

CHRISTMAS IN CARMEL VALLEY

Written by

Sarah Clifford

FADE IN:

EXT. CONDOMINIUM APARTMENTS - DAY

A beige building with six units. Each condo has its own small porch. Most of the condos are festively decorated with Christmas lights, except for SPACE TWO.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

A sleeping WOMAN (40), snores softly. A terrier mix, his hair mostly white and wiry-textured, is asleep near her feet.

Her bedroom is a mess, clothes and shoes are scattered everywhere. A radio ALARM goes off. Two MORNING RADIO DJs from a Bay Area station have an animated discussion.

MALE RADIO DJ (V.O.)
Did you decorate this weekend?

FEMALE RADIO DJ (V.O.)
Our house has been fully decorated
since the day after Thanksgiving!
My husband went full Griswold!

Both of them do an exaggerated radio LAUGH in unison.

The woman GRUNTS as she lifts her hand, hastily turning it off. Still drowsy, she sits up, her blonde hair tousled. The dog yawns, stretching out his scruffy legs.

INT. LIVING ROOM - LATER - DAY

The condo is sparsely decorated with only a few items of mismatched furniture.

Her bedroom door opens. She strolls out with her hair in a loose bun, wearing stylish reading glasses, and Boho style clothing. The dog follows closely behind.

KITCHEN

She beelines to the coffee maker, halting mid-way and peers out the kitchen window.

WOMAN
Harold is putting up Christmas
lights. Total overkill.

She glances at the dog lying down. As she makes coffee, he stands up, sniffing her. He nudges her elbow with his nose.

She reaches into her pocket for a BLOOD GLUCOSE DEVICE. The device scans a patch worn on her upper arm. It reads, *69 mg/dl* on the screen.

WOMAN (CONT'D)
Nice alert, Walter Lee. You're right, my blood sugar is low.

Opening a jar on the counter, she smiles proudly and gives him a treat. She adds some honey to her coffee and takes a few sips, then checks the time on her watch.

WOMAN (CONT'D)
Come on handsome, let's go to work.

She places the mug in the sink, then leaves.

FRONT FOYER

She notices a letter that has fallen on the floor. She picks up the envelope. On the front: **JOSS DAWSON, 555 BAYSIDE COURT, SPACE 2, NOVATO, CA.**

JOSS
(to herself)
It's always medical bills.

She tosses it on a messy dresser and gathers her purse and keys.

JOSS (CONT'D)
Walter Lee!

The dog trots over. She takes a service dog vest off the coat rack, sliding it over his head before she clips on a leash.

EXT. JOSS'S APARTMENT - DAY

Joss and Walter Lee step outside, blinking into the sun. Her neighbor, HAROLD (60s), a Black man, leers as he untangles a mess of lights.

HAROLD
It's the Christmaszilla herself!

JOSS
Hey Harold.

She gives him a small wave.

HAROLD
(apprehensive)
Um, hey Joss... Do you think you
can pay that late fee soon?

JOSS
Yeah, sorry. The past few months
have been such a struggle because
of Walter Lee's vet bills a--

Harold cuts her off.

HAROLD
You mentioned that before. It's
just that you've been late on rent
three months in a row.

JOSS
(ashamed)
I'm trying. I'll get you the money
soon, I promise!

HAROLD
I'd appreciate it.

Joss forces a smile. She loads Walter Lee in the back,
clipping on his seatbelt.

INT. JOSS'S 4RUNNER - DAY

After getting in, she unlocks a RED CLUB attached to the
steering wheel. She starts the car, heading to work.

EXT. JUNG TAX & ACCOUNTING AGENCY - DAY

Joss pulls up in front of a plain, nondescript building.

INT. JOSS'S 4RUNNER - DAY

She parks and takes out her portable glucose blood monitor,
scanning her arm patch. It reads 84 mg/dl on the screen.

JOSS
Much better.

INT. JUNG TAX & ACCOUNTING AGENCY - DAY

Joss and Walter Lee enter the office. HANA JUNG (18), a
bored, Korean-American teen, sits behind a receptionist desk,
humming along to K-POP Christmas tunes.

Noticing Joss, Hana turns the music off, pretending to skim social media on her phone.

As Joss gets closer, Hana glances up.

HANA

Sup' Joss! Hi Walter Lee!

JOSS

Hi Hana. What's new on the gram?

Hana holds up her phone.

HANA

Justin Bieber got a new tat.

KOREAN WOMAN (O.S.)

Bieber is way out of your league.
Get off social media!

HANA

(rolls her eyes)

Look who's talking, you old hag!

Joss stifles a laugh as she makes her way to her cubicle. Walter Lee makes himself at home in a dog bed near her desk.

CUBICLE WORKSTATION

As Joss goes to her station, MINA JUNG (40s), a witty, dark-humored Korean woman, gives her a finger wave as she finishes an email on her laptop.

Joss takes a seat. She eyes a calendar on her desk, with December 20th circled in bright red ink. Above it is written, *Walter Lee's test results*.

MINA

Hey, Miss Cheek Bones! You got that sultry librarian vibe goin' on!

Mina leans back in her chair in observation.

JOSS

Good Morning, Mina. So, where are all the Christmas decorations that you usually put up?

MINA

Hon, you've had a rough few years and I know Christmas isn't your thing. I don't want to add to your stress by decorating the office.

JOSS

Are you going to shield me from all things Christmas? I know I'm a self-proclaimed Grinch, but I don't want to steal other people's joy.

MINA

Seriously, why even bother? We're gonna be closed for two weeks.

JOSS

Crud! How'd I forget? I can't afford to not work. Between vet bills, lawyer fees, and Bay Area rent, I'm drowning in debt. All I want in life is some stability.

MINA

What about your weekend job at the Marin museum?

JOSS

Mary's visiting family in Florida, so it's also closing.

The phone RINGS. Hana answers.

HANA (O.S.)

Hello, Jung Tax & Accounting Agency. She is. Hold please.

MINA

Maybe you should go back to modeling? Or maybe we can find you a temp job?

Hana peeks around the corner.

HANA

Mother, line two.

MINA

(miffed)

I'm busy helping my friend with a crisis! Tell them I'm at lunch!

Hana rolls her eyes.

HANA

It's not even ten!

MINA

Brunch then!

Hana stalks back to her desk.

HANA (O.S.)
She's at brunch, call back later.

Mina leans closer to Joss, then points towards Hana.

MINA
(whispering)
You chose well by not breeding.

Mina points to Hana as Joss stifles laughter.

HANA (O.S.)
Heard that. You're so cringe!

MINA
(sweetly)
Aww, I didn't mean you, I meant the
devil twins.

Hana makes a groaning noise.

JOSS
(giggling)
You are wicked!

Mina picks up the local paper and thumbs through it.

MINA
Let's see here. Telemarketing, no.
Bovine semen collector?

Mina gives her a cheeky glance.

JOSS
Big no! And that's nasty.

MINA
Here's one! In search of a holiday
coordinator for Camp Carmel Valley.

JOSS
Pass.

Mina ignores her.

MINA
Help decorate the camp and plan
holiday arts and crafts.

JOSS
 Hardly! I haven't touched an ornament or decorated a tree in forever.

Hana chimes in.

HANA (O.S.)
 Joss, you can search how to decorate on Youtube!

MINA
 (irritated)
 Hana, stop eavesdropping!

JOSS
 I don't have an ounce of holiday spirit. I don't want to be a fraud.

MINA
 Hana's right. You can learn how to do anything on Youtube. And it says the camp is dog-friendly.

This peaks Joss's interest.

JOSS
 That's refreshing.

Mina starts dialing a number on her desk phone.

MINA
 There's a number, I'm calling.

JOSS
 No, Mina!

Mina puts it on loudspeaker as it RINGS.

LUIS (V.O.)
 Hello, this is Luis at Camp Carmel Valley. How can I help you?

MINA
 I was calling about the job ad for the holiday coordinator.

LUIS (V.O.)
 I just posted it. You interested?

Mina eyes Joss.

MINA
It's on behalf of my employee.
We're closed for the holidays so
she's searching for temp work.

LUIS (V.O.)
That's cool of you to help her. Can
she do a Zoom interview right now?

Joss mouths, now?

MINA
Sure! I see your email so I'll send
you a Zoom link.

LUIS (V.O.)
That works!

She hangs up.

JOSS
Mina!

Mina types at her keyboard.

MINA
Put on some lipstick and pinch
those cheeks. You look pale.

Joss fumbles for her lip gloss and checks herself in a
compact mirror.

The Zoom call comes through, and LUIS (19), a Puerto Rican
with a radiant smile appears. He waves at the screen.

MINA (CONT'D)
Hello, I'm Mina. Like Nina with an
M. This is my employee, Joss.

Joss rolls her chair next to Mina and smiles.

JOSS
Hello, I'm Joss Dawson.

LUIS
Nice to meet you.

Luis reviews his interview notes.

LUIS (CONT'D)
So are you a good communicator, a
positive person, and are you cool
with kids?

Joss nods.

JOSS
Yes. I don't have kids, but I
mostly enjoy being around them.

MINA
(sarcastic)
I've got three kids and she likes
them more than I do!

HANA (O.S.)
Rude!

Mina ignores her daughter.

MINA
You seem so young to run a camp.

LUIS
(amused)
I'm the assistant camp director.

JACOB LEROUX (mid-40s), slides coolly into frame in his
office chair. He's wearing a crimson beret which partially
covers his silver-grey hair.

JACOB
Jacob Leroux, camp director. I've
been listening. I'm a bit camera
shy.

Mina gives Joss a wide-eyed stare.

MINA
(flirty)
Heeey, Mr. Jacob Leroux.

He flashes Mina a smile.

JACOB
Ms. Dawson, you sound like a good
candidate. Are you fine with a
background check?

JOSS
Yeah, absolutely.

JACOB
My sister is a special needs
educator. She wants to bring her
students here for a few days, so I
want them to have an awesome
experience.

MINA
That sounds so nice! Joss is
exceptionally creative.

JACOB
That's what we need. Someone with
more creativity than us two gents.

Joss adjusts her glasses, then clears her throat.

JOSS
I have a dog. Walter Lee. As an
employee, is that okay?

Jacob pans his laptop screen over to a couch where a giant
BLUE GREAT DANE sleeps up-side-down. He pans it back.

JACOB
Not a problem. We're super dog
friendly here.

LUIS
I just replied to your email.

Mina's computer DINGS.

MINA
Got it!

JACOB
If all checks out, we hope to see
you out here. You and the pooch.

LUIS
When are you available?

Joss eyes Mina.

MINA
Whenever you need her.

LUIS
Dope!

JACOB
Thanks for your time.

MINA
Pleasure was mine.

JOSS
Thank you.

INT. CAMP CARMEL OFFICE - DAY

Jacob hangs up the Zoom call.

JACOB
That was easier than I thought.

LUIS
She's the first person who called
about it. And bruh, what is that on
your head?

Jacob shrugs. He rolls his chair back to his desk.

JACOB
(smiling)
It's a raspberry beret.

Luis makes a confused face.

JACOB (CONT'D)
Raspberry Beret! Prince?

LUIS
Who?

JACOB
Man, your generation is so doomed.

Jacob takes off the beret, tossing it aside.

JACOB (CONT'D)
It was in our lost and found.
Anyway, that woman seems fine.

LUIS
(teasing)
Yeah, she fine!

JACOB
I didn't mean like that.

LUIS
You gotta admit, they are highly
attractive ladies.

JACOB
That's not why I'd hire her. I want
an easy person with zero drama.

LUIS
(playful)
She got those MILF vibes!

Jacob tries to conceal a smile, which fades when he glances
down at his wedding band. He turns the ring with his finger.

JACOB
I don't date my campers and
certainly not my employees.

Luis silently mouths, "whatever."

JACOB (CONT'D)
If everything checks out, go ahead
and hire her. We need someone to
start decorating right away.

Luis nods.

LUIS
Copy that, boss man.

INT. JUNG TAX & ACCOUNTING AGENCY - DAY

JOSS
What just happened?

MINA
You said you needed another job.

Joss is dumbfounded. She rolls her chair back to her desk.

JOSS
Thank you, Mina, but --

Mina interrupts.

MINA
-- but nothing. And girl, can we
talk about that silver-haired fox?
He is yummy!

JOSS
What was up with the beret?

MINA
Leroux. He's French.

Joss sighs.

JOSS
I don't want to do a crappy job and
ruin Christmas for a bunch of kids.

MINA
Then don't do a crappy job! Youtube
it. And also, you're invited to our
Christmas dinner.

JOSS

I have a tradition of sharing a
filet mignon with Walter Lee, then
we always watch *The Exorcist*.

MINA

The twins wanted to watch *Merry
Christmas Mr. Mo* with you. Dal is
cooking bulgogi.

Mina's eyes scan around for Hana.

MINA (CONT'D)

Dal is lousy in bed, but the man
can cook like Gordon Ramsay!

HANA (O.S.)

Ewww! You're so gross!

Joss laughs, covering her mouth with her hands.

MINA

(to Hana)

Santa's gonna get you some ear
plugs for Christmas!

Joss pulls up the website for Camp Carmel Valley. She looks
pleasantly surprised how beautiful and appealing it seems.
She clicks through the photos of the 115-acre property.

JOSS

Gorgeous property.

MINA

See! You'll thank me later.

EXT. SCENIC CALIFORNIA COASTLINE - DAY

The 4Runner drives along the breathtaking coastline.

INT. JOSS'S 4RUNNER - DAY

Joss briefly glances at her iPhone in its holder on the dash.

GPS VOICE (V.O.)

Turn right.

She turns right and enters the camp, driving slowly across a
wood beam bridge, enamored by the scenery.

Walter Lee pops up from the seat. He sniffs eagerly out the partially open window, as Joss pulls into a gravel parking lot marked by signage.

JOSS
We made it!

She gets an incoming VIDEO CHAT from an UNKNOWN number. She stares at the screen, then hits decline.

EXT. LOWER PARKING LOT - DAY

Joss exits and opens the back. She stares at the luggage for an apprehensive beat, then gathers everything.

After closing the back, she opens the passenger door, clipping a leash to Walter Lee's harness.

JOSS
I think it's a trek from here.

EXT. PAVED ROAD - DAY

Joss struggles to balance everything. Walter Lee tugs her over to the side of the road, disappearing around a tree. He throws her a glance, and she averts her eyes to give him privacy.

JOSS
Oh, got it...

Joss sets down the luggage, checking her pockets.

JOSS (CONT'D)
Darn.

Walter Lee reappears from behind the tree, looking relieved.

JACOB (O.S.)
Excuse me, ma'am?

Across the way is Jacob. He stands straight with a commanding presence. Dressed tidy in a polo shirt and jeans, he holds the leash to his Great Dane. The giant dog stares at them.

JOSS
You startled me.

JACOB
I need to let you know that it's a requirement to pick up after your dog on this property.

JOSS
(embarrassed)
I forgot my roll of waste bags in
my car. I'll head back for them.

He whips out a blue baggie from his back pocket.

JACOB
I keep several in case of
emergencies. Something you should
consider.

JOSS
(hesitant)
Okay.

Jacob walks it down to her. She takes it, accidentally
grazing his hand, she notices his WEDDING RING.

JACOB
I'm Jacob Leroux.

JOSS
I almost didn't recognize you
without the raspberry beret. Hi,
I'm Joss.

He gives her a slight smile and eyes her luggage.

JACOB
So... we normally pick people up
from the bottom. I'll text Luis to
get you guys.

Walter Lee and the Great Dane sniff each other.

JOSS
I'm a few hours early.

Jacob takes his phone out, sending a text.

JACOB
The Great Dane is Tinsel.

JOSS
Tinsel? You must be a fan of
Christmas.

JACOB
My wife named him.

His phone VIBRATES with a text response.

JACOB (CONT'D)
Hang tight. Luis is coming.

JOSS
Right on, thanks.

JACOB
Catch up with you later.

He gently tugs the leash, and Tinsel follows obediently.

Moments later, a golf cart appears from the top, buzzing its way down to her.

Luis greets her with a big smile.

LUIS
Welcome to Camp Carmel Valley! I'm
Luis. Happy to have you here!

Joss holds out her hand, and Luis shakes it.

JOSS
Joss Dawson and Walter Lee.

Luis eyeballs her luggage.

LUIS
Dang! You carried all this? Call us
on arrival, and I'll come get you.

Joss shrugs.

JOSS
Honestly, I like burning calories.

LUIS
(amused)
I'll run you up to the office to
get you some clean linens, then I
can show you to your cabin.

Joss nods and helps him load the luggage.

EXT. CAMP CARMEL - VARIOUS PARTS - DAY

As they whirl up the hill, Joss takes it all in.

INT. CAMP CARMEL OFFICE - DAY

Joss and Walter Lee follow Luis to the main office. She waits as he disappears in back.

On the desk, sits a PHOTOGRAPH. She studies it.

INSERT - an image of a YOUNG JACOB (30) embracing his beautiful BRIDE (30). The LONDON TOWER BRIDGE is behind them.

Joss's CELL-PHONE RINGS. She gestures for Walter Lee to stay put, and she steps outside.

EXT. CAMP CARMEL OFFICE - PORCH - DAY

Joss walks to the side of the building.

JOSS

Hi Bob.

BOB (V.O.)

Quick update. Got a call from the FBI, and those tips they had with leads to the UK ran cold. They think he could still be here in the Bay Area.

JOSS

(frustrated)

Nothing surprises me at this point. I don't think he'll ever get caught.

BOB (V.O.)

Never say never.

JOSS

It's almost been a year, and sometimes I think, is it worth it? It's like chasing a ghost.

BOB (V.O.)

You call the shots here. You tell me when enough is enough, and I'll close the file and I'll stop billing you. I know money is tight.

Joss contemplates. She notices Luis rubbing Walter Lee's belly on the front porch.

JOSS

I'm not ready to give up on trying to get my money back. Not yet.

BOB (V.O.)

Sure thing.

She hangs up, walking back to Luis.

Luis leans back in, grabbing the stack of clean linens.

LUIS
Here you are. All set!

JOSS
Great.

EXT. PATH - DAY

Luis drives them down a tree-lined path through a thicket of beautiful oak trees that drip with dreamy Spanish moss.

LUIS
Cool dog.

Joss smiles with pride.

JOSS
He's a service dog. Semi-retired.
He is trained to alert me for low
blood sugar, and he can also
retrieve my medicine.

LUIS
(impressed)
That's dope!

She looks at him with an amused smile as they reach a clearance through the trees. Joss observes, a cluster of cute cabins painted red and black.

SOLSTICE CAMPGROUND

As they drive closer to the cabins, Joss notes the matching bathhouse.

LUIS
It's way out here in the back
forty.

JOSS
No kidding! I hope there's no
serial killers sneaking around.

LUIS
(laughing)
If you try to get on Mr. Leroux's
good side, he might move you closer
to campus.

Luis parks in front of CABIN ONE, a stand-alone cabin with stunning views of the woods encompassing it.

JOSS

Is it hard to get on his good side?

Luis pulls her suitcase from the back of the cart.

EXT. CABIN ONE - DAY

He opens a screen door, then a primary door.

LUIS

Let's put it this way. He's a tight wad with money, has loads of rules, and he likes to keep things crazy clean.

JOSS

Yikes.

LUIS

That said, he's the GOAT!

JOSS

(humored)

The goat? Okay?

INT. CABIN ONE - DAY

Joss carries the pile of linens while walking Walter Lee. Luis shuffles past them to grab the other bags.

LUIS

In case you don't know, there's no electricity out here.

Joss is taken aback.

JOSS

I admit, I didn't read the fine print. When the website said glamping, I guess they meant it's not a dirt floor.

LUIS

We do have upgraded cabins with more amenities, but those are usually for the paying campers.

JOSS
Honestly, free lodging is what's in
my price range.

Luis drops the remaining bags inside as Joss rummages through
her purse.

LUIS
All set!

She finds some cash, offering Luis a ten-dollar bill.

JOSS
Thank you for carrying my luggage.

Luis holds up his hands, stepping out of the cabin.

EXT. CABIN ONE - DAY

LUIS
I can't. You're an employee.

Joss continues to hold it out.

JOSS
You've been so helpful.

LUIS
All good. Doing my job.

Luis jumps into the driver's seat of the golf cart.

LUIS (CONT'D)
Catch you later, Joss!

Joss waves as he drives back down the scenic path. Once
alone, she takes a deep breath of the cold, clean air.

INT. CABIN ONE - DAY

Inside the cabin, there are two twin-sized beds, a small
dresser, and two end tables. In the corner is a long
flashlight.

JOSS
Rustic and simple.

Joss props open the door, shutting the screen, to allow air
flow. She climbs on the bed and opens an app on her phone to
do guided meditation. She positions herself in the lotus
pose.

Walter Lee jumps on the opposite bed, watching her. He lowers his chin to his paws as Joss starts slowly transcending into a relaxed state. Tired, she leans back. She falls asleep.

Walter Lee jumps off the bed, sniffing around curiously.

Outside, a squirrel CHATTERS up in a tree. He runs excitedly to stare out through the screen door.

EXT. CABIN ONE - DAY

Walter Lee paws at the edge of the screen door, and it pops wide open. With the option of freedom, he chooses to explore.

EXT. TULARCITOS CREEK - DAY

Jacob tosses a large stick for Tinsel, laughing as his giant dog splashes through the creek, searching for it.

He glances up at the sun and checks his watch for the time.

He WHISTLES for Tinsel to follow.

EXT. TRAIL - DAY

They head up the dirt trail when Tinsel suddenly freezes, lowering his head. He lets out a DEEP BARK.

Jacob's eyes search. Walter Lee bounds down the trail.

Baffled, he looks for Joss.

JACOB
(to Tinsel)
Easy, be gentle.

Walter Lee stops several feet away from Tinsel. He does a play bow. Tinsel wags his tail. Jacob can't help but laugh. He lets them play for a moment.

JACOB (CONT'D)
Walter Lee, come here.

He runs over without hesitation. Jacob clips Tinsel's leash to his harness, then walks the dogs back up the path.

INT/EXT. CABIN ONE - DAY

Joss is still sound asleep. The guided meditation is still playing on her phone.

KNOCK KNOCK. The sound startles her. She sits up to see Jacob, Walter Lee, and Tinsel staring from outside.

She straightens her crooked glasses as Jacob unclips the leash, letting her dog back in.

JACOB
(dryly)
You lost something.

JOSS
Huh?

Joss presses stop on the meditation app.

JACOB
Found your pooch wandering near the creek on the opposite side of camp.

Walter Lee lies down next to his bowl, panting contently.

JOSS
Oh gosh, I fell asleep.

Jacob points to the doors.

JACOB
If you shut both doors, it will keep a curious dog inside.

JOSS
Sorry, I didn't realize my dog would turn into Houdini...

JACOB
(annoyed)
You urbanites forget we have coyotes, and even mountain lions. If something happens, guess who's held liable? Me! Plus I'll get a bad review online. A lady once gave us one star because the pool isn't heated. People are so fickle!

Joss looks worried he's about to fire her.

JOSS
I would never want something bad to happen. I love him. He's not only my pet, but my trained service dog.

JACOB
 (doubtful)
 A real one or one of those fake
 service dogs so you can take him
 places?

JOSS
 (offended)
 I assure you he's legit. I get it.
 You're mad, so we'll leave.

Joss turns away. He starts to simmer down.

JACOB
 Hold up, I don't want that. I have
 rules to enforce. As an employee,
 you now represent the camp.

She turns back.

JOSS
 Fine. Understood. Hard to believe,
 but I'm a responsible dog owner. I
 mean, except for just now.

Joss shuts the screen door between them.

JACOB
 Dinner is at five at the Treetop
 Terrace. Luis can show you where we
 keep the holiday decorations.

JOSS
 Great. If that's all...

Joss gives him the stink eye as she shuts the door.

EXT. TREETOP TERRACE - NIGHT

A sprawling patio area surrounded by thicket of tall trees.
 Over twenty four-seater tables occupy the space.

Now wearing a grey cowboy hat, Jacob raises a glass, clicking
 it with a fork. He gathers the attention of FIFTEEN GUESTS.

A small handful of the campers hold dogs on leashes,
 encouraging them to behave. A GOLDEN RETRIEVER tries to make
 a break to the buffet table. A JAPANESE CHIN drools.

JACOB
 Hello! I want to welcome you to our
 Camp, both canines and humans.

A few of the adults CHEER enthusiastically.

JACOB (CONT'D)
Please let me or my staff know if
there's anything we can do to make
your visit more comfortable.

Only one person politely CLAPS, most have started lining up
to get food or have sat down to eat.

JACOB (CONT'D)
Last thing! Big shout-out to Luis's
grandmother, Rosa, our head chef.

Luis smiles proudly at ROSA (late 60s), a curvy, dark-haired
Puerto Rican. She gives a quick wave to Jacob, then quickly
resumes serving food.

Jacob realizes nobody besides Luis is paying attention.

LUIS
(teasing)
Yo! That speech hits different.

Jacob playfully elbows his shoulder.

JACOB
Thanks, wise guy.

His eyes scan the crowd.

JACOB (CONT'D)
Hey, do you see Joss?

LUIS
The MILF?

JACOB
Enough with that.

LUIS
Just playing. Don't see her. Why?

Jacob fidgets uncomfortably.

JACOB
Earlier today, her dog got out. I
found him by the creek. I probably
came down too hard on her, because
I called her an urbanite.

LUIS
(confused)
What's an urbanite?

JACOB
 City people. I also questioned
 whether her pooch was a fake
 service dog or a real one.

His eyes go wide.

LUIS
 Dude, it says on her employee app
 she has type one diabetes and takes
 insulin for it. He's for real.

An expression of guilt washes over his face.

JACOB
 She's diabetic? I am a jerk.

LUIS
 My grandpa used to say that when
 you get yourself into hot water
 with a lady, it's best to let them
 simmer down for a while. Amirite?

JACOB
 (amused)
 Are you giving me advice?

LUIS
 (joking)
 I mean, I don't got the problem
 with the ladies that you seem to
 have...

JACOB
 Ouch. Burn, man!

Luis cracks up.

JACOB (CONT'D)
 Go get some dinner.

LUIS
 Tomorrow you're gonna slay that
 apology, cowboy!

EXT. CABIN ONE - NIGHT

Joss sneaks out of the cabin, holding a flashlight. Wearing only pajamas, she shivers. She stumbles on her untied shoelaces, falling ungracefully to the ground. Undeterred, she rises, straightens her glasses, and forges ahead.

INT. BATHHOUSE - NIGHT

Joss shines the light in the dark building, making sure she's alone. She goes to a stall, setting the flashlight facedown. When closing the door, she knocks it over. The light goes clanking loudly away, leaving her in darkness.

INT. THE GREAT HALL (DINING ROOM) - DAY

Jacob now wears a baseball cap, greeting CAMPERS as they file in for breakfast. Luis walks up to join him.

Joss enters, appearing groggy with Walter Lee on a leash wearing his service dog vest. She notices the guys.

JOSS
 (sharply to Jacob)
 My canine is wearing his vest so
 you can properly identify him.

Luis eyes Jacob.

Nearby, the couple with the Golden Retriever struggle as the dog desperately tries to put her feet on the breakfast table.

Joss gestures to them.

JOSS (CONT'D)
 That dog would be a great example
 of what a fake service dog does.

She spins and walks away.

LUIS
 (whispering)
 Her canine? Ouch, she salty!

JACOB
 Going in for damage control.

COFFEE BAR

Joss holds a cup of coffee like it's the holy grail. Jacob approaches apprehensively, fidgeting with his hat.

JACOB
 How was your first night?

JOSS
 (curt)
 It was rough. Coffee helps.

He clears his throat.

JACOB
About yesterday, I want to--

JOSS
You don't have to. I haven't had
enough coffee to formulate a cogent
response.

They stand in silence for a moment.

JACOB
Your dog doesn't have to wear a
vest here. And I should apologize--

Luis rushes up to Jacob with a worried expression.

LUIS
Sorry to barge in.
(to Jacob)
I was told there are some broken
water pipes at the summer cabins.

Jacob exhales.

JACOB
Story of my life. Something breaks
every five minutes.

LUIS
Need a hand?

JACOB
I got it. Do me a favor and show
Joss where the decorations are.

LUIS
Can do.

Jacob starts to head off, he pauses.

JACOB
Oh, and if you guys can put up the
artificial tree and decorate it by
tonight, that'd be super.

LUIS
Copy that.

Jacob rushes off. Joss continues to sip her coffee.

JOSS
Artificial tree?

Luis shrugs.

LUIS
He thinks the real ones are way too messy.

JOSS
I can see how he's a bit uptight.

They grin.

INT. OAK ROOM - DAY

Luis, Joss, and Walter Lee look up toward the attic. They stand near a tall wooden ladder.

Luis glances at Walter Lee.

LUIS
Is your dog going up there?

Joss shakes her head no. She takes off her red hoodie and lays it on the ground several feet from the ladder. Walter Lee immediately curls up in it.

JOSS
Stay.

Luis climbs up the ladder. Joss follows.

INT. ATTIC - DAY

They observe a dozen dusty cardboard boxes. He points to the artificial tree in a corner.

LUIS
Let's get that first.

JOSS
At least it's in pieces.

LUIS
Ready to get this party started?

Joss pumps her arms up in the air.

JOSS
Let's git 'er done!

INT. CAMP OFFICE - DAY

Jacob sits behind a desk doing paperwork. Nearby, his dog Tinsel sleeps upside down on a couch seeming content.

His cellphone RINGS. He answers a VIDEO CHAT from KARA (30s), his attractive and overly optimistic sister.

JACOB

Kara!

KARA

Je suis bien chez Jacob Leroux?

JACOB

Oui. C'est Jacob!

Kara leans closer to her lens.

KARA

(teasing)

What up with the backwards cap?

JACOB

I find these different hats in the lost and found. I guess I'm rather self-conscious about my hair.

Jacob takes off the hat revealing his grey hair.

KARA

First off, eww, you can get head lice! Second, j 'adore le naturel!

JACOB

When I look in the mirror sometimes, I see our Father.

KARA

Luckily, you're absolutely nothing like him.

Jacob winces, knowing he touched a nerve.

JACOB

Shouldn't have brought him up.

KARA

The last time I spoke with our parents years ago, they were still trying to talk me into going to conversion therapy.

JACOB
(shakes his head)
I'll never forgive them.

KARA
I'm lucky to have you.

Jacob tosses the hat back into a cardboard box.

INT. ATTIC - DAY

Covered in sweat and dust, they've removed all the decoration boxes but one. Joss reaches into the last box, discovering a FRAMED PHOTO.

INSERT - An image of Jacob and two women posing near a decorated Christmas tree.

Luis peeks over her shoulder.

LUIS
That's Jacob's little sister, Kara,
and his wife Elizabeth.

Joss smiles at the photo.

JOSS
They are gorgeous. I haven't met
them yet.

His smile fades.

LUIS
His wife died before I started
working here, almost five years
ago. Never got to meet her.

Joss gently puts the photo back in the box.

JOSS
That's devastating. I noticed Jacob
still wears a wedding ring.

Luis yanks on a strand of tangled Christmas lights.

LUIS
Yeah...
(takes a somber pause)
What I said before... the reason
he's the GOAT, is cause he took a
chance on me when I was a punk ass
kid. He offered me an internship
which turned into this job.

JOSS
He's got good instincts.

LUIS
My mom's in jail for bein' a dope
peddler. If it weren't for him, I'd
be on the streets selling drugs or
woulda OD'd.
(before she responds)
You wanna take a quick break?

JOSS
I'll stay to finish sorting these.
You go ahead.

LUIS
Can I get you a cold beverage?

JOSS
I'd love some orange juice.

Luis heads for the ladder.

LUIS
Be right back.

As Joss continues to sort, the ALARM on her watch alerts her that it's time for her insulin. She checks her pockets realizing she forgot the insulin pen and her phone.

Joss goes to the ladder and carefully starts to climb down. As she does, the room starts to spin. Her fingers clench the wood to keep her steady.

Walter Lee has woken up. He paces below. He stops to sniff the air, knowing something is off.

She gets to the last step and trips, stumbling to the floor. Her glasses go flying to the ground.

Walter Lee runs to her.

JOSS
Walter Lee, go fetch my insulin.

He understands the assignment and he takes off.

EXT. CAMPGROUND - DAY

Walter Lee runs full speed toward Solstice campground.

INT. OAK ROOM - DAY

Joss pulls herself up, bracing against the wall. She takes a step, her glasses go CRUNCH. She quietly groans.

INT/EXT. OAK ROOM - DAY

As she reaches the doorway, Luis returns holding her juice. They stare at each other. Joss slides to the ground.

His eyes go wide with surprise, causing him to drop the drinks. He runs to her aid.

LUIS
What's wrong?

JOSS
Low blood sugar.

Luis calculates what to do as she grips his arm.

JOSS (CONT'D)
No ambulance. Please.

He nods and then pulls out his phone to text Jacob.

INT. CAMP CARMEL OFFICE - DAY

Jacob continues his video chat with Kara.

JACOB
I recently stepped outside my comfort zone by hiring a holiday coordinator to decorate the camp.

KARA
No fricken way!

JACOB
I can't seem to avoid spending money on this dump. Our folks left it in shambles before they retired.

Kara sits up straight.

KARA
(theatrical)
I have a dream. A dream to turn our camp into an inclusive retreat for all walks of life! Muslims, Buddhists, Mormons --

Jacob laughs. He gets a text from Luis. It reads, "911! Oak Room!"

JACOB
Sis, I gotta jet.

KARA
Everything all right?

JACOB
It's fine. Love yah.

KARA
Love you more!

He quickly ends the call.

INT. OAK ROOM - DAY

Jacob rushes in to find Luis kneeling next to Joss who has fainted. He dashes over to them.

LUIS
I ran to go get us some drinks...
when I came back and she was like,
out of it and passed out.

JACOB
Did you call 911?

LUIS
She asked not to. It's diabetes
stuff. She sent the dog for her
medicine.

Jacob checks over her vitals.

JACOB
(confused)
She sent the dog?

EXT. CABIN ONE - DAY

Walter Lee reaches cabin one. He sniffs the bottom corner of the screen, pushing it with his nose. The screen door pops open. He pushes his body against the second door, opening it enough to squeeze inside.

INT. OAK ROOM - DAY

Joss slowly regains consciousness.

JOSS
(dazed)
I need juice or anything sugary.

JACOB
Luis, can you grab that?

Luis jumps up and runs out. Jacob tries to comfort her.

INT. CABIN ONE - DAY

Walter Lee goes to a duffle bag on the ground, sniffing inside. He emerges with a Ziploc baggie with EMERGENCY written on it. He grips the baggie with his teeth, then squeezes out.

EXT. CAMPGROUND - DAY

Walter Lee runs full speed back to the Oak room.

INT. OAK ROOM - DAY

Jacob checks in with Joss.

JACOB
You still with me?

JOSS
Yeah. The room's spinning.

Walter Lee runs in with the medicine. Jacob stares at the dog in admiration. He takes the baggie from his mouth.

JOSS (CONT'D)
The insulin pen.

He pulls it out.

JACOB
Found it.

JOSS
Can you inject it in my stomach?

Jacob gently pulls her shirt up to reveal her stomach. He carefully gives the injection under the skin.

JACOB
Done.

He covers her back up. Luis and Rosa rush in carrying four cups of juice.

LUIS
How's she doing?

JACOB
She got the meds.

Luis hands her a cup as Joss tries to sit up.

JOSS
(foggy)
Tell me I didn't faint.

JACOB
You did for a sec.

Joss takes a big, messy gulp.

LUIS
Dude, you were lights out!

JOSS
Sorry everyone.

Rosa hands her a second cup.

JACOB
We're glad you're okay.
(to Luis and Rosa)
Can you guys stay? I need to step out.

They nod.

EXT. OAK ROOM - DAY

Jacob walks out while taking several shallow breaths.

A few moments later, Joss walks out with assistance from Luis and Rosa, still wobbly.

Jacob composes himself.

JOSS
I'm super embarrassed.

JACOB
Some things are beyond our control.
Don't blame yourself.

Jacob gestures to Luis. He swaps positions with him, putting an arm around Joss's waist to keep her steady.

JACOB (CONT'D)
 (to Joss)
 I'll move you into the Director's cabin which is nice and close.

LUIS
 Yo! I'll grab her luggage.

EXT. PAVED ROAD - DAY

Jacob walks her up the road.

JOSS
 Does it mean I'm on your good side now that I've been upgraded?

He tilts his head.

JACOB
 You were never on my bad side.

JOSS
 I deserve the worst employee of the year award.

EXT. DIRECTOR'S CABIN - DAY

They walk toward a much larger red and black trimmed cabin. He stops at the front door.

JACOB
 This one's a real house with electricity *and* plumbing.

He opens the front door. Walter Lee trots inside.

JOSS
 Eh, I much prefer midnight trips to the bathhouse with a flashlight.

JACOB
 (smiling)
 Making jokes! You must be feeling better?

JOSS
 Yeah, I can walk on my own.

Jacob pulls his arm away, with the realization he was holding her close.

JACOB
Get as much rest as you need.

JOSS
I'll get a bit steadier before I
head over to decorate the tree.

Jacob puts a hand firmly on her shoulder.

JACOB
I want you fully recovered first.

JOSS
Okay, got it.

INT. DIRECTORS CABIN - DAY

Joss softly shuts the door behind her. She spins around observing the cute home décor.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - DAY

Walter Lee jumps up, stretching out on the king-size bed.

Joss walks over, sitting next to him. She lays back and gives him a soft kiss on the snout.

JOSS
You saved my life. You always do.

Walter Lee reaches a paw out, resting it against her heart. She smiles as her eyes flutter closed, and she drifts off to sleep.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Total darkness. A digital clock reads, 9:11 PM. CLICK! The sound wakes Joss. She flips on a light.

JOSS
Hello?

No answer. Walter Lee stirs awake.

Joss climbs out of bed, turns on another lamp, cautiously scanning the room, as Walter Lee follows.

LIVING ROOM

She makes her way to the back door and she checks the handle. It's unlocked. Walter Lee sniffs, letting out a low growl. Joss locks the door, looking at her dog with uncertainty.

INT. DIRECTOR'S CABIN - KITCHEN - LATER

Dressed in her red hoodie and PJs, Joss grabs a small backpack off the counter and exits with Walter Lee in tow.

EXT. PATHWAY / TREETOP TERRACE - NIGHT

They walk down the path as Joss cautiously observes her surroundings.

A MAN dressed in all black watches them from behind a large Oak Tree. His face is hidden in the shadows.

Joss passes through the outdoor dining area which is empty. She opens the door to Sycamore Hall. They enter.

INT. SYCAMORE HALL - NIGHT

She observes the immaculate space with its tall wood beams. It's trimmed with walnut and has a warm, ski resort feel. She locates the Christmas tree, which is assembled but not decorated. She walks into the great dining hall.

GREAT DINING HALL

The room is a spacious, modern cafeteria. She kneels, pulling out a RED KONG TOY from her backpack. She offers it to Walter Lee. He chews it to get the snacks inside.

JOSS
(to herself)
Time to decorate!

INT. CAMP CARMEL - MAIN OFFICE - NIGHT

Jacob sits at his desk sipping on red wine. He picks up a stack of bills, mechanically thumbing through them. One letter piques his interest. He opens it, reading portions out loud.

JACOB
The representatives from Gregson
Holding Group are interested in
making an offer on your camp...

He pauses, then continues.

JACOB (CONT'D)
(reading quickly)
Although the property is not listed
for sale, our firm would like to
offer a generous proposal.

Jacob takes a deep breath. He carefully folds the letter,
setting it next to his laptop.

INT. GREAT DINING HALL - NIGHT

Joss tilts her head sideways. Walter Lee sits next to her. He
gazes at her, then looks back to the tree, then lies down.

The finished tree appears as if a group of squirrels
decorated it. Messy and cluttered.

JOSS
(to Walter Lee)
What? I'm out of practice.

Walter Lee gives her a quiet chuff.

JOSS (CONT'D)
I think it's time for some Youtube.

Joss grabs her backpack. She forgets the Kong Toy.

JOSS (CONT'D)
Let's go, bubs.

They exit Sycamore Hall.

EXT. TREETOP TERRACE - NIGHT

Jacob walks and chats with Luis.

JACOB
Thanks for helping me lock up.

LUIS
Makin' sure you're good, cause you
were trippin' earlier.

Jacob opens the door to Sycamore Hall, and the men enter.

INT. SYCAMORE HALL - NIGHT

They walk through the hall.

JACOB

I'm not great with seeing people
get sick. I always feel useless.

Luis silently nods.

INT. DIRECTOR'S CABIN - MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Walter Lee is curled up in the huge bed.

JOSS

Bubs, I forgot your Kong Toy. Stay
put, be right back.

Walter Lee blinks at her with his soulful eyes.

Joss exits the cabin.

INT. GREAT DINING HALL - NIGHT

Luis is looking at the decorated tree as Jacob joins him.

INT. SYCAMORE HALL - NIGHT

Joss enters Sycamore Hall through the back entrance. She
halts around the corner when she hears the men talking.

GREAT DINING HALL

They observe the tree with odd expressions.

LUIS

Dang. That tree is cringe.

Jacob's eyes Luis.

JACOB

Hideous is the first word I think
of.

SYCAMORE HALL

Joss covers her face.

GREAT DINING HALL

LUIS
Maybe the kids will like it?

JACOB
Let's hope it doesn't scare them.

SYCAMORE HALL

Joss grimaces while rubbing her temples.

GREAT DINING HALL

JACOB
Who was I kidding? I shouldn't have hired her. It's been nothing but drama since I did.

SYCAMORE HALL

Ouch. She winces, then silently exits without being seen.

GREAT DINING HALL

LUIS
Bruh, real talk. I haven't ever seen you look at a chick like that before. Sorry, a *woman*.

Jacob feigns confusion.

JACOB
How so?

LUIS
How you always look at her. Dude, it's like, intense.

Luis makes an exaggerated lovey-dovey face.

JACOB
Intense?
(shakes his head)
You watching Rosa's telenovelas?

LUIS
(laughing)
So, she can't decorate trees, but she passes the vibe check.

JACOB
That's high praise from you.

LUIS
Yup.

JACOB
(teasing)
Okay, bruh.

LUIS
(teasing)
Okay, boomer!

Jacob chases him out of the room as Luis laughs hysterically. He walks back to turn off the lights in the dining hall. Everything goes dark.

INT. DIRECTOR'S CABIN - NIGHT

Joss flips the lights on as she enters the cabin, locking the door behind her.

She storms into the bedroom.

MASTER BEDROOM

Walter Lee sleeps, stirring a bit when he hears her. She grabs her suitcase, then hurriedly starts packing.

Her phone RINGS. It's another RESTRICTED NUMBER, and she hastily hits decline, slamming it on the bed.

EXT. DIRECTOR'S CABIN - DAY

The next day as the sun rises, Joss exits the cabin with Walter Lee and her luggage in tow.

EXT. LOWER PARKING LOT - DAY

Joss and Walter Lee reach the lower lot. She's winded, and her cheeks are flushed. She pulls out her blood glucose monitor, swiping her arm patch. Satisfied, she puts it back.

She then notices a black Prius parked next to her with fully tinted, fogged-up windows. Joss makes a troubled face.

Unlocking her car, she puts Walter Lee in, then loads her luggage. As she shuts the back, she hears a door open.

STEVE (O.S.)
 (British accent)
 Joss? Hey hun, it's me.

She freezes when she sees, STEVE (40s), her ex-boyfriend, an attractive Persian man, (former male model), who speaks with a British accent.

JOSS
 Steve?

His hazel eyes are tired, his dark hair uncombed, and his face unshaven.

STEVE
 Don't panic. I've been trying to buzz you, but you keep blocking or ignoring me.

Joss steps back.

JOSS
 Umm, that's because you hacked my bank account and stole every hard-earned penny I've ever worked for.

STEVE
 I'm gutted. I bugged up. I want to tell you how sorry I am. I still love you, darling.

JOSS
 (angry)
 Did you fall in love before or after you robbed me? I couldn't afford Walter Lee's chemo and radiation when he was diagnosed with cancer! I had to do a Go-Fund-Me to save his life!

Steve walks toward her with his hand out.

STEVE
 Babe, I made some bad decisions, but I'll get your money back. I'll make it right.

Walter Lee notices Steve outside and starts BARKING.

JOSS
 Don't get any closer to me.

He stops.

STEVE

You know I'd never hurt you guys.
Even though that dog has always
hated me.

Walter Lee BARKS louder to confirm this.

INT. CAMP CARMEL OFFICE - DAY

Luis walks by the camera monitors and does a double-take. He notices Joss with Steve in the lower lot.

He snatches the golf cart keys off the desk.

EXT. LOWER PARKING LOT - DAY

JOSS

How did you find me?

STEVE

How do you think? When we were
together, I told you to revoke your
location permissions on social
media.

JOSS

Yah, I know you're a hacker. And it
wasn't only me. You've scammed
several other women too.

STEVE

(agitated)
Joss, the Feds drained my accounts,
leaving me totally skint. They also
confiscated your money and I'm
living in my bloody car!

Luis buzzes down the hill on the golf cart. Joss and Steve whip their heads towards the sound.

STEVE (CONT'D)

(angry)
Who the hell is that?

JOSS

(she lowers her voice)
Calm down, he's my co-worker. You
need to leave right now.

Luis drives up next to Joss, parking the cart.

LUIS
Hey Joss, everything cool?

Luis eyeballs Steve with suspicion.

JOSS
This guy is lost. He's asking for directions.

LUIS
Where you headed?

Steve seems miffed, and he takes a second to gather himself.

STEVE
The beach... to surf.

LUIS
That's easy. Turn left and go straight till you see the ocean!

Steve nods, then walks back to his Prius.

STEVE
(dryly)
Thanks.

Steve eyes Joss as he gets in the car. The two watch him drive away.

LUIS
What up?

Joss stares at the ground trying to be unemotional.

JOSS
I overheard what Jacob said last night. About the tree and him regretting hiring me.

Luis rubs his forehead.

LUIS
Aww, dang, sorry you heard that. He didn't mean it. He gets wound up sometimes.

JOSS
He's right, I suck at decorating. So we're gonna head back home.

LUIS
I think he'll be bummed. We like you, Joss. And the kids will be arriving tomorrow.

They get interrupted by RINGING. Joss pulls out her mobile, glancing at the screen. Her eyes light up.

JOSS
It's Walter Lee's vet. So sorry, I must take this call.

Luis nods with understanding.

LUIS
Hope you change your mind.

He climbs in the cart, driving away. Joss answers.

JOSS
Hello?

She gets inside her car to talk.

INT. JOSS'S 4RUNNER - DAY

DR. CONRAD (V.O.)
Hi, is this Walter Lee's mom?

JOSS
Yes. Hi, Doctor Conrad.

DR. CONRAD (V.O.)
I'm sorry to be calling on a Sunday, I know our call was scheduled for tomorrow.

JOSS
Oh, it's fine!

DR. CONRAD (V.O.)
How has the patient been?

JOSS
He sleeps a lot more than usual.

DR. CONRAD (V.O.)
Lethargy and lack of energy are a common side effect of chemotherapy.

She glances in the rear-view and sees Walter Lee resting.

DR. CONRAD (V.O.)
 Listen, I'll get right to the
 point. The bloodwork and X-rays
 came out clear. The cancer is gone.
 Your boy is officially in
 remission!

Joss's mouth opens. She can hardly contain her excitement.

JOSS
 That's the best news!

DR. CONRAD (V.O.)
 I thought so too. That's why I
 wanted to call you right away.

JOSS
 (emotional)
 You've given me the greatest gift
 possible.

DR. CONRAD (V.O.)
 I know how special he is to you.

Joss opens her car door, stepping out.

EXT. LOWER PARKING LOT - DAY

JOSS
 Thank you doesn't even come close.

DR. CONRAD
 Enjoy the extra time you have
 together and Merry Christmas!

Tears roll down Joss's cheeks.

JOSS
 Thank you! Same to you!

She ends the call, then walks to the passenger side door,
 opening it. She pulls out a tennis ball. He lights up.

JOSS (CONT'D)
 Come here, my angel.

Walter Lee jumps out of the car with his focus on the ball.

JOSS (CONT'D)
 You're cancer free!

Joss jumps up and down. Walter Lee loves her energy, and he jumps up too. She throws the ball, and he retrieves it, bringing it back with puppy-like enthusiasm.

JOSS (CONT'D)
I'm so happy and so relieved!

Joss lures him back into the car. She kisses his face.

INT. JOSS' 4RUNNER - DAY

She jumps in, driving up the hill, back to the camp.

EXT. CAMP CARMEL OFFICE - DAY

Luis jogs out of the office to greet her.

LUIS
You came back!

JOSS
(smiling)
I've got some decorating to do.

LUIS
Today's my day off, so I can help!
I'm sure my grams will too.

JOSS
On your day off. You sure?

LUIS
Hell yeah, for the kids! Get your
car parked, and we'll jam! Jacob's
out getting supplies, so he won't
be back until later.

Joss high fives him out the window before she drives off.

INT. GREAT DINING HALL - DAY

Joss, Luis, Rosa, and Walter Lee are gathered near the Christmas tree which is now stripped.

INT. SYCAMORE HALL - DAY

Joss has her phone mounted on a mini tripod, and they watch a Youtube video on how to decorate the ultimate Christmas tree.

INT. GREAT DINING HALL - DAY

Joss and Luis reveal the finished tree. With its ornaments, bows, tinsel and lights, the tree is perfect enough for a magazine cover.

EXT. TREETOP TERRACE - DAY

Joss and Rosa work in unison decorating the terrace, hanging garland with candy canes, while Luis strings twinkle lights.

EXT. CABINS - DAY

Luis and Joss hang more Christmas lights as Rosa hangs beautiful wreaths on the cabin doors.

EXT. PAVED HILL - NIGHT

Jacob returns. As he drives up the hill, he notices the lights shining through the trees.

When he turns the corner, a giant inflatable snowman next to the camp directory sign. It makes him smile.

He drives to the cabins where he spots Joss walking Walter Lee. She leers at his Jeep approaching.

EXT. CABINS - NIGHT

As he approaches, Walter Lee wags his curly tail.

JOSS

Hey.

Jacob observes all the lights and decorations.

JACOB

I'm so impressed. You did this all?

JOSS

No, Luis and Rosa helped big time.

She stands in a dark shadow, seeming moody.

JACOB

It's a winter wonderland.

She steps out of the shadow, and a ribbon of moonlight splashes across her face.

JOSS
I was doing the job you hired me
for.

He notices her guarded energy and tone.

JACOB
Umm, I bought a bunch of
gingerbread kits for the kids. I'll
leave them in the kitchen.

She nods. There is an air of tension.

JOSS
I'm heading to bed early. I'm
exhausted from today.

JACOB
(conflicted)
All right, see you in the morning.

Joss pats her leg. Walter Lee follows. Jacob lingers, then
walks sullenly back to his Jeep.

THE CELEBRATION LAWN - DAY

Joss and Walter Lee join Jacob as he waits for the arrival of
the children.

JACOB
Sleep well?

She does a big head nod.

JOSS
Yes.

JACOB
Good.

A yellow minibus RUMBLES up the road. When the doors open,
Kara leaps out, sprinting to Jacob.

KARA
Jakey Pants!

They embrace.

JACOB
Hi Kara!

Joss is touched by their close bond.

KARA
I missed you like crrrrrazy!

They part. Kara approaches Joss and offers a hand.

KARA (CONT'D)
You must be Joss?

They shake. Joss instantly likes her warm charisma.

JOSS
I am. It's lovely to meet you.

Kara clocks that there's no ring on her finger.

KARA
You guys, we're going to have a
blast. I seriously can't wait!

Behind them, several CHAPERONES and NURSES assist the children off the bus.

A little GIRL (8), with Down syndrome points.

LITTLE GIRL
Doggie!

Kara turns to Joss.

KARA
That's Becca. She is obsessed with
dogs. Can she meet your pup?

JOSS
Yes! Walter Lee is very gentle.

KARA
Walter Lee? As in, A Raisin in the
Sun?

JOSS
(smiles and nods)
Uh huh!

Joss leads him over to Becca.

BECCA
Can I pet your doggie?

JOSS
Sure can. This is Walter Lee.

Becca sits down on the grass. Walter Lee gives her gentle face kisses, and she giggles in sheer delight.

Jacob watches Joss. Kara saunters over to him.

KARA
 (whispering)
 You didn't mention your holiday
 coordinator is drop dead gorgeous.
 And she isn't wearing a ring!

JACOB
 (whispering)
 Don't try to play Cupid.

KARA
 (playful)
 You seem pretty enamored with her.

JACOB
 (whispering)
 Afraid you are mistaken.

Kara sneers.

Joss takes a ball from her backpack, helping Becca hold it,
 then throw it. Walter Lee gives chase. Becca squeals.

Kara CLAPS her hands to get everyone's attention.

KARA
 Are my students ready to have a
 fabulous time at camp?

The TEN KIDS who have disembarked the bus CLAP or CHEER.

KARA (CONT'D)
 This wonderful man is my brother
 Jacob, the camp director. The nice
 lady is Joss. She'll be helping
 with fun activities!

The kids wave to Jacob and Joss, and they wave back.

KARA (CONT'D)
 First up. Who wants to go check out
 the awesome cabins? I know I do!

The kids raise their hands.

KARA (CONT'D)
 Follow me! Tally-ho!

JOSS
 I'll help the kids get settled in.

Jacob politely nods.

EXT. CAMPFIRE - NIGHT

Everyone is gathered around a crackling campfire. Luis and Rosa pass out cups of hot cocoa. Joss wears her red hoodie. She's cozied up with Walter Lee. Becca gently pets his head.

JACOB

You really like that hoodie, huh?

JOSS

I do. It's like getting a warm hug.

JACOB

It's a great color on you.

JOSS

My mom's favorite color was fire engine red. Reminds me of her.

JACOB

Are your parents --

JOSS

My parents both died while vacationing in Mexico. They got carbon monoxide poisoning from a faulty heater. They used to travel somewhere tropical for the holidays. They invited me but I didn't want to leave Walter Lee.

JACOB

That must have been awful.

JOSS

(tears brim her eyes)
I'm so glad they were together. I've finally found some solace in that. What about you? Are your parents around?

He shifts, slightly uncomfortable with the topic.

JACOB

Yeah, they're alive. They left me the camp when they retired. We were raised as Mormons growing up, but my sister and I left the church.

JOSS

Do you still talk to them?

JACOB
 Unfortunately, no. They won't
 accept my sister for who she is.

Kara has a microphone. She steps up on a hay bale.

KARA
 Hey campers! Is everyone ready to
 play a Christmas campfire game?

The campers and adults CHEER.

KARA (CONT'D)
 Okay! This first game is called
 Stop At The Good Part. I'm going to
 tell a story, but when I stop and
 hand you the mic, you have to
 continue in your own words! If you
 don't want to play, just say pass.

JACOB
 (to Joss)
 She's for sure picking me.

KARA
 Here goes! One day, my brother
 Jacob was walking on a road at the
 North Pole when he suddenly noticed
 something in his pocket! Imagine
 his surprise when he reaches in...

Kara jumps next to her brother, handing him the mic.

JACOB
 And pulls out a small... elf!!

Several of the children giggle.

JACOB (CONT'D)
 He wonders where the elf came from
 and realizes that he was just in
 Santa's workshop. That means --

Jacob puts the microphone in Joss's hand.

JOSS
 -- the elf must have snuck into his
 pocket when Santa wasn't watching!

The kids giggle. Jacob is amused.

JOSS (CONT'D)
 But why was an elf in Jacob's
 pocket?

(MORE)

JOSS (CONT'D)

I think it's because he ate all of Santa's cookies! What do you think, Becca?

Joss leans to Becca, handing her the microphone.

BECCA

I think so too! Walter Lee ate the elf and he became a fairy dog and lived happily ever after. The End!

Everyone CLAPS for Becca. Kara jumps back on the hay.

KARA

(announcer voice)
Give it up for Becca! Okay, campers, how about we make some yummy smores before our next game?

JOSS

(to Jacob)
These kids are incredible!

He's thrilled to see her let down her guard.

JACOB

I think you're incredible.

He tries to make a quick recovery.

JACOB (CONT'D)

I meant, you did incredible with the story.

She smiles shyly, then gets up to help Kara.

JOSS

Your energy is so infectious!

KARA

These kiddos are my heartbeat. You're great with kids. Do you have children?

Kara hands her a package of marshmallows.

JOSS

I don't. It never happened for me. I love them but prefer sending them home at the end of the day.

Kara laughs. Joss helps her melt the smores.

KARA

I'm currently kid-free as well. My partner, Natalie and I are planning to adopt.

JOSS

That's a beautiful thing to do.

Jacob notices how the firelight illuminates Joss's face. She feels his gaze, and he quickly looks away. She watches him for a moment before turning back to Kara.

EXT. CAMPFIRE - NIGHT

KARA

(French accent)

Salut?

Jacob snaps out of a daze.

KARA (CONT'D)

You look beat. We're gonna call it a night and get everyone to bed.

JACOB

Okay. Goodnight, love yah.

KARA

Je t'aime!

Kara walks past Joss and Walter Lee as they start back to the cabin. The ladies smile warmly to each other.

Jacob gets up, calling after Joss.

JACOB

Joss, would it be okay if I walked you guys back?

JOSS

Sure.

For a moment, they are quiet, then they speak in unison.

JACOB

Listen I...

JOSS (CONT'D)

I should...

Jacob gestures to her.

JACOB (CONT'D)

You go.

JOSS
I'd like to be honest with you.

Jacob listens intently.

JOSS (CONT'D)
This may sound bizarre, but my ex-boyfriend Steve is wanted by the FBI for theft, fraud and embezzlement.

He stops abruptly.

JACOB
Woah, that's a riveting truth bomb.

JOSS
He seemed so genuine at first, but a year into dating, he hacked my computer and transferred all my money into his accounts. He left me with nothing. I may have missed a red flag or two, but it was shocking. I hate being his victim.

JACOB
(pained expression)
Ugh, what a nightmare.

JOSS
He still hasn't been caught. He tries to contact me, but I block the restricted numbers.
(beat)
It's lessened my ability to trust other people.

They continue walking.

JACOB
Yeah, I'd be the same.

They approach the Director's Cabin.

EXT. DIRECTOR'S CABIN - NIGHT

They stop at the front door.

JACOB (CONT'D)
I hope I've never made you uncomfortable. Consider me a trusted friend.

JOSS
Not uncomfortable, but saying I was
an urbanite was... harsh. And I
overheard what you said about my
first tree. The hideous one.

Jacob scratches the back of his head, eye shifting.

JACOB
I sincerely apologize.

JOSS
And technically you're my boss, but
I'll also consider you a friend.

JACOB
It feels awkward to ask, but do you
mind if I give you a hug to make up
for being insensitive prick? I know
you have your hoodie, but...

Joss holds her arms open. Jacob steps in, embracing her. They
close their eyes, savoring the closeness.

JOSS
Real hugs can be nice too.

JACOB
(teasing)
Truth is, I wanted a chance to feel
this plush hoodie. Nice and soft!

He smiles. Joss's cheeks flush. She pulls away.

JOSS
(softly)
Goodnight, Jacob.

She takes Walter Lee inside. The door shuts behind them.

INT. DIRECTOR'S CABIN - KITCHEN - DAY

Joss fills the coffee reservoir with water and presses start.
While waiting, she prepares Walter Lee's breakfast.

He walks into the kitchen as Joss pours warm water on his
kibble. She tests the temp, then serves it.

JOSS
We're doing arts and crafts with
the kiddies today, so you'll have
to stay put. You can sleep in!

She watches Walter Lee happily crunch on his food.

EXT. ARTS AND CRAFTS BUILDING - DAY

Kara plus a few chaperones have gathered the kids in front of the Arts & Crafts building. The space underneath the roof has two long picnic tables covered in craft paper.

Kara waves with her two hands at Joss as she joins them.

KARA
(addressing the group)
Guess what awesome activity we're
gonna do today? We're going to
create gingerbread bridges!

A little GIRL (10), with autism, raises her hand.

LITTLE GIRL
I like making gingerbread houses.

KARA
Well, today, we're making bridges
instead of houses. How fun is that?

Kara guides her students to the art tables. Joss helps.

INT. ARTS AND CRAFTS BUILDING - DAY

The kids sit on the benches. Joss leans into Kara.

JOSS
(quietly)
Why bridges?

KARA
(quietly)
This week it will be five years
since my sister-in-law has been
gone. She had this obsession with
famous bridges. I try to keep her
memory alive in small ways.

JOSS
That's lovely.

Joss picks up a gingerbread kit, going to work.

EXT. ARTS AND CRAFTS BUILDING - DAY

Now covered in frosting and sprinkles, Joss steps out to answer her phone while the kids are finishing up.

Mina requests a VIDEO CHAT. Joss accepts.

MINA
Hola, my decorating diva!

Joss holds the phone up to get a better signal.

JOSS
Hey, you got my text!

MINA
Girl, what is on your face?

JOSS
(smiling)
Frosting. We're making gingerbread bridges for the kids.

MINA
Oh, you poor thing.

JOSS
Truthfully, I'm having fun! I texted you to see if you still have that art dealer friend?

MINA
Marina? Yeah, we're tight.

JOSS
Can you text Marina's number? I'm looking for a specific painting.

MINA
Sure! Hey, the twins keep asking if you're bringing Walter Lee over for Christmas.

The conversation is interrupted when...

KARA (O.S.)
Becca? Has anyone seen her?

Joss sees Kara sensing trouble.

JOSS
Mina, I'll call you back.

Joss ends the chat. She hurries over to Kara.

INT. ARTS AND CRAFTS BUILDING - DAY

KARA
(panicky)
I'm gonna text Jacob. We'll get the kids back to camp so we can form a search party.

Joss jogs out of the crafts building.

EXT. ARTS AND CRAFTS BUILDING - DAY

She scans the area, calling out.

JOSS
Becca?!

Kara runs out to update her.

KARA
Jacob responded. He's gathering the staff.

JOSS
Okay, good.

KARA
Becca's obsessed with your pup. Where is he today?

JOSS
My cabin.

KARA
Can you go check?

EXT. CELEBRATION LAWN/PATH - DAY

Joss sprints across the grass field, continuing down the path towards the cabins.

EXT. DIRECTOR'S CABIN - DAY

As she sprints, she can see that the door is WIDE OPEN.

JOSS
BECCA? WALTER LEE!

She runs inside.

INT. DIRECTOR'S CABIN - DAY

It's empty. Joss notices that her backpack contents have been spilled out. Her face fills with dread.

EXT. TREETOP TERRACE - DAY

Jacob and Luis have gathered a small group of STAFF. Jacob holds a map of the property. Joss joins up with them.

JOSS
(winded)
I think Becca has Walter Lee.

KARA
Oh no! I'm worried sick.

Joss puts a comforting arm around her.

JACOB
Luis and Rosa, you cover Sunrise
and Solstice camp.

Luis and Rosa both nod.

JACOB (CONT'D)
Manuel and John, you cover Sunset
camp and take the golf cart.

JACOB (CONT'D)
Me, Kara, and Joss will search the
pool and the creek. Call me if you
find *anything*!

Everyone silently agrees.

JACOB (CONT'D)
Let's move out!

The staff head out as instructed. Jacob clips a leash on Tinsel, gesturing for him to stand.

JACOB (CONT'D)
Come on, Tin.

EXT. PATH - DAY

Jacob jogs with Tinsel on leash. Something up the path catches Tinsel's attention, and he pricks up his ears.

JACOB
The pool area!

Tinsel leads them toward the gated pool. The three of them reach the entrance outside the gate.

JACOB (CONT'D)
(to Kara)
Hold him a sec.

EXT. SWIMMING POOL - DAY

He opens the gate to Becca playing ball with Walter Lee near the edge of the pool.

Walter Lee returns the ball. It rolls out of Becca's hands. She runs to chase it, heading straight toward the water.

KARA
Becca!

Walter Lee runs past, tripping her before she can fall in the pool.

All three run to Becca. She sits on the ground holding her knee, near tears. Kara gets down to embrace her.

JOSS
Walter Lee!

Walter Lee runs to Joss, happy, tongue out, panting.

BECCA
(sheepish)
Am I in trouble?

KARA
No baby, you're not in trouble.

Joss lets out a sigh of relief, as Jacob texts the others.

BECCA
Teacher, why are you crying?

KARA
I was very worried! We should have never taken our eyes off you.

BECCA
I wanted to play with Walter Lee. I fell and got an ouchy.

Becca points to her freshly skinned knee.

JACOB
 Hey Becca, how about you ride
 piggyback? Does that sound fun?

Becca holds up her arms with a giant wide-eyed smile. Kara and Joss help, hoisting her on his back.

JACOB (CONT'D)
 Hold on tight. Oink oink!

BECCA
 (giggling)
 Giddy up, piggy!

Becca holds on tight while Kara and Joss flank her. The four of them walk together with the dogs in tow. Jacob makes piggy noises to keep her amused. Joss steals glances at him.

EXT. CELEBRATION LAWN - DAY

Red and white balloons bounce wildly in the wind. Picnic tables are festively decorated with the colors of Christmas.

Kara leads Jacob, who has been blindfolded.

The kids wear matching red Santa hats. Joss stands near an object that's propped on an easel, fully covered up by a sheet.

JACOB
 Is this necessary?

Kara leads him to the easel. The kids giggle, ready and eager to show off their gingerbread bridges.

KARA
 Okay, take it off.

Jacob takes off his blindfold, the kids simultaneously hold up and display their creations. Joss unveils a stunning oil painting of a bridge.

JACOB
 Woah. I'm...flabbergasted!

Becca holds up her hand.

BECCA
 Teacher! Is that a bad word?

KARA
 No, it means he's super excited.

Everyone laughs as Jacob studies the painting.

JACOB
Is this a Leonid Afremov oil
painting?

JOSS
(grinning)
You know your artists.

Kara gives his arm a loving squeeze.

KARA
I know the fifth year is coming
up... I wanted to get this painting
for you. Joss helped me locate it,
and she had someone deliver it.

JACOB
(touched)
You guys, this is lovely. Lizzy
deeply admired this artist.

KARA
Even though she's gone, we'll
always keep her spirit alive.

Jacob looks at his sister fondly and gives her a hug.

JACOB
Thank you both.

Jacob and Joss lock eyes for a moment, while Kara skips over
to the tables to make an announcement.

KARA
Who wants to eat their gingerbread
bridge?

The kids raise their hands. Rosa and Luis set down plates.
Joss goes to help as Jacob heads over to Kara.

JACOB
You outdid yourself, kid.

Kara tugs at his arm to pull him aside.

KARA
(eyes brim with tears)
When we lost Lizzy, I thought I had
also lost my big brother. Lately,
you seem remarkably... upbeat.

JACOB
Not my normal cantankerous self?

KARA
(raises her eyebrows)
And I see the rapport between you
and Joss. You have a crush on her.

JACOB
(uncomfortable)
Don't start. We're not emotionally
unavailable for anything more.

KARA
You make excuses and silly rules to
keep yourself closed off.

JACOB
She recently got out of a bad
relationship. She has trust issues.

Kara stares him in the eye.

KARA
Then earn her trust.

Joss notices the siblings in a hushed conversation.

JACOB
(softer tone)
You gotta drop the Joss thing. And
I know this is bad timing, but I
got an offer for the camp from this
tech company with big bucks.

KARA
Sell the camp? I thought we had
plans for what we could do in the
future. I want to make it a safe
haven for LGBTQ youth and at-risk
kids... plus so much more.

JACOB
Running this place is a ton of work
and expensive. The money from the
sale would be split between us.

KARA
(sniffling)
I can't imagine this place going to
some corporate schmucks.

JACOB
I didn't mean to upset you. This
was an inappropriate time to bring
it up. We'll talk later.

Jacob puts an arm around her. They rejoin the group.

EXT. CAMPFIRE - NIGHT

Flames dance inside a raging fire. The burning logs CRACKLE while all the children and adults gather around the fire pit.

At a safe distance away, Jacob sits on a hay bale with Tinsel sleeping at his feet. Joss quietly slides on the bale next to his. Walter Lee lies down near Tinsel.

Kara and Luis step into the circle. They're dressed up as bear hunters. Kara enthusiastically CLAPS her hands.

KARA
Okay campers! You ready for a song?
Who wants to go on a bear hunt with
Luis and I? Everyone sing along!!

Kara and Luis bust out in song.

LUIS
We're goin' on a bear hunt!

KARA (CONT'D)
We're goin' on a bear hunt!

LUIS (CONT'D)
I've got my binoculars!

KARA (CONT'D)
I've got my binoculars!

They gesture having pretend binoculars on. The kids giggle.

LUIS (CONT'D)
Ooh, look at the deep white snow!

Luis pretends to point next to Becca. She laughs.

KARA
We can't go over it!

LUIS (CONT'D)
We can't go under it!

KARA (CONT'D)
We're gonna have to go through it!

They both leap through the imaginary snow. Simultaneously, the chaperones throw handfuls of FAKE SNOW in the air. The children explode in giggles.

Jacob notices Joss laughing. He climbs next to her, leaning in to whisper.

JACOB
I've got to run an errand. Can you
watch the Tin Man?

Joss flushes, giving him a nod. He quietly sneaks out.

Kara and Luis continue the silly bear song as Joss slides next to the dogs, zoning out with her thoughts.

Becca suddenly GASPS and points.

BECCA
It's Santa!!

All the kids look over and see SANTA CLAUS carrying a red sack filled with gifts.

KARA
What's up Santa?! Okay kids, let's
all go over to pick out a gift! One
at a time, okay?

As Kara and the staff assist the children, Santa waves a white-gloved hand to Joss. She smiles, waving back.

CONNOR (10), a boy in a wheelchair, wheels up to her.

CONNOR
You know Santa? That's so cool!

Joss winks at Connor. She watches Santa hand each child a gift from the sack.

KARA
Santa, thank you for taking the
time to visit us!

Kara APPLAUDS with enthusiasm. Santa waves to the kids.

SANTA CLAUS
Ho ho ho! Have a Merry Christmas!

They wave back. As he leaves, Kara jumps on the hay bale.

KARA
Children! We're gonna call it a
night! Tomorrow we all have to get
up early and head back home.

Some of the kids WHINE.

JOSS

Luis, can you take the dogs back to the cabins? I'll help Kara get the kids to bed.

LUIS

Yeah, be happy too!

JOSS

Thanks! You were a total Rockstar.

Luis smiles warmly. Joss pushes Connor's wheelchair, making funny motor sounds which makes him giggle.

EXT. UPPER PARKING LOT - DAY

The morning sun rises. Everyone hugs for their final goodbyes. Luis transports the luggage in the golf cart.

KARA

We did it, bro! The kiddos had the time of their lives.

They high five. Kara notices Jacob's wedding ring.

KARA (CONT'D)

Are you ever gonna take that off?

Jacob gazes at his ring as Becca runs up, giving his legs a massive squeeze.

BECCA

Thank you, Mr. Jacob! I love your camp.

Jacob pats her back.

JACOB

Come visit us again, okay?

BECCA

I will!

A chaperone comes to take Becca's hand. She waves to Walter Lee lying underneath a tree.

BECCA (CONT'D)

Bye fairy dog! I love you!

The chaperone leads her away as Kara leans into her brother.

KARA
See how special this camp is? We're
changing young lives.

Joss walks back from the bus. Kara throws her arms around her
in a huge embrace.

KARA (CONT'D) JACOB
You were beyond wonderful. She's a hugger!
The holiday decorations were
a hit.

JOSS
Thank you, Kara! You're an absolute
delight!

The women part.

KARA
I've gotta run! Take care you two.
I hope to see you again, Joss.

Joss and Jacob wave as the last camper loads on the minibus.
The engine comes to life. The bus slowly pulls away.

Luis takes the golf cart back up the hill. The sound of
CHIRPING BIRDS fills the quiet void.

Jacob breaks the silence.

JACOB
Shall we head back?

Joss silently walks next to him.

EXT. PATH - DAY

JACOB
(nervous)
So, I have this rule about not
dating my campers or my staff, but
technically, you're neither as of
tomorrow.

Joss unconsciously twirls her hair. She glances at Walter
Lee, who trots behind them off leash.

JOSS
(softly)
Jacob...

JACOB
I know what I said before but --

He stops walking, stares longingly, then slowly leans in to kiss her. She tentatively pulls back just before they kiss.

JOSS
I'm only reluctant because of --

Jacob steps back to give her space.

JACOB
(embarrassed)
No, I understand.

Joss's insulin ALARM goes off.

JOSS
Oh crud, bad timing. I should...

Jacob stays silent as Joss pats her leg, encouraging Walter Lee to follow. They jog together toward the cabins.

INT. DIRECTOR'S CABIN - KITCHEN - DAY

Joss stands in the kitchen, taking her daily insulin. Her cellphone RINGS. She answers.

JOSS
Hello? Hi Mary, I'm sorry to hear your pet sitter flaked on you.
(listening)
You need all the cat boxes cleaned today? But I'm still in Carmel.

She rubs her temple.

JOSS (CONT'D)
Don't be upset, I'll come. And yes, tomorrow I'll go to the museum to get the mail. You're welcome.

Joss hangs up, her face filled with trepidation.

EXT. TREETOP TERRACE - DAY

Joss walks Walter Lee through the terrace to Sycamore Hall.

INT. SYCAMORE HALL - DAY

She finds Jacob having breakfast with John and Manuel. All three glance up at her.

JOSS
Apologies for the interruption.

Jacob holds up a basket.

JACOB
Cranberry scone?

Joss smiles politely.

JOSS
No thanks. I wanted to let you know
that I'm heading back home. Mary is
having a pet sitter crisis.

Jacob stands, wiping away crumbs with a napkin.

JACOB
You're leaving right now?

JOSS
Yes.

He is taken aback. Aware that she's watching him, he turns his attention to the dog.

JACOB
Mr. Lee, you be a good dog.

Walter Lee wags his tail as Jacob bends down to pet him. He puts his paws up on his chest, giving Jacob's face a lick.

JOSS
(on the verge of tears)
My contacts are really itchy today.
(rubbing her eye)
We should get going.

Jacob rises, his eyes pleading. He obviously wants to say more, but he struggles for words.

JACOB
Umm... I'll make sure your check is
mailed out in a few days.

She reaches out, offering her hand. He shakes it formally.

JOSS
Bye Jacob.

She turns away, lightly pulling Walter Lee on the leash, leaving Jacob visibly glum. He somberly returns to the table. His workers whisper something. One speaks up.

MANUEL

Ella es una mujer hermosa!

Jacob nods. He turns back, but Joss is long gone.

INT. JOSS'S 4RUNNER - DAY

Joss drives over the bridge. She waits to turn right. She glances at the camp sign in the driver-side mirror.

Her PHONE RINGS on the dash mount. She accepts a VIDEO CHAT.

MINA

Hey hot stuff! Where are you?

Joss makes a right turn on Carmel Valley Road.

JOSS

Driving home.

MINA

Does this mean you'll join us for Christmas?

JOSS

I think it will only be me and Walter Lee. I'm not feeling very festive.

MINA

(teasing)

Not feeling festive? SHOCKER!

The joke falls flat. Mina digs deeper.

MINA (CONT'D)

Why are you so gloomy? You look like you're driving to my funeral.

Joss exhales.

JOSS

I'm trying to hold myself together. I had this strong connection with --

MINA

(her eyes go wide)

The silver-haired fox?

JOSS

Yes. Jacob.

Mina teases.

MINA
 And by connection do you mean, a
connection? Oh! Did you remember to
 wax your--

Mina WHISTLES.

JOSS
 (her cheeks flush)
 He tried to kiss me once.

Mina looks confused.

MINA
 Tried? Don't tell me you rejected
 those sexy French lips!

JOSS
 I did because we have a ton of
 emotional pain from our pasts. It's
 not gonna happen with us.

MINA
 (rolling her eyes)
 Girl, we're in our forties. We all
 do at this age. It's called living
 life and experiencing hard shit!

JOSS
 I know, but I said I wasn't ready.

MINA
 Well, that's a damn shame.

Children SCREAM and FIGHT in the background.

MINA (CONT'D)
 I better go. The twins are about to
 commit homicide. Call you later!

Mina YELLS at the kids in Korean as she hangs up.

Joss frowns as she continues to drive in silence.

EXT. MARIN HISTORY MUSEUM - PARKING LOT - DAY

The morning sun shines as Joss pulls into a parking spot in
 front of the Marin History Museum in San Rafael.

She walks briskly towards the Victorian gothic style house.
 At the front gate, she grabs the mail from the mailbox.

EXT. MARIN HISTORY MUSEUM - DAY

Joss walks up the small staircase, unlocks the front door and enters.

INT. MARIN HISTORY MUSEM - DAY

She sets the mail down on the countertop. A cordless phone RINGS behind the counter. Joss goes to answer it.

JOSS

Hello?

An older voice scolds her.

MARY (V.O.)

You're five minutes late!

JOSS

Hi Mary, sorry. Walter Lee needed some extra belly rubs this morning.

MARY (V.O.)

I pay you to be on time!

JOSS

Apologies.

MARY (V.O.)

I'll let you get back. If you don't mind dusting, that would be nice.

Before Joss can respond, Mary hangs up.

JOSS

Uh, sure --

Joss grabs some cleaning supplies from behind the counter. She sprays the window. As she bends down to clean, the front door CHIMES. Footsteps enter.

JOSS (CONT'D)

Closed for the holidays!

The footsteps walk across the creaky wood floor triggering a panic response in her. She swallows nervously.

MAN (O.S.)

(obvious fake accent)

Excuse me, ma'am? It true this used to be the Boyd Gate House?

Heart pounding, Joss peeks around the corner holding the feather duster as a weapon. Jacob is staring at black and white photography mounted on the wall.

JOSS
Jacob?! What in the --

The phone RINGS again. Joss sets the feather duster down. She goes to answer.

JOSS (CONT'D)
Hi Mary. Yes, I do know the strange man. He's a friend. Bye now.

Jacob continues to act enthralled with the photography.

JACOB
This place is neat. Built back in 1879. Wowsers.

She approaches.

JOSS
How'd you know I work here?

Jacob turns to her, his blue eyes sparkling.

JACOB
I was told you worked here by your other boss, Mina. You sure have a lot of bosses.

Jacob hands her an invitation.

JOSS
What is it?

JACOB
An invitation to Christmas Eve dinner. I should've invited you sooner but I thought you'd say no.

Joss eyes the festive invitation.

JACOB (CONT'D)
I feel like there were things left unsaid...

The phone RINGS again. Joss ignores it.

JOSS
You came almost three hours to give me this?

The phone continues RINGING.

JOSS (CONT'D)
Mary is extremely nosey. Let's go
outside.

Joss grabs his hand, not noticing he's no longer wearing his
wedding band.

EXT. MARIN HISTORY MUSEM - PORCH - DAY

Joss leads him outside to an enclosed porch.

JACOB
I'm also here because I always look
forward to seeing you. I wanted to
stare in your captivating eyes and
see that enchanting smile.

JOSS
Jacob, that is --

JACOB
Intense? Luis says I'm too intense.
And he calls me a boomer.

She laughs. He grins back.

JOSS
I can't believe you came here!

JACOB
The drive was nice. I needed to
clear my head.
(takes a long beat)
Joss, I might be selling the camp.

JOSS
(surprised)
Wait. What? Sell it?

JACOB
I got a generous offer from a big
tech company.

JOSS
I don't know what to say.

JACOB
Kara's upset with me right now.
It's weighing on me.

Jacob walks to the railing to observe the grounds.

JOSS

What I saw in your sister was a compassionate and sensitive young woman... I'm sure she'll eventually understand.

Joss leans on a thick column. He turns so they're standing inches apart.

JACOB

When she came out, my parents chose their religion over unconditionally loving their own daughter. They abandoned her which wounded her deeply. How could any parent do that to their own child?

Joss reaches out, gently touching his hand. She notices his naked ring finger, a band of white skin where it once was.

JOSS

People get sucked into their religions so deeply they don't know what's true or false.

Jacob listens, his eyes soft and vulnerable.

JACOB

I had to step into the parent role. I can't forgive them for the grief they caused her, which is why we're estranged. It's still painful, especially during the holidays.

Joss wraps her arms around him, holding him tightly. They stay there a few moments until he gently releases her.

JACOB (CONT'D)

I should get back on the road. I left Luis in charge so --

JOSS

(grinning)

I hope you realize how much Luis and Kara love you.

Jacob takes a step down to the stone pathway.

JACOB

(sincere)

Joss, I hope you come tomorrow. Dinner's at five. Kara is bringing her partner, Natalie.

She swallows hard.

JOSS
I'll seriously consider it.

Jacob winks. She watches him go to the parking lot. He gives her a small wave before getting in his Jeep and driving off.

She stares at the invitation in her hand. The bottom print reads: *No gifts, just good company!*

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Joss snores softly with Walter Lee curled up near her feet. The radio ALARM turns on. The MORNING RADIO DJs from before have an animated discussion.

MALE RADIO DJ (V.O.)
It's Christmas Eve everyone! Rise and shine, sleepy-heads. Get those presents wrapped!

FEMALE RADIO DJ (V.O.)
And don't forget, Christmas is the most wonderful time of the year!

Joss GROANS in annoyance.

MALE RADIO DJ (V.O.)
That's true! Everyone have yourself a M...

Joss turns the radio off before they say it.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Wearing dog paw pajamas and her glasses, Joss makes coffee and prepares breakfast for Walter Lee.

JOSS
I was thinking we can take a nice walk, then we can get back in our jammies and watch *The Exorcist*.

Walter Lee lies on the floor with his chin on his paws.

JOSS (CONT'D)
You don't approve?

Someone KNOCKS on the front door. Surprised, she sets his food bowl down, then goes to answer.

INT. FRONT FOYER - DAY

She cautiously looks through the peep hole, then opens the door. Harold stands there holding a covered bowl.

HAROLD
Hey Joss!

EXT. JOSS'S CONDO - DAY

Joss steps out to chat.

JOSS
Hey Harold.

HAROLD
I'm sorry I called you a
Christmaszilla.

JOSS
(playful)
It's okay. I mean, I am.

Harold hands her the large bowl.

HAROLD
Joyce made this for you. It's her
special holiday jambalaya.

JOSS
That's too kind!

HAROLD
We feel bad about you spending the
holidays alone, so if you'd like to
come for dinner ...

Joss spontaneously gives him a hug, catching him off guard.

JOSS
I'm touched, thank you, but I think
I have plans this year.

HAROLD
You think you have plans?

JOSS
(comes to a decision)
I mean, I do. In Carmel Valley.

HAROLD
That's great!

JOSS
I should start getting ready.

HAROLD
Have a Merry Christmas.

JOSS
Please give Joyce my love.

Joss hurries inside.

INT. FRONT FOYER - DAY

She rushes through the foyer into the kitchen.

KITCHEN

She sets the bowl in the fridge as Walter Lee finishes his breakfast.

JOSS
(excited)
Change of plans!

Walter Lee wags his tail. She runs off to get ready.

BEDROOM

Joss shuts the door to her bedroom. Two hours later, she emerges wearing a red and gold blouse and black slacks. She's wearing makeup and has even curled her blonde hair.

LIVING ROOM

Joss does a spin for Walter Lee who is chilling on the couch.

JOSS
Okay pup, let's hit it!

EXT. SCENIC CALIFORNIA COAST LINE - DAY

The 4Runner winds along the breathtaking coastline.

INT. JOSS'S 4RUNNER - DAY

Joss drives with a content smile on her face.

GPS VOICE (V.O.)
Turn right on Carmel Valley Road.

Joss makes a right on the scenic country road. She cracks the window, taking in the country smells.

EXT. CARMEL VALLEY ROAD - DAY

A BROWN COW stands contently chewing her cud. When Joss comes around the bend, the cow is directly ahead. She SLAMS on the brakes. The SUV skids. Her eyes go wide with terror.

EXT. TREETOP TERRACE - DAY

Jacob helps Rosa carry plates of food to the tables while Kara pours drinks. She giggles with her partner, NATALIE (30s), a gorgeous, biracial woman.

Luis sits near the wall, strumming a Christmas song on his guitar. When Natalie notices Jacob, she jumps up to help.

JACOB
Thank you, Natalie.

Kara approaches her brother, gently hip-checking him.

KARA
Hey. You think she'll show?

He shrugs.

KARA (CONT'D)
Can you text her?

JACOB
About that, I forgot to get her cell number. The one we have on file is her office job.

KARA
(joking)
Jeez bud, you are rusty.

NATALIE
She's probably running fashionably late.

Kara nods in agreement.

INT. JOSS'S 4RUNNER - DAY

Joss sits on the side of the road still clutching her steering wheel after the near accident. Her car is smoking. She turns back to Walter Lee with immediate concern.

JOSS
Baby, you okay?

Walter Lee gazes up from a nap, completely unfazed. She breathes a sigh of relief.

JOSS (CONT'D)
That's good.

She turns her attention back to her car. She tries to start it, but it doesn't turn over.

JOSS (CONT'D)
Come on!

She tries again with no luck. She grabs her phone, holding it up to her dash. No signal. She turns back to Walter Lee.

JOSS (CONT'D)
Stay put, bubs.

Walter Lee rests his chin down on the window.

EXT. CARMEL VALLEY ROAD - DAY

Joss steps outside as the low sun rapidly descends. She holds her phone above her head to find a signal. Not watching the ground, she steps in a pile of cow poop. SQUISH. Her face contorts into a grimace.

JOSS
Gahh!

Noticing she has a single bar, she dials the number to the camp. The answering machine picks up after a few rings.

LUIS (V.O.)
Hello! You've reached Camp Carmel Valley. Please leave us a message and we'll try to get back soon!

INT. CAMP CARMEL OFFICE - NIGHT

The Office is dark. Joss's voice plays over the machine.

JOSS (V.O.)
 Hey guys, it's Joss. I hope you can hear me. I broke down on Carmel Valley Road. I'm trying to get there. I'll update you when I can.

EXT. TREETOP TERRACE - NIGHT

Everyone is enjoying a delicious feast. They all toast except for Jacob. Kara sees Jacob staring off in the distance, and her smile turns into a frown.

EXT. CARMEL VALLEY ROAD- 4RUNNER - NIGHT

Standing in the same spot with the phone above her head, Joss now speaks with roadside assistance.

ROADSIDE OPERATOR (V.O.)
 Yes, ma'am. It will be at least two hours. They'll call you when the truck is on the way.

Joss throws her head back in defeat.

JOSS
 Two hours? Ugh, okay, I understand.

ROADSIDE OPERATOR (V.O.)
 Y'all have a good night.

The call ends. Joss finally lowers her arm. She steps out of the manure trying to shake it off. A cloud of fog breath forms when she exhales. She quickly returns to her car.

INT. JOSS'S 4RUNNER - NIGHT

Joss shuts the door behind her. She turns back to Walter Lee who sits up at attention.

JOSS
 Do you think this could be some divine cosmic intervention with the message that I should stay single and not risk potential breakup grief all over again? Was this trip a total mistake?

He stares blankly. A pair of headlights illuminate their car.

JOSS (CONT'D)
 That was fast!

EXT. JOSS'S 4RUNNER - NIGHT

Joss gets out, waving at the oncoming lights.

A vintage blue truck rambles up. Inside, an ELDERLY COUPLE smile. The woman rolls down the passenger window.

ELDERLY MAN
Car troubles?

Joss's teeth quietly chatter.

JOSS
I was coming around that bend and
had to serve because there was a
cow standing right in the road.

The woman gives her husband a wide-eyed glance.

ELDERLY WOMAN
Was she a brown cow?

Joss nods. The older couple shake their head.

ELDERLY MAN
Betty Brown.

ELDERLY WOMAN (CONT'D)
Miss Betty Brown!

Joss looks perplexed.

ELDERLY MAN (CONT'D)
That's our dairy cow. She's an
escape artist. Bad old Betty!

ELDERLY WOMAN
We are just comin' home from a
church event.

ELDERLY MAN
Can we help you out, miss?

Joss shrugs.

JOSS
I hit a pot-hole, not sure what's
wrong with my car.

ELDERLY MAN
Where yah headed?

JOSS
To Camp Carmel Valley.

Their faces light up in recognition.

ELDERLY WOMAN

That's the place the two Leroux kids took over. Lovely folks!

ELDERLY MAN

That's up the road. Why don't I tow you there?

JOSS

Are you sure? I called a tow truck.

ELDERLY MAN

Of course, dear! I got a set of chains in the back. I pull city folks out of ditches all the time.

The man sets his truck in park and exits.

ELDERLY WOMAN

He's right. Come on in, you'll catch your death out there.

JOSS

I have my dog with me.

ELDERLY WOMAN

We love dogs. Bring it in!

The man puts on a headlamp. He hooks up her car.

JOSS

Okay!

EXT. CELEBRATION LAWN - NIGHT

Jacob and the group have finished their meal.

KARA

Rosa, that was insanely delicious!

NATALIE

So good!

ROSA

(grinning proudly)
Thank you, ladies!

KARA

Why do you work here? You should be a Michelin star chef.

Jacob wags a finger at Kara.

JACOB
(to Kara)
Don't give her any ideas.
(to Rosa)
We love having you here.

ROSA
I love it here too. It's a joy to
be here with my grandson. I don't
wish to work anywhere else.

Luis stands up to give his grandma a hug. She beams.

KARA
Any you guys up for Pictionary?

NATALIE
I'm soooo down.

Everyone gets up.

JACOB
You guys go ahead, I'm gonna clean.

LUIS
You sure, boss?

JACOB
Yeah, go have fun.

The rest of the group start to trickle away. Kara gestures for Natalie to go ahead as she hangs back.

KARA
(softly)
Hey Jacob? I know you're hurting --

He gathers the disposable plates in a pile, then harshly tosses them in the trash can. It startles Kara.

JACOB
I feel like an idiot! I don't want
to talk about it.

Kara gives him a shoulder squeeze from behind.

KARA
(holding back tears)
Okay. I love you.

She turns to leave. Jacob has a pained expression.

INT. VINTAGE PICKUP TRUCK - NIGHT

Joss and Walter Lee sit beside the couple on a bench seat, as he slowly tows her car up the road. The hazard lights blink.

ELDERLY WOMAN
We're the Kays.

JOSS
Joss Dawson and my dog, Walter Lee.
Lovely to meet you two.

Mrs. Kay turns to her husband.

MRS. KAY
I told you to fix that darn fence!

MR. KAY
I do! She keeps on breaking it!

JOSS
You guys don't happen to have an
iPhone charger? My battery died and
I need to cancel the tow truck.

MRS. KAY
Sweetie, we don't even have cell
phones. Only a regular landline.

MR. KAY
Our grandson calls us old relics.

MRS. KAY
Honey, you're so old your first car
was a covered wagon.

Joss laughs.

MR. KAY
You're so old your birth
certificate says it's expired!

Mrs. Kay socks him in the arm. They laugh.

JOSS
You two are a riot. How long have
you been married?

MR. KAY
Fifty loooong years.

Mr. Kay puts his arm around his wife.

MRS. KAY
 What about you? Do you have a
 special someone?

JOSS
 Single, but this scruffy guy keeps
 me content.

Joss scratches under Walter Lee's chin.

MRS. KAY
 Dogs are certainly better
 listeners!

MR. KAY
 Can't argue with that.

MRS. KAY
 How do you know the Leroux's?

MR. KAY
 Ain't he the widower? Poor fella.

Joss keeps her eyes locked on Walter Lee.

JOSS
 Jacob and I are friends.

The couple exchange a glance.

MR. KAY
 We made it here!

Mr. Kay turns right into the camp. Joss doesn't notice the
 black Prius parked outside the entrance.

JOSS
 You can park it here in the lot and
 I'll walk up the hill.

He pulls into the lot as Mrs. Kay searches the truck for a
 piece of paper and a pen. She finds some, handing it to Joss.

MRS. KAY
 Write down the number of the tow
 company and we'll call for yah.

Mr. Kay parks. He shuffles out of the truck.

JOSS
 Oh gosh, thank you!

Joss scribbles down the number. Mrs. Kay hugs Joss.

MRS. KAY
It was a pleasure meeting you.

JOSS
You too, Mrs. Kay.

MR. KAY (O.S.)
All done out here!

EXT. LOWER PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Joss and Walter Lee exit as Mr. Kay returns the chains to the back of his truck.

JOSS
Mr. Kay, can I please give you some cash for your trouble?

MR. KAY
Don't you be silly.

Joss shakes his hand.

JOSS
Thank you so much. You're such kind-hearted people.

MR. KAY
I'd like to impart this tidings. The Christmas spirit is a spirit of giving and forgiving. The world has grown weary through the years, but at Christmas, it is still young. This is a season not only of rejoicing but of reflection.

Mrs. Kay rolls down her window.

MRS. KAY
Merry Christmas!

MR. KAY (CONT'D)
Merry Christmas!

Joss gives them a warm smile and blows them a kiss.

JOSS
Merry Christmas!

Mr. Kay climbs back in the truck. Mrs. Kay returns the air kiss as she rolls up her window and waves goodbye.

EXT. LOWER PARKING LOT/PAVED HILL - NIGHT

Joss and Walter Lee walk toward the base of the hill. A vehicle pulls in with the high beams on, driving slow in their direction. Joss shields her eyes.

The vehicle stops a few feet away. Squinting, she discerns it is the black Prius. Steve steps out.

STEVE
We seriously need to chat.

Walter Lee stiffens. He lets out a low GROWL.

JOSS
Steve? Are you stalking me?

STEVE
I need your help to get rid of these charges. You've got to lie and say you gave me the money.

Joss stares and she takes an involuntary step back.

JOSS
Absolutely not.

Sensing her distress, Walter Lee BARKS at him.

EXT. CELEBRATION LAWN - NIGHT

Tinsel is alerted, he lifts his head, listening. Jacob notices, but he continues cleaning.

EXT. LOWER PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Walter Lee continues to BARK as Steve cautiously eyes him.

STEVE
(irritated)
Tell him put a sock in it. I don't want to hurt him.

JOSS
(protective)
You dare touch this dog, you'll be the one in pain.

STEVE
(laughing)
Do you even hear yourself?

Walter Lee carries on. Steve takes a sharp tone.

STEVE (CONT'D)
Put him in your car right now!

Joss hesitantly complies. She walks to her car, opens the door, and encourages Walter Lee inside.

JOSS
Good boy, it's okay.

Joss shuts his door. She rapidly opens the drivers side door, diving in. She attempts to lock it, but he makes a quick play, stopping her. She fights using her legs as she stretches over the seat, grabbing the red club.

STEVE
I realize you're cheesed off, but
you're acting completely barmy!

JOSS
Get off me!

Walter Lee BARKS like mad. Steve manages to pull her out of the SUV. She swings at him with the club but nearly misses.

STEVE
Bloody hell, Joss!

Steve snatches the club, throwing it to the other side of the vehicle. He harshly grabs her wrists. Using his foot, he SLAMS the car door shut, which muffles the barking.

JOSS
(seething mad)
I'll scream.

STEVE
DO NOT!

He continues to hold her wrists tightly.

STEVE (CONT'D)
I'll let you go if you agree to
talk to me for a minute. I need to
know what you told the Feds. I
cannot go to prison.

Steve releases her hands, but Joss pulls them in haste.

JOSS
I told the Feds the truth! You
stole from me! You're a criminal
and you deserve to do time!

His faces flickers from angst to rage.

STEVE
 (furious)
 Rubbish! What the hell happened to
 the old Joss I knew?

Joss makes a run for it while Steve gives chase.

EXT. CELEBRATION LAWN - NIGHT

Tinsel continues to be bothered by what he hears. He stands up and BARKS. Jacob goes to him. He looks down the hill, noticing the headlights.

Luis comes jogging in from the office.

LUIS
 Jacob, she called!

Jacob raises an eyebrow.

LUIS (CONT'D)
 Joss left a message about an hour
 ago. She broke down.

JACOB
 Someone's down in the lower lot.
 I'm gonna check in the golf cart.

LUIS
 Can I come with?

JACOB
 Do me a favor, put Tinsel in my
 cabin. I'll text if I need a hand.

Luis nods as Jacob hurries over to the golf cart, jumps in, and takes off down the hill.

EXT. LOWER LOT - NIGHT

Joss hides in the brush not far from her car, clutching the club between her fists, trying to stay silent. She watches as Steve frantically tries to find her.

STEVE
 You know I'm not a violent guy.

Steve freezes when noticing the lights from the approaching golf cart. He hides behind Joss's car.

Jacob pulls up, observing Steve's Prius with the door open. The only sound comes from Walter Lee's muffled barking.

JACOB

Joss?

Jacob steps off the cart. Steve emerges from behind her car.

STEVE

You're the one making moves on my girlfriend! I've been watching you!

Jacob halts, entirely caught off guard.

JACOB

Who the hell are you?

Steve walks toward him. He pulls a hunting knife from his back pocket.

STEVE

YOU WANKER! YOU NEED TO SODD OFF!

Joss emerges from hiding, running to Steve.

JOSS

STEVE! NO!

Jacob stumbles back as Steve whips around to face Joss, yielding the knife. She swings the club like a bat, hitting him square in the forehead.

Steve crumples, flinging the knife out of his hand.

Jacob scrambles to his feet, rushing to Joss. She drops the club.

JOSS (CONT'D)

(distressed)

Did I... Is he?

Jacob cautiously reaches down to check his vitals.

JACOB

You knocked him out cold. Find something to bind his hands and I'll call the sheriff.

Joss nods, breathing hard, in total shock.

EXT. LOWER PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Jacob holds her protectively as two police cars and an ambulance pull into the lot.

JOSS
I ruined your dinner plans.

JACOB
Joss, you saved my life from a
knife-wielding lunatic!

FOUR OFFICERS exit the two squad cars.

OFFICER NORTON (O.S.)
Jacob Leroux?

A COP (40s), mixed-race, approaches them.

OFFICER NORTON (CONT'D)
I'm Officer Norton. Jacob, we went
to the same high school in Napa
Valley.

Jacob shakes his hand.

JACOB
Derek Norton? Running back?

OFFICER NORTON
Yah, my football days are long
behind.
(to Joss)
Are you Ms. Dawson?

She nods.

OFFICER NORTON (CONT'D)
Ms. Dawson, I'd like to speak to
you in private so I can take your
statement. Jacob, Officer Sola will
take yours.

OFFICER SOLA (35), a curvy Latina, approaches Jacob with a notepad. Joss walks off with Officer Norton.

As the PARAMEDICS examine Steve, he wakes up. They have to restrain him from getting up.

STEVE
Joss Dawson assaulted me!

Luis, Kara, and Natalie drive up in the Jeep. They jump out and run over to Jacob.

KARA
What happened?

JACOB
We're okay. I'll explain in a bit.

Other Officers canvass the area, searching for the knife.
Officer Norton and Officer Sola approach.

OFFICER NORTON
Ms. Dawson, I'm afraid we have to
ask you to come down to the station
for further questioning.

Jacob interjects.

JACOB
But it's Christmas Eve.

OFFICER NORTON
I see this as a domestic dispute
where only one party was injured.
The use of the club is assault with
a deadly weapon. We can't find the
knife you mentioned.

JACOB
(furious)
Assault? More like self-defense. He
had a knife! Search harder!

Kara puts a protective hand on his arm.

JOSS
I'll be fine. Can you guys please
look after Walter Lee?

Joss hands Jacob her car keys. He nods.

OFFICER NORTON
Let's go. We'll take you and Steve
in separate patrol cars.

Joss goes willingly with the officers. Jacob and the others
watch her with concern. Jacob gets an idea.

JACOB
Hey! What about security footage? I
have cameras.

OFFICER NORTON
That'll help. If you have
something, bring it to the station.

Officer Norton helps Joss into the squad car. Once they are gone, Jacob turns to the group.

JACOB
Ladies, do you mind looking after
Walter Lee? Luis and I will work on
getting the video footage.

KARA
Was that her ex-boyfriend?

Jacob nods.

KARA (CONT'D)
We'll look after the dogs. Do
whatever you have to do.

Kara and Natalie go over to Joss's car, open it, and comfort Walter Lee. Kara gently carries him to the Jeep.

Jacob and Luis jump into the golf cart, speeding up the hill.

INT. SHERIFF'S STATION - LOBBY - NIGHT

Officer Norton leads Joss past a DRUNK SANTA handcuffed to a chair in the lobby. An IRATE MAN argues with a DESK CLERK about a ticket.

OFFICER NORTON
I'll take her to interrogation room
six and you take him to room seven.

Officer Sola nods, escorting Steve away.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - NIGHT

He leads Joss into a small room with beige walls, a metal table, and two metal chairs.

OFFICER NORTON
Have a seat.

Joss sits in one of the chairs.

OFFICER NORTON (CONT'D)
Before we begin, can I get you
anything to drink? Coffee, water?

There is a KNOCK on the door. Officer Sola enters.

OFFICER SOLA
 Drunk Santa is raising hell in the
 lobby. We can use your help.

He nods to her.

OFFICER NORTON
 (to Joss)
 I'll be back in a few.

Joss nods. He exits the room.

She scans the small space, shifting uncomfortably in the hard chair. She rubs the back of her neck, trying to keep the rising panic repressed.

The ALARM on her watch starts to BEEP incessantly. She stands up, patting her pockets down. No insulin pen. No phone.

She tries the door, but it's locked. She POUNDS hard, calling out:

JOSS
 Hello! Officer Norton!

Joss leans against the door, listening.

JOSS (CONT'D)
 (emotional)
 Anyone out there? It's a medical
 emergency. Please help!!

Frustrated, she plops back down in the chair. Becoming light-headed, she cups her face and starts to sob.

INT. CAMP CARMEL - MAIN OFFICE - NIGHT

Luis and Jacob carefully scan the security footage. Luis puts a memory stick in the laptop.

LUIS
 I meant to tell you, this dude's
 been around before. Super sketchy.

JACOB
 (concerned)
 He seemed to recognize me, but I've
 never seen him.

ON SCREEN

Steve goes after Jacob. The gleam of the knife reflects the light from the Prius's headlights.

IN OFFICE

 LUIS
Busted!

 JACOB
We need to find that knife.

Luis pulls out the memory stick. They rush out of the office.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - NIGHT

Joss slowly slides to the floor, looking woozy.

EXT. LOWER PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Jacob and Luis come to a screeching stop. They jump out of the Jeep. Jacobs tries to recreate the event.

 JACOB
Come over here. You be the guy...
I'm standing here.

Jacob points to Joss's car.

 JACOB (CONT'D)
He came from there and then at me.

Luis follows the same path that Steve did.

 JACOB (CONT'D)
I stumbled back, Joss comes out,
Steve turns, she whacks him here.

Luis comes forward and turns, pretending to fall.

 LUIS
The knife would likely go that way,
toward her car.

They run over to search. Luis crawls on the ground, underneath the car.

 LUIS (CONT'D)
Bruh! I see it!

He uses the flashlight on his phone. The knife is sticking in the rear passenger side tire at a thirty-degree angle.

 JACOB
Yes!

Jacob takes a FLASH PHOTO on his phone. He reaches in his back pocket for poop bags. He doubles up two, handing them to Luis.

Luis goes under the car. He crawls back out with the knife in the bags.

JACOB (CONT'D)
Nice work, Holmes.

LUIS
Holmes?

JACOB
Never mind! Let's go!

INT. SHERIFF'S STATION - NIGHT

The men run into the sheriff's station. Drunk Santa is still there, now cuffed to each side of the chair. Jacob goes to the desk clerk, who seems agitated.

JACOB
Hello ma'am, I need to see Officer Norton right away.

The disgruntled clerk stares at her computer screen.

CLERK
Who's asking?

JACOB
Jacob Leroux.

CLERK
(dryly)
Take a seat.

Jacob nods. He guides Luis to the far side of the lobby. Officer Norton comes out, still chewing on some food.

OFFICER NORTON
Hey Jacob and...

LUIS
Luis. Sir, officer.

Jacob hands him the memory stick and the bagged knife.

JACOB
This is footage of Steve on my property coming at me with the knife. Luis found it.

He stares at the poop bags oddly.

OFFICER NORTON
My team searched everywhere for
this weapon.

Jacob shows him the photo on his phone of the knife position.

OFFICER NORTON (CONT'D)
Huh. Impressive work, kid.

Luis smiles proudly.

JACOB
Tell me you'll run the prints ASAP?

OFFICER NORTON
Even with the evidence, I gotta get
permission from my chief to cut her
loose. He's off duty... on
Christmas break.

Jacob balks.

JACOB
Come on, Man! She can't spend
Christmas in here.

OFFICER NORTON
I'll do what I can, but it could be
up to twenty-four hours.

JACOB
Can I least see her to explain
what's going on?

Officer Norton shifts uncomfortably.

OFFICER NORTON
It's normally not allowed, but --
I'll make an exception. Just you.

Jacob glances at Luis.

LUIS
Go ahead.

INT. POLICE HALLWAY - NIGHT

Jacob follows him through a hallway. The officer opens the door to a spacious conference room.

OFFICER NORTON
Wait in here. I'll get her.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - NIGHT

Jacob steps into the conference room, glancing around.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - NIGHT

Officer Norton enters the interrogation room, discovering Joss lying unconscious.

OFFICER NORTON
Ms. Dawson? Ms. Dawson wake up!

She doesn't stir. He calls out:

OFFICER NORTON (CONT'D)
CALL A BUS!

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

He runs to the hallway.

OFFICER NORTON
OFFICER SOLA!

Officer Sola rushes up to him.

OFFICER NORTON (CONT'D)
11-41. She's unresponsive!

She nods.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - NIGHT

Jacob hears the commotion. He steps out.

HALLWAY

He runs to Officer Norton.

JACOB
What's wrong?

OFFICER NORTON
She's down. I'm not sure wh--

Jacob pushes past him.

INTERROGATION ROOM

Jacob goes to Joss, checking her pulse.

JACOB
She's diabetic. Didn't anyone
notice her medical bracelet?

OFFICER NORTON
Uh, I guess not.

JACOB
How long has she been in here?

OFFICER NORTON
I think almost an hour.

His brows furrow.

JACOB
(emotional)
Joss, we're getting help. Stay with
me. Please hang on.

Jacob squeezes his eyes closed.

INT. HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM - NIGHT

Jacob's eyes open, bleary and tired. He sits in an empty
waiting room with Luis, who is half-asleep.

Kara and Natalie come running from the elevator. Jacob stands
to hug his sister. Kara can't hold in her emotions.

KARA
(crying)
Is she okay?

JACOB
We don't know her condition yet.

Natalie hands Jacob a small tote bag.

NATALIE
We brought Joss some clothes,
toothpaste, a few other things,
incase she--

JACOB
Thanks, Natalie.

The DOCTOR comes into the lobby to speak with them.

DOCTOR
Are you Joss Dawson's family?

Before he can respond, Kara waves her hand.

KARA
Yes, we're her family.

DOCTOR
She's in better shape than when she first arrived. She had severe hyperglycemia, so we're treating her with fluids, electrolytes, and insulin therapy. She'll be good to go in the morning.

They are all extremely relieved by the news.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)
You may want to invest in getting her an automatic insulin pump.

JACOB
(nodding)
Yes, sir. Thank you.

The doctor heads off to his next patient.

KARA
Oh boy, huge relief!

NATALIE
Thank goodness.

Natalie gently wipes the tears from Kara's eyes.

JACOB
You three should head back. I'll stay here in case there's an update. I'll give Joss a ride back once they release her.

LUIS
You sure? I don't mind chillin'.

KARA
We don't mind staying.

JACOB
I'm sure. You guys should go.

All three give him a group hug.

KARA
We love you.

JACOB
Love you too.

As Jacob watches them walk to the elevator, he catches the attention of a FEMALE NURSE (25), walking by.

JACOB (CONT'D)
Hi! I was wondering if I could
visit Joss Dawson?

The nurse reviews her charts.

NURSE
(flirty)
Technically, visiting hours are
over, but since she's stable, you
can have fifteen minutes. Room 202.

He grins as the nurse points to the far hallway.

JACOB
Fantastic, thanks!

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - NIGHT

Jacob finds ROOM 202. He quietly enters.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Joss sleeps. She's hooked up to IVs and a heart monitor. He quietly approaches her bed and leans down, softly kissing her temple.

He finds a chair, pulling it next to her bed. He sits and exhales. It doesn't take long for him to fall asleep.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

JOSS (O.S.)
Jacob. Wake up.

Jacob sleeps soundly, now covered by a thin blanket. He stirs awake. Joss is smiling at him.

JOSS (CONT'D)
Hey you.

He sits up, wiping his sleepy eyes.

JACOB

Hey you.

JOSS

The nurse told me what happened.

Jacob reaches out and touches her arm.

JACOB

How you feeling?

There's a KNOCK at the door. Officer Norton enters, wearing plain clothes, holding a plate of Christmas cookies and a poinsettia floral display.

OFFICER NORTON

Hi. It's my day off, but I wanted to check on the patient.

Officer Norton hands the gifts to her. She sets them aside.

JOSS

That's extremely thoughtful.

OFFICER NORTON

Beware, my wife made those cookies.

JACOB

Hey Derek.

OFFICER NORTON

Listen, I feel terrible...

JOSS

Please don't blame yourself.

OFFICER NORTON

You should know, we ran the prints. Not only do they match what's on the knife, but Steve's real name is Solomon Mohammadi.

JOSS

Solomon?

OFFICER NORTON

Yeah. He has a lengthy record and a lot of pending charges. I think he'll be locked up for a long time.

JACOB

What about the charges against her?

OFFICER NORTON

Joss, you're not being held on any charges. And you should also know the Feds have been in touch with your attorney. They recovered a significant portion of your money. He'll give you all the details.

Jacob and Joss smile with relief.

JOSS

Gosh, this is all overwhelming... incredible news! Thank you for coming here in person.

OFFICER NORTON

I'm gonna get back to my family. You two have a wonderful Christmas.

JOSS

Merry Christmas.

JACOB

Merry Christmas, Derek.

Officer Norton goes to leave. He pauses before exiting.

OFFICER NORTON

You guys should stop by the Village Market. Best damn pies in the town!

He winks, as he leaves.

JOSS

I can't believe they recovered part of my money. I thought it was gone.

Jacob reaches down to get the tote bag.

JACOB

Almost forgot, the girls left you this overnight tote.

He hands it to Joss. She pulls out an ugly Christmas sweater.

JOSS

(laughing)
So appropriate!

JACOB

(grinning)
You ready to blow this popsicle stand?

JOSS

Yes! I'll get changed.

EXT. HOSPITAL - PARKING LOT - DAY

Joss now changed and tidied up, walks with Jacob to the Jeep. He opens the passenger door for her.

JACOB
Joss? Will you spend Christmas Day
with me?

JOSS
(playful)
Only if we can stop for pie!

They each smile.

INT. JEEP - DAY

He turns in to the Village Market to see an enchanting assembly of various VENDORS hosting their goods and services. Jacob pulls into a parking spot right in front.

JOSS
Quite festive for Christmas
morning!

He turns off the engine.

JACOB
It's this annual thing Carmel does,
where they open the market for the
less fortunate families until noon.
And the local churches donate toys.

JOSS
I love that.

JACOB
You sure you feel up for it?

JOSS
Yep, I feel hunky-dory.

EXT. VILLAGE MARKET - DAY

They exit the Jeep. They wander toward a line of KIDS waiting to take a photo with a SANTA CLAUS in surf shorts. He stands next to a surfboard with a beachy backdrop.

They wander past, over to a small ice-skating rink.

JACOB
You ever skate?

JOSS
 When I was a kid. But these forty-
 year-old ankles aren't having it.

He pauses.

JACOB
 (awkward)
 Could we take a selfie? To show the
 crew back at the camp you're
 feeling better?

JOSS
 (amused)
 Serious? You don't seem like the
 selfie type.

Jacob pulls out his cellphone.

JACOB
 I'm definitely not, Also, can I
 have your digits?

JOSS
 (laughs)
 My digits? That's smooth.

Joss puts her number in his phone. She then holds it in
 selfie position. They smile brightly for the photo.

WOMAN (O.S.)
 Cute couple! I'd say God bless you,
 but it looks like he already has!

They turn to see a plump WOMAN dressed like Santa's elf.

JOSS
 He's not, we are --

JACOB
 (sarcastic)
 -- having an illicit affair so keep
 in on the DL, cool?

Her smile twists into a look of disgust. She marches away.

JACOB (CONT'D)
 Should we get our pie?

Joss covers her mouth with one hand and smacks his arm.

EXT. PIE SHOP - DAY

As they approach the pie shop, a group of CAROLERS sing Christmas songs outside. They enter the shop.

INT. PIE SHOP - DAY

A SHOP WORKER greets them with a smile.

JACOB
Get whatever you like.

JOSS
Do you have any low sugar or sugar free pies?

SHOP WORKER
We have an apple pie low in sugar.

JOSS
That works!

SHOP WORKER
Anything else?

JACOB
Also, a pecan and a pumpkin pie.

SHOP WORKER
Sure. I'll ring you up over here.

Jacob rubs his lean, muscular torso.

JACOB
I'm a pie kinda guy.

Joss smirks as Jacob hands the shop worker cash.

JACOB (CONT'D)
Keep the change.

The shop worker hands him the pies in a bag.

EXT. PIE SHOP - DAY

As they leave the shop, Jacob points to a space designated as a snow arena with real snow made from a machine.

JACOB
Should we?

JOSS
 You sure? I was the pitcher on my
 high school softball team.

JACOB
 Ooh! A challenger.

Jacob trots over to the VENDOR, handing him money and giving him the pie bag for safekeeping.

EXT. SNOW ARENA - DAY

He sprints into the arena, scooping up snow. Joss follows.

JOSS
 No fair! Wait until I have my
 balls!

Jacob halts before throwing his snowballs.

JACOB
 Ready?

Joss quickly scoops up as much snow as she can, then runs. He misses his first snowball, but it's a miss.

She throws her first snowball, tagging him in the arm.

JOSS
 Direct hit!

JACOB
 Ouch! You do have a strong arm.

He tosses another, she ducks just in time. She throws, hitting him in the chest. He scoops up more snow.

JACOB (CONT'D)
 Comin' in hot!

He gives chase, dodging a LITTLE BOY. He takes his shot, the snowball imploding near her collar-bone.

Joss trips over her feet, landing butt down in the wet snow.

JOSS
 (laughing)
 My neck! That was cold.

Jacob runs over, offering a hand. He pulls Joss on her feet. He reaches inside her neckline to pick out the snow.

JACOB
You've got goosebumps.

JOSS
It's chilly! And tickles.

They have a flirty moment, but it ends when the little boy lobs a snowball directly at Jacob.

LITTLE BOY
No old people allowed!

JACOB
Ah! We're under attack!

They run back to the vendor booth to get their pies.

JACOB (CONT'D)
You're fun to hang out with.

JOSS
You mean when I'm not passing out, getting arrested, or laid up in a hospital? I'm a barrel of laughs.

He cracks up.

JACOB
(teasing)
Is that what you write on your dating profile?

The VENDOR hands Jacob the pie bag.

JOSS
That's a good one, Mr. Funny Man!

She flirtatiously locks her arm in his, as they head back to the parking lot.

EXT. VILLAGE MARKET - PARKING LOT - DAY

As they approach the Jeep, parked next to them, a MAN helps a PREGNANT WOMAN from their car. Jacob stares at her belly, his grins fading as he fumbles to open his door.

INT. JEEP - DAY

He climbs in the driver's seat with a vacant expression.

JOSS
You okay?

Aware that Joss is watching him, he clears his throat.

JACOB

That woman. She made me think of Elizabeth.

(takes a moment)

She had catamenial epilepsy so it was too risky to get pregnant.

He pushes back into the seat.

JACOB (CONT'D)

She had one of her seizures on the Golden Gate Bridge. I was supposed to go with her that day...

His eyes change, remembering the tragic event.

FLASHBACK - INT. HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM - DAY

Jacob and Kara sit huddled together, tear-streaked faces, red eyes, endless waiting.

A FEMALE DOCTOR solemnly approaches. Jacob and Kara stand.

DOCTOR

Mr. Leroux, I'm so sorry. We did everything we could do to save her, but the fall caused a major hemorrhage. We couldn't stop the --

Jacob cries out, falling to his knees. Kara WAILS.

JACOB

No, no, not my sweet Lizzy.

The doctor struggles to continue.

DOCTOR

I'm also immensely sorry that we couldn't save the baby.

On his knees, he stares up at her. Tears flowing.

JACOB

The baby? She was pregnant? We weren't.... Oh God...

He falls forward, sobbing, as Kara holds him tightly.

PRESENT DAY - INT. JEEP - DAY

Jacobs exhales, pushing the painful memory away.

JACOB
I'll never know if she even knew.

Tears slide down Joss's cheeks. Jacob wipes the corner of his eye. He clears his throat and starts the engine.

JACOB (CONT'D)
Sorry. Talk about a buzz-kill. We should probably head back.

Joss reaches over to squeeze his arm.

JOSS
Don't be sorry. If we didn't love deeply, we wouldn't grieve deeply.

Jacob straightens up. He puts the Jeep in reverse.

EXT. CAMP CARMEL VALLEY - DAY

They drive up the winding hill in silent contemplation. At the top is Mina, her husband, DAL JUNG (50s), Hana, and her TWIN BOYS (10).

Joss GASPS. Jacob throws the Jeep in park, she jumps out.

JOSS
What are you doing here on Christmas day?

Mina gazes at Jacob.

MINA
Jacob called when you were taken to the hospital. We drove up last night.

JOSS
You guys came all this way?

HANA
Of course! You're family.

MINA
Plus I'm sick of Korean Christmas dinners. No offense, Dal.

Jacob leans out the window.

JACOB
It's settled. You'll all stay for
Christmas!

The twin boys jump up and down in excitement.

MINA
(quietly)
I had to bring the little savages.

Joss laughs as she bends down to hug the twins.

MONTAGE: - VARIOUS LOCATIONS - DAY

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Luis flirts with Hana as they prep the silverware. Behind them, Joss and Mina laugh as they help Rosa cook.

INT. SYCAMORE HALL - DAY

Sitting near the fireplace, the twins eat fistfuls of pumpkin pie in secrecy, straight from the pie tin.

EXT. TREETOP TERRACE - LATER

Everyone gathers at the table eating dinner. Jacob raises a toast, and they clink glasses, smiling and laughing.

The twins try to steal a gallon of eggnog, but Mina gives chase as Joss throws her head back laughing. Jacob ogles her.

INT. OAK ROOM - LATER

After dinner, they have an ugly sweater fashion contest. Each adult walks down the makeshift runway while Luis, Hana, and the twins hold up their fingers to show their scores.

END OF MONTAGE

EXT. OAK ROOM - DAY/SUNSET

Everyone files out of the Oak Room still giggling.

JACOB
I've gotta take mine off, it's
insanely itchy.

As Jacob pulls off his sweater, Joss catches a glimpse of his muscular chest.

The twins run to Mina and Dal. They hug Mina's legs.

TWIN ONE
Mommy and Daddy, can we play Pin
the Nose on the Snowman?

TWIN TWO
Promise we'll be good.

Mina balances her wine glass as she eyes Hana.

MINA
Only if your sister stays with you.

HANA
That's fine, but you'll owe me.

The twins run off with Hana trailing behind.

MINA
They're not always the Shining
Twins, only most of the time.

The adults laugh.

JACOB
Luis and I are going to set up the
projector on the celebration lawn.

KARA
We'll help Rosa clean up.

JACOB
Hey Joss, do you mind coming down
in a few minutes? I want to show
you something.

Joss blushes for being singled out.

JOSS
Sure.

Jacob smiles as him and Luis head off. Joss and the others all walk back to the treetop terrace.

EXT. PATH - SUNSET

MINA
 (teasing)
 I bet he wants to show you
 something.

Joss narrows her eyes.

JOSS
 Oh, stop that.

MINA
 What? I can't be the only one who
 can see the sparks between you two.
 Anyone else notice?

Kara and Natalie raise their hands. Dal keeps his down.

MINA (CONT'D)
 Dal! Are you blind?

DAL
 (defensive)
 What? I don't feel right about
 putting Joss on the spot.

JOSS
 Thank you, Dal.

Mina gets close to Joss, still clutching her wine.

MINA
 I thought we were going to lose
 you. It scared the hell out of me!

JOSS
 Oh lovey, I'm okay now.

Mina goes in for a hug, spilling red wine all over her.

MINA
 Boo! I spilled on your ugly
 sweater!

JOSS
 (laughing)
 I needed to change anyway.

MINA
 (boozy)
 I've had way too much to drink.

Dal grabs Mina's free hand.

DAL
 Come on. Let's have you sober up
 before we head out.

The group splits up. Joss heads back to her cabin.

EXT. DIRECTOR'S CABIN - SUNSET

Joss steps out with a fresh change of clothes, wearing a sexy V-neck sweater and black leggings. Walter Lee is on a leash.

EXT. PATH - SUNSET

Joss walks the path to the celebration lawn as the sun sets. She marvels at the bright colors in the sky.

EXT. CELEBRATION LAWN - SUNSET/NIGHT

The men have set up a large projector screen, surrounded by blankets and big pillows. Dozens of flameless tea candles and twinkle lights illuminate the sitting area.

JOSS
 You guys! This is amazeballs!

She unclips Walter Lee's leash so he can play with Tinsel.

LUIS
 I'm gonna go see how Hana is doing.

Luis winks at her with a cheesy grin before he jogs away.

JACOB
 Would you like to sit?

Joss sits down on the blanket.

JACOB (CONT'D)
 For today's viewing, we have
 Scrooged or The Grinch!

He reveals the two DVDs from behind his back.

JOSS
 Are you trying to hint that I'm
 mean and grinchy?

JACOB
 (laughing)
 Not at all! A little birdy said
 you're not fond of holidays.
 (MORE)

JACOB (CONT'D)
(before she can respond)
I also got you this.

He sits next to her, revealing a Christmas stocking.

JOSS
A gift? But I thought --

JACOB
It's a stocking stuffer.

Joss pulls out a wrapped box and her fingers tear it open.

JOSS
Oh my! An automatic insulin pump!

JACOB
That one is the tubeless kind. You
wear the little pod and it will
monitor your glucose levels --

Joss can't help herself, she leans in, kissing him mid-speech. He eagerly kisses her back slow and tender. Joss pulls away. She looks back to the gift.

JOSS
These are expensive.

JACOB
Truth is, the ER doctor suggested
it. I want you to be healthy and
get better.

Her enthusiasm deflates. She gazes at him.

JOSS
Being diabetic, I can't get better.
It's a chronic, life-long disease.

He tries to recover.

JACOB
I know, sorry... I'm nervous... I
said it wrong.

He clenches his jaw.

JACOB (CONT'D)
Joss, I accidentally fell in lo--

Her eyes go wide. She quickly moves her fingers to his lips.

JOSS
 You can't say the L word, we've
 only known each other a few --

TWIN ONE (O.S.)
 Yeet! We're looking for
 Santa's Reindeer!

TWIN TWO (O.S.)
 You can't catch us!

The twins come running down the hill with Hana and Luis chasing after them. They catch up, each grabbing a twin.

HANA
 I'm so sorry, they've had too much
 sugar!

They take the squirmy kids back up the hill.

JACOB
 (nervous)
 How about I grab some drinks? Hot
 chocolate or red wine?

Joss is still shocked by his declaration.

JOSS
 Um, red wine please.

Jacob hops up.

JACOB
 Be right back!

To kill time, Joss inserts Scrooged in the DVD player, but she can't figure out how turn on the sound. She watches in silence as the two dogs lie down close to her.

A few moments later, Jacob returns carrying two large mugs. He hands one to Joss.

JOSS
 Wine in a mug, totally my style.

They CLINK their mugs together. Joss takes a drink.

JACOB
 I think your friends are heading
 out. I told them they could stay
 another night.

JOSS
 Mina probably wants to get the kids
 back home.

He sits next to her. He takes a drink of wine.

JACOB

I can get your car repaired, which should only take a day or so.

Joss stares into his eyes.

JACOB (CONT'D)

I want you to stay for as long as you'd like. The truth is, as deeply as I've been mourning my wife for the past five years, I've also been terribly lonely. When I'm with you I can feel my heart beating again. Not only beating, but almost pounding through my chest.

He gently takes her hand, placing it over his heart.

JACOB (CONT'D)

Feel that?

JOSS

These past few weeks have been fantastic, but I don't want to rush this and make the same mistakes.

JACOB

I'm not him. I'm not Steve, or Solomon.

JOSS

I know.

Jacob slowly releases her hand.

JACOB

But you're not interested in us, in giving this a shot?

Before Joss can respond, Mina yells.

MINA (O.S.)

Hey cuties, we're leaving!

They turn to see her waving. Jacob stands, helping her up. They slowly walk over to Mina. Walter Lee trails behind.

JOSS

I think it's best I catch a ride with them... and I'll come back soon for my car.

JACOB
 (pleading eyes)
 Please stay. It's Christmas.

Joss places her hand on his cheek. He leans in to it.

EXT. PAVED ROAD - NIGHT

Dal and Hana usher the sleepy twins to a minivan.

DAL
 Hey Jacob, thanks for a fantastic
 time. You throw a great party!

Dal goes to buckle the kids. Mina gives Jacob a big hug.

MINA
 (flirty)
 You, sir, have a really firm chest.
 Take care of this one for me.

JOSS
 Do you think me and Walter Lee can
 hitch a ride with you guys?

MINA
 (surprised)
 Of course.

JOSS
 I'll be in touch.

He nods.

JACOB
 You guys drive safe.

Joss takes Walter Lee, and they pile in the minivan. Dal jumps into the driver's seat. Jacob watches as they drive away.

EXT. CELEBRATION LAWN - NIGHT

He somberly returns to the celebration lawn. He reaches Tinsel, who is resting on his side. He feigns a knife to his heart and drops to his knees, next to his dog.

JACOB
 Don't ever fall in love.

Jacob reaches out to stroke the dogs soft ears. His phone CHIMES. It's a text from Joss. It reads, *Looking for influencers?* Jacob is baffled.

Tinsel abruptly perks up.

JOSS (O.S.)
Hey you!

Jacob sits up upright, he sees Joss and Walter Lee approach.

JACOB
(guarded)
Did you forget something?

She walks in front of the movie projector.

JOSS
Only all my luggage!

JACOB
(unguarded)
Well, that's kind of important.

JOSS
That's another thing about me.
Besides being chronically ill, I'm
chronically forgetful.

She bends down to his level, close to his face.

JOSS (CONT'D)
Forgot something else.

Joss leans in, as they taste each other's shared breath, their lips gently graze. She tilts her head, letting her mouth connect with his. Their tongues explore. She lowers her body on top of his, hearts pounding until they finally part.

JACOB
(besotted)
Joss, that was --

JOSS
-- perfection.

JACOB
If I can't say the L word, can I
say I'm madly infatuated with you?

Joss leans in, speaking seductively.

JOSS
I'm infatuated with you too, Mr.
Leroux. You silver-haired fox.

He tenderly kisses different parts of her face.

KARA (O.S.)
Hey, you two! Get a room!

Kara, Natalie, Luis, walk toward them. Luis holds his guitar,
and Kara has a bottle of tequila with a tray of shot glasses.

Smiling, they both rise to their feet.

LUIS
It's time for some Puerto Rican
holiday cheer!

Kara and Natalie pour tequila. The adults take a shot
together as Luis strums his guitar, singing a popular
Christmas song.

Kara strolls over to Jacob and Joss.

KARA
(tipsy)
I love seeing you together. It
makes me insanely euphoric.

JACOB
Sis, I'm not going to sell the
camp. I respect your choice.

Kara SQUEALS as she jumps up and down. Natalie comes to pull
her away, and they kiss to celebrate.

Jacob offers his hand out to Joss.

JACOB (CONT'D)
May I have this dance?

She takes his hand, he pulls her close to slow dance.

JACOB (CONT'D)
What did your text mean, looking
for influencers?

JOSS
Influencers? Ugh, auto-correct. I
meant *investors*!

Jacob chuckles.

JOSS (CONT'D)
I believe in the same vision Kara
has. I see everything this camp can
be with the proper repairs that it
needs to get there.

JACOB
(teasing)
I'll take it into consideration...
if, I can smooch the investor.

Joss nods as he goes in for a kiss. Walter Lee and Tinsel
feel the good vibes. They get the zoomies. Joss is so happy,
she spontaneously YELLS.

JOSS
MERRY CHRISTMAS EVERYONE!

ENTIRE GROUP
MERRY CHRISTMAS!

Jacob spins her around, then bends her back in a dip.

JOSS
Are you French? Because Eiffel for
you!

He laughs as he pulls her upright.

JACOB
Eiffel for you too.

They kiss passionately.

FADE TO BLACK