets go of things it needs. But
it will always, from now on, be
honest. And true. And it comes
bursting with love. At no
additional cost. It's been guarded
for most of its life, but it's
ready to open up and grow.

(MORE)

MARY (CONT'D)

It might be a little broken, but that's how you know it works. It just needs the right person to help piece it back together. There's only one. It's free. And it's yours if you want it.

Kevin is SILENT. Everyone waits.

NATALIE

Dad, Hello!?! Love phone, it's for you!

MARY

Kevin?

JULIANA

Kevin?

CREW

Kevin!?

KEVIN

I've been known to let one must-have, limited-edition item slip through my fingers before. I guess-- I just can't let it happen again.

Kevin and Mary EMBRACE and KISS. The crew erupts with Joy.

KEVIN (CONT'D)

You, uh, still have my snow angel, right?

Mary LAUGHS.

MARY

Thank you for being you.

KEVIN

Thank you for being wonderful.

JULIANA

There you have it, folks. A holiday miracle brought to you by HSD, the place where anything can happen and you can find anything. Even true love. Merry Christmas-- from our hearts to yours!

THE END