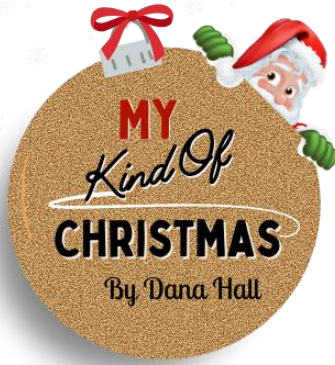


# My Kind of Christmas

Dana Hall



*“He who has Christmas in his heart will never find it under a tree.”*  
*Roy L. Smith*

Copyright © 2024 Dana Hall

All rights reserved.

ISBN: 9798871560532



## SYNOPSIS

David has lost his enthusiasm for Christmas after his grown children moved out. However, the magic of the holiday season may have other plans for him. Will he be able to rediscover his love for the holidays, or will he remain lost in memories of Christmases past? You won't want to miss this holiday classic filled with seasonal music, festive twists, and all the joy of the season!

## PLACE/TIME

December 2015. (Flashbacks 1995) Chicago suburbs.

## PLAYWRIGHT NOTE

**A Slash (/)** in the dialogue indicates an interruption of speech. The intent is to create overlapping dialogue. If there are lines following this in parentheses ( ) this indicates what the actor would've said had there been no interruption. An actor may try to say the rest of the line until they are cut off.  
**An Ellipses (...)** means the character is actively searching for what to say next.

**A Beat (Beat)** is a breath or shift in thought/tactic.

**OS** indicates dialogue is happening off-stage.

## STAGING

Single set staging. Staging does not need to be elaborate.

A shift in lighting during the dream scenes.

A living room that has an adjoining dining room table.

## MUSIC

This play utilizes songs in the Public Domain. The Stanford University Guide to Copyright and Fair Use defines works in the "public domain" as 'creative works that are not protected by intellectual property laws, ' meaning that the public, as opposed to an individual, owns these works. If the need should arise to include other songs, all responsibility to secure rights to music and arrangement is the sole responsibility of the producing theatre house.

## FEATURED SONGS

Jingle Bells - 1857 Original Version

O' Christmas Tree

We Wish You a Merry Christmas

Deck The Hall (instrumental)

Silent Night

Up on the House Top

\*(Optional full cast singing of We Wish You a Merry Christmas)- curtain call

## CAST

10 minimum

6 Characters 3M/ 3F

\*Carolers/Robbers 4 (open casting)

## CHARACTERS

### DAVID SMITH

Male, 50s, Husband to Jennifer.

### JENNIFER SMITH

Female, 50s, Wife to David.

### SARAH SMITH

Female, 28, Daughter. Plays an eight-year-old version of herself.

### STEVEN SMITH

Male, 30, Son. Plays a ten-year-old version of himself.

### RAYMOND SMITH

Male, 70, Father of David. Husband to Gloria.

### GLORIA SMITH

Female, 70, Wife of Raymond.

### CHRISTMAS CAROLERS

Dressed traditionally, a spirited group of singers.

### ROBBERS

A group of angels that have come down to earth as thieves.

*\* The Robbers can double for Carolers if wearing face masks.  
May add more if desired.*

## SETTING

A Midwest family home. Single set.

## SCENE BREAKDOWN

### ACT I

**SCENE 1:** Living room of the Smith's Home, Beginning of December.

**SCENE 2:** Living room of the Smith's Home, Dream Sequence.

**SCENE 3:** Living room of the Smith's Home, Two weeks before Christmas.

**SCENE 4:** Living room of the Smith's Home, Dream Sequence.

**SCENE 5:** Living room of the Smith's Home, Morning of Christmas Eve.

**SCENE 6:** Living room of the Smith's Home, A few hours later.

**SCENE 7:** Living room of the Smith's Home, A few minutes later.

### ACT II

**SCENE 8:** Living room of the Smith's Home, Evening Christmas Eve.

**SCENE 9:** Living room of the Smith's Home, Later the same evening.

**SCENE 10:** Living room of the Smith's Home, The same evening.

## CAUTION

Professionals and Amateurs are hereby warned that performances of *My Kind of Christmas* are subject to payment of a royalty. It is fully protected under the copyright laws of The United States of America, and of all countries covered by the International Copyright Union (including the Dominion of Canada and the rest of the British Commonwealth), and of all countries covered by the Pan-American Copyright Convention, the Universal Copyright Convention, the Berne Convention, and of all countries with which the United States has reciprocal copyright relations. All rights, including without limitation professional/amateur stage rights, motion picture, recitation, lecturing, public reading, radio broadcasting, television, video or sound recording, all other forms of mechanical, electronic, and digital reproduction, transmission, and distribution, such as CD, DVD, the Internet, private and file-sharing networks, information storage and retrieval systems, photocopying, and the rights of translation into foreign languages are strictly reserved. Emphasis is placed upon the matter of readings, permission of which must be obtained from the Author in writing. The English language stock and amateur stage performance rights in the United States, its territories, possessions, and Canada for *My Kind of Christmas* are controlled exclusively by Dana Hall LLC. No professional or nonprofessional performance of the Play may be given without obtaining in advance written permission and paying the requisite fee. Inquiries concerning production rights should be addressed to [Magnoliawrites120@gmail.com](mailto:Magnoliawrites120@gmail.com)

## SPECIAL NOTE

Anyone receiving permission to produce *My Kind of Christmas* is required to give credit to the Author as the sole and exclusive Author of the Play on the title page of all programs distributed in connection with performances of the Play and in all instances in which the title of the Play appears for purposes of advertising, publicizing or otherwise exploiting the Play and/or production thereof. The name of the Author must appear on a separate line, in which no other name appears, immediately beneath the title and in size of type equal to 50% of the size of the largest, most prominent letter used for the title of the Play. No person, firm, or entity may receive credit larger or more prominent than that accorded the Author.



## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

Premier Production:  
Palos Village Players, Production 2024

Dedicated to Len Wcislo & Daniel Grube

**ACT I**  
**SCENE 1**

*Evening. The Smiths' empty midwestern living room. Off stage, we hear CAROLERS singing Jingle Bells. As they continue their spirited rendition, DAVID enters the living room, ready for a movie night. Just then, the CAROLERS knock on the Smiths' front door. DAVID hears the knock and peeks out the window; panic ensues.*

**DAVID**

No, no, no! It's barely December. What are they even doing here?!

*DAVID drops to the floor.*

*There's a lull.*

Phew! They must think no one is home. Great!

**CAROLER 1**

(In a chipper tone)

Hello! We see the light on! We're here bringing Christmas tidings...

**DAVID**

Tidings? What does that even mean?

**CAROLER 3**

Maybe they didn't hear us...

**CAROLER 2**

We know how to fix that, don't we?

*CAROLERS continue singing even louder and more spirited than before. DAVID reaches for the light switch and flicks it off. A hush falls over the carolers. DAVID is relieved for a moment. He goes to the couch. They begin again. He takes pillows and puts them over his ears.*

**DAVID**

Can I get a little peace and quiet in my own home?!

**CAROLER 4**

Let's really jingle those bells folks!

*CAROLERS continue the song letting the bells do the work.*

**CAROLER 3**

It's really starting to feel like Christmas, isn't it?!

*CAROLERS continue singing as JENNIFER enters the room. She is carrying a tabletop Christmas tree. She turns on the lights as she hums Jingle Bells. She puts the tree on the coffee table.*

**JENNIFER**

*(Calling)* Who doesn't love carolers?! So joyous. I'm coming!

*DAVID peers out from under a blanket.*

**DAVID**

Shhh! Quiet, they'll hear you!

**JENNIFER**

David, what were you doing in the dark?

**DAVID**

My taxes.

**JENNIFER**

You're so silly. Oh, I love this time of year, don't you?

**DAVID**

Nope.

**JENNIFER**

Don't be like that! It's just some neighbors offering good tidings.

**DAVID**

Don't act like you know what a tiding is! No one knows! No one!

**JENNIFER**

Honey, come on. Come with me to the door -

**DAVID**

No. *(Beat.)* So, what's with the Christmas tree?

**JENNIFER**

It's for Sarah's apartment.

**DAVID**

Why would she need it if she's spending the holidays with us?

**JENNIFER**

We've been over this. She'll be out of town-

**DAVID**

Next, you'll tell me Steven won't be here/

**JENNIFER**

Well...he asked me to talk to you about that-

**DAVID**

Really?! *(Catches himself then whispers.)* Really?

**JENNIFER**

He has a new baby and/ *(they just moved to the new house)*

*CAROLERS are jingling bells loudly over JENNIFER's lines.*

**DAVID**

What?! Ugh, I can barely even hear you! Hold on.

*DAVID opens the door.*

**ALL CAROLERS**  
MERRY CHRISTMAS, SIR!/  
**DAVID**

**DAVID**  
WE DON'T WANT ANY!

*DAVID slams the door.*

**JENNIFER**  
David! It's Christmas-

**DAVID**  
No, Christmas is the 25<sup>th</sup> - not today.

*CAROLERS continue with  
enthusiasm.*

Again, with the bells! How many verses does this song have!?

*CAROLER 2 opens the door slightly and wedges their way in.*

**CAROLER 2**  
Hi, excuse me, couldn't help but hear you... actually, there are  
seventeen different versions and four verses. Don't feel bad, most  
people don't know/

*CAROLER 4 pops in under  
CAROLER 2.*

**CAROLER 4**  
Did you tell him it was originally written in 1857/

**DAVID**  
ENOUGH! I SAID ENOUGH!

*The CAROLERS stop. They begin commiserating.*

**CAROLER 1**

We can take a hint. Let's go.

**CAROLER 3**

This house sucks!

**CAROLER 2**

I hear the Erickson's have hot chocolate-

*CAROLERS exit.*

**DAVID**

What? Don't look at me like that Jen. This is private property/

**JENNIFER**

It's Christmas.

**DAVID**

A commercialized holiday/

**JENNIFER**

A time for festivities and good cheer/

**DAVID**

*(A snide laugh.)* A ploy for corporations to exploit parents into buying expensive gifts and for people to trespass on your property in the middle of the night.

**JENNIFER**

It's 8 pm.

**DAVID**

You know what I mean.

**JENNIFER**

This year's been hard, but can't we find a little joy? Don't you think your dad would've wanted that?

*She gestures to RAYMOND'S black and white photograph on the mantel. DAVID clears his throat and waves off the conversation. He goes back to the couch.*

**DAVID**

Dad's not here. And apparently, neither of my children will be either.

**JENNIFER**

They're adults now/

**DAVID**

*(He waves her off.)* I'm about to start a movie. Do you want to join me?

**JENNIFER**

A holiday movie?

**DAVID**

Yes, matter of fact it's a Christmas classic...Die Hard.

**JENNIFER**

That's not a Christmas/ (movie)

**DAVID**

Don't. Don't start Jen. I'm in a fragile state/

**JENNIFER**

Ok. How about I make some cookies?

**DAVID**

Suit yourself. You know where I'll be...

*JENNIFER exits. DAVID puts his feet up on the coffee table and slowly pushes the little Christmas tree to the floor as he stretches. Ahhh... now where was I...*

*(David turns on the TV. As he does, we hear gunplay and explosions: "Now I have a machine gun. Ho-Ho-Ho." David is very pleased.) "Yippee-ki-yaaaaay!"*

*JENNIFER pops in and out mixing batter, singing, "We Wish You a Merry Christmas."*

**JENNIFER**

...And a Happy New Year...

**DAVID**

*(Calling.)* Jen! Jen, I'm trying to watch something. *(Sigh.)* Forget it. *(DAVID turns off the TV and covers himself in the blanket.)*  
Not even John McClane can save this holiday.

*Lights down.*

**SCENE 2**

*Lights shift, indicating a dream sequence. It's quiet. DAVID is still on the couch. He's been sleeping for some time now. Enter SARAH (8) in pajamas, she is her younger self. She sees the little Christmas tree and softly sings, "We Wish You a Merry Christmas," as she fixes its ornaments. DAVID begins to stir.*

**DAVID**

Jen, I was having the strangest dream. Sarah was home, and it was the Christmas when she turned nine. That year she started asking all those questions about Santa. "How can he make it to every house in the world in just one night/"

**SARAH**

Christmas magic/

**DAVID**

Whoa! What the Jingle Bells is this? *(Beat.)* Sarah?



**SARAH**

You were right! That's how he does it.

**DAVID**

W-what are you doing here?

**SARAH**

Stevie said that I'll never see him.

**DAVID**

See who?

**SARAH**

Santa. I was gonna sleep down here and wait for him.

**DAVID**

*(Whispers to self.)* Wake up, wake up.

**SARAH**

Oh Daddy, can you read this to me?

*SARAH hands DAVID a book.*

**DAVID**

The Night Before Christmas. We haven't read this together since/

**SARAH**

Last Christmas.

**DAVID**

Last Christmas. I see.

*SARAH snuggles next to DAVID on the couch.*

**SARAH**

Please Dad...

**DAVID**

Uhh...Sure, Peanut.  
"The stockings were hung,  
by the chimney with care,  
In hope that Saint Nicholas,  
Soon would be there."  
The children nestled,  
all snug in their beds/

*JENNIFER enters.*

**JENNIFER**

There you are! I went to check on you and figured you might be down here.

**SARAH**

Mom, we're right at your favorite part!

**JENNIFER**

Really!

*JENNIFER snuggles in with them on the couch.*

**SARAH**

Keep going, Dad!

**DAVID**

"While visions of sugar plums,  
danced in their heads."

**JENNIFER**

Now Dasher! Now Dancer!

**SARAH**

Now Prancer and Vixen!

**JENNIFER**

On! Comet; on! Cupid/

**SARAH**

On! Donner and Blitzen!

**JENNIFER**

To the top of the porch!

**SARAH/JENNIFER**

Dash Away All!

*JENNIFER and SARAH laugh together. This is all too much for DAVID.*

**DAVID**

Ohhh Ok. (*Pinching himself.*) (*To self.*) This has been really nice and all, but I think it's time to call it a night/

**JENNIFER**

Was it the wrong part? I love the reindeer part/

**DAVID**

No, it's...this evening, it's uhh...not what I expected...

**JENNIFER**

I know what you mean. Stevie tucked himself in at eight with no fuss. It's a strange night.

**SARAH**

Oh, No!

**JENNIFER**

What honey?

**SARAH**

He forgot to leave cookies and milk for Santa. *(to Dad.)*  
It's tradition, right?

**DAVID**

Tradition. Right.

**SARAH**

I'll go get it!

*SARAH exits to the  
kitchen.*

**JENNIFER**

She's so cute, isn't she? I wish we could just-

**DAVID/JENNIFER**

Freeze time.

**JENNIFER**

Yeah/

**DAVID**

It's a nice thought.

*JENNIFER checks to make sure SARAH isn't listening.*

**JENNIFER**

*(Keeping her voice down.)* I know Christmas is 'your' holiday, but I started wrapping the presents already. I'm not nearly as meticulous as you are but I think they look sort of nice/

**DAVID**

Jen-

**JENNIFER**

I'm sorry, I couldn't wait.

**DAVID**

No, Jen it's not that... you know all this will change? They won't be little forever. Then what?

**JENNIFER**

There'll always be lasts, but each year brings something new/

**DAVID**

It sure does.

*SARAH enters with a glass of milk and a giant plate of cookies for Santa. JENNIFER rushes to help.*

**JENNIFER**

And they'll be full of surprises.

**DAVID**

Someone must be afraid of the naughty list...

**SARAH**

Not me! This should do the trick. That and...

*She leans into DAVID and nudges him.*

**DAVID**

A little *Christmas Magic*.

*DAVID pats her head.*

**SARAH**

Daddy, can we finish the story?

**DAVID**

I'd like that- I'd like that a lot, honey.

*They all snuggle back on the couch. DAVID embraces the moment. He begins reading again.*

*Lights down.*

**SCENE 3**

*A few days later, it's morning. DAVID and JENNIFER are at the dining room table drinking coffee. DAVID is fussing with the newspaper very dramatically.*

**JENNIFER**

Who's winning?

**DAVID**

What?

**JENNIFER**

Are you reading it or fighting it?

**DAVID**

Ha. Ha. Well, it's all ads. Look. Ad. Ad. Cremation service. Ad. Ad. A sale on pants.

**JENNIFER**

Ohhh- give me that.

**DAVID**

The only things we get in the mail these days are bills and this thing - filled with garbage.

**JENNIFER**

I wanted to cancel it a year ago- everything is online now anyway.

**DAVID**

Agh—too much with these devices. Technology is killing our brain cells. I want to sit with my coffee and paper in hand like my ancestors did. (*He reads the paper a bit more, then gets frustrated with holiday ads and folds it up.*) Never mind, they've ruined it.

**JENNIFER**

Christmas is just two weeks away- what did you expect? Which reminds me, we got a few holiday cards in the mail... and...(*JENNIFER excitedly retrieves an envelope. She hands it to DAVID.*) I waited for you so we could read it together.

**DAVID**

The Smith Family Christmas letter.

**JENNIFER**

Come on, read it. It'll cheer you up.

**DAVID**

Ok...let's see...(*Opening the envelope.*) This one is from Aunt Regina - (*Reading.*)

Dear Family,  
Happy Holidays! We hope this finds you well. It's been a roller-coaster of a year, starting with Uncle Paul taking a tumble down the stairs; he's been in tractions for a few weeks. The bright side, we wrapped his leg like a Christmas present; the downside-he thinks it's funny to tell the home health care worker I pushed him. As for me, no Jingle Bell Rock this year- I need a total hip replacement. Bright side though, we'll

get to see our oldest more since he quit his corporate job to be an influencer. (*DAVID smiles and sips his coffee.*)

This is gold. (*Returns to reading.*) Bright side for all you twine-enthusiasts, Meghan and the kids went to Kansas to see the world's largest ball of twine, it weighs 5,000lbs. Too bad Mr. Whiskers passed away earlier this year he would have loved it. We turned his ashes into an ornament. Bright side, he'll be with us for all Christmas to come. (*Stops reading.*) Aunt Regina never disappoints.

**JENNIFER**

Her "bright sides" really get you in the Christmas spirit.

**DAVID**

They're the brightest bulb on a dimly lit tree.

*STEVEN enters from kitchen.*

**STEVEN**

Mornin' parental units.

**JENNIFER**

Hey sweetie. I have that box ready for you- I'll grab it.

*She kisses STEVEN's forehead and exits.*

**DAVID**

Come sit a minute. Talk with your old man.

**STEVEN**

I can't stay long. I-I gotta get back home/

**DAVID**

Sit.



*STEVEN sits at the table. There is awkwardness between them.*

**STEVEN**

Holiday letter?

**DAVID**

Yah... Mr. Whiskers died.

**STEVEN**

Bummer.

**DAVID**

So, what brings you by-

**STEVEN**

Mom packed up some Christmas decorations for the new house.

**DAVID**

Right. Right...Well, how goes it?

**STEVEN**

What?

**DAVID**

Things-

**STEVEN**

You've seen it. It's a house, Dad.

**DAVID**

You know what I mean. 'Life.'

**STEVEN**

You really wanna know? I thought you'd never ask. (*All in one breath, his head on the table.*) Everyone depends on me, and I feel like I'm suffocating most days, but I have to breathe because I have to work, and the baby is up half the night on a good night, so I don't sleep /

**DAVID**

Here. Have a cup of coffee.

**STEVEN**

The bags under my eyes have bags of their own.

**DAVID**

Try cucumber. Your mother swears by it.

**STEVEN**

Unbelievable. I pour my heart out and that's all you've got to say-

**DAVID**

Also-maybe skip writing a Christmas letter this year.

**STEVEN**

They send you home with this tiny human like you're supposed to know what to do. It's not easy.

**DAVID**

It's not. Hang in there, son. It does get better.

*DAVID lifts his mug.*

**STEVEN**

Thanks, that's surprisingly sincere.

**DAVID**

Then your kids move out, and you're all alone, wondering what purpose you have anymore until they want money or to borrow your lawnmower.

**STEVEN**

There it is. Mom, said you've been in a mood/

**DAVID**

Just wait until *my* letter comes out. (*Beat.*) Ahhh, what can I say? Enjoy these years, son. The sleepless nights are worth it, and if you're lucky, you'll get some good ones *all together*.

**STEVEN**

Dad, don't make me feel bad about this, we're alternating holidays now that the baby is here and/

**DAVID**

Yes, yes- I've heard it all from your mother/

**STEVEN**

We'll still have holidays altogether; it's just a lot for us right now. What about grandma, she'll be here-

**DAVID**

She's not flying in from Boca. The retirement village has bunco finals.

*Enter JENNIFER with a box full of decorations. She plops them down between them.*

**JENNIFER**

Here you go! We won't need any of this anymore—enjoy! With all these old decorations, you can decorate Isabelle's nursery, too! Oh, how cute would that be? David...

*(DAVID looks in the box. A switch inside him is flipped. He takes out a wad of tangled lights.)*

David, what are you doing?

**DAVID**

These stay.

**JENNIFER**

They've been in a knot for years. Now you're interested in them?

**DAVID**

And this too. *(DAVID takes a Santa statue out of the box.)*

**JENNIFER**

We agreed this was the 'giveaway box.'

**DAVID**

I'm just taking back a few things. No biggie.

**JENNIFER**

Fine.

**DAVID**

This...and these...

**STEVEN**

Dad-

**DAVID**

We've had this before you were born.

*DAVID takes many, many holiday decorations out of the box. He drapes himself in garland and holds lights and figures.*

**STEVEN**

*(Concerned.)* Mom...

**JENNIFER**

Uhhh, honey.

**DAVID**

Sorry, son. There isn't much left. Uhh-- here. You can take this. *(DAVID gives STEVEN a broken decoration.)*

**STEVEN**

Gee, thanks. *(He goes to his father who is enjoying the old decor.)* Dad, it's Isabelle's first Christmas and I thought having some things from home would be nice. Like a passing down of traditions/

**DAVID**

You want tradition? Bring her over *here* for Christmas Eve dinner!

**STEVEN**

Mom, can you help me here?

**JENNIFER**

Honey, remember we're not *having* Christmas Eve dinner this year.

**DAVID**

We weren't, but now we are. I'm making my roast! Oh! I have to start the grocery list- you know how the stores are this time of year. You have to go in with a plan, son.

*DAVID is looking for  
paper and pen.*

**STEVEN**

But-

**DAVID**

No butts, son, unless it's our butts all together at the table for dinner.

**STEVEN**

I promised our first Christmas with Isabelle would be at the new house. We had Thanksgiving here, and next year, we'll do Christmas with the Smith side. I promise. (*DAD ignores STEVEN. STEVEN gestures to Mom to 'do something' about Dad.*) Mooommm--

**JENNIFER**

(*To STEVEN gesturing to the box*) Go pack up, I've got this.  
(*To DAVID*) Hey, Honey, forget about the list, ok?

**STEVEN**

No list?! Ha, last year I went in without a list and forgot the cranberry sauce. I went back to get it and Mrs. Dignin took the last can. She's got it out for me-

**JENNIFER**

Yes, the great sauce battle of 2014. Many managers were called- it lives in infamy in Food Mart lore.

**STEVEN**

Well, not this year Jen. I'm going in prepared.

**JENNIFER**

I appreciate your enthusiasm, but the kids have their plans, so there's just no need for a big dinner. (*She takes the notepad.*) On the *bright side*, it'll be a cozy, romantic dinner for the two of us.

**DAVID**

Very funny dear.

*DAVID takes his list and tucks it into his pocket. He then takes JENNIFER by the hand and twirls her.*

O Christmas tree, O Christmas tree,  
How lovely are your branches!  
Not only green in summer's heat,  
But also winter's snow and sleet...

**JENNIFER**

David/

*DAVID continues singing as he prances around the house, he grabs the box STEVEN has just put back together. DAVID starts putting up the decorations. JENNIFER and STEVEN watch with concern.*

**DAVID**

*(Checking his watch.)* Look at that! I bet the lot is still open.

**JENNIFER**

What lot?

**DAVID**

You want to help your old man cut down a tree?

**STEVEN**

I'm supposed to be home by Isabelle's next feeding/

**DAVID**

Suit yourself.

**JENNIFER**

Honey, we agreed we'd use the little tree this year since it's just us/

**DAVID**

I don't recall that -

**JENNIFER**

You nodded-

**DAVID**

To be fair, I nod along to a lot of things that I don't intend to do.

**JENNIFER**

David really- well I/

**STEVEN**

Mom, is he going to be, ok?

*DAVID gets his coat and wears a piece of garland as a scarf.*

**JENNIFER**

Of course, honey, he's just having a bout of *nostalgia*.

**STEVEN**

Is this about Grandpa?

*DAVID comes in between them and hands STEVEN the little Christmas tree.*



**DAVID**

Here son! We won't need this- I'm getting the biggest tree they have! Then we hit the mall for presents!

*DAVID goes to grab his keys.*

**JENNIFER**

I suppose we all grieve in our own way, dear.

*DAVID puts on a Santa hat and hands reindeer ears to JENNIFER.*

**DAVID**

Let's go my little Snickerdoodle- time is a'wastin'.

*DAVID exits.*

**JENNIFER**

Give Kim and Isabelle my best.

*JENNIFER exits. STEVEN stares at the Christmas tree and then sings.*

**STEVEN**

O' Christmas tree, O' Christmas tree  
This year should be interesting...

*Lights down.*

**SCENE 4**

*The lights shift, indicating a dream sequence. The Christmas tree is in the living room. DAVID is wearing a Christmas sweater. He passed out on the couch after wrapping presents. His own snoring wakes him, and he falls off the couch.*

**DAVID**

Oh- I must've dosed off. Better get these under the tree. I may have gone a little overboard. Well, desperate times and all...

*DAVID starts to put presents under the tree.*

**STEVEN**

*(OS Calling.)* Daaad!

**DAVID**

Steven? Steve, is that you? I thought you'd be with Isabelle...*(To self.)* Wow, these presents are working better than I could've imagined!

*Enter STEVEN (10) in pajamas, he is physically his age but is his younger self. He wears headgear and it's a bit hard to understand him.*

**STEVEN**

Dad! There you are.

**DAVID**

*(Shocked.)* What the gum drop buttons!?

**STEVEN**

*(STEVEN charges for the Christmas tree.)* Presents!

**DAVID**

Stevie!?! Stop.

*STEVEN is throwing presents and shaking them. He is making two piles, his and Sarah's pile.*

**STEVEN**

Not mine...Not mine...sounds like socks... Oh! Maybe Legos!

**DAVID**

Whoa- whoa, buddy-

**STEVEN**

Mine...mine... probably a stupid pony...

**DAVID**

Son. Son!

**STEVEN**

Can't you see I'm working here, Dad?

**DAVID**

Hey- slow down buddy.

**STEVEN**

Why? It's Christmas, this is what it's all about! The big show!

**DAVID**

The big show?

**STEVEN**

Presents!

**DAVID**

Right... uhhh maybe take a break for a minute. I think you scared Santa off when you came running in here.

**STEVEN**

*(Rolls his eyes.)* Ok, sure, Dad.

*DAVID snags a present  
from STEVEN's pile.*

Hey! Give it back!

**DAVID**

If you don't believe. You don't get any. It's that simple.

**STEVEN**

Ok. I believe- geez.

*(DAVID stands staring off trying to make sense of things.*

*STEVEN meanwhile tries to get his present back.)* Dad...Dad!

**DAVID**

Uhh, what? Sorry. Uhhh... just déjà-vu or something...

**STEVEN**

The present?! *(STEVEN grabs the gift back.)*

**DAVID**

You know the holidays aren't just about gifts, right?

**STEVEN**

Yeah- Mom makes us clean our rooms, too.

**DAVID**

That's because family comes to stay with us.

**STEVEN**

Yeah, Grandma Gigi and Grandpa take my room and Grandpa snores. (*Demonstrates snoring.*)

**DAVID**

Stevie, come here.

**STEVEN**

What?

**DAVID**

Sit.

**STEVEN**

Fine. But next year I'm asking "Santa" for a dirt bike.

**DAVID**

Mom. (*Clears his throat.*) Santa-would never allow that.

**STEVEN**

We can just keep this between me, you, and "Santa"- right Dad?!

*STEVEN elbows and winks at his father.*

**DAVID**

I think it's time we had the talk.

**STEVEN**

(*Jumps up.*) Gross! We covered this in health class - I am not doing that again!

*He covers his ears and hums.*

**DAVID**

Not *that* talk.

**STEVEN**

What other talk is there-

**DAVID**

About Santa.

**STEVEN**

(*Whining.*) Dad...I already know/

**DAVID**

Listen, when I was about your age my father told me something that stayed with me. Now I want to pass it on to you.

**STEVEN**

Ok.

**DAVID**

He said, "There are three stages of Christmas. Believe. Un-Believe. And *Become*." (*DAVID nods at STEVEN*)

**STEVEN**

(*A slow realization as he nods back.*) Ohhhh!

**DAVID**

You get it, my boy?

**STEVEN**

I think I know just what you mean.

**DAVID**

Good.

**STEVEN**

You're Santa?!

**DAVID**

Wait...what?

**STEVEN**

Like in the movie where the guy turns into Santa Claus and has to live at the North Pole to keep the tradition of Christmas alive!? I thought that was fake but it's true-

**DAVID**

Son, that's not/

**STEVEN**

Where's your sleigh?

**DAVID**

I don't have one.

**STEVEN**

*(Bummed.)* Is it like in the shop or something?

**DAVID**

Stevie, listen, I don't have one because I'm not Santa.

**STEVEN**

*(Bummed)* Oh. It would've been really cool if you were.

**DAVID**

*(To self.)* I really hope the other talk went better than this one.

**STEVEN**

So, what *are* you saying Dad?

**DAVID**

I'm saying, Santa lives in the hearts of everyone who does something selfless for another person. Santa is the spirit of the holidays. That's the reason for all of this. Sometimes I think we get away from that...you know?

*There is a long pause. DAVID isn't sure STEVEN understands.*

**STEVEN**

Uh-huh.

**DAVID**

So you understand what I mean?

**STEVEN**

I'm ten Dad, I get it.

**DAVID**

You do? *(Still unsure.)*

**STEVEN**

Yup.

**DAVID**

Ok then...good talk son.

*DAVID pats STEVEN on the back. STEVEN then goes to the table, takes off his headgear, and eats the cookies.*

What are you doing?

**STEVEN**

*(With a mouthful of cookies.)* Becoming.



**DAVID**

Ha! Welcome aboard! When you're done. Let's get these presents fixed up before your sister comes down.

**STEVEN**

Oh! I got an idea. (*STEVEN takes a bell and then starts stomping around the living room.*)

**DAVID**

Shhh! What are you doing?! You'll wake the house?!

*STEVEN loudly, in a deep voice, 'Ho, Ho, Ho!' Off stage, we hear young SARAH exclaim, 'Santa! Santa's here!' STEVEN tosses DAVID the bells. DAVID hides them. SARAH enters.*

**SARAH**

Dad! Dad! Did you hear him!?

**DAVID**

Uhhh. Yes! He woke us up too! We ran down and Santa was gone/

**STEVEN**

I looked out the window just in time to see the sleigh in the sky!

**DAVID**

That's right, Stevie. He got away- again!

*JENNIFER enters in a robe.*

**JENNIFER**

What's all the fuss?

**STEVEN**

Dad and I tried to catch him, but he got away.

**JENNIFER**

You did, huh?

**DAVID**

So close, we were.

**JENNIFER**

That's a shame, guys.

*JENNIFER picks up the  
headgear and hands it  
back to STEVEN.*

Maybe all the cookies slowed him down.

*JENNIFER gives STEVEN a knowing look and pats him on  
the head.*

**SARAH**

Good thing you remembered the cookies, Stevie. Santa was hunnnngry.

**STEVEN**

He didn't forget the presents, either. I guess I was wrong; you weren't on the naughty list. But I think you got mostly socks.

**SARAH**

Awww! Daddy look at the presents! Mom, I've never seen so many. I'm gonna wake up Grandpa and Gigi they've gotta see this!

**DAVID**

Lucky for them they probably took out their hearing aids. Let's let them sleep.

**JENNIFER**

Speaking of sleep. Let's get a few hours, they'll still be there in the morning /

*SARAH and STEVEN begin pouting and pleading.*

**SARAH**

Ugh. Do we have to?

**STEVEN**

Come on Mom?

**DAVID**

Enough. Come on kids, do as your mother says.

**SARAH**

Fiiine.

**STEVEN**

I'm setting my alarm for -early.

**SARAH**

I'll set mine five minutes earlier than yours.

**STEVEN**

You can't even tell time!

**DAVID**

*(Warning.)* Kids--

**SARAH**

Can so!

**STEVEN**

Can not!

**JENNIFER**

Kids! Say goodnight and head up before Santa hears you, and turns the sleigh right back around and gives you nothing but coal instead!

*SARAH and STEVEN stop instantly. They say their goodnights and exit to their bedrooms.*

**DAVID**

Nice one, seasonal threats.

**JENNIFER**

A true gift to parents everywhere. *(Beat.)* So, it looks like we'll have an extra helper for next year.

**DAVID**

He'll make a great elf.

**JENNIFER**

Are you heading up?

**DAVID**

Yeah, give me a minute. I'll straighten up a bit.

**JENNIFER**

Sure, not too long. Neither one of them knows how to work that alarm. *(Beat.)* Merry Christmas, honey.

**DAVID**

Merry Christmas.

*JENNIFER exits. DAVID returns to the couch. He sits for a moment taking it all in. He yawns and falls asleep in the same position he was in before. He begins snoring.*

*Lights down.*

**SCENE 5**

*On the morning of Christmas Eve, STEVEN and SARAH knock and enter the house in a rush. They are carrying matching gift bags. Christmas music plays softly, and the house has become more festive.*

**SARAH**

*(Calling.)* Mom! Mom, it's me and Stevie/

**STEVEN**

Steven.

**SARAH**

You'll always be 'lil Stevie Wevie' to me.

**STEVEN**

And you'll always be annoying.

**SARAH**

Well, judging from the bag, you're here for the same reason I am. *(They both take out hideous matching sweaters out of a gift bag.)* I thought you told him we weren't doing Christmas this year.

**STEVEN**

I did. Well, Mom did. Apparently, he isn't taking no for an answer. Wow, look at these presents! *(He shakes a few packages.)*

**SARAH**

Put it down, we can't be bought. We have to draw the line somewhere. We're not kids anymore. *(Whining like a child.)* Mooooommmmm!

**STEVEN**

So, what are your ‘big adult plans’?

**SARAH**

I’m going to Roger’s cabin in Wisconsin and spending Christmas on the slopes.

**STEVEN**

*(Mocks her “Roger’s cabin.”)* Sounds cold. If you ask me.

**SARAH**

I didn’t and it’s *romantic*. Anyway... *(Whining like a child.)* Moommmmm. Ugh, where is she? The door is open. She’s gotta be home.

**STEVEN**

Leaving the door open *(Scoffs.)* That’s not very safe.

**SARAH**

*(Mocking.)* “That’s very not safe.”

**STEVEN**

Mock me but over 39% of burglars use an unlocked door.

**SARAH**

Is that so- Mr. Homeowner?

**STEVEN**

It was in the brochure. *(Bragging.)* Kim and I bought a security system.

**SARAH**

You’ve always been naïve. How much did they soak you for?

**STEVEN**

The safety of your family is priceless—(under his breath) more than we thought. But ‘peace of mind is worth every penny.’

**SARAH**

Save yourself some cash, throw on this sweater, and stand on the lawn. You won’t have to worry about break-ins. They’ll be running the other way- (*JENNIFER enters wearing a hideous Christmas sweater matching the one the kids have.*) (*Reacting to the sweater.*) Oh! Holy Ghost of Christmas Past!

**JENNIFER**

Do you like it?

**SARAH**

No.

**STEVEN**

Not even a little.

**JENNIFER**

Sorry, I didn’t hear you come in -

**STEVEN**

Turn down the volume on that sweater then!

*SARAH and STEVEN  
share a laugh and smile.*

**JENNIFER**

I was in the attic taking down some ornament boxes. To what do I owe the honor?

**STEVEN**

Where's Dad?

**SARAH**

Yeah, where is Chris Kringle? He's got some explaining to do. (*Gestures to bag.*)

**JENNIFER**

I see you got his *Christmas surprise*, too.

**SARAH**

They're hideous.

**STEVEN**

How is this a surprise?

**JENNIFER**

(*Trying to make it better.*) We all match. (*Jazz hands.*)  
Suurrprisee.

**STEVEN**

I can't believe you're going along with this.

**JENNIFER**

It's just a sweater.

**SARAH**

It's a cry for help.

**JENNIFER**

So, your father has a bit of the 'Christmas cheer'- so what?!

**SARAH**

Is that code for some kind of old-person "episode?"



**STEVEN**

He isn't drinking, is he? You know they have alcohol-free egg nogg/

**JENNIFER**

There's nothing wrong with your father. (*An aside.*) Besides his questionable taste in fashion. He wants to have one last holiday before you all go off and live your lives. When I broke the news that you wouldn't be coming, it was like the last spark in his eyes dimmed. It's also the first Christmas without Grandpa-

**STEVEN**

He never got to meet Isabelle. She came in right when he was going out.

**SARAH**

Sometimes I think I hear his laugh.

**JENNIFER**

Me too. Grandpa loved this holiday. He loved decorating and singing songs. It'd mean the world to your dad if you came to Christmas Eve dinner. Maybe helped decorate, like old times. What do you say? Please. Then you can go about your plans...for dad...for grandpa.

*STEVEN and SARAH look at each other. Then after a pause.*

**SARAH**

She's good. Very skilled at the art of guilt-tripping.

**STEVEN**

You're telling me - we had mother/ son Halloween costumes until I was twelve.

**JENNIFER**

So...is that a 'yes?'

**STEVEN**

*(Reluctant.)* Well, I guess it *is* tradition/

**SARAH**

*(Sighs.)* I suppose we could use a little extra dose of Christmas Magic this year/

**JENNIFER**

So, it's a, yes?!

**STEVEN**

I could sneak away for a bit. But my in-laws are coming in so I can't stay long...

**SARAH**

A couple of hours max- that's it, then I gotta get on the road.

**JENNIFER**

Sold! It'll just be the four of us. Now that that's settled. Would you mind helping me bring the ornament boxes down?

**STEVEN**

Sure. *(To Sarah.)* After you-

**SARAH**

No, I insist, age before beauty. After you-

**STEVEN**

Just GO!

**SARAH**

You Go.

**JENNIFER**

Some things never change. *JENNIFER exits.*

*STEVEN and SARAH  
follow bickering.*

**STEVEN**

Mom, Sarah's making faces at me.

**SARAH**

Am not! That's just my face.

**STEVEN**

Well, did anyone tell you, you have a resting 'Grinch' face?

**SARAH**

Ha. Ha. Did anyone tell you you're like Aunt Regina's fruitcake? People just pretend to like you!

**STEVEN**

*(Gasps.)* You take that back!

**SARAH**

No!

**STEVEN**

Mom!

**SARAH**

Oh- you gonna tell?

**STEVEN**

Mooommm!

*They continue arguing with each other as they exit. The room is silent, and then bumbling ROBBERS, with masks, enter. The lead robber (RAYMOND, DAVID's father, who is now a ghost) takes off his mask.*

**RAYMOND**

Ok. Listen up, we don't have much time.

*ROBBER 1 raises his hand.*

Yes, yes, what is it?

**ROBBER 1**

Yeah Ray, you said we were comin' down here to do some good deeds. I hafta say, this don't look so good.

**RAYMOND**

Good deeds come in many forms. My friend.

*ROBBER 2 raises his hand.*

Yes, what now?

**ROBBER 2**

My mask is itching.

**ROBBER 3**

Mine too.

**RAYMOND**

Those are not questions...anyone else/

**ROBBER 4**

Are you sure the big guy said this was ok?

**RAYMOND**

Of course. It's my son's house, we're just paying him a... a *holiday visit*.

**ROBBER 2**

Oh, cuz, I thought we was robbing them.

**RAYMOND**

Would I bring a group of upstanding angels, like ourselves, all the way down to earth to do a thing like that? On Christmas Eve no less? Think about it. (*ROBBERS all mumble ad-lib phrases like, "You're right." Sorry boss. etc.*) Now that we've covered that, kindly shove all these presents into these giant satchels, would ya?

**ROBBER 3**

Ohhh! I bet I know what this one is!

**RAYMOND**

Give me that! And you, start helping or I'll make sure you'll never get those wings! (*ROBBER 3 wraps up the candy cane he was eating and goes to work.*)

**ROBBER 4**

How about these, boss? (*ROBBER 4 holds up the sweaters- all nod "NO WAY."*)

**RAYMOND**

For the love of jingle bells- Leave em. (*Just then, a glass ornament breaks OS, and perhaps a few roll out on stage. STEVEN yells "Oww."*)

Hit the deck! (*They all hide ridiculously in plain sight. A plant on the head, a lamp shade, feet peeking out from a curtain, etc., etc.*)

**JENNIFER OS**

You ok, Sweetie?

**STEVEN OS**

Oww! I'm bleeding. One of these glass ornaments cut me.

**JENNIFER OS**

Elevate it. Above your head -

**SARAH OS**

It's just a little cut. I'll grab the big baby a Band-Aid.

**STEVEN OS**

Hurry up, I'm bleeding all over our precious childhood memories-

*SARAH enters mumbling to herself. RAYMOND looks lovingly at his granddaughter. SARAH opens a drawer and looks for a band-aid. As she turns RAYMOND puts one on the desk. SARAH finds it and exits. RAYMOND motions for the ROBBERS to leave.*

**RAYMOND**

This should do the trick. (*He admires his work.*) All right, gang, head out. Let's go-

**ROBBER 3**

What's the rush?

**RAYMOND**

If you must know- I got a card game going. I got Sinatra and Rickles right where I want them, I'm not losing *this* time!  
(*ROBBERS 2,3,4 exit*)

**ROBBER 1**

What happened last time?

**RAYMOND**

Pocket aces... Lost to Sinatra. A flush on the river.

**ROBBER 1**

That's a bad beat boss!

**RAYMOND**

You're telling me. He even made me kiss the ring.

**ROBBER 1**

Sounds like you got off easy considering. (*Exits.*)

**RAYMOND**

It was in his back pocket. (*Shudders at the thought.*)

*RAYMOND exits.*

**SCENE 6**

*STEVEN and SARAH sit at the table. Crime scene tape surrounds the Christmas tree. The gravity of the situation is before them.*

**SARAH**

Robbed. Right before Christmas. I can't believe it!

**STEVEN**

The police said that robbery and larceny increase by 20% every December-

**SARAH**

How is that helpful?

**STEVEN**

Those are the facts, Sis.

**SARAH**

How about the fact Dad's going to be crushed?

**STEVEN**

Maybe he won't notice...

**SARAH**

Our living room is a crime scene! All the presents are missing, and we can't replace them because we don't know what they were!

**STEVEN**

There's that face again.

*SARAH punches STEVEN in the arm.*

**STEVEN**

Mom!

*JENNIFER enters.*

**JENNIFER**

The police just called and said they filed the report. There's no evidence of any break-ins in the area but they'll be watching the neighborhood.

**STEVEN**

That's comforting. I guess.

**SARAH**

In the middle of the morning - someone had to see something! Who robs a house during the day?

**STEVEN**

The most common times for break-ins are between 10 am and 3 pm.

*SARAH hits STEVEN.*

Oww! Mom!

*JENNIFER shrugs.*



**STEVEN**

Great, guess we know who the favorite child is-

*JENNIFER's phone rings  
in a Christmas tone.*

**JENNIFER**

Oh no, it's Dad! I can't tell him over the phone. Can I? No. I'll let it go to voicemail.

*As the phone continues ringing in its jolly song. SARAH  
reaches over and declines the call.*

Why'd you do that?

**SARAH**

Text him. Say you need him to stop at the store for something. You know-buy us some time.

**STEVEN**

Yeah, Mom, listen to the expert liar.

**JENNIFER**

Oooh that's a good idea Sarah-

*JENNIFER starts texting.*

**STEVEN**

So, when he gets here who's going to tell him?

*Both JENNIFER and SARAH  
touch their nose at the same  
time.*

**JENNIFER/SARAH**

Not it!

**STEVEN**

Real mature!

**SARAH**

You're such a sore loser.

**STEVEN**

I am not!

**SARAH**

You've always been.

**STEVEN**

Take that back.

**SARAH**

No! When I was four you dragged me three yards face first because you didn't want to lose to our cousins in a sack race.

*JENNIFER receives a text.*

**JENNIFER**

Kids...

**STEVEN**

Everyone knows the Smiths from Nebraska are cheaters we had no choice/

**SARAH**

I picked rocks out of my nose for a week.

**JENNIFER**

Kids!

**STEVEN**

It just proves I'm competitive, not a sore loser.

**SARAH**

That's what a sore loser would say/

**JENNIFER**

STOP! It's Dad.

*They all freeze. Then they  
throw the phone back and  
forth like it's a bomb. It  
lands back with  
JENNIFER.*

**STEVEN**

What does it say?

**JENNIFER**

*(She looks hesitantly.)* He's on his way.

**SARAH**

Well- this has been fun...

*SARAH gets up and moves  
towards the door.*

**STEVEN**

You can't leave!

**SARAH**

I'd rather be dragged face first in a sack than see his face  
when he finds out.

**STEVEN**

*(To JENNIFER.)* And where are *you* going?

**JENNIFER**

I should go down to the station, make sure the police have everything they need...

*JENNIFER eases to the door.*

**STEVEN**

Suuure! Forsaken by my own family! They say tragedy brings out people's true colors.

*SARAH pats STEVEN on the shoulder and goes to put on her coat.*

**SARAH**

Yup, Good luck.

**JENNIFER**

Text me after you tell him.

**STEVEN**

Whoa! Whoa! Dancer and Prancer get your Christmas cheer back in here cuz I am *not* doing this alone.

**JENNIFER**

Wait. That's it! I have an idea.

**SARAH**

Go on- we're listening...

**JENNIFER**

There was something that wasn't stolen...

*JENNIFER goes to the Christmas sweaters and holds them up.*

**STEVEN**

No!

**SARAH**

No way!

**JENNIFER**

If you put these on it'll soften the blow. Please. We're running out of time!

*STEVEN and SARAH stare at each other. They both reach for the sweaters. JENNIFER pats their heads.*

Good, kids! Now hurry up, he'll be here any minute.

**STEVEN**

Looks like we're in this all together. Ha. Ha.

**SARAH**

Shut up, *Stevie!*

*STEVEN and SARAH unenthusiastically exit to change.*

## **SCENE 7**

*JENNIFER tries to clear the crime tape. DAVID enters singing Deck the Halls he's holding a basket of poinsettias. JENNIFER hides the tape behind her back.*

**DAVID**

And these are for my beautiful Christmas snow angel. (*He puts the flowers on the table.*)

**JENNIFER**

Oh, you shouldn't have.

**DAVID**

You asked me for them--

**JENNIFER**

Right- Thanks, honey. (*She shoves the tape into the couch cushion.*)

**DAVID**

The roast and all the fixings are in the kitchen. Can't wait to start cooking!

**JENNIFER**

Great dear.

**DAVID**

It really is- all of us together! Well, except Dad, but with him looking over us, I know this will be a truly special Christmas.

**JENNIFER**

Umm, honey, there's something I want to tell you...

**DAVID**

I'll do clean-up duty too, no worries, dear -

**JENNIFER**

No, not that...it's just...uhh...

**DAVID**

You're acting all nervous...(gets it.) What are you hiding?

**JENNIFER**

Hiding?

**DAVID**

You have a surprise, don't you!

**JENNIFER**

Uhh- well...

**DAVID**

It's my Christmas present!

**JENNIFER**

What?

**DAVID**

Don't play coy, Mrs. Smith; you never could keep a secret. What delightful holiday magic have you created? Oh wait, let me guess...

**JENNIFER**

I don't think you could in a million years...

**DAVID**

Well, then, out with it!

**JENNIFER**

Ok...maybe we should sit.

**DAVID**

Oh, this is bigger than I thought...

**JENNIFER**

How do I put this... uhhh/ (*Just then SARAH and STEVEN enter. They looked disgusted.*) Kids! Come in here. I was just talking to your Dad...

*DAVID turns, sees the kids  
and jumps out of his seat.*

**DAVID**

The sweaters! You got them! Do you love them?

*SARAH and STEVEN fake a  
half-hearted smile and,  
through their teeth, agree.*

*(To JENNIFER.)* This is the best present a dad could get.  
Thanks, honey.

*DAVID embraces them.*

**SARAH**

It is?

**JENNIFER**

It. Is.

**STEVEN**

That's good to hear considering/

*SARAH nudges STEVEN hard.*

**DAVID**

It's only a second to seeing your faces as you open presents.  
That's always brought me so much joy. Right, honey?

**JENNIFER**

Uh-huh. But look how darling they look in these freakin'  
Christmas sweaters! Nothing really can top this!

**DAVID**

We'll look great in the family photo!



**ALL**

Family photo!?

**SARAH**

Let's go back to the kitchen and let Mom and Dad plan where to put this glorious family portrait. I'm sure they have a lot to discuss. (*SARAH continues to shoot looks at JENNIFER, indicating she needs to tell DAVID what happened.*)

**DAVID**

Hmm... Where *should* we put it? (David takes Jennifer by the arm and shows her.) 48x72 would fill that wall nicely, don't you think, honey?

**JENNIFER**

That's uhh...awfully large, don't you think honey.

*SARAH and STEVEN motion for Mom to tell Dad the news.*

**STEVEN**

Ok then, we'll just be in here making sure you...uhh.. locked the door.

*SARAH and STEVEN exit.*

**DAVID**

Locked the door?

**JENNIFER**

It's a saying. These kids these days with their wacky slang... "Hey honey, what are you doing later? 'Locking the doors.' It means hanging out or something who knows ANYways...

*DAVID puts his arm around JENNIFER.*

**DAVID**

Thank you for this.

**JENNIFER**

But I didn't do anything.

**DAVID**

You did. You gave me two of the best gifts a guy could ask for.

**JENNIFER**

That's all that really matters, right? Us. All of us being here.

**DAVID**

I have a confession to make.

**JENNIFER**

What is it?

**DAVID**

I went overboard with the presents. I got them all the gadgets and gizmos they could want, and not just them... Kim and Isabelle and even that Roger character Sarah's been seeing. I felt like I was losing them, Jen, but not his year. I can't wait to see their faces!

**JENNIFER**

Oh boy.

**DAVID**

Oh, boy is right. This is going to be one magical Christmas, my love.

**JENNIFER**

Bring some of that magic over here for a second and sit with me dear. (*JENNIFER brings DAVID to the sofa. JENNIFER starts to get emotional.*) I don't know where to start...

**DAVID**

I know, it all moved me too.

**JENNIFER**

You're making this so hard.

**DAVID**

Go ahead my little Peppermint Patty, what is it?

**JENNIFER**

We've been robbed.

**DAVID**

(*As he embraces her.*) I know not having Dad here has stolen some joy out of things, but he would've wanted us to carry on.

**JENNIFER**

No, robbed. Like actually robbed.

**DAVID**

What? Like burglars, bandits, thieves?

**JENNIFER**

Yeahhhhh...those would be the ones.

**DAVID**

When?! Are you ok? Are the kids, ok?

**JENNIFER**

We're fine.

**DAVID**

What did they take? No- no, that's selfish. Who cares about material things at a time like this?! As long as my family is ok, we're ok/

**JENNIFER**

They took the presents.

*DAVID rushes to the tree.*

**DAVID**

*(Outraged.)* What?! Noooooo! All of them?! All the shiny presents with big red bows.

**JENNIFER**

Hon, honey/

**DAVID**

*(Falling to his knees looking around for traces of the present or clues)* Not the gadgets and gizmos!

**JENNIFER**

Gone and...gone.

**DAVID**

Nooo...they stole Christmas.

**JENNIFER**

David! They took presents, not Christmas.

**DAVID**

*(Catching himself.)* Right. Right. You're right. Those were just things, very expensive things, but they're not important/

**JENNIFER**

I'm so relieved to hear you say that.

**DAVID**

Do the police have any leads?

**JENNIFER**

No, looks like we were the only ones. (*DAVID goes to the door and yells out.*)

**DAVID**

COAL! They all deserve coal! You hear me! May Santa strike you down where you lay!

**JENNIFER**

I don't think it works like that/

**DAVID**

Maybe the kids were right-

**JENNIFER**

What?

**DAVID**

I'm forcing things on them this year. They don't want to be here. I got what I deserved.

**JENNIFER**

Don't say that. Try to stay positive.

**DAVID**

I think I'm all out of 'positive.' (*DAVID is sulking. JENNIFER tries her best to comfort him.*)

**JENNIFER**

I know it's a terrible thing, but we can still have a nice holiday...Life is what you make of it.

**DAVID**

Yeah, I've made a mess of it.

**JENNIFER**

Hey, don't do that. Uhh...when life gives you lemons, keep your face to the sun, and what doesn't kill you makes you stronger. I'm sorry I'm terrible at pep talks.

**DAVID**

I know. Thanks for trying. Tell the kids they can go. I think I'm just going to head upstairs and sleep through this holiday.

**JENNIFER**

You sure? We could still do dinner.

**DAVID**

I lost my appetite.

*DAVID exits. JENNIFER takes a moment and then gets an idea.*

**JENNIFER**

*(Calling.)* Kids! Kids come in here.

*Enter SARAH and STEVEN eating snacks.*

**STEVEN**

Where's Dad?

**SARAH**

How'd he take the news?

**JENNIFER**

(*Lying.*) He took it in stride... he was very reasonable and uh... he's looking forward to dinner even more now! In fact, he's upstairs right now getting his outfit ready! Singing carols and frolicking and such...

**SARAH**

Frolicking? Dad?

**STEVEN**

Really? Wow, he *did* take that well...

**JENNIFER**

Yup. Life is what you make of it and we're not going to let a little home invasion bring us down. So, we'll see you two tonight. With bells on.

**SARAH**

We'll be on time.

**JENNIFER**

No literally, bells on. I want full holiday garb!

**SARAH/STEVEN**

Mooooommm!!

*As JENNIFER speaks, Deck the Halls (Instrumental) plays behind her, and it rises to a dramatic crescendo.*

**JENNIFER**

None of that-you promised. It's Christmas Eve and the Smiths are in this together. We're a family. No thief is going to steal our joy. We are going to decorate that bare giftless Christmas tree because your dad needs this, WE need this!

Let's do it for grandpa (*She brings the kids in tightly as they embrace.*)

**STEVEN**

Mom, I think I'm allergic to this fabric.

**JENNIFER**

Take some antihistamines, son, and be here at six o'clock sharp! The Smiths are going to have a freaking Holly Jolly ol' time!

*They all stand arm in arm.  
JENNIFER beams as SARAH  
and STEVEN look dejected.*

*Fa-la-la-la-la, la-la-la-la.  
Fade to black.*

**END OF ACT I.**

**ACT II**  
**SCENE 8**

*JENNIFER finishes setting the table. She is wearing her Christmas sweater. She checks her watch. There's a knock on the kitchen door.*

**JENNIFER**

Must be the kids. (*Calls.*) Come in!

*Enter SARAH and STEVEN  
from the kitchen. They take off  
their coats, hats, etc.*

Looks like the snow is really coming down!



**SARAH**

It's like someone shook a snow globe out there.

**JENNIFER**

Guess it'll be a white Christmas after all... What's the matter?

*STEVEN is checking his  
phone.*

**STEVEN**

Everything looks great...smells wonderful Ma...it's just Kim's parents' flight- is delayed again.

**JENNIFER**

Sorry honey.

**SARAH**

If it keeps up like this, we may have to leave for the cabin in the morning.

**JENNIFER**

Sure, is pretty though, isn't it? It's the kind of snow that would be good for sledding.

**SARAH**

It's funny ten years ago I would've sold my soul for a snow day!

**STEVEN**

What soul?

*The doorbell rings.*

**SARAH**

Who could that be?

**STEVEN**

Check before you open it mom, could be burglars.

**SARAH**

Ringing the bell?

**STEVEN**

Sure, they know how long it takes for the police to get here.  
Why not get in the easy way-

**SARAH**

I always suspected Mom dropped one of us-

**JENNIFER**

*(Sing-Song.)* I know who that is...a special surprise-

*JENNIFER opens the front door. She is taken by surprise.  
GLORIA is wearing a coat over her Floridian outfit.*

*(Shocked.)* Grandma Gloria?!

**SARAH/STEVEN**

Gigi!

**GLORIA**

Come give your granny a hug.

**JENNIFER**

I thought you were my *special surprise*.

**GLORIA**

*(Sarcastic.)* It was quite a warm welcome, dear. Uhh... my aching sciatica. Stevie, grab your Gigi's bags, will you? But be careful. I have breakables.

**JENNIFER**

What are you doing here?

**GLORIA**

I've been trying to call that son of mine but he's not answering. So, I packed up my things and got on a plane. Where is he?

**JENNIFER**

He's upstairs resting.

**SARAH**

(*Accusatory.*) I thought you said he was, “frolicking.”

**JENNIFER**

Ok, I may have oversold it.

**GLORIA**

What's going on here?

**JENNIFER**

David's not feeling the Christmas spirit this year.

**STEVEN**

He's missing grandpa...we all are-

**GLORIA**

I'm still mad at him for leaving.

**JENNIFER**

He had a heart attack/

**GLORIA**

We had plans. (*Beat*) Anyways, what can you do? You can't hide away crying in your wine spritzer listenin' to Earth, Wind, and Fire, forever.

**JENNIFER**

How's Boca?

**GLORIA**

Warm. Full of old people.

**SARAH**

Must be beautiful to see the lights on the palm trees.

**GLORIA**

There's something off about it. I miss the wind smacking my face, and my fingers turning red as I brush snotty icicles from my nose. You know, like the good lord intended.

**STEVEN**

Builds character.

**GLORIA**

That's what Grandpa would say.

**JENNIFER**

Well, make yourself comfortable. We're getting dinner started and waiting on some *entertainment*.

**GLORIA**

I'll make a plate and take it up to Davie.

**JENNIFER**

No, no- I invited some carolers to serenade us during dinner.

**GLORIA**

Great. *(To kids.)* No wonder he's not coming down. Oh, by the way, I'm on a special diet. I've got a lot of restrictions.

*GLORIA reaches into her bra and pulls out a change purse. Inside the purse, she takes out a long, folded,*

*piece of paper. She hands it to SARAH.*

Here.

**SARAH**

It's still warm.

**GLORIA**

Give it to your mother. (To JENNIFER) And no gluten, neither. I have the diabetes, so watch it with the sugar, too. (GLORIA props her legs up on the chair.) Stevie, would you mind rubbing your Gigi's feet? They're swelling something awful. I have a dollar calling your name. Oh, Sarah, be a dear and fetch my checkbook. It's in that suitcase next to my orthopedic inserts.

*Doorbell rings.*

**STEVEN/SARAH**

I'll get it!

*At the door are the CAROLERS.*

**JENNIFER**

Merry Christmas. Thank you for coming.

**CAROLERS 1**

You're sure this is a good idea.

**CAROLERS 2**

Last time didn't go so well.

**JENNIFER**

*(Nervously laughing.)* Don't be silly. We're all holly jolly with the Christmas spirit in here!

**CAROLERS 3**

(*To Sarah/Steven.*) Hi, Oh! I love your sweaters.

**SARAH/STEVEN**

You want them?!

**JENNIFER**

Oh- a couple of Christmas jokesters! (*Threatening mother tone.*) Keep your clothing on, we're going to have a nice family Christmas dinner.

**GLORIA**

Is that why it looks like Charles Dickens threw up in your living room.

**JENNIFER**

(*To the CAROLERS.*) Sorry, my mother-in-law is a bit jet-lagged.

**CAROLER 4**

Uh-huh (*To the other CAROLERS.*) Must run in the family.

**JENNIFER**

I hired you to sing for us during dinner, as a gift to my husband.

**CAROLER 3**

Aww the gift of song. How wonderful.

**STEVEN**

Yeah, that and because all our presents were looted by some burglars.

**CAROLER 2**

That's awful/

**GLORIA**

When did this happen, no one tells me anything! I guess it's a good thing there's not much else here to steal.

**JENNIFER**

*(Happily.)* So anyway... that's why you're all here. I thought we could start with a nice sentimental number—you know, something for ambiance—and then move more into a festive sing-along for dessert.

**CAROLER 1**

Lovely. We brought the candles as you asked. We're ready when you are.

*CAROLER 2 lights the  
carolers' candles.*

**JENNIFER**

Great. You don't know how much this means to me!  
Ok, kids. Sarah, light the candles, please.

*SARAH lights the candles  
that are on the table.*

Steven, get the lights, dear. It looks wonderful in here, doesn't it?

**GLORIA**

With the lights down you don't see as much dust.

*As STEVEN turns off the lights. The CAROLERS sing the first  
verse of Silent Night. JENNIFER goes to the door and yells  
up the stairs to DAVID.*

**JENNIFER**

Oh, Honey! Can you please come down here?

*Nothing happens. JENNIFER signals for the CAROLERS to continue a bit louder, they oblige until DAVID enters.*

**DAVID OS**

What's with all the racket down here?

**JENNIFER**

Sweetie- we have guests.

*DAVID enters. He is disheveled.*

**DAVID**

Guests? (*Sees the setup. Takes it in a moment.*) Ma?! What are you doing here?

**GLORIA**

Flew in. Coach. No leg room. You can't text your mother? What's wrong with you? You look awful.

**DAVID**

Love you too, Mom. (*To Jennifer*) Uhhh... Jen, I told you to cancel dinner. What are all these people doing here?

**JENNIFER**

Remember how much you enjoyed Christmases when the kids were young, when the house was filled with music. (*Beat.*) Just listen.

*The CAROLERS sing. DAVID is motionless. They finish, and all but DAVID claps. STEVEN turns on the lights.*

This...this is what Christmas is all about.

*DAVID walks to the table.*

Right...Honey. Honey?



*He grabs a plate of food, kisses the kids and GLORIA on the heads, then Jennifer, and goes to leave.*

What about the carolers?

*He lifts a fork to the CAROLERS as acknowledgment.*

David- don't be rude- it's Christmas Eve.

*He turns and extends his arms.*

**DAVID**

*(Dripping with sarcasm.)* Happy Christmas to all, and to all a good night!

*DAVID bows and exits.*

**JENNIFER**

*(To CAROLERS.)* Did I mention we were robbed earlier... I guess some of us are still in shock.

**CAROLER 3**

Right...Maybe we should head out.

*They begin to leave.*

**JENNIFER**

No! Please, no... just stay. One more song.

**CAROLER 4**

No offense, lady, but this ain't feeling like a Jingle Bell rock kind of night.

**STEVEN**

It certainly does not.

**GLORIA**

Let 'em' go; we don't need 'em.'

**JENNIFER**

At least let me pay you for your time.

**CAROLER 2**

Consider it our gift to *you*. Good luck lady.

**JENNIFER**

I appreciate it. Be safe out there. Merry Christmas.

**CAROLER 1**

Merry Christmas. Better luck next year.

**JENNIFER**

Thanks.

**SARAH**

Maybe we should get going too-

*SARAH and STEVEN go to  
mom.*

**STEVEN**

It was a sweet idea, Mom.

**SARAH**

He'll come around, eventually.

**GLORIA**

Where's everybody going, I just got here.

**JENNIFER**

The kids have plans this year.

**STEVEN**

It was nice seeing you, Gigi.

**GLORIA**

You come down and bring that baby of yours you hear me?

**SARAH**

I've been meaning to visit too.

**GLORIA**

Drag your mother with ya- we'll make her pay for a spa day.  
My gift to you.

**SARAH**

You got it, Gigi.

**JENNIFER**

*(To Sarah/Steven)* I'll be there in a minute to pack you up  
some desserts.

*SARAH and STEVEN exit to the kitchen. JENNIFER hangs  
back.*

An awful lot of bags for a visit.

**GLORIA**

I'm always prepared. What can I say.

**JENNIFER**

*(Accusatory)* Gloria...

**GLORIA**

Fine! Stop the interrogation. *(Beat.)* They kicked me out.

**JENNIFER**

Gloria! Why? What happened?

**GLORIA**

You know those hot plates you warm your food on?

**JENNIFER**

You got kicked out for having one?

**GLORIA**

It was not so much for having it as for throwing it. Ahhh, nosey neighbors. We called her 'Sylvia the Snake' for a reason.

**JENNIFER**

I see. Well, I guess I'll put your bags in Sarah's old room. How long do you plan on staying?

**GLORIA**

Who says I'm leaving? Don't tell Davie yet. I'll tell him when the time is right.

**JENNIFER**

Uh-huh. Merry Christmas, Gloria and...and Happy New Year, I guess...

*JENNIFER grabs a glass of wine from the table and exits to the kitchen.*

**GLORIA**

I suppose I should have a talk with that son of ours. (*To the heavens.*) You know he gets his flair for dramatics from your side of the family. (*Beat.*) I tried Boca like we talked about. It was good for my sciatic and the arthritis; the fancy trees ain't so bad to look at neither. But it just wasn't the same without you- no one to hold on to the 'Oh crap handle' and scream when I go through a yellow light. The quiet is hard. Anyway, I knew I had to come back, and it looks like I picked the right time. Merry Heavenly Christmas my love, though I could use your help on this one- if you're listenin'.

*GLORIA blows out the remaining candle on the table as she looks up to heaven to Grandpa.*

**SCENE 9**

*Dream sequence: Later that night, DAVID enters groggy. He brings the dinner plate down and exits to the kitchen. The front doorbell rings. DAVID looks out and sees no one. He turns to walk away. The doorbell rings again. He opens the door. It's RAYMOND.*

**DAVID**

Dad?

**RAYMOND**

Well, it ain't Benny Hill.

**DAVID**

But you're...

**RAYMOND**

Cold. Are you going to let me in?

**DAVID**

Of course, uhhh...

**RAYMOND**

Since when are you locking doors?

*RAYMOND takes off his stingy brim hat and overcoat.*

**DAVID**

I was in bed...

**RAYMOND**

You didn't think I'd miss Christmas Eve, did you?

**DAVID**

Well... uhhh... kind of. (*Trying to break the news.*) Dad, you know you're dead, right?

**RAYMOND**

I've been told I'm a lot of things. Hey, come give your old man a hug!

*DAVID is reluctant at first as he can't believe his eyes. He hugs him as if to hold him forever, then steps back and takes it all in.*

Stop staring at me like that - you're giving me a complex.

**DAVID**

It's just... the last time I saw you I was giving your Eulogy.

**RAYMOND**

It was a real tear-jerker too, son.

**DAVID**

You heard it?!

**RAYMOND**

I'm dead, not deaf.

**DAVID**

Dad. It is really you.

*DAVID examines  
RAYMOND.*

**RAYMOND**

It is.

*DAVID continues staring.*

*(Trying to lighten the mood.)* You look like you've seen a ghost. *(Beat.)* Are you okay?

**DAVID**

Sorry, it's just seeing your dead father historically has not been a great omen- just ask Hamlet.

**RAYMOND**

Funny you should say that.

**DAVID**

Why is that?

**RAYMOND**

Something is rotten in Denmark.

**DAVID**

What do you mean?

**RAYMOND**

I saw your little display earlier...

**DAVID**

You saw that, huh?

**RAYMOND**

You could've put Ebenezer Scrooge to shame.

**DAVID**

I've had a hard time finding joy in the season. I miss you, Dad, and the kids, and Jenny does, too. Kids. Listen to me. Ha. They're not kids anymore, are they? They want to have their own lives and make their own traditions. It feels like my world is shrinking. What's left?

**RAYMOND**

Jenny has been trying to show you that for a while now.

**DAVID**

I guess she has, maybe I'm too stubborn to listen. Wonder where I got that from?

**RAYMOND**

Come, sit with me, son.

**DAVID**

How long do you...have?

**RAYMOND**

Long enough.

**DAVID**

Why are you here?

**RAYMOND**

We'll get to that. (*He sees GLORIA's purse.*)  
How's your mother?

**DAVID**

She flew in after all. Got kicked out of the retirement community for disorderly conduct.

**RAYMOND**

(*He smiles.*) That fits.

**DAVID**

You haven't visited her?

**RAYMOND**

You're my first stop.



**DAVID**

Why me?

**RAYMOND**

You're in trouble son.

**DAVID**

Trouble?

**RAYMOND**

Listen, one gift we get in the afterlife is the ability to see the life we lived—the good and the not-so-good. Trust me, it isn't easy to watch. I may be handsome, but I don't know if you know this about me—I could be quite stubborn.

**DAVID**

Rings a bell.

**RAYMOND**

Don't talk ill of the dead son. As I was saying, you keep acting like a curmudgeon and you'll drive the people you love away.

**DAVID**

*(Whining.)* Daaad-

**RAYMOND**

That's why I'm here to introduce you to Christmas future.

**DAVID**

Wait, what? No, that's the scary one. I don't want that one! Give me one of the others.

**RAYMOND**

No- I mean me, I'm here to show you what's to come.

**DAVID**

Ohhh- ok. Phew. (*Realizing.*) Wait! I'm dying?

**RAYMOND**

No. You have time.

**DAVID**

Phew. No offense.

**RAYMOND**

Humans are remarkable, aren't we? We fear death so much that it stops us from living.

**DAVID**

Hey, I am living.

**RAYMOND**

Before I got here, you were pouting upstairs in your room like a teenager.

**DAVID**

I'm grieving.

**RAYMOND**

You're avoiding. There's a difference.

**DAVID**

What's the difference?

**RAYMOND**

Here, maybe this will help clear things up.

*STEVEN enters in full Santa costume. He is holding his infant daughter, rocking her, and soothing her. A single light finds STEVEN downstage.*

**DAVID**

Steven.

**RAYMOND**

And Isabelle.

**DAVID**

She has your eyes.

**RAYMOND**

Good looking kid.

**DAVID**

Can he?

**RAYMOND**

See or hear us? No.

**DAVID**

So, why are we here?

**RAYMOND**

Shhh... listen.

**STEVEN**

Don't fuss, don't fuss. It's just me, Daddy. I know I look a little different. See, (*lowers beard*) still me. I wrapped your presents and put them under the tree. Mommy will open them for you, but I wanted you to get the full Christmas experience for your first time. What do you think? A little roomy but not so bad, huh? Grandpa says this was great grandpa's suit, then his, and well now it's mine. Some pretty big shoes to fill.

**DAVID**

He's a good dad.

**RAYMOND**

He had a good role model.

**DAVID**

Thanks.

**RAYMOND**

I meant me.

**DAVID**

Well, this confirms it.

**RAYMOND**

*(Hopeful.)* It does. You see now?

**DAVID**

He doesn't need me anymore.

**RAYMOND**

That's your take-away?

**DAVID**

Just look at him.

*They look at STEVEN.  
RAYMOND walks around  
him as he speaks.*

**RAYMOND**

You know what I see?

**DAVID**

What?

**RAYMOND**

I see a young father who needs his father's guidance, who is petrified of doing the wrong thing, and who clearly overpaid for a security system because everything he loves is in that house.

**STEVEN**

When they put you in my arms, I became a dad. Nothing in this world could stop me from loving you. I want to make this holiday as special as my dad made it for me. Merry Christmas, baby girl.

*DAVID walks up behind  
STEVEN.*

**DAVID**

I love you son.

*RAYMOND comes up behind DAVID and puts his arm on his shoulder. Three generations of Smith men stand in silence. There is a beat, then STEVEN exits.*

I remember that first Christmas with him. Thank you for this...for reminding me what I'm gaining.

**RAYMOND**

We only have so many Christmases. How do you want to spend yours?

**DAVID**

Dad, I'm grateful for all the Christmases we had together. I promise not to take a single one for granted in the future.

*They embrace.*

**RAYMOND**

Then my work here is done. I've got to get back. You know what you have to do.

**DAVID**

I do?

**RAYMOND**

You do. Trust yourself. I love you son.

**DAVID**

I love you too, Dad.

**RAYMOND**

Remember, it doesn't matter what's under the tree; the greatest gift is the love of family. It's the only thing that matters.

**DAVID**

When will I see you again?

**RAYMOND**

Our loved ones are always near, especially this time of year. Merry Christmas.

**DAVID**

Merry Christmas, Dad.

**RAYMOND**

Kiss Jen and the kids for me. Tell your mother I love her...

**DAVID**

I will...

*RAYMOND sees his own photograph and adjusts it.*

**RAYMOND**

Handsome guy.

*With his jacket draped over his shoulder, Raymond exits. DAVID takes a moment and then is struck with an idea. He takes wrapping paper from the drawer and heads upstairs.*

**SCENE 10**

*The stage is dark. Enter David. He brings with him two wrapped presents. He begins turning on all the lights, playing Christmas music, singing and dancing.*

**DAVID**

*(Calling.)* Jen. Come down here!

*JENNIFER enters thinking something is wrong.*

**JENNIFER**

What is it? Is everything ok...

**DAVID**

Better than ok!

**JENNIFER**

*(Cautious.)* David- what are you doing?

**DAVID**

Living!

**JENNIFER**

What?

**DAVID**

I saw Dad tonight.

**JENNIFER**

Do you see him now?

**DAVID**

It was a dream, I think, but it felt so real. He was right here Jen.

**JENNIFER**

Maybe we should go back up to bed/

**DAVID**

No! I've been having them lately, and I couldn't make sense of them.

**JENNIFER**

Having what?

**DAVID**

Dreams—wonderful visions. At first, they were terrifying, but that's because I didn't understand. I lost sight of what Christmas is all about. Where are the kids?

**JENNIFER**

I sent them home hours ago.

**DAVID**

*(Realizing.)* It's still Christmas Eve?!

**JENNIFER**

Yeah.

**DAVID**

Oh good! There's time!



**JENNIFER**

Time for what?

**DAVID**

Wake Ma. Call the kids. Tell them to come back.

**JENNIFER**

Now? Honey, I don't think that's a good idea-

**DAVID**

Please, use your motherly ways to get them here now, ok?  
Please.

**JENNIFER**

Fiiine. But you owe me - big time.

*She sends a text to the kids.*

**DAVID**

You know, I've been thinking- maybe it took having our presents stolen to teach us what really matters.

**JENNIFER**

I'm not sure that defense would hold up in court/

**DAVID**

If you think about it, they're basically elves/

**JENNIFER**

Home invading elves/

**DAVID**

Santa works in mysterious ways. (*Realizing*) Wait. (*He recalls RAYMOND's words.*) It doesn't matter what's under the tree, the greatest gift is the love of family. It's the only thing that matters. (*To Self.*) It wasn't Santa! It was a lesson

*(He laughs as he talks to a picture of his father.)* You crazy old man!

**JENNIFER**

David?

**DAVID**

Oh, Jenny, I've been an idiot. Can you forgive me?

**JENNIFER**

Of course. I always do.

**DAVID**

I know *I* got a bit carried away this year.

**JENNIFER**

*(Sarcastically.)* You think? I love you, I do, but I'm not sure I know how to help you through this.

**DAVID**

I'm different now. *(Sees her glare.)* I am.

I thought I had to keep things the same. I was trying to live in the past, but I can't do that- I see that now. I was so sad thinking about what I lost that I lost sight of all I had right in front of me. You've helped me see that.

**JENNIFER**

I hope so.

**DAVID**

You're beautiful, my Snow Angel.

**JENNIFER**

I'm glad to hear you're feeling better.

**DAVID**

Thank you. Thank you for dinner and the carolers/

**JENNIFER**

And...

**DAVID**

And... I'm sorry I acted like an old curmudgeon and almost ruined the holidays.

**JENNIFER**

I know things aren't the same. I miss those early years too. It felt like yesterday I walked Stevie to school for his first day. Then I blinked, and now he has a family of his own. And Sarah, I wanted to keep her my baby forever, but she didn't even crawl she went straight to walking. I swear she did it on purpose just to get away from me.

**DAVID**

Determined like her mother.

**JENNIFER**

As much as we want to hold on ...

**DAVID**

I know...I know.

**JENNIFER**

We can't stop them from growing up. In fact, I think it's a sign that we've been pretty good parents. *(Beat.)* I think it's time for us to make some new traditions too, of our own.

**DAVID**

I like that and we will. We will, honey.

*They snuggle into each other. DAVID wraps a blanket around them.*

**JENNIFER**

Promise?

**DAVID**

Promise. Merry Christmas my love.

**JENNIFER**

Merry/

*They're about to kiss when we hear a loud knock on the kitchen door. Sarah and Stephen are off stage, calling "Mom." "Let us in!"*

The kids!

**DAVID**

That was fast!

**JENNIFER**

I'll let them in...

*JENNIFER exits to the kitchen. She returns with SARAH and STEVEN rushing past her to DAVID.*

**STEVEN**

Dad, are you ok?

**SARAH**

We got here as soon as we could.

**DAVID**

Thanks for coming back out.

**SARAH**

Oh, thank goodness, he's talking!

**DAVID**

Why wouldn't I be talking?

**STEVEN**

Dad layback. A man in your condition needs to rest.

*STEVEN rushes DAVID to the couch and lies him down.*

**DAVID**

My condition?

**SARAH**

Mom said you hit your head.

**DAVID**

She told you that, huh?

*STEVEN is inspecting DAVID's head.  
JENNIFER shrugs.*

**STEVEN**

Yes. It looks a little swollen.

**DAVID**

Swollen!? Where?

**STEVEN**

Where you hit it, Dad.

**SARAH**

Are you having blurred vision/

**STEVEN**

Feeling drowsy/

**SARAH**

How many fingers are we holding up?

*STEVEN and SARAH hold up their fingers. They change the amount quickly as he guesses... 6, 4, 8, 3 he gets flustered.*

**DAVID**

Slow down, slow down.

**SARAH**

Oh no, he's confused.

**STEVEN**

Head injuries are especially bad in older folks.

**DAVID**

Hey, watch it!

**SARAH**

It's ok, Dad. *(She speaks slowly.)* It's Sarah and Steven, your children-we think you might have a concussion.

*GLORIA enters from the bedroom.*

**GLORIA**

What's all this fuss about? Who's talking about concussions?  
Are we being robbed again?

**DAVID**

No, no, everything is fine, Ma. Better than fine!

**STEVEN**

He must have lost consciousness! Poor guy.

**DAVID**

Jen- care to help me?

**JENNIFER**

Sure, I'll get you a cool compress.

**DAVID**

Jen! Tell them!

**SARAH**

Tell us what?

**GLORIA**

Out with it, Jen. I was dreaming of a Bert Reynolds this better  
be good.

**JENNIFER**

Fine. He didn't hit his head.

**GLORIA**

Are you sure? Look at him he's all goofy looky.

**JENNIFER**

I lied to get the kids over here.

**GLORIA**

This is the woman you married.

**SARAH**

Mom! How could you?

**STEVEN**

It's just like third grade all over again!

**JENNIFER**

Steven don't start.

**GLORIA**

What's all this about?

**STEVEN**

She said all the other mothers and sons were dressing in pairs for Halloween!

**GLORIA**

So?

**STEVEN**

We were the only ones! Sonny and Cher, how'd you expect me to live that down!?

**SARAH**

*(Teasing)* That's not a pair that's a *couple!*

**STEVEN**

So embarrassing!

**GLORIA**

Oh! I remember that now, with the hair and the outfit.



**JENNIFER**

We won, didn't we.

**STEVEN**

Not the point -

**SARAH**

I see where you get your competitive nature from-

**JENNIFER**

Not helping.

*All talk over each other.*

**DAVID**

Hey. Hey, remember me. Hello, I'm the guy with a head injury.

**SARAH**

We know you're fine Dad.

**GLORIA**

Relatively...

**DAVID**

Don't blame Mom for this; it was me. I wanted to get you over here to give you something.

**SARAH**

Dad, we don't need anything.

**STEVEN**

Yah Dad. Wait, did you replace the presents from under the tree?!

**SARAH**

*(As if to say cut it out)* Stevie! What he means is, your being okay is gift enough.

**STEVEN**

Sure, but they sounded expensive though. I shook a few...*(Seeing SARAH's disapproval)* What? For old times!

**DAVID**

I hope you won't be too disappointed.

*DAVID retrieves the presents.*

They're not the presents I thought I'd give you, but they are from the heart. Go ahead.

*He hands them to the SARAH and STEVEN.*

**SARAH**

What is it?

**DAVID**

Unwrap it. Go ahead.

*SARAH opens it.*

**SARAH**

The Night Before Christmas.

**DAVID**

Open the cover.

**SARAH**

*(Reading.)* "To my beautiful daughter Sarah, who has taught me the meaning of Christmas Magic time and time again.

May you read this each year and know I will always be with you. Love, Dad." Oh, Dad, it's beautiful. Thank you.

**JENNIFER**

Oh David, how lovely. (*She goes to the book and admires it.*)

**GLORIA**

My son is such a sweet boy. He gets his sensitivity clearly from my side of the family.

**DAVID**

Son. Go ahead.

*STEVEN opens the gift and is stunned.*

**STEVEN**

Oh, Dad.

**DAVID**

Do you know what it is?

**STEVEN**

I- I can't accept this...

**GLORIA**

Oh, honey.

**DAVID**

It was Grandpa's, then mine, now yours.

**STEVEN**

(*He reads a tag in the box.*) Believe, Un-believe...become.

*STEVEN hugs DAVID.*

**DAVID**

I know you'll put it to good use. Merry Christmas my son.

*STEVEN holds up the  
Santa suit. We hear a faint  
bell ringing.*

**GLORIA**

What's that? Sounds like it's coming from out front.

*We hear 'Up on The  
House Top' sung by  
CAROLERS.*

**JENNIFER**

Singing? Do you hear it? At this hour?

*She goes to look out the  
window.*

It's the carolers!

**DAVID**

... a little Christmas Magic of our own.

*The family takes it all in.  
They embrace and join in  
the singing.*

**GLORIA**

*(A tight hug.)* Come in here. We may not be perfect, but this, *this*, is what family is all about. *(To DAVID)* You could also pick up your phone a bit more. Would it kill you to call your mother? But I'm glad to be back here with you all—  
indefinitely.

**DAVID**

Ma/

**GLORIA**

Shhh... (*Squeezing them all tighter*) I can feel your grandpa with us.

**JENNIFER**

Since we're all here...

*JENNIFER takes ornaments from a box, and they all start to decorate the tree. The siblings playfully annoy one another. The song ends and we see an additional CAROLER has joined the group. RAYMOND carries a sack of presents that he places outside the door.*

**RAYMOND (AS CAROLER) AND DAVID TOGETHER**

Now, that's My Kind of Christmas.

**END OF PLAY.**

For more of Dana Hall's plays visit [DanaHallCreates.com](http://DanaHallCreates.com)  
Contact Dana Hall for production graphics and materials.

**Special Thanks:**

David Lipschutz and the 'Cool Kids', The Imposters, Stephen Bell, Julie Zebleckis, Kelly Morgan-Lallo, Scott Sowinski, Peter Fenton, Darrin Friedman, Philip Middleton Williams, Scott Sickles, Playwrights Thriving, Bob LeBlanc, Christopher Cavanaugh, The Playwright Connection, Dana Young-Howze, Ricky Young-Howze, The Palos Village Players board and all those that have been with me through this process.



**BELIEVE...UNBELIEVE...BECOME**  
*A family play wrapped in Christmas magic*