FADE IN:

EXT. ST. AUGUSTINE’S - OLD SCARY FIELD

SUPER DECEMBER 1st 2008

Two DERELICT HOUSES stand side-by-side.

MOIRA VANISH, 33, with the rustic elegance of a cowgirl, catches note of THE MAN, a youthful 70s.

His white beard dresses his chin in magnificence. He’s calling her in, silently, with his hands.

MOIRA
I don’t think so. I’ve heard that people going in there, come out changed.

At once, these houses are blinking to become:

EXT./INT. POSH OFFICE

Moira looks joyful and enters. In seconds- The Man SLIDES OVER A CONTRACT on an elaborate desk.

THE MAN
Just sign right here. And here. And here. And there. And here...

And Moira complies, quite happily.

MOIRA
Wow! You’re buying my script!

She exits the Posh Office, but really she exits:

THE DERELICT HOUSE ON THE RIGHT

EXT. ST. AUGUSTINE’S - OLD SCARY FIELD - PRESENT DAY

A TELEVISION REPORTER speaks directly.

TELEVISION REPORTER
I’m standing outside of St. Augustine’s North where Moira Vanish was last reported seen entering one of the two houses reported as haunted.
SUPER: NORTHERN BRITISH COLUMBIA - CANADA

INT. CABIN

A large open room serves as kitchen and living room with an old wood stove and a black iron kettle boiling upon it.

A RADIO broadcast’s the Television Reporter:

    TELEVISION REPORTER O.S.
    Authorities are still investigating, but time is starting to make her return look less likely. It’s been a year today and people are still wondering. What happened to Moira?

Moira sits at her desk near a stuffed WOLVERINE hanging in the corner near a gun rack. She’s typing at an old upright typewriter, but when she hears this, she looks up, confused.

    MOIRA
    I’m here. What are they talking about?

The broadcast jumps to DJ speak then a Christmas song. Back to the typing:

THE MAGIC OF LETTERS

Now Moira speaks directly to you, the Someone, who enquires.

    SOMEONE O.S.
    What are you doing?

    MOIRA
    I’m writing for a movie.

    SOMEONE O.S.
    Why on an old typewriter?

    MOIRA
    Cause I like old stuff; it’s nostalgic. And, because I need money to build a transition house...

Every time she says, “transition”, there’s a loud clap of thunder. Strange. Moira only sees SNOW FALLING.
MOIRA
...for people in—well, in transition. Everyone’s always in transition; so that’s pretty important I think.

Moira pulls out a sketch from her desk and holds it up. Looks like a charming Bed and Breakfast.

MOIRA
See?

SOMEONE O.S.
Do you know how many people have the same kind of crazy notions? I think you might be wasting your time.

Moira looks at the stuffed wolverine hanging in the corner above her desk.

MOIRA
What do you think wolvy?

Moira looks at you seriously, and says:

MOIRA
He says “time is an illusion”. And then she smiles like she’s eaten chocolate.

SOMEONE O.S.
Time is suspicious to say the least.

Moira jumps up.

MOIRA
I need supplies!

She grabs her list and pushes you out the door into the snow covered forest.

Before she shuts the door, she notices a large Raven taking flight from the branch of an evergreen. She closes the door. And a new door opens out—

SUPER: VIRTUAL VANCOUVER
EXT. POSH OFFICE

Where she exits and does the macarena to:

MOIRA
I-I-I-I-I gotta contract...

FADE IN:

SUPER: THE MAGIC OF LETTERS - A CHRISTMAS STORY
Clink-clink-clink typewritten on the screen.

EXT. VIRTUAL VANCOUVER - MAIN STREET - DAY

This is where the action is, a long main street in Simply Vancouver dedicated to Christmas tradition.

Suddenly, as always happens, this wintry scape parts in the middle like the Red Sea and a warm golden path exists right down the center between the snow covered shoppers.

This path – it’s bathed in sunshine and it must be summertime because this man-in-the-middle, he’s walking without a shirt.

The Man from earlier approaches up the street. He’s vigorous and his steps are forthright. Hard to know what to look at, the scenery or him, but he captures us with his voice-

THE MAN
Hi! I’m the-

He waves his hand across his chest as if to reveal something, but NOTHING’S there except his chest. THE WOMAN, 70s, jumps into frame, handing him a T-shirt.

THE WOMAN
Whoops. Just about forgot.

The Man smiles and puts on the T-shirt; thus announcing proudly:

THE MAN
I’m the-

His hands direct our attention to the name on his shirt:
NARRATOR

THE WOMAN
He’s The Narrator.

THE MAN
You stole my line!

The woman shrugs then plays with her feathered hat.

THE WOMAN
Tell ‘em who you are.

THE MAN
Not yet, this isn’t my story.

The Woman brushes up against him.

THE WOMAN
But I like your story.

The Man snaps his fingers and presto: Sparkles and-

THE MAN
This is a story about:

Materializing on screen is Moira and she’s hanging like a marionette from strings.

MOIRA
Hey get me down from here. This wasn’t the way I wrote it.

The Man, points like Uncle Sam. He even has a SHINY RING with a great SILVER ‘S’, glinting starlight in all directions.

THE MAN
You signed the contract.

MOIRA
But this is messing with my plans.

THE MAN
I have a better plan.

Moira stops fighting the strings and hangs limply.

THE MAN
Achem, Moira is thankful because of everything that’s happened to her.

(MORE)
Moira gives a grievous “yes” shrug.

MOIRA
Hey! Are you gonna introduce everyone?! This could be long and I need a drink.

The Woman steps in with a pair of scissors to cut the marionette strings.

THE MAN
Don’t cut her down yet. Hang on...

The Man walks out of frame.

THE WOMAN
Hey where are you going?

THE MAN
Have to wee-wee. Keep ‘er occupied.

The woman smiles wickedly, holding up the scissors and clipping them together. She looks at us.

THE WOMAN
Snip-snip.

Moira looks up.

MOIRA
I know it all ready, fall down go boom right?

Moira falls. She FAAAAALLLLLS... all the way into the headquarters of Simplyscripts.

SIMPLYSCRIPTS - HEADQUARTERS

KERPLUNK!!! Flat on her keister.

THE STRANGER O.S
I’m afraid you’ve fallin’ for one of the oldest tricks in the book.

MOIRA
Huh?

THE STRANGER appears, extending a warm hand. He’s 30s with wavy light brown hair.
STRANGER
Here let me give you a hand up.

MOIRA
What trick? ...

...looking around the room, FILLED WITH COMPUTERS and bedazzled for Christmas.

STRANGER
You went into one of the haunted houses on that vacant lot of St. Augustine’s didn’t you?

MOIRA
No I didn’t.

STRANGER
Yes you did.

MOIRA
No I didn’t.

STRANGER
No you didn’t.

MOIRA
Yes I did.

Moira’s face is now wrung with confusion.

MOIRA
You tricked me!

STRANGER
Correct, now. Yes. You. Did!!!

He lifts a PICTURE from his pocket. Yip, she’s entering.

STRANGER
You thought you were entering a Posh Office. You thought you were selling your script. You thought a lot of things, but you thought wrong.

MOIRA
What’s going on?
The Man you sold your script to is an entity that changes people and things and he gives them a bad virus. It causes Writer-wreckadeliosis. Very serious. Turn around, and things have changed.

Moira’s seriously frightened.

MOIRA
Writer-wrecka-deliouses!!! It’s serious?

MOIRA
But why? Why me?

STRANGER
Something to do with your wanting to build a transition house...

Thunder clap again.

STRANGER
It’s just the effects manager. He’s a little over zealous. ...
Transition, obviously, means change of passage and I’m afraid that your dream drew you inside the Haunted House and invoked The Man and the virus.

MOIRA
Is it curable?

STRANGER
It is, but you’ll first have to remember who you are.

MOIRA
Oh my gawd, who am I?!

STRANGER
You’re Moira Vanish formerly of Windy Point who’s now an actress playing Moira who is a grief counsellor of 7471 Clearview Drive. You live with your husband, Joseph, who’s a professional party planner and you want to move out of your stuffy old office. Confusing huh.
MOIRA
But I don’t wanna be a grief counselor. Why can’t Joseph be a grief counsellor and I be the party planner? Wait, who’s Joseph?

STRANGER
Your husband.

MOIRA
Am I cured? I mean, you told me who I am.

STRANGER
Not so easy. You can’t be told. You have to live it to remember it.
Moira falls down on her knees.

MOIRA
Please, there must be another way to get rid of this. Anything. Amoxicillin?

STRANGER
Sorry.

Moira stands back up.

MOIRA
(tapping her head)
Something stronger. Vancomycin?

STRANGER
Nope. Virus is resistant.

Moira’s eyes lighten as she thinks she’s got it.

MOIRA
OK, let’s go the herbal route. Pcnogenal. Co-enzyme Q 10...

Successive “no” nods from the Stranger.

MOIRA
Colloidal Silver? Oil of Oregeno! Superoxide dismutase?

No-no-no nods.

MOIRA
The old standby- ultra high doses of vitamin C?
(MORE)
MOIRA (CONT'D)
For the love of Santa Clause, there must be SOME other way to get rid of Writer-wreckadelioses

STRANGER
Let’s see... Any other way than Grief Counsellor...

The Stranger crunches some numbers.

STRANGER
5x5x5=125- Nope, I don’t see any other way.

The Stranger walks away.

MOIRA
Hey wait! Don’t leave me here! I don’t know my way around. What’s my address? Where’s my office?

STRANGER O.S.
You’ll figure it out. Don’t worry.

Leaving Moira to recognize, It was all a half lie or a half truth, depending how you look at it, ‘cause if you take a step back,

Things have changed: The whole marionette bit was all a movie on a computer screen and-

The BACKS of The Man and The Woman exist next to one another, seated in front of that same computer screen. The Man, AKA, The Narrator, has just hit “pause”.

THE MAN
I never put in the part of you cutting her down.

THE WOMAN
I don’t like seeing her in limbo. She needed to get cut down so I did the edit when you went for wee-wee.

An “oh-oh” smile rises on The Woman’s face as she sees: The Moira we’ve come to know as a marionette.

THE WOMAN
What a tangled web we weave when we practice to dece- December! Happy first of December! Fa-la-la! Sisboomb- bah!

The Woman does a bit of a cheerleader thing.
MOIRA
Quit being dodgy. Why are you changing what I wrote?

THE WOMAN
We were just trying to “really live it” you know?

MOIRA
But I’m playing Moira and I need to represent her in the utmost truth.

THE MAN
You will—you will. Just give us some time.

MOIRA
If the REAL MOIRA shows up on Simply and we do a crappy job of her story, how will I feel? I’m representing her. It wouldn’t be right if we make a mockery of her life.

THE WOMAN
We won’t do that Moira, er, Moira the actress playing Moira. Really.

Moira suddenly looks confused.

MOIRA
Hey wait a minute. I am Moira. That guy, he went thata way and he said I have to remember it and then I’ll be cured and I can go back to the cabin and live happily ever after.

THE WOMAN
I heard him and he didn’t say that.

MOIRA
OK I paraphrased, but that’s the gist. I am Moira, the actress playing the real Moira who’s a grief counsellor or the other way around, I’m not sure.

The Woman gives a tsk-tsk; turns to The Man and whispers:

THE WOMAN
Do you think she’s a little, you know, “touched”?
THE MAN
There is a phenomenon that happens sometimes where actors “turn into” those characters they play...

MOIRA
I heard that. You guys don’t get it do you? This is a virtual world!

THE MAN
Oh well of course! You’ve got something there. Virtual can be very real.

MOIRA
I know and I’m just getting my bearings. I’m not good at virtual. I’ve never even played World of Warcraft. (proudly) I do my typing on an Underwood #5 vintage upright typewriter.

The Woman walks to Moira, puts her arm around her.

THE WOMAN
OK, you need to get rid of this virus. You need to remember who you are in this virtual world. Maybe we can help.

Moira brightens.

MOIRA
Really?

THE WOMAN
Sure. After all it is our fault that you’re here, but we never meant anything by it. The Narrator here, achem, The Man, MY MAN, needed an actress and there you were, right out there on the street outside of St. Augustine’s.

MOIRA
I mean, all I did was sign a contract.

THE MAN
I know. Contracts, they get people every time. Sorry.
BELLA ROSEMOND, (6) enters the computer room of Simply. Moira grabs Bella, an overprotective stir.

    MOIRA
    Don’t mess with Isabel because she’s lost her brother and been through enough.

Bella holds up a copy of the script and points.

    BELLA
    Says here that my name’s Bella.

    MOIRA
    For crying out loud you changed her name?!

    THE MAN
    It was easier to pronounce and besides, everyone needs a nickname don’t they?

    FLASH TO:

INT. FREEMONT ELEMENTARY

MRS. FELIX chases down Bella, who has once again, stolen out of class and is wandering the halls. Mrs. Felix is middle aged with red curly hair and stout as a tea pot.

    MRS. FELIX
    Bella you really must stop wandering the halls. Come back to class.

INT. CABIN

Moira types at her typewriter as before.

    SOMEONE O.S.
    Brought the supplies. How’s it going?

    MOIRA
    They’re changing it.

Someone’s hands place down a box of tissues and scads of scads of Christmas stuff. Christmas explosion.

    SOMEONE O.S.
    Who’s changing what?
Moira bawls, opens the box, and pulls out a tissue.

MOIRA
The Man and The Woman. And the people outside, they think I’ve vanished... And I’m worried for Bella.

SOMEONE O.S.
Who’s Bella?

MOIRA
She’s a little girl who just lost her brother before Christmas and she keeps wandering the halls and doesn’t want to do her school work.

SOMEONE O.S.
Maybe you can help her.

Moira dries her eyes.

MOIRA
Yeah. Yeah maybe I can.

EXT./INT. FREEMONT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - HALLS

SUPER: TUESDAY DECEMBER 1ST - 2009

Children deck the halls under the guidance of their teachers. Everyone’s happy, ‘cept one who stands, motionless, watching. Our Bella. She studies the affairs with an indifference.

Mrs. Felix spots her, walks into Bella’s lonely space and kneels down.

MRS. FELIX
Oh Bella. Won’t you please join in?

No answer.

MRS. FELIX
Well, I’ll put this one up for you, OK?

Mrs. Felix hangs a Santa wreath on the wall; then claps her hands to get attention from the others.
MRS. FELIX

Everyone, bring your decorations back into the classroom it’s just about lunch time.

Everyone goes back into class except Bella. Bella wanders the halls aimlessly.

INT. MRS. FELIX’S CLASSROOM

Mrs. Felix tries to gain order as she notices Bella’s-

EMPTY DESK.

As She searches the room.

MRS. FELIX

Bella?

She exits the classroom.

HALLWAY 1

Mrs. Felix looks both ways. No Bella. She proceeds in one direction and heads around a corner.

HALLWAY 2

There’s Bella. At the far end of this hallway, staring out THE WINDOW

Mrs. Felix watches Bella quietly for a moment. Bella watches snowflakes falling to the ground outside.

A decorated Christmas tree is her view. A raven perches upon one of its branches.

Mrs. Felix proceeds toward Bella; looks outside the window along with her.

MRS. FELIX

Bella, could you please stop wandering the halls? You really do need to be in class and work and study and learn like everyone else. I can’t keep giving you preferential treatment. I mean, special privileges.
Bella turns away from the window, stares for a moment.

BELLA
Mrs. Felix, please leave me alone.
She turns back to the window.

Mrs. Felix puts a hand upon her shoulder.

The raven flies off the branch. The branch sways.

INT. VICE PRINCIPAL’S OFFICE – LATER

The VP is GLENDA TAVISH, 40s. She arises from her desk. She appears as a strictress, with her hair tied up tight in a roll on the top of her head.

GLENDA
Ah Felly, this just adds to my glorious morn. This is exactly why I’m breaking up with my boyfriend. He thinks I should quit, but this is where I belong. With the kids.

MRS. FELIX
And kids like Bella need us.

GLENDA
Exactly.

Eyeing the ceiling for help, Glenda turns suddenly.

GLENDA
Why didn’t I think of it before.

She writes down a name and number. MOIRA VANISH 555-2238

GLENDA
She’s a good friend of mine and she’s a grief counselor. Maybe she can help. Look, our Principal’s away until next week, and I’ve gotta get my stuff moved out of my boyfriend’s place. I’m putting you in charge for the day tomorrow. Call up a sub for your class.

Glenda rushes out, but stops for a moment to turn back.

GLENDA
Oh, and tell Moira we can start meeting for coffee again like the good ole days.

(MORE)
GLENDA (CONT'D)
Jerk Off Jeremiah and I are through
and I won’t be frying him anymore
of his morning eggs.

Glenda clicks away, leaving Mrs. Felix, AKA- Felly in wonder.

INT. MOIRA’S OFFICE

Moira polishes the placard. GRIEF COUNSELLOR. Phone rings.

INTERCUT:

INT. MZ. MCADAMS’ HOUSE

MZ MCADAMS, 60s, curly top, rushes around frantic, ringing
the bells in her bell collection. And she’s repeating:

MZ. MCADAMS
Teacher says, “Every time a bell
rings an angel gets its wings-t”...

Moira begins pacing too.

MOIRA
Mz. McAdams, try and stay calm.
These episodes. You know they
always pass.

MZ. MCADAMS
But I really NEED you to come over
right now.

Moira reaches for her coat.

INT. MRS. FELIX’S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT TIME

Mrs. Felix stands in her living room, dialing the phone.

MRS. FELIX
Where are you Mrs. Vanish? Have you
vanished off the planet? Living up
to your name or what?

INT. SIMPLYSCRIPTS HEADQUARTERS

Moira freaks. She shakes The Man.

MOIRA
Yeah! Where am I?
THE MAN
I think we have a little problem.

MOIRA
What kind of a problem?

THE MAN
You don’t wanna know.

MOIRA
Yeees, I wanna know.

THE MAN
No you don’t.

MOIRA
Yes I do.

THE MAN
No you don’t.

MOIRA
Yes! I DO!

THE MAN
Yes you do.

Moira just about says it. “No”– She shakes her head suddenly.

MOIRA
Ah-ah-ah-ah. You’re not going to fool me again with that one.

THE WOMAN
Might as well tell her.

THE MAN
You see... there’s a little bit of danger in Virtual Reality.

MOIRA
I know– I know. Getting Writerwrecka–

THE MAN
No actually something a little more serious.

MOIRA
What could be more serious than that?
THE MAN
You see, The Virtual World is a precursor to The Spiritual world and it’s kind of a training ground you might call it... so ee-i-i-en-

THE STRANGER O.S
G. O. BINGO. You’re in The Spiritual!

All three go: “What”?!?

The Stranger flaps his arms and prances around silly-like.

THE STRANGER
The whole thing gets rather weird, but when you cross over the plains, you enter very changeable territories.

Bella claps her hands.

BELLA
Scary, but fun.

THE STRANGER
I’m really not supposed to tell you ahead of time, but I’ll bend the rules: get yourself a good Kabbalah group and start studying.

BELLA
Oh I know that.

MOIRA
How do you know? You’re only six.

BELLA
Your husband told me about it. It’s a spiritual study. Good when you need more real reality.

Moira, trying to think, crinkles her brow.

MOIRA

BELLA
And he’s got a baker baking a special cake for one of his clients who study it. A BIG party’s planned.
MOIRA
 Really? I love parties!

The Man puts his arm around Moira.

THE MAN
 See? It’s not so bad.

Moira looks up, thinking optimistic, but then drops a frown.

MOIRA
 But I’m a grief counsellor!

THE MAN
 Not exactly.

A “whuh” look.

THE MAN
 You’re a Catholic grief counsellor.

THE WOMAN
 That’s right! And Joseph’s Jewish. How ‘bout that eh?

The Stranger shrugs and turns his palms up.

EXT. VIRTUAL VANCOUVER – NIGHT TIME

Swishing around like superman,

Here is a gorgeous JEWISH SYNAGOGUE, placard reads: SIMPLYJEWISH.

And there is a gorgeous CATHOLIC CHURCH, placard reads: SIMPLYCATHOLIC.

And down the street further is a quaint little coffee shop.

You might have guessed: Simplycoffee, but you’re wrong. Sign says: ARISTOCRATIC COFFEE HOUSE, so there.

EXT. RUMLEY’S BAKERY

There she is again: Moira Vanish, the writer, the actress, the grief counsellor.

She exits the coffee shop into the Christmas wonderland, where shoppers busily do their thing with bags and packages.
Her cell rings; she retrieves it while heading under the awning cover of Rumley’s Bakery and Confections.

Before answering she notices—

INT. BAKING WINDOW

The warm light inside betrays the cold and frosty outdoors. BAKING YOU A MERRY CHRISTMAS painted on the glass.

RUMLEY BRINKS, 30, heavy set, in the process of assembling what looks to be the beginnings of a clumsy FIVE TIERED CAKE.

Moira waves “hello” in a greeting of familiarity. Rumley waves back with a big jovial smile. He returns to his work, with the utmost seriousness. Moira answers her phone.

INTERCUT:

INT. MRS. FELIX’S HOUSE – LIVING ROOM

Mrs. Felix holds a Christmas stuffed animal.

MRS. FELIX
Is this Moira Vanish?

EXT. RUMLEY’S BAKERY

Moira covers one ear to hear better.

MOIRA
Yes, this is me.

MRS. FELIX
You’re a hard one to get a hold of.

MOIRA
I only learned awhile ago my phone had gotten clicked off.

MRS. FELIX
How did we ever manage without cell phones. Well Mrs. Vanish...

MOIRA
No need for formality.
MRS. FELIX
Moira, you can just call my Felly. I’m a teacher at Freemont Elementary and our Vice Principal says she knows you and to give you a call. She would have called you herself, but she’s just broken up with her boyfriend and she’s moving out and left me to fly the plane.

MOIRA
Glenda? Breaking up with Jeremiah?!

MRS. FELIX
Yeah, well, I have to say I saw it coming. So you can help?

MOIRA
Help Glenda move? Sure.

MRS. FELIX
No, sorry I mean she said that since you’re a grief counsellor, you might be able to help a little girl we have at our school who just lost her brother. I went with them both yesterday to the grave. It was hard...

FLASH TO:

EXT. SIMPLY GRAVEYARD – YESTERDAY
Bella, ALICE ROSEMOND, 30s, and Mrs. Felix step to the grave:

JAKE ROSEMOND BORN NOVEMBER 16, 1999 DIED NOVEMBER 23, 2009
Bella rests a miniature hockey stick. Alice rests flowers. Mrs. Felix places a wreath.

BACK TO:

EXT. RUMLEY’S BAKERY
Moira notices the snow coming down harder.

MOIRA
I’m close to the Aristocratic right now.

(MORE)
EXT. CHRISTMAS FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS

Bella and her mother, Alice, walk among various Christmas Trees and exhibits. Very beautiful, but things aren’t right.

BELLA
I don’t like Christmas anymore. Let’s go home.

ALICE
Look at this one. It’s beautiful!

BELLA
Why did you divorce Daddy?

ALICE
Because Daddy didn’t want to be a daddy.

BELLA
What do you mean?

ALICE
He wanted other things more than us. And when he didn’t come home at nights anymore, I knew that it was the right thing.

BELLA
Oh. I hope Grandma comes to our house for Christmas. Then it won’t be so lonely.

ALICE
I’m trying to talk her into it.

BELLA
Are we going to buy Jake a Christmas present?

Alice can’t comprehend what to say, but—

ALICE
We can look for something.

Carollers walk past singing.
INT. ARISTOCRATIC COFFEE SHOP - LATER

Moira and Mrs. Felix sit at a booth together drinking coffee.

MRS. FELIX
I’m so sorry to call you in off hours, but I’m at a loss.

MOIRA
Not a problem, I get a lot of calls more often than you can imagine, and all from one person.

Mrs. Felix is about to question, but Moira shakes her off.

MOIRA
Never mind. It’s a long story. Anyways, How’d you get the name Felly?

MRS. FELIX
Actually, my name is Gertrude, but I really don’t like that name. Felly’s close to Felix and I figure, everybody’s gotta have a nickname right?

Moira stirs her coffee.

MOIRA
Mooooiiiraaaa! How do ya get a nickname from that?

MRS. FELIX
You could go with your last name like me and have it Vanny.

MOIRA
Sounds too much like Fanny. I think I’ll stick with what I’ve got.

The WAITRESS sets down a plate of french fries.

MRS. FELIX
My weakness. Sure you don’t want?

MOIRA
No, I’m meeting my husband for supper at the Redstone.

Mrs. Felix’s eyes bug out.
MRS. FELIX
The Redstone! Isn’t that the place with all the big fuss about reservations? And they don’t even have prices on the menu?

FLASH TO:

EXT./INT. REDSTONE - FINE DINING ESTABLISHMENT

A stuffy looking host with a too tight tie looks down upon the two poor potential DINERS, 20s- fresh from high school. He brushes the air like imaginary lint exists.

HOST
No reservations, no dice.

BACK TO:

INT. ARISTOCRATIC COFFEE SHOP

MOIRA
That’s the place.

MRS. FELIX
All of a sudden these fries don’t taste so good.

She shoves the plate away. Retrieves something from her purse—a PICTURE of Bella and Jake when Jake was still alive. She hands it across to Moira.

MOIRA
Ah, he was adorable. How’s Bella’s mother handling it?

MRS. FELIX
Well during parent-teacher interviews, she seemed to just try and put on a happy face.

MOIRA
People handle their grief differently. That’s one way.

Mrs. Felix changes her mind and eats a fry. Moira hands the picture back. Moira stares questioningly at the french fries. Mrs. Felix notices. Moves the plate in the middle.

MRS. FELIX
Sure you don’t want?
MOIRA
Maybe just a few.

She blobs the ketchup. Dips and eats.

MOIRA
Can you give me some insight into Jake? Might help me.

MRS. FELIX
Well, he was really very playful. Didn’t like working, would steal out and wander the halls. I remember once...

FLASHBACK:

INT. FREEMONT ELEMENTARY - FOYER - COAT ROOM

Bella and the posthumous JAKE ROSEMOND, 10, a mischievous glint in his eye attempts to put on yet another coat, turning himself into a very fatly coated boy.

Bella laughs at the sight. So do the others.

JAKE ROSEMOND
I’m the Pillsbury coat monster.

He plunks awkwardly into THREE TEN YEAR OLDS.

Mrs. Felix, suppressing a smile.

MRS. FELIX
Give back their coats.

INT. ARISTOCRATIC COFFEE SHOP

Moira scribbles down a date and time.

MOIRA
Give this to Mrs. Rosemond. As a suggestion, that is. I know it sounds weird, but some people react very hostile towards people in my profession.

Moira notices the time on the clock above the counter.
MOIRA
I’d better be off. The Redstone is calling me. Nice meeting you, Felly. I’ll do my best with Bella.

EXT. MAIN STREET

She’s away in a hurry. When from behind her:

RABBI O.S.
Moira!

RABBI VERDI, 40s, looks burnt out, but he conjures what energy he has left and races after incognizant Moira.

RABBI VERDI
Moira!

Moira turns, she smiles upon seeing him.

MOIRA
Oh hi Rabbi-dabby. I’m late to meet Joseph.

RABBI VERDI
Where is that guy? I’ve been trying to get a hold of him all day long.

MOIRA
His phone probably got clicked off. My phone does that in my purse all the time. Gets jiggled around.

RABBI VERDI
(pointing at her purse)
You’ve got an excuse with that suitcase.

Moira gives a pout.

RABBI VERDI
Sorry. But he’s got pockets.

MOIRA
Actually, he always stuffs his phone in his suitcase.

FLASH TO:
EXT. FRASER STREET

JOSEPH VANISH, 30s, walks happily, carrying his JOSEPH’S PARTY PLANNING suitcase, emblazoned with rainbow letters.

He enters a parking lot, can’t remember where he parked; so looks on searchingly. Spots his van.

    JOSEPH
    There you are Partheus!

His van has the name, PARTHEUS painted across it. He heads. Opens the door and plunks his suitcase.

BACK TO:

EXT. MAIN STREET

Moira eyes Verdi with a look of a concerned mother.

    MOIRA
    Oh, Verdi. You don’t look too well. Rabbing not going so good these days?

A large piece of snow dislodges itself from an over hanging awning and PLUNKS right on top of Rabbi’s head.

    RABBI VERDI
    Does that answer your question? When I signed up for the job, I never knew it was gonna be this way. Tell him we need to talk OK?

    MOIRA
    Sure thing, Verdi. Well, off to The Redstone...

INT. ALICE ROSEMOND’S HOUSE - NIGHT TIME

The Christmas tree glimmers, but not Bella’s eyes, as she stares at it weakly. The lights pale. Bella’s mother writes Christmas cards.

    BELLA
    How come you don’t really talk about him anymore?

Alice studies her for a moment.
ALICE
It doesn’t mean I don’t think of him. I just... I just think we need to be happy.

BELLA
And forget him?

Alice runs over.

ALICE
No honey no!

Alice hugs Bella and Bella hugs her back.

ALICE
Sometimes it’s about what’s right and not about the way things seems.

BELLA
It seems like you want to forget him.

ALICE
No. Not at all. But there’s a whole lot of gray in the world.

BELLA
What’s that mean?

ALICE
It means, that what seems like the wrong thing to do, is sometimes the right thing to do and what seems like the right thing to do is sometimes the wrong thing to do and it’s different for everyone and at different times.

BELLA
That’s complicated, but like when Eddie didn’t want to go to Laura’s wedding reversal because he didn’t think they should get married?

ALICE
First of all, it’s wedding “rehearsal” not reversal and yes, he felt it was right not to go.
BELLA
I feel it’s right not to go to class because it takes my mind off of Jake and I don’t want to forget him!

Bella dashes out of the room, knocking the tree. An ornament falls to the wooden floor and splinters to pieces.

INT./EXT. CABIN

Moira types “him”! And begins to cry again.

MOIRA
The poor child. It should never happen at Christmas! Christmas is a time for giving; not for taking away.

A KNOCK on the door O.S. Moira goes to answer it. She opens the door. Quiet. The snow falls, softly.

MOIRA
Hello? Helloooo?

She looks across to the cabin across from her, only several yards away. She exits her cabin to the other cabin. The cabins are seen to be blinking in and out to:

CABINS, HAUNTED HOUSES, CABINS, HAUNTED HOUSES...

OTHER CABIN

She knocks on the door. Enters, leaving the door ajar. No one there. She turns around slowly to see the door behind her SHUT.

She runs to it, tries to open it, but it won’t budge.

MOIRA
Who are you and why are you doing this?

A dark figure appears, PSEUDOS, eternal 30; handsome, a thick black upside down triangle for a goatee. His hair over-gelled, his fingers over-jewelled.
I’m Pseudos and I have a little score to settle with The Narrator, or The Man... details-details. He bet you’d write this thing and I bet you wouldn’t. Seems like I’m currently winning. See?

Moira
But I have to write it. I have a contract.

Pseudos
That is a little problem isn’t it? Well, I’m not above the law... unfortunately. But I am BENEATH IT. VERY LOW IN FACT, but THAT’S another story.

Pseudos rubs his goatee.

Pseudos
Maaaaybeee. Maybeee you could write me into that plain your crossing over into and I’ll let you go back to your typewriter. And I “promise”, I’ll pay you well.

Moira
I have an idea. I’ll write you in and you make sure I get to come back here to the cabin and live happily ever after.

Pseudos thinks, nods, and extends his massive hand. Moira shakes.

Moira
Anyone ever tell you that you have a dark and scary kind of natural appeal?

Pseudos looks flattered and soaks in the moment.

EXT. GUIDO’S RESTAURANT – VIRTUAL – LATER

The neon lights flash: Yes, GUIDO’S

Moira and Joseph exit. Joseph patting his tummy.
JOSEPH
Boy that was good. I think I ate too much.

MOIRA
Good, but not as good as the Redstone.

JOSEPH
Sorry I forgot to make reservations. But Guido’s was pretty good tonight.

Moira taps him gently on the chest.

MOIRA
I want the Redstone on our Million Dollar Street and I want it to be special like when you first proposed.

Joseph pretends he’s in “party planning mode”, writing.

JOSEPH
Redstone, gypsy theme... Gee work is 24-7 isn’t it?

Moira smacks him. Joseph pulls out his cell and dials.

MOIRA
Still haven’t gotten a hold of Verdi?

JOSEPH
No. Telephone tag.

MOIRA
His probably clicks off too.

Joseph is “whu?” Listens; waits. Nothing.

MOIRA
Never mind. Well, make sure you getta hold of him tomorrow then. He looked terribly troubled about something.

And just then, Moira’s eyes light up as she sees: FATHER WILLIAM, AKA BENNY, 40s, strolling up.

MOIRA
Father Benny!
Benny’s eyes light up too.

FATHER BENNY
Well how’s Guido’s tonight?

MOIRA
NOT as good as the Redstone.

Father nods sadly. Joseph gets it.

JOSEPH
Noh! They didn’t turn away the Father of St. Augustine!

FATHER BENNY
No reservations. No dice.

MOIRA
Well if themz be the rules... Enjoy your meal here at lowly Guido’s.

JOSEPH
The veggie burrito is quite good.

FATHER BENNY
I might try that.

Father waves off. Moira and Joseph step out onto the curb...

TIME CUT:

EXT./INT. MOIRA AND JOSEPH’S HOUSE – LATER

...and into their house. Through the corridor into

THE LIVING ROOM

Moira to the kitchen. Joseph slumps onto the couch. Moira returns with two glasses of JD. They drink a toast

MOIRA
To Life!

JOSEPH
Le chaim!

MOIRA
I had a chat with a teacher from Glenda’s school today. There’s a little girl there that just lost her brother.
JOSEPH
Well that’s the business you’re in.
You’re into the funeral side of
things, and I’m into Party’s and
celebrations.

Another:

MOIRA  JOSEPH
Le chaim!  To life!

MOIRA
What I wanna know is who put the
word “fun” into funeral? Anyways,
I’ve got an idea how to help her.
I’m going to use magic. It’s always
worked for me; so why can’t it work
for her.

JOSEPH
Of course. You and your mom’s
magical letters that you send to
Santa each year. How’s it you
figure they always work anyways?

Moira FLASHES HER HANDS—tens and tens of fingers.

MOIRA
Re-re-re-re! Mom says the secret’s
in their mailing.

The telephone RINGS. Moira answers. Joseph sits.

MOIRA
That’s wonderful Mz. McAdams.

INTERCUT:

INT. MZ. MCADAMS’ HOUSE

MZ. MCADAMS, 60s, with a youthful flair,

MZ. MCADAMS
Listen!

RINGS the newest bell from her bell collection. Moira squints
as she pulls her ear away from the phone.

MOIRA
Yes, the sound of your new bell
really is wonderful. Yes, it’s a
wonderful life alright. OK, bye.
Joseph looks up, smiling.

JOSEPHTA good call this time anyways.

MOIRA
She wanted me to hear the sound of the new bell she just added to her collection. She wanted to tell us that today was a good day.

Joseph raises his glass once more.

INT. KITCHEN - NEXT DAY

WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 2 - 09

Moira places a single coffee down on the table in front of Joseph. He reacts with surprise.

JOSEPH
Where’s yours?

Moira grabs her coat and is halfway out the door.

MOIRA
Glenda and I are going to meet for coffee just like old times. She just broke up with Jeremiah.

JOSEPH
I saw that one coming a mile-

A KISS hits him suddenly after Moira returns and leaves.

EXT. ARISTOCRATIC COFFEE SHOP - MORNING

Moira walks amid the seasonal cheer. She enters. As the door’s chime rings, she and Glenda catch sight of each other. They hug and sit down, holding hands across from each other.

MOIRA
I’m so sorry Glenda.

GLENDA
I know you knew it was coming.

MOIRA
Are you doing OK though?
GLENDA
Actually, yes. We can be girlfriends again.

MOIRA
Your boyfriend never liked me.

GLENDA
That’s because he knew you didn’t like him.

MOIRA
He was so selfish.

GLENDA
I don’t know what I saw in him.

MOIRA
I know what you saw in him.

Moira hugs herself up and down like a schoolgirl.

GLENDA
Yeah well... So Felly gotta hold of you about Bella?

MOIRA
Yes, I’m waiting to feel out the waters with her mother.

Glenda looks out the window, notices Father and Rabbi crossing paths and stopping to chat.

GLENDA
That’s strange. Wonder what they’re talking ‘bout.

MOIRA
Not that strange, they both have a penchant for Letter Writing.

Glenda raises an eyebrow.

MOIRA
Homilies, sermons... whatever you wanna call them.

EXT. ARISTOCRATIC COFFEE SHOP

FATHER BENNY
Morning Verdi.
RABBI VERDI
Morning Benny.

FATHER BENNY
The Lord looketh upon us all.

RABBI VERDI
Indeed he does. Hey, did you hear about the parents that wanted to know what their little boy was going to be when he grew up?

FATHER BENNY
I don’t think so.

RABBI VERDI
What they did is put a bible, a ten dollar bill and a bottle of beer in front of him. They figured, if he chose the beer, he’d be a drunk, if he chose the money, he’d be a business man, and if he chose the bible, he’d be religious.

FATHER BENNY
What happened?

RABBI VERDI
The boy was smart. He took the money, slapped it inside the pages of the bible and after he took that, he took a swig of the beer. His parents were surprised and said, “Holy Crum! He’s gonna be a Catholic Priest!”

Father Benny laughs along and they depart for their days.

INT./EXT. ARISTOCRATIC COFFEE SHOP

MOIRA
Guess we should be off too.

Moira and Glenda exit, but not before Moira sees a WOLVERINE hanging above the cash register.

GLENDA
You look like you’ve seen a ghost.

Just then PSEUDOS, brushes past Moira, nudging slightly.
Pseudos is much scarier looking then before, his dark cast has intensified.

    PSEUDOS
    Good job.

    GLENDA
    Do you know him?

    MOIRA
    I don’t know. I mean. I think I had a dream of (at him) you, once.

    PSEUDOS
    Oh it was no dream.

He walks to a booth and sits down, while Glenda pulls Moira outside.

EXT. ARISTOCRATIC COFFEE SHOP

    GLENDA
    I’ll call the police. Something.

    MOIRA
    No don’t!

    GLENDA
    Why not? He’s- he’s evil I can tell. Could be a stalker.

    MOIRA
    I can’t. Because-

    GLENDA
    Because why?

    MOIRA
    Because he said he’d help me.

    GLENDA
    Help you with what?

    MOIRA
    Oh Glenda. Maybe it was a dream, but I can’t.

Moira and Glenda depart for their days.

THROUGH THE WINDOW:

Pseudos starts “circling” his index finger to a beat.
EXT. FREEMONT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - LATER

Glenda exits her vehicle and heads inside.

INT. MOIRA’S OFFICE BUILDING - LATER

Moira enters her office that says GRIEF COUNSELLOR. It’s rather small and not that hot looking. Moira sits down and slumps at her desk.

    MOIRA
    But I don’t wanna be a Grief Counselor.

INT. JOSEPH’S HOME OFFICE

Joseph’s on the phone to Rumley.

    JOSEPH
    What do you mean you can’t get me the cake by the end of-

He shuffles papers, looking for the date.

    JOSEPH
    You’ve got until Christmas Eve! Are you a baker or what?

There’s blah-blah coming from the telephone.

    JOSEPH
    What do you mean you’re confused? It’s a Kabbalah party with over a hundred guests and I need a five level cake symbolizing Keter, Hochma, Bina...

FLASH TO:

INT. SIMPLY BROADWAY DANCE FLOOR

Several Broadway dancers do the “FIVE LEVELS OF REALITY DANCE” while transparencies are drawn on screen over them.

BACK TO:
INT. JOSEPH’S HOME OFFICE

Telephone voice... Blah-blah-blah.

    JOSEPH
    Re-Al-I-Ty. Get it?

Joseph pulls something out of his desk.

    JOSEPH
    Look Rumley, Abraham is my bestest clients ever so just do it!

INTERCUT:

INT. RUMLEY’S BAKERY

Here we go, here is Rumley, sitting defeated in front of The Leaning Tower of Cake.

    RUMLEY
    I’ve got Baker’s block or something. I just can’t make it. I can’t just make a Kabbalistic cake and not know what it is I’m doing! It has to mean something. I have to get the concept. I don’t know how to approach it. My whole reputation as a baker is on the line here. What are these “levels” you’re talking about?!

    JOSEPH
    You don’t know? Then research it for God’s sake. My friend says he gets up every morning at 3:00 am to study. Why don’t you try it? It might do you some good. I’ll send you a link.

Rumley staggers to a chair.

    RUMLEY
    I’m a baker, I’m already up at 3:00 in the morning!

    JOSEPH
    Look all I’m asking is that you give it your best shot.
RUMLEY
Just give me some kind of advice wouja?

JOSEPH
My advice? Pat-a-cake-pata-cake baker’s man, bake me a cake as fast as you can- That’s my advice.

Joseph hangs up the phone gently and smiles.

He does a fond “pata-cake” with his hands in the air.

After that fun, He blows up a single red balloon. He playfully taps it into the air.

JOSEPH
Okeeze, what’s on the agenda for today? Old Time Mickey Mouse Theme - four pm - Let’s have ad-her.

He grabs his coat...

INT. FREEMONT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

OUTSIDE GLENDAS OFFICE

Glenda stands across from Felly.

GLENDA
Well that’s good. At least her mother is open to counselling.

INT. ALICE ROSEMonds’S HOUSE

Alice has a pleading look on her face.

ALICE ROSEMOND
Mom - Christmas alone just because you’re afraid of flying?!

INTERCUT:

GRANDMA ROSEMOND, 70s, looks up and out her living room window to see a plane flying overhead. She is not on the “yes” side.

GRANDMA ROSEMOND
I really don’t want to fly.
Follow the plane into the wild blue yonder. And float down safely as a feather to hover above:

**EXT. ST. AUGUSTINE’S - SCARY FIELD - AERIAL**

Same as before- vast; two houses at the back of the property. Touch down to the two-

**EXT. HAUNTED HOUSES**

Side-by-side where the STRANGER exits the house on the right and heads- CURBSIDE-

--where MZ. MCADAM’S, 60s, comes ‘round the corner, unaware of the Stranger’s departure from the house on the right.

She approaches The Stranger who is gazing at the houses. And pulls a BELL from her purse. She RINGS it all around the Stranger.

**MZ. MCADAMS**

It’ll give you protection! Those houses have a way of drawing you in and “INS” not where you wanna be. Well, not in there anyways.

**THE STRANGER**

What are you afraid of Mrs.-

**MZ. MCADAMS**

Mz... Mz. McAdams. I’m afraid that I’ve seen too many people come out of those houses and they’re never the same. Those houses are both haunted by many ghosts and demons that mess with the minds of those who enter. NEVER-EVER enter them...

On the other hand, some people come out in really good shape, DEPENDING

**ONSTRANGER**

DePENDING?

“Depending” echoes around the property and that can’t be; so you need to talk with The Effects Manager.

He must be pissed at the criticism because we’ve Lost sound and color.
The two HAUNTED HOUSES, of St. Augustine’s. Side-by-side in black and white. A grainy old image. Looks grim since it’s supposed to be a Christmas movie.

STRANGER
(as if he doesn’t know)
I’m just a little curious. Just wanna see what it says on the door.

MZ. MCADAMS
Suit yourself.

Mz. McAdams walks away.

STRANGER
I almost forgot...

The Stranger walks back up to the house on the right.

The door reads SIMPLYHAUNTED with a great big coiling “S” as a door knocker.

He places a LETTER inside the door’s mail slot. He dusts off his hand, mission accomplished style and leaves. But not us. The KEY HOLE is where we go.

EXT./INT. HAUNTED HOUSE

Here, through the key hole, SQUEEEEZE, PLUUUFFF.

Inside a very eccentric haunted house alright. What’s that in the corner? A big box labeled “slush”.

A winding staircase to travel upwards, but instead, a GHOST, comes down to meet us. He’s tree-like, many branches as arms.

GHOST
Hello, you really shouldn’t be here you know... weird things happen inside here. Best you leave before... (laughing)

The GHOST, returns up the stairs and yes, we return outside, through that very same keyhole. But not before seeing THE LETTER on the floor that The Stranger had placed through the slot. It reads NEW CONTRACT.

SQUEEEEZE, PLUUUFFF

EXTR.
EXT. HAUNTED HOUSE

We’re out. And there he is, that Stranger, still. As he walks, he notices that there’s a bustle in the hedgerow that separates these two houses.

He’s slightly alarmed and jumps back. But then, intrigue captures him. He bends down, looks inside the hedge, moves it around. Nothing. He walks off with a shiver.

    STRANGER
    Amazing how things change so quickly some times.

As The Stranger walks off...

Pseudos appears out of the hedgerow. He enters the house...

INT. HAUNTED HOUSE

...retrieves the letter and promptly RIPS IT UP.

INT. ST. AUGUSTINE’S

Father sits in his office doing his fathering. He writes his homily, every so often looking around a bit dazed and tired.

His secretary LEONARD FLEUR, (30s) enters excitedly. Leonard is a gentle looking male who looks rather high strung.

    LEONARD
    Father, it’s Mz. McAdams again!
    She’s hit the holy high water again in major nervous breakdown mode!

Father jumps out of his chair and heads.

INT. MZ. MCADAMS’ HOUSE - LATER

Mz. McADAMS is shaking all over. She’s pacing back and forth.

    MZ. MCADAMS
    I don’t know what to do? I don’t know what to do? My heart is beating so hard and I’m in conflict
    Father! I’m in complete conflict!
FATHER BENNY
Mz. McAdams, just tell me why and then maybe I can help.

MZ. MCADAMS
I can’t. I mean I just can’t. You just don’t understand.

FATHER BENNY
Of course I don’t understand if you don’t tell me how can I understand.

LATER STILL
Mz. McAdams sits calmly now.

MZ. MCADAMS
Thank you so much Father, I feel much better now.

FATHER BENNY
But I didn’t do anything. And you know that if you don’t tell me, it’s just going to happen again.

Mz. McAdams ushers Father to the door.

MZ. MCADAMS
God bless you Father. See you next time.

As Father gets outside and the door shuts...

EXT. MZ. MCADAMS’ HOUSE

FATHER BENNY
What to do with that woman?

He walks up the driveway to his car.

FATHER BENNY
A job - to take her mind off whatever’s troubling her.

He gets inside his vehicle.

INT. FATHER BENNY’S CAR

He thinks inside the rearview.
INT. MRS. FELIX’S CLASSROOM

The full classroom is quiet. The students busily practice addition while Mrs. Felix marks papers.

As she bends down to retrieve something from one of the drawers—Bella slinks down and crawls away out the door.

INT. MOIRA’S OFFICE

Moira opens a drawer. Pulls out a SKETCH of her dream transition house for people in need.

MOIRA
It would beat this by a mile.

INT. FATHER BENNY’S OFFICE — LATER

He dials the phone.

INTERCUT:

MOIRA’S OFFICE — LATER

Moira has her arm around CRYING MAN just leaving. The phone continues to RING as she shuts her door—

MOIRA
(satiric)
Well, that sure went well—She picks up.

FATHER BENNY
Hello Moira. How’s it going?

MOIRA
Not well, Father. I really wish I could get out of this stuffy old office:

TIME CUT:

INT. ST. AUGUSTINE’S

CHAPEL

Moira sits with Father, gazing up at the cross.
MOIRA
Yes, I wanna build that transition house.

FATHER BENNY
That’s why I called you. I’ve been thinking about what you asked me-

MOIRA
You’ve been thinking about it for a year, Father. That’s a lot of thinking.

FATHER BENNY
Yeah I know, I’m sorry, but times are hard...

MOIRA
You’re afraid to pay the fee so you find yourself somebody who will do the job for free- I know how the song goes.

FATHER BENNY
I think I have an idea... a- i-

Moira’s eyes sparkle, but then she notices Father stuttering a bit on “idea, a bright idea... you know”.

INT. FREEMONT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - SAME TIME
HALLS
Bella walks the halls again, aimless.

MRS. FELIX’S CLASSROOM
The classroom is still quiet. Mrs. Felix looks up, notices Bella gone. She heads out to search. The children whisper.

INT. VICE PRINCIPAL’S OFFICE
Bella Rosemond, sits in a chair as before, swinging her feet underneath her.

GLENDA
Bella, it’s the 5th time this week you’ve been wandering the halls and it’s only Monday. What’s that mean?
BELLA
Means I’m sneaking out about once per hour. Pretty good, huh? Ya think I’m Ninja material?

Glenda looks away, trying to hide a smile.

GLENDA
How ‘bout this. You promise to go to classes and I promise to treat you to the biggest treat-fest at Rumley’s Bakery.

BELLA
Is that a bribe?

GLENDA
Well I guess it is.

BELLA
They won’t send you to jail will they?

GLENDA
I think I’m in the clear since I’m the Vice Principal. It’s in my contract.

Bella reaches over the desk and extends a hand for shaking.

THEY SHAKE.

INT. ST. AUGUSTINE’S

CHAPEL

Moira now looks slightly suspicious.

FATHER BENNY
So, I’ve been thinking about it and there’s this certain woman who calls me every day—sometimes several times a day—

MOIRA
You mean Mz. McAdams.

FATHER BENNY
Yes.
MOIRA
You want something don’t you.

FATHER BENNY
And so do you.

MOIRA
What’s your proposal?

FATHER BENNY
Well if you weren’t married and I weren’t a priest, I would ask you to marry me.

Moira smiles.

MOIRA
Flattery will get you everywhere, but if you weren’t a priest, Glenda would be all over you like chocolate on a banana split.

Father’s head tilts at a sharp angle. He shakes it off.

FATHER BENNY
What Mz. McAdams needs is something to take her mind off her troubles. She needs a job and you’re the one who’s going to give it to her.

MOIRA
No way! I can’t have her ringing bells in my office and whatever it is that she does.

FATHER BENNY
Not even if I were to swing a deal and get you your transition house?

MOIRA
Really?

FATHER BENNY
And if I do, it will be the perfect place for her. You can get her cleaning or something.

Moira agrees and puts her hand out-
THEY SHAKE.

MOIRA
Okay, I need a name. Hmmmm....
Helping Hands... Nah, sounds too
cliche... Something Solei... Nah
sounds like a rip off Circe de
Solei.. Hmmn... How about The Big
House?

FATHER BENNY
Might work ‘cept that’s actually a
term they use for a jail.

MOIRA
Jail?

FATHER BENNY
As in “the slammer”. How could you
not know that?

MOIRA
Maybe ‘cause I was home schooled
and only picked up the good stuff.
Slammer doesn’t sound very nice.
Well, I like Big House.

Moira looks up to notice, WOLVY up by the cross.

FATHER BENNY
Moira? You alright?

Moira steps up to the altar and looks down to Father Benny.

MOIRA
Father, do you believe that time is
an illusion?

FATHER BENNY
Well, it is rather suspicious.

EXT. FIRST STREET

Bella walks home, snow glistening and beautiful when- PSEUDOS
glides up next to her. Her head rises at the shadow-

She puzzles, but unafraid.

PSEUDOS
Hello Bella. Your dad told me to
come and say he’s sorry.
BELLA
Why didn’t he come himself?

PSEUDOS
Cause he feels ashamed.

BELLA
He should.

PSEUDOS
I might be able to get your dad to come home again. And I might be able to tell you how Jake’s doing.

BELLA
Jake?!!! You saw Jake?

PSEUDOS
Yeah. I’m one of those, whatcha call it, psychics. I might be able to tell you what he says, but I need you to do me a little favor first.

BELLA
What?

PSEUDOS
First of all, don’t tell anyone, or that will cancel the deal, and second of all, I’ve heard you have connections with a Kabbalist.

BELLA
Oh, you mean Rumley?

Pseudos has the look of FALSE SURPRISE.

PSEUDOS
Oh yes! That would be him.

PSEUDOS
Wudya retrieve a little smidgen of his will? (laughing) Will ya? For your brother, of course.

BELLA
What’s “the will”?

PSEUDOS
It’s a- well it’s a-- How duya explain it to a six year old?
BELLA
Is it like a “desire”?

Pseudos holds up that same “circling index” again.

PSEUDOS
That’s it! It’s desire! Rumley has a lot of that, and if you bring me back a tiddly-wink of it, I should be able to give you some news on Jake.

Bella nods “yes”, waiting for instructions...

INT. HAUNTED HOUSE ON RIGHT

The Man scoops up the ripped NEW CONTRACT.

THE MAN
What’s going on here. This was NOT in the movie. Everything had been fixed and now-

The ghost comes down the stairs again.

GHOST
He was very intriguing. Tha guy who ripped up the New Contract.

The Man turns.

THE MAN
Who was it? What did he look like?

GHOST
Well, he had...

INT. SIMPLY JEWISH SYNAGOGUE

RABBI’S OFFICE

Rabbi sits at his desk writing his lecture. His secretary walks in. It’s BELINDA WERNCOF, (30s).

She’s twiggy thin, with dark framed thick lensed glasses and wearing a big heavy sweater with a cowl neck. Rabbi gives her a concerned look.

BELINDA
Father-
RABBI VERDI
I’m a Rabbi, Belinda.

BELINDA
Sorry, my blood sugar is low.

RABBI VERDI
Belinda, you need to eat more. Are you sure you’re getting help for your anorexia?

BELINDA
I bought the cream and I’ve been putting it on.

Rabbi looks puzzled. Belinda lifts something from her pocket. She hands it to him. He reads the jar:

OREXIA

RABBI VERDI
Orexia? Belinda this is a female enhancement.

BELINDA
No wonder I’ve been...

RABBI VERDI
I’ll put you in touch with someone. Two people. Someone who deals in eating disorders and a good optometrist. Now what did you want?

BELINDA
It’s Mz. McAdams again. She’s having a meltdown. Not too bad yet, but I sense it’s getting worse.

Rabbi puts on his coat; absently— the cream in his pocket.

BELINDA
Rabbi? The cream?

He hands it back.

RABBI VERDI
Careful with that stuff.

Belinda’s eyes blink a lot as she smiles.
EXT./INT. RUMLEY’S BAKERY

Glenda and Bella enter. Ice creamery and sweets abound as Bella glows at the sight of everything. Rumley’s clerk at the front of duty.

JANET THE CLERK
What can I do you for?

BELLA
I want the vanilla bean cheesecake and a bag of red licorice and one of those golden nuggets gums and a handful of silver balls and...

JANET THE CLERK
Wa-wa-wait. I can’t keep up.

BELLA
Is Rumley here?

JANET THE CLERK
He is, but I’m afraid he’s pretty exhausted, he’s started getting up early in the morning.

BELLA
He always gets up early. He says that that’s what bakers do.

JANET THE CLERK
Well yeah, but one am is a little too early.

BELLA
One am?

JANET THE CLERK
Right after midnight.

BELLA
Ooooh. Can I see him?

JANET THE CLERK
Go ahead.

Glenda chats with the clerk. Bella walks round the counter top to that baking area with the wide window where people see baking in action.

BAKING ROOM
No action right now, Rumley’s slumped over the counter, his head resting upon thick Kabbalah texts.

Several books at his head: One is black and reads ZOHAR. Another is green and reads: KABBALAH FOR THE STUDENT

Bella crawls up to the counter and knocks on Rumley’s head.

BELLA
Cong-cong. Hi Rumley.

Rumley wakes.

RUMLEY
Oh hi Bella.

BELLA
Janet told me you’ve been getting up at one am. How come?

RUMLEY
Well, I got a problem.

BELLA
Me too. I don’t like Christmas anymore.

RUMLEY
Ah Bella-

BELLA
I’m getting used to it. I wander the halls at school, think a lot about things. I think it helps. But I said I wouldn’t anymore. The VP said she’d treat me big time if I stay in class. That’s why I’m here.

RUMLEY
Well I’m glad to see a pretty little face like yours.

BELLA
So what’s your problem?

RUMLEY
Ever want to make something really special and you don’t know how?

Bella thinks.
BELLA
I wanted to crochet blankets like Mom, but I don’t know how.

RUMLEY
Well, what if you knew how to crochet, but someone asked you to crochet a blanket that represented everything you knew about everything and even the things you don’t know about everything—like the whole world and the moon and the stars and well, everything...

BELLA
If I could crochet? Make a blanket like that? That would be hard.

RUMLEY
That’s the problem I’m having. So I’m studying about it because I’m supposed to make a cake that kind of gets the concept across.

BELLA
Joseph told me, but “What’s a concept?”

RUMLEY
A concept is an idea. Like this: He points to a bird ornament up in the corner.

BELLA
A bird is a concept?

RUMLEY
Not just a bird. It’s a concept to me. An idea. Because I think of how birds, they fly. And flying to me means freedom. That’s the concept.

BELLA
The bird or freedom?

RUMLEY
A little of both. When I look up at that bird, I think of how I’m free because I’m a baker. I’m doing what I want to do.

BELLA
But you’re so tired.
That’s because it’s important to me to do things right. And sometimes that can be hard.

Bella is having a hard time with her conscience. Finally, she puts a PAPER before Rumley.

What is that?

Bella stutters-

It’s ah- ah- ah-

My goodness, I’ve seen fine print, but this...

Some of the print—SO SMALL you’d need a microscope to read.

It’s basically, a request for— for rights to taste and show your Kabbalah cake when you get it finished. My friend’s mother’s mother’s sister’s brother is entering this “taste and make” contest. You know Chef Ramsayish and...

Well in that case, SURE!

Rumley signs his name and proudly dots the end.

Bella looks scared.

I’d better go.

Glenda hands Bella a big bag. Bella smiles big up to Glenda.
BELLA
I won’t wander the halls ever again.

They exit...

BAKING ROOM

Rumley thumps his head upon the counter.

EXT. RUMLEY’S BAKERY

...through snow, Bella dragging her hand on the frontages-

Pseudos shows up, smiling and almost convincing. Glenda gives
him a dark stare, but he just bends down to Bella’s level.

PSEUDOS
   Did your mom finish the letter?

BELLA
   Yeah she did. She said thanks for
   mailing it.

Bella pulls out a crumpled sheet.

PSEUDOS
   We shall all have a wonderful
   Christmas tea together. Te-he.

Pseudos walks off, contract in hand. Glenda looks alternately
to Pseudos and down to Bella.

GLENDA
   What did you give him?

BELLA
   My mom asked if he’d mail a letter
   for her. She’s been awfully busy.

INT. CABIN

Moira fiddles with the Christmas stuff around her; Pseudos
stands behind her.

PSEUDOS
   Your precious Bella has become
   quite the liar.

Moira stands up to him.
MOIRA
This is all your fault!!!

PSEUDOS
My fault? You signed the contract.

Moira sits back down.

PSEUDOS
Don’t worry. I won’t hurt the girl. It’s The Narrator that I want.

Moira stands up again; throws her hands at the typewriter:

MOIRA
It’s yours! Why don’t you do it?!

Pseudos scrapes one shoe over the floor boards. It sounds like fingernails on a the old blackboards.

PSEUDOS
Alas, I don’t have that ability. I’m what you call a “go between”. Has its advantages, but the transitions are hell.

A clap of thunder. Moira shoots a glare at the air.

PSEUDOS
And you already know what that’s about don’t you buttercup.

Moira nods her head in agreement- a moment as Pseudos draws close; then realizes she’s connecting with the “bad guy”.

PSEUDOS
Ah-ah! You were feelin’ it!

Moira is disgusted with herself. She hangs her head.

INT. MZ. MCADAMS’ HOUSE

Mz. McAdams paces as before. She pats at her collar bone, pulls at her hair.

RABBI VERDI
Mz. McAdams, how can I help you if you won’t tell me what’s wrong?
A LITTLE LATER

Mz. McAdam has calmed down.

MZ. MCADAMS
I’m OK now.

She ushers him to the door.

RABBI VERDI
You need to tell me-

MZ. MCADAMS
I’m sorry Rabbi.

EXT. MZ. MCADAMS’ HOUSE

Rabbi stands outside talking on his cell.

RABBI VERDI
Joseph? Can you meet me at Flanagan’s. It’s important.

INT. FLANAGAN’S IRISH PUB AND GRILL

Joseph and Rabbi find each other in the crowd. Joseph scrunches his eyes, noting the Rabbi doesn’t look well. Rabbi sneezes. He’s a burnt out mess.

JOSEPH
Verdi, what’s wrong?

RABBI VERDI
There’s a certain needy woman-

JOSEPH
Mz. McAdams?

RABBI VERDI
Yes, and I thought if you could give her a job, it would take her mind off her troubles.

JOSEPH
Oh no Verdi. I love you but-

RABBI VERDI
But you know how you’ve wanted to move your business outside your home?
Joseph nods...

RABBI VERDI
Well, I think that I might be able to pull some strings and get you the place if you can give her a job once you’ve got the space.

JOSEPH
Doing what?

RABBI VERDI
I don’t know. Blowing up balloons or something.

JOSEPH
I get those from the dollar store. They have machines for that and... But- I’d actually have my own place?! I could call it... Joseph’s Party Palace.

RABBI VERDI
I’d be careful. There’s a brothel downtown with a similar name.

EXT. VIRTUAL VANCOUVER - SUNSET
The sun sets on this virtual day.

EXT./INT. MOIRA AND JOSEPH’S HOUSE - NIGHT TIME
They enter in from the winter wonderland to the FOYER
Joseph unpacks and hangs up their coats before entering on THE LIVING ROOM - Moira sweeps onward to the kitchen.
Joseph lights a fire. Moira returns with drinks.

MOIRA
To life!

JOSEPH
To life!

Their faces are charged with their secrets:

MOIRA
I have a surprise!

JOSEPH
I have a surprise!
MOIRA
But I don’t want to tell you yet. I want it to be special. At the Redstone!

JOSEPH
Well I won’t either.

MOIRA
Deal! Redstone Rah!

They ting their glasses and chug.

MONTAGE

A. Mz. McAdams dings each bell while reciting “Teacher says”

B. Rumley draws five large “U’s” closed on top in vertical order and writes beside each: KETER, HOCHMA, BINA, ZEIR ANPIN AND MALCHUT phases on a large white board at the bakery.

Some of what he writes looks like gobbledeegook.

He scratches his head and writes: GOOBLEDEGOOK

He stuffs a clump of cake into his mouth.

C. Father enters his abode for the night. Pours a whiskey.

D. Rabbi enters his abode for the night. Washes a couple of aspirin back with a beer.

E. Bella’s tucked in by her mother.

F. Glenda undresses. She looks through her closet and looks longingly at a black dominatrix outfit.

G. Pseudos enters Simplyscripts Headquarters in the night time glow of the unoccupied computers. He sits down and enters: CONTRACT #7162359-A2 DELETE

H. The Man and The Woman play Scrabble with words on the board: VIRTUAL, GAMES, XMAS

—on their record player—SLEEP IN HEAVENLY PEACE plays— the night winds down until everyone is

IN BED - SNOOZING - EXCEPT

I. Mz. McAdams who is pacing the floor. She breaks down; begins dialing frantically. She calls: Rabbi, Father, Moira and Joseph each successively.
END MONTAGE

INTERCUT ON A ROTATING EARTH BALL

INT. FATHER’S ABODE, RABBI’S ABODE AND MOIRA AND JOSEPH’S HOUSE

-Father answers.

FATHER BENNY
It’s alright Mz. McAdams. I just wanna do what’s right.

He pulls on a coat over his PJ’s and heads out the door.

-Rabbi answers and snorts.

RABBI VERDI
Alright Mz. McAdams.

-Moira answers.

MOIRA
Alright Mz. McAdams.

She hangs up and shakes Joseph awake.

MOIRA
Come on. You gotta drive me to Mz. McAdams.

JOSEPH
Why can’t you drive yourself?

MOIRA
You know my night vision is bad and I see halos all around lights.

JOSEPH
If I don’t get my rest I’m gonna die and I’m gonna start seeing real halos if you get my drift.

MOIRA
If you don’t be a good citizen, you’re gonna be seeing stars if you get my drift.
INT. MZ. MCADAMS’ HOUSE

Everyone is gathered around her, at a loss for what to do.

RABBI VERDI
Mz. McAdam, we’ve been through this so many times and if you don’t tell us what’s wrong, we can’t help you.

MZ. MCADAMS
When my husband passed away, I know he asked you to watch over me, but this isn’t about me-

MOIRA
Please tell us. Is it your husband? Do you see visions?

MZ. MCADAMS
No.

MOIRA
Do you hear voices?

MZ. MCADAMS
No. “Cept you guys, but I don’t think that’s what you’re after.

MOIRA
Then maybe it’s like a post traumatic stress disorder.

MZ. MCADAMS
Haven’t fought in any wars.

MOIRA
But the stress of losing your husband-

MZ. MCADAMS
Moira, I’ve lost a lot of people in my life. I’m old. It’s not that.

Moira looks helplessly to Father.

MOIRA
Father?

FATHER BENNY
Well it could be demons. That or thyroid.
Moira throws up her hands.

MOIRA
Gajeezers! We’re not getting anywhere! Mz. McAdams doesn’t even look remotely possessed.

A momentary happy nod from Mz. McAdams-

MOIRA
Worried and anxious yes.

A momentary overdone worry frown from Mz. McAdams-

MOIRA
Demons? No. But- But have you had your thyroid checked?

A happy blitz as McAdams beams-

MZ. MCADAMS
Just had a complete physical. I’m as fit as a fiddle!

Not so for the rest, they all look fiddle-be-damned, but Mz. McAdams looks miraculously better.

MZ. MCADAMS
Would anyone like some tea?

They all nod yes, unhappily.

EXT. MZ. MCADAMS’ HOUSE - LATER

It’s still dark because it’s the wee morning hours. Father pulls Moira aside next to a

GIANT SANTA.

Joseph and Rabbi head towards the

OUTDOOR CRECHE

INTERCUT THE CONVERSATIONS
GIANT SANTA

FATHER BENNY
Look you’ve gotta give her a job
even though I don’t have your
transition ...

Thunder again. They all shoot a look to the sky.

FATHER BENNY
...house worked out yet.

Moira looks down.

CRECHE

RABBI VERDI
Come on Joseph. Give her some kind
of work. I’ll work out your Party
Palace as quickly as possible.

Joseph looks down.

GIANT SANTA

MOIRA
I can’t do that. Someone else.

FATHER BENNY
She feels comfortable with you.

MOIRA
Don’t throw a guilt trip on me. I
can’t have that in an office
building. There are accountants
lawyers. We’ll just have to tough
it out until you get things worked
out. Take it in shifts or
something.

CRECHE

JOSEPH
I need time.

RABBI VERDI
Time for what?
JOSEPH
Time to pad a few walls? Seriously,
I’ll try and figure something out.

Rabbi pats him on the shoulder and looks at the creche.

RABBI VERDI
It’s rather nice isn’t it?

JOSEPH
Rabbi, we’re Jewish.

RABBI VERDI
And your wife is as Catholic as
Benny and his jets.

JOSEPH
We try and make our families happy.

RABBI VERDI
Oh I’m sure getting married just
thrilled them to death.

JOSEPH
Well, Grandpa did kill himself
shortly afterwards, but I like to
think it was because he went
bankrupt.

A moment. Makes sense. Rabbi and Father head to their
vehicles and leave while Moira and Joseph meet in the

MIDDLE BETWEEN SANTA AND THE CRECHE

MOIRA
What were you two talking about?

JOSEPH
About family.

MOIRA
Family.

JOSEPH
Yeah and what it means and I’ve
been thinking and-

Moira turns away and walks to “Partheus”...
MOIRA
We’ve discussed this before and I
don’t want to start a family yet
Joseph. I have so many things I
want to accomplish in my life and-

JOSEPH
And you have to stop believing that
what happened to your grandma is
going to happen to you!!!

MOIRA
Things always skip generations.
Look it up Joseph!

JOSEPH
She died giving birth to your mom
because it was an accident. Not
because of genetics.

MOIRA
Yeah well maybe accidents skip
generations too!

They get inside Partheus and take the short drive home that
is extremely LONG in the ugly silence.

INT. MOIRA AND JOSEPH’S HOUSE – LATER
They’ve caught a few hours and are freshly dressed.

KITCHEN
Joseph sits at the table, looking through party catalogues.

JOSEPH
I apologize.

Moira turns.

MOIRA
No I apologize. I’m just not ready
to have a baby yet.

JOSEPH
It’s OK. I’m just all about family.

MOIRA
Of course you are. You’re Jewish.
And I’m just a poor single mothered
Catholic girl whose family is
Seventh Heaven on DVD.
A cold silence, again.

MOIRA
I really AM SORRY. I’m just bitter. Because it was me and Mom and lonely.

JOSEPH

That brings Moira a smile. Joseph gets up and holds her.

JOSEPH
But we could MAKE THAT FAMILY.

Moira’s almost ready to fold; then, puts on the speed skates—time to hurry. She turns to the counter. Joseph sits down.

Moira plates some toast and jam and pushes it forward.

JOSEPH
Not again.

MOIRA
Glenda needs me. Her whole world is upside down.

JOSEPH
I thought you said she’s doing better.

MOIRA
She is and she isn’t. Her bedroom was a bad room and now it’s good and that’s bad for her if you catch my drift.

JOSEPH
Well at least sit down and have half a cup of coffee with me.

Moira sits down, not relaxed.

JOSEPH
Come on. You know you want to tell me about that “surprise”. Let’s not wait ‘till the Redstone tonight. Tell me now.

MOIRA
No! That would ruin it. We’ll wait until tonight. I can wait.
She glances at the clock.

MOIRA
Oh no!

JOSEPH
What?

MOIRA
Today’s my mother’s annual letter writing day.

Joseph perks.

JOSEPH
Which runs right through our dinner date. That settles it. We’ll tell each other now.

MOIRA
No! That’s like getting married in Vegas or something. Not the same!

Joseph shakes his head.

JOSEPH
Your Grandma’s letters are very special.

Moira becomes intensely reflective.

MOIRA
Without them, Mom wouldn’t feel like she does. She says she knows her mom from the letters. Without them, what would she know? That her mom died giving her birth. That’s all she’d know. But how Grandma corresponded with her sisters...

JOSEPH
Makes your mom feel better.

MOIRA
Yeah, like there’s a connection.

More reflective. Quiet.

MOIRA
And then I grew up with these rituals we’d do and then we’d each write a letter to Santa and there was magic in that.
Joseph gets an evil grin.

JOSEPH
Hold it right there.

Moira sits up straight and backwards, wondering as Joseph exits and returns just as quickly flapping a pink paper letter in the wind.

JOSEPH
I can still smell the perfume. And this letter isn’t just from the heart, it’s from someplace very naughty!

Moira reaches to grab it, but Joseph snatches it away. She chases him around the table.

MOIRA
Give me that! Put that thing away!

JOSEPH
You want me to give it to you or put it away? Make up your mind you naughty girl.

MOIRA
Joseph, I’m serious. I don’t want that floating around.

JOSEPH
A little quick morning nooky and I promise.

He waves the letter goading her out of the kitchen. Their voices disappear and melt into some easy moans.

EXT. VIRTUAL VANCOUVER - AERIAL

A song plays, amidst the splendor we witness from on high. The snow, the bustling city and excitement of the season.

STRANGER O.S.
Jolly old St. Nicholas, lean you’re ear this way...

As if floating on a feather that’s free, our descent is assured to be safe, landing on
EXT. ARISTOCRATIC COFFEE SHOP

Where Moira approaches again. The SONG OF The Stranger grows louder on approach. The Stranger stands, a guitar strapped around him. At his feet:

AN OPEN GUITAR CASE

And he sings,

THE STRANGER
Johnny wants a pair of skates, Susy wants a Dolly, Nellie wants a story book, she thinks dolls are folly, as for me my little brain, isn’t very bright, choose for me old Santa clause, what you think is right.

And Moira stands staring at him until he finishes the chorus once more. He looks at her, wide eyes of The Stranger that you have to have known to really know.

MOIRA
Where do I know you from?

THE STRANGER
People are always mistaking me for someone.

MOIRA
No really. I know you from somewhere.

THE STRANGER
I don’t think so. Any requests? I can play Christmas or I can do Dylan if you like?

Moira rubs at her neck. Digs for bills and drops them in.

MOIRA
Yeah. Dylan.

He begins to play THINGS HAVE CHANGED. Moira’s captivated. A mystic moment as things shift at weird angles.
INT./EXT. ARISTOCRATIC COFFEE SHOP

THE STRANGER O.S
A worried man with a worried mind
No one in front of me and nothing
behind There's a woman on my lap
and she's drinking champagne Got
white skin, got assassin's eyes I'm
looking up into the sapphire tinted
skies I'm well dressed, waiting on
the last train...

Moira snaps out of it; gives a thumbs up and ABOUT to walk
inside the coffee shop when-

FREEZE FRAME

CUT TO:

EXT./INT. HAUNTED HOUSES

The Haunted Houses are actually PUMPING to the beat.

-through the keyhole again- there’s a party going on inside
and the ghosts are people dressed in costumes.

SANTA CLAUSES, LITTLE GREEN MEN, BIG BLUE GIANTS, JESTERS,

GEORGIAN KINGS and QUEENS, FAIRIES and a life is like a box
of chocolates assortment of colorful characters.

BACK TO:

EXT./INT. ARISTOCRATIC COFFEE SHOP

Undo the Freeze Frame- let’s move, Moira!

She does, into the coffee shot and THE SAME DARN SONG ON THE
RADIO is playing-

Moira turns back, opens the door and

LOOKS FOR THE STRANGER- NO ONE. BUT AN IMPRINT OF HIS GUITAR
CASE IN THE SNOW. She goes back inside- the jingle of the
door chime and a whoosh of cold air, to sit down with Glenda.

GLENDA
You look like you’ve seen a ghost.
MOIRA
Maybe I have. Or maybe it’s just
the lack of sleep.

She waves and points to her cup, “coffee” at the waitress.
The waitress, coffee pot in hand, comes on order.

MOIRA
(centering herself)
Life is good.

GLENDA
It is if you’re doing this-

Glenda passes a picture to Moira.

Moira looks and a glint shoots from her eyes.

MOIRA
You and Jeremy did that!

GLENDA
Yip. And I really miss that. Don’t
miss Jeremy, but I miss that. I
know I can be a bit shallow, but-

MOIRA
No. No I think it’s good that you
can be unrestrained. More people
should be like you.

Glenda smiles at the compliment. Outside the window, the
Rabbi and Priest cross paths again.

EXT. ARISTOCRATIC COFFEE SHOP

The Rabbi and Priest greet each other as usual.

RABBI VERDI
Mornin’ Benny. Another day another
dollar.

FATHER BENNY
Mornin’ Verdi. Another day another
dollar.

RABBI VERDI
So this Irish Priest asks a Rabbi a
question. Says, “I know in your
religion you’re not supposed to eat
pork, but have you ever tried it?
FATHER BENNY
He didn’t he?

RABBI VERDI
Oh yes, the Rabbi said he had tried Pork once. And then the Rabbi asked the Priest, ‘I know in your religion you’re supposed to be celibate, but have you ever gotten down with it?’

FATHER BENNY
And the Priest says, “Yes. He did succumb to his primal urges at least once.”

RABBI VERDI
Indeed, he said he did. And the Rabbi had one thing to add.

FATHER BENNY
What was that?

RABBI VERDI
Beats pork doesn’t it.

They both laugh and head their ways in opposite directions.

INT. ARISTOCRATIC COFFEE SHOP

MOIRA
Good to see their resilient after last night.

GLENDA
Wish I could say the same... So what’s the status with Bella’s mother?

MOIRA
I’m not sure yet. She says she wants Bella to be able to talk, but she’s wondering if she should wait until after Christmas.

GLENDA
Well I treated her out yesterday at Rumley’s. She seemed to like that.

They both rise to leave.
EXT. ARISTOCRATIC COFFEE SHOP

As the two women travel away, it’s nice to travel backwards toward the “Baking Window” of Rumley’s.

BAKING WINDOW

Poor Rumley is hard at it again. His Kabbalah books are stacked in one corner as high as his cake. He’s covered in flour and looks like he could cry.

Decorated sugar cookies fall softly to-

INT. SIMPLYSCRIPTS HEADQUARTERS

The Man and Woman sit at the computer.

THE WOMAN
I wouldn’t worry, Dear. Just because it was ripped up doesn’t mean anything. You can print up another New Contract.

The man is searching files.

THE MAN
So you would think, but no! No! No!

THE WOMAN
What?

THE MAN
Someone’s went in and deleted the files!!

PSEUDOS O.S.
(laughing)
Now who would do such a thing?!

The Man and Woman turn in a whip.

THE MAN
Pseudos! How did you get here?

PSEUDOS
Let’s just say I get by with a little help from my friends.
His fake warmth disappears as he grabs The Man and hurls him away like he were made of straw. The Woman screams.

TIME CUT:

INT. PSEUDOS’ QUARTERS

The Man is tied up. Pseudos has fun eating a meal and pouring a drink.

PSEUDOS
Thought you’d win the bet. Well you did. She’s writing the script alright. Wrote the script. However you want to look at it. Details – details– but we all know that Time is just an illusion after all.

THE MAN
As such, you can’t kill me ‘cause there’s no death without time.

PSEUDOS
No, but I can make living, very painful. Let’s see, what would be worst-- How but what you did to me? Make you spend eternity alone. WITHOUT THE WOMAN? How’s that for a start?

The Man looks on fearful.

THE MAN
Your Woman is still around. We just haven’t found her yet.

Pseudos SMACKS his hand on a desk.

PSEUDOS
She’s been gone for how long?!!! How long in this godforsaken place? And all because of you and your GAMES!!!

THE MAN
Pseudessa is here somewhere! I know she is. I’m sorry, but I never meant to lose her.
PSEUDOS
When you find her, I’ll let you go.
And to give you a little
encouragement... I want you to know
that Rumley’s building a soul cake—
one that I have complete and legit
rights to.

THE MAN
Whose soul?

PSEUDOS
Moira’s. And truthfully, I don’t
think she minds one bit. She likes
her place inside the Haunted House.
Or is it The Cabin? And that’s
where she wants to be.

THE MAN
You can’t take her soul.

PSEUDOS
She’s already given it willingly
I’m afraid. Couldn’t resist my
charm.

THE MAN
Release whatever spell you’ve put
her under!

PSEUDOS
You find Pseudessa, and I will
leave Moira alone, but I must
admit, she has her charm too, but
Moira and Dos doesn’t have the ring
that Dessa and Dos does. (smile)
Everybody’s gotta have a nickname
right?

Pseudos does his happy dance to Sting’s “Soul Cake”.

INT. FREEMONT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

HALLS

Bella wanders them again.

INT. RABBI VERDI’S OFFICE

He’s on the phone to someone. It’s Father.
FATHER BENNY’S OFFICE

RABBI VERDI
I’ve just figured out where our blessed children can do business.

FATHER BENNY
Please don’t tell me you’re involved in the mafia or something.

RABBI VERDI
No nothing like that. You know those two old houses that are vacant on your church’s property?

FATHER BENNY
Those houses are haunted.

RABBI VERDI
I thought you priests were good at exorcisms and the like. Anyways, the proper term is “psychologically impacted”.

FATHER BENNY
We can’t do that to them.

RABBI VERDI
Do what? They don’t have to know.

FATHER BENNY
Everyone in this section of the city knows the story.

RABBI VERDI
Not Moira, remember?

FATHER BENNY
Oh yeah. She was home schooled. She only got the good stuff. And not Joseph either, he was brought up on the island.

EXT. FREEMONT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

VP’S OFFICE

Bella sits in the chair again, swinging her feet.
GLENDA
Bellllaaa, why?

BELLA
The effect of the treats wore off.

Glenda sighs.

INT. RUMLEY’S BAKERY
Joseph enters. Acknowledges the clerk and breezes through to

THE BAKE ROOM
Rumley is a complete mess.

RUMLEY
I just can’t do it, Joseph. I’m not good enough to get the concept.

JOSEPH
Why on earth not?

RUMLEY
Well, I’ve been studying this Kabbalah stuff and I’m just completely missing something.

JOSEPH
I think my client said something about it’s not the intellect.

RUMLEY
But what if I make it and it’s all wrong?

JOSEPH
Just do your best.

Joseph walks off.

EXT. RUMLEY’S BAKERY
Joseph’s cell rings.

INTERCUT:
RABB’I’S OFFICE
Rabbi sits back happily in his chair.
RABBI
Joseph, guess what - I’ve got a location for your business and it won’t cost you except to fix it up.

JOSEPH
That’s excellent can I drive by and have a look?

MOIRA’S OFFICE
Moira picks up.

MOIRA
Oh Father that’s wonderful. Can I drive by and have a look? Wonderful!

EXT. HAUNTED HOUSE ON LEFT

INT./EXT. VAN
Joseph drives up. His jaw drops. He gets out; slams the door.

JOSEPH
A haunted house?! My Party Palace is going to be a haunted house?!

He stomps back into his van and speeds off.

EXT. CHURCH LANDS - HOUSE ON RIGHT

EXT./INT. MOIRA’S CAR
Moira drives up and the house comes into view. Her jaw drops. She gets out and slams the door.

MOIRA
A haunted house?! My Big House is going to be a haunted house?!

INT. CABIN
Pseudos sits next to Moira as she types. He puts his arm around her. She smiles at him.
MOIRA
You really are charming you know that?

He brushes his hand through her hair. She leans in.

PSEUDOS
What if I told you that you were in the Haunted House right now.

MOIRA
I’m at The Cabin. What are you talking about?

PSEUDOS
Strange then how the News Reports say you’re missing. Don’t you think?

Moira thinks, confused.

PSEUDOS
But you like it here don’t you?

MOIRA
Yes. Yes I do. I really do.

PSEUDOS
That’s what I thought.

EXT./INT. ST. AUGUSTINE’S

Moira marches up the steps, tripping, but finds her way in.

HALLWAY

Moira approaches Leonard from behind. He has his head poked into a newspaper.

MOIRA
WHERE IS!-

Poor Leonard jumps.

MOIRA
Sorry Leonard. Where is Benny?

LEONARD
Fa..ther Benny?
MOIRA
Don’t cover for him. He’s gotta face me sooner or later.

LEONARD
He’s not here.

MOIRA
Where?

LEONARD
He’s in the chapel.

MOIRA
Oh! So he thinks he’s safe there. That I won’t yell at him if he’s near the cross and the holy water... Well!

She stomps out and into-

CHAPEL
Father is deep in reverent prayer, his head bowed.

MOIRA
Faaaaa THER!

FATHER BENNY
Holy Lord, that thou knowest thou good intentions...

MOIRA
FAAAAAAAA-

INT. SIMPLY JEWISH SYNAGOGUE

RABBI VERDI’S OFFICE

FA-LA-LA-LA-LA... The music plays as the energy mounts in fear of confrontation as the Rabbi peaks out the WINDOW- Oh no. He spots an unhappy Joseph leaving his Van.

INT. ST. AUGUSTINE’S - CHAPEL

Father continues to pray aloud ignoring Moira.
FATHER BENNY
And that we shall make things right...

MOIRA
FATHER!

He turns around finally and gets up.

FATHER BENNY
All it needs is a little sprucing up.

MOIRA
It’s haunted!

FATHER BENNY
How do you know?

MOIRA
Everybody knows!

FATHER BENNY
But you were home schooled. You didn’t even know that a jail is The Big House!

MOIRA
Well I knew that!

FATHER BENNY
It just—but, look, it’s not haunted, it’s psychologically impacted... Give me a chance and I’ll make things right.

Moira stands her ground, but then softens.

MOIRA
Alright.

EXT./INT. SIMPLY JEWISH SYNAGOGUE

Joseph storms up the steps. He rounds a corner meeting Belinda.

JOSEPH
Alright! Where is Verdi?

BELINDA
He said he had to run.
BELINDA points. JOSEPH dashes. Sees Rabbi rounding the turn.

JOSEPH
Hold it right there!

RABBI stops, turns, puts his hands up like a gun is pointed.

RABBI VERDI
What are you gonna do?

JOSEPH
Tell ‘em you ate pork at that banquet back in ’78. I’ll tell ‘em all I will.

RABBI VERDI
How did you know?

JOSEPH
Mz. McAdams.

RABBI VERDI
(lowers his hands)
OK, I give up. I’ll figure out a way. I know it’s a fixer-upper but-

JOSEPH
Fixer upper! The place is haunted!

RABBI VERDI
No-no-no. It’s PSYCHOLOGICALLY IMPACTED. And besides, Father says he’d call in one of the heavies and do the mother of all exorcisms.

JOSEPH
You don’t exorcise ghosts, you exorcise on people. It’s called a “cleansing”.

RABBI VERDI
Oh. Well, it was worth a try. But seriously, I’ll get the money and fix it up. Trust me. And have you figured out what to do about McAdams yet?
JOSEPH
Yeah, I’m going to have her spend some time with Moira’s mother.

INT. FREEMONT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

HALLS

PRINCIPAL DALE, (50s) no nonsense looking, strides in long steps down the hall.

He comes upon our wanderer, Bella, who looks up as he heads toward her. He looks rather threatening, but Bella looks mature and stands her ground.

PRINCIPAL DALE
Young lady, WHAT are you doing out of class?

Glenda arrives on scene, pulling Dale away. She speaks softly just out of earshot from Bella.

GLENDA
How was the seminar?

PRINCIPAL DALE
HOW WAS? Miss Tavish, we have other issues to address at this moment.

GLENDA
I couldn’t get a hold of you. Did your phone click off?

PRINCIPAL DALE
My phone does NOT click off.

GLENDA
Ya sure, cause I couldn’t- OK listen. Something tragic happened when you were gone.

Principal Dale changes his countenance immediately.

PRINCIPAL DALE
What?

Glenda whispers of “Bella’s loss” into his ear. He frowns and approaches Bella. He squats down to her level.

PRINCIPAL DALE
How would you like to take a trip to Rumley’s Bakery?
BELLA
We already tried that. It didn’t work.

PRINCIPAL DALE
You wanna try again?

BELLA
OK.

INT. VICE PRINCIPAL’S OFFICE - LATER

Glenda calls up Moira.

INTERCUT:

GLENDA
Do you think there’s any way you can persuade Bella’s mother to bring her to see you before Christmas. We’re at our wits end around here.

MOIRA’S OFFICE
Moira’s amongst a heap of boxes.

MOIRA
If she doesn’t mind the state of my office. I thought I was going to have this beautiful place to move into, and now I find out it’s that old haunted house on the north side of the church grounds.

GLENDA
Ew- that sounds bad.

MOIRA
Father said he was going to have it fixed up though. I guess it will take a bit of time... Yeah, I’ll try and talk to Mrs. Rosemond.

EXT./INT. MOIRA AND JOSEPH’S HOUSE

They both arrive home early, looking rather glum. As they enter the foyer, their eyes meet in sadness.
MOIRA
Things aren’t going so well in the surprise department. I think we need to hold off on the Redstone.

JOSEPH
You too? Well I have to agree. I think I might have been counting my chickens before they were hatched.

MOIRA
Well, my chickens hatched alright, but they hatched some ugly ducklings.

JOSEPH
You going to your mom’s for the letter writing?

MOIRA
Yeah. It’s important.

JOSEPH
Ya think you could bring along Mz. McAdams?

MOIRA
Ah Joseph you didn’t.

He looks like a sad little puppy.

MOIRA
No you’re right. I’ll pick her up. Mom won’t mind.

Moira’s about to get ready, but Joseph–

JOSEPH
Do you think you’d mind giving my letter to Santa to your mother for the ritual?

Moira looks stunned.

MOIRA
You? Wrote a letter to Santa?!

JOSEPH
Well, sure. It might work.

SILENT MONTAGE:
A) Moira hugs MOM 70s, introduces Mz. McAdams
B) Mom reading letter in a many candled light

C) DEAR SANTA they all write on old fashioned stationary

D) Moira and McAdams say goodbye

E) Moira’s mom walks up to The Haunted House
She SLIPS the Santa Letters into the mail slot of the door.

END MONTAGE

INT. HARD HAT OFFICE

RING! From the phone. #1 HARD HAT, (50s) picks up the phone.

    HARD HAT #1
    All hours on the job, we work our buts off ’cause we’re no slobs.
    (listens)
    OK Mr. Woods, I’ll send someone out.

Enter: Rabbi and Father

    FATHER BENNY
    We need your help and we need it fast!

    RABBI
    We need the two houses on the St. Augustine property fixed up.

    HARD HAT
    The haunted houses?!

    RABBI VERDI         FATHER BENNY
    Psychologically impacted.  Psychologically impacted.

    HARD HAT #1
    I’m on it!

Hard Hat #1 punches buttons on the telephone and begins making calls like wild.

SERIES OF SHOTS:

HARD HAT #2 grabs a massive tool box.
HARD HAT #3 grabs ladders and saws.
HARD HAT #4 loads heavy duty machinery.
HARD HAT #5 grabs loads of pizzas and beer.

He looks right at us:

    HARD HAT #5
    What? Can’t work on an empty stomach!

END SERIES OF SHOTS

INT. MOIRA AND JOSEPH’S HOUSE - LATER

Moira returns home to find Joseph sleeping. She kisses him softly and places a cover atop him. She sits down to watch the fireplace with its flames.

INT. SIMPLYSCRIPTS HEADQUARTERS

The Woman paces the floor. The Stranger sits at the computer.

    THE WOMAN
    Pseudos just took him out of here with the strength of a hundred men. How could he get such power?

The Stranger is scanning through data. Lines and lines appear to scroll and he’s reading THAT FAST.

    THE STRANGER
    That’s why I was called on the job here. I think I was overconfident when I rewrote the contract. Pride always comes before the fall.

    THE WOMAN
    What are you doing?

    THE STRANGER
    I’ve got hidden files here that no one knows about. Looks like Pseudos took part of Rumley’s will and applied it to his own. And that cake of Rumley’s is going to hold a lot of soul.

    THE WOMAN
    Pseudos has rights to the cake?!
THE STRANGER
Not anymore. I’m pulling up new contracts and I just have to find the right one. Here we go:

NEW CONTRACT FOR:
THE MAGIC OF LETTERS - A CHRISTMAS STORY
THE STRANGER’S REVISIONS
BLACK

THE MAGIC OF LETTERS clinks on top the black as white snow.

EXT. RUMLEY’S BAKERY
There’s a sign on the door. CLOSED ’TILL I RECOVER

INT. RUMLEY’S BEDROOM
Rumley puts on his bed cap.

RUMLEY
Must rest. Need rest. He crawls into bed.

RUMLEY’S DREAM PREMONITION

EXT./INT. RUMLEY’S BAKERY
Bella enters with Principal Dale.

BELLA
Can you choose? I want it to be a surprise.

She rushes to the back to see Rumley. He’s as vexed as ever.

BELLA
Hi Rumley. How’s The Concept?

Rumley looks up. Bella makes him smile, but he has no words.

BELLA
Still no good huh?
RUMLEY
‘Fraid I’m coming up empty. I’m completely blocked.

Bella climbs up the chair next to the counter.

BELLA
Why don’t you just make it an “everything” cake?

RUMLEY
Everything?

BELLA
Yeah. If the concept is like the whole universe, then why don’t you do moons and stars and planets and rainbows and— and— She looks up at the bird in the corner—

BELLA
And birds! Freedom birds!

Rumley looks astonished.

RUMLEY
It takes a child to figure things.

INT./EXT. RUMLEY’S BEDROOM — ABOVE THE BAKERY

Rumley in his old fashioned “bed cap” awakes, amazed.

He runs to his window and looks out the same way Scrooge did when he was enlightened. He sees a BOY walking below him. He lifts the window to call out:

RUMLEY
Hey you Boy! It’s not Christmas yet is it?

BOY
Over a two weeks left, Sir.

RUMLEY
Good! I need you to run and bring me the biggest groups of kids you can to help me with a project and I’ll pay you all real good.

BOY
Alright!!!
The boy dashes. Rumley rubs his hands together excitedly.

RUMLEY
Yesin’ deedy this is going to be
the best cake I’ve ever made!

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. TORNADO
An hourglass spins. Clocks spin. Time? What time?

EXT. SUBURBAN STREETS – MORNING
The boy knocks on doors collecting friends like the Pied
Piper. It must be the Christmas magic.

EXT. HAUNTED HOUSES
They still look haunted, but progress is being made it seems.
A whole crew of workers are outside doing their thing.

INT. ARISTOCRATIC COFFEE SHOP
Glenda and Moira sit having coffee.

MOIRA
How’s the bedroom front?

GLENDA
Bad. Jeremiah and me couldn’t get
along with anything, but we sure
did get along in the bedroom.

Glenda turns to the window and sees: Father and Rabbi cross
paths again.

GLENDA
This is so bad.

MOIRA
What?

GLENDA
I think I feel the hots for Father.

MOIRA
Glenda!
Moira shakes her head, smiling like a cat.

GLENDA
How’s The Big House coming?

MOIRA
Not sure. I’ll believe it’s truly done when I see it.

GLENDA
Looks good on the outside.

MOIRA
Yeah well appearances can be deceiving.

EXT. ARISTOCRATIC COFFEE SHOP
Father and Rabbi have their usual morning chit-chat.

EXT. MOIRA’S OFFICE - WAITING ROOM
Moira stands in the waiting area with Mrs. Rosemond just outside her office. The office is pre-moving chaos. Boxes stacked. Pictures down.

MOIRA
I think it will work. If you’ll just wait out here to give your daughter some “free space”, we’ll try and get this going. Oh, sorry for the state of everything. My new location is in fix up mode.

INT. MZ MCADAMS’ HOUSE
Mz. McAdams rings her bells trying to ward off an attack.

MZ. MCADAMS
Look Daddy, teacher says, every time a bell rings an angel gets his wings.

From bell to bell she goes, but it’s no good. She reaches for her Emergency Numbers: On the list is: FATHER BENNY, RABBI VERDI, MOIRA AND JOSEPH, but she turns the page and calls:
AMBULANCE

EXT. STREET
The ambulance speeds down the street, its siren howling.

EXT. ARISTOCRATIC COFFEE SHOP
Rabbi’s cell rings.

RABBI VERDI
Are you serious? Alright.

INT. MOIRA’S OFFICE
Moira stops only to mention to Alice.

MOIRA
Keep in touch with her teacher and call me if you need to. I’m sorry I have to rush off, but a friend of mine is sick.

As she rushes out the door, she dials her cell to Joseph.

INTERCUT:
Joseph’s in the middle of a party set up.

JAMES BOND 007 PARTY
Joseph picks up.

JOSEPH
No way. I’ll be right down.

INT. SIMPLYHOSPITAL
They stand around the bedside of Mz. McAdams while the doctor explains.

DOCTOR
We’re not sure really. We try our best but sometimes we just don’t know. Her thyroid test seems to be alternating between completely normal and completely out of whack. We can’t do anything if it keeps switching.
JOSEPH
What’s happening then?

DOCTOR
An overactive thyroid at times is causing her heart rate to soar.

MOIRA
Mz. McAdams, you said you were as fit as a fiddle.

MZ. MCADAMS
I am fit as a fiddle aren’t I Doctor.

DOCTOR
Yes I did say that. Except for this one thing, you’re in great shape. Just keep doing your best with it and call your friends unless you feel it’s out of control.

RABBI VERDI
Isn’t there “something” you can give her?

DOCTOR
Well there are beta blockers to slow the heart rate, but like I said, it’s too unstable.

INT. MRS. FELIX’S CLASSROOM

Mrs. Felix at her desk with Bella.

MRS. FELIX
So how did your chat go with Mrs. Vanish?

BELLA
She said you’d help me write letters to Santa Clause. That he’s The Man and that he can help.

MRS. FELIX
Well, are you ready to get started?

BELLA
Yeah!
INT. VICE PRINCIPAL’S OFFICE

Glenda stands talking with Rumley.

GLENDA
I think that’s a wonderful idea Rumley. All the volunteers have my permission to help you for the final days leading up to the holidays.

She turns to the secretary.

GLENDA
Have some field trip forms sent out.

INT. RUMLEY’S BAKERY

Bella and Principal Dale enter.

BELLA
Can you choose? I want it to be a surprise.

She rushes to see Rumley. He looks up, peacefully from his Kabbalah text.

BELLA
Hi Rumley. How’s the concept?

RUMLEY
Couldn’t be better thanks to you.

BELLA
Me? But I- I lied.

RUMLEY
Bah! You wouldn’t do anything without a good reason. You showed up in a dream I had and gave me the best idea ever.

BELLA
What did I say?

RUMLEY
You said, “If the concept is like the whole universe, then why don’t you do moons and stars and planets and rainbows and-
Bella looks up at the bird in the corner.

Bella
And Freedom Birds?

Rumley
And Freedom Birds.

Bella
Rumley, do you believe in magic?

Rumley
I do now.

Bella
Do you believe in The Magic of Letters?

Rumley
What kind of letters?

Bella
The letters you write to people and especially to Santa Clause. Mrs. Vanish says there’s a magic in writing letters and that she does it all the time. Her mom does and her Grandma used to too.

Rumley takes out something he’s been working on. It’s a large Hebrew letter “Hey”.

Bella
What’s that?

Rumley
It’s the Hebrew letter, “Hey”.

Bella
Like “Hey you?!”

Rumley laughs.

Rumley
Actually, you’re not far off.

Bella
The letter “Hey” is the sound of breath. Try breathing out loud like this:

Rumley breathes out “Haa”. Then Bella breathes out, copying.
RUMLEY
Now try saying something like, “How ya doin’?”

Bella speaks it excitedly.

BELLA
How ya doin’?

RUMLEY
Very good. Now say it without breathing.

BELLA
I can’t do that.

RUMLEY
Well then, it must be a very important letter mustn’t it?

BELLA
Yeah!

RUMLEY
When God creates and izifies us-

BELLA
Izifies?

RUMLEY
Makes us be, it’s like he breathes inside of us and everything. Very very important.

BELLA
Rumley, you’re really smart.

RUMLEY
No, I’m not so smart, but I’m trying.

INT. MRS. FELIX’S CLASSROOM

Bella writes:

Deer Santa, Rumlee owr bacer sed he lernd sumthing frum a dreem. Can u let me tok with mi bruther in a dreem like wat hapend to Rumlee.

Luv, Bella

Bella brings the letter to Mrs. Felix. She reads it, smiling.
MRS. FELIX
You never know, Santa might be able to do that. Bring your brother to you in a dream.

BELLA
I have questions to ask him.

MRS. FELIX
I’m sure you do.

BELLA
Like what happened after Jake died?

Mrs. Felix nods, yes.

MRS. FELIX
Take it home to your mother, and she’ll mail it to Santa Clause.

EXT. HAUNTED HOUSE - RIGHT SIDE
Moira looks at the house studying it for a moment. Progress.

MOIRA
I guess it could work.

Her face turns to a deep scrutiny as she sees: THE STRANGER—

He curls his arms in a calling motion at the door of the house. She comes.

INT. ALICE ROSEMOND’S HOUSE
Bella holds the letter, sitting at the kitchen table.

BELLA
I remember you said the postal system has a lot of problems sometimes. That it’s often better to courier things.

ALICE ROSEMOND
That’s for certain.

BELLA
But what’s better than courier?

ALICE ROSEMOND
Well, I guess delivering it yourself.
Bella thinks.

BELLA
But the North Pole is too far to go.

Alice looks up, seeing Bella’s letter.

ALICE ROSEMOND
Oh, you’re talking about your letter. You’ve got it finished already? Well, you’re fast. Let’s see.

Bella hands it over. Alice smiles.

ALICE ROSEMOND
I think it’s beautiful.

BELLA
But I don’t want to send it through the mail.

ALICE ROSEMOND
It will be OK.

BELLA
No, you always say that sometimes you’re better off going to the source.

ALICE ROSEMOND
The source?

BELLA
Yeah, like at the supermarket. When you had all those problems with getting a return. You said that “the manager” was the source.

ALICE ROSEMOND
Yes that’s true.

BELLA
So I’m thinking that God is the Source and Santa works for him and God has these Managers that work for him.

ALICE ROSEMOND
Managers?
BELLA
Yeah that run things. Like Father Benny.

ALICE ROSEMOND
Well, sounds like you’ve worked this out in your head pretty thoroughly.

BELLA
So I’m gonna take the letter to him and tell him to pray about it for me and then Santa will get it when the Freedom Birds fly it over.

ALICE ROSEMOND
Freedom Birds?

BELLA
Rumley told me all about Freedom Birds and they can do anything.

EXT./INT. HAUNTED HOUSE ON RIGHT
Moira approaches The Stranger, walks up the steps.

MOIRA
I know I know you from somewhere.

THE STRANGER
There is a code of law and I can’t say right now.

He takes her hand as he opens the door and draws her inside. She looks around.

The place has been transformed and truly does look like the insides of a cozy bed and breakfast. Right down to the fine curtains and even a vase of flowers sitting on a table near the window, where the light pours in.

THE STRANGER
Come upstairs with me.

The Stranger presses gently on Moira’s upper back as he guides her in the direction of the first step. Her feet rise one, two, three...

INT. FATHER BENNY’S OFFICE
Leonard brings Bella in.
LEONARD
You have a visitor, Father. Father stands up to greet his young guest.

FATHER BENNY
Well hello, Bella!

BELLA
Hi Father. I’m coming to bring you a letter I want you to get to Santa Clause.

FATHER BENNY
Couldn’t you just mail it?

BELLA
But you’re closest to the Source...

EXT. HAUNTED HOUSES - RIGHT AND LEFT SIDE

Hard Hat guys come running out of there.

HARD HAT #3
Did you see that?

HARD HAT #2
It was a ghost! A real big and scary- He makes a “bubbling” sound with his lips and a crazy face.

LEAD HARD HAT
Come on men. We can’t let this stop us. We’ve got work to do. And besides, maybe he’s lonely. Try and cheer him up.

HARD HAT #2
But Boss, he’s scary and it makes the hair on the back of my neck go all weird.

LEAD HARD HAT
Just get to it and I’ll give you all a nice fat Christmas bonus.

INT. FATHER BENNY’S OFFICE

Father Benny sets the letter down on his desk and pats it firm.
FATHER BENNY
I’ll make sure Santa gets it and
I’m positive he’ll send you a
letter back.

Bella gives Father Benny a great big hug and heads out the
doors at which time, Leonard rushes in.

LEONARD
Father, it’s Mz. McAdams again!

Father rushes out, leaving the letter upon his messy desk.

Leonard looks, sadly at the mess and begins to clean it up.
He swiftly begins moving papers when The Letter—slow-mo
FALLS into the trash can next to the desk.

INT. MOIRA AND JOSEPH’S HOUSE

Moira enters, surprised to see Joseph.

MOIRA
You’re home early.

JOSEPH
As is you. What’s up?

MOIRA
Something strange happened this
afternoon. I remember leaving my
office and then it’s like I lost a
whole chunk of time. I don’t
remember where I was or what
happened.

MOIRA
Listen, I’ve been thinking about
revealing the surprise at the big
dinner we have planned at the
Redstone, but I’m not sure.

JOSEPH
No?

MOIRA
It’s just that I’m afraid that
maybe this whole thing is a bad
idea because people—

JOSEPH
People?
MOIRA
People aren’t going to want to-

Moira stutters.

MOIRA
No maybe I’m wrong. Maybe I’m just thinking too negative.

MOIRA
Dinner tomorrow at the Redstone and we celebrate!

INT. REDSTONE - FINE DINING ESTABLISHMENT

A big sign on the door reads: RESERVATIONS REQUIRED NO EXCEPTIONS The stuffy host greets Moira and Joseph.

THE HOST
Do you have reservations?

MOIRA
Oui.

Moira giggles. The host smiles only slightly.

THE HOST
Very good then.

He checks his list.

THE HOST
Strange, I don’t see you on here.

Moira gets the look of a demon.

MOIRA
Whadya mean we’re not on there?!!! I made reservations over two weeks ago! We have to be on there?!!!!

The Host then suddenly realizes, there’s a second page for this day’s reservations.

THE HOST
Oh, he-hee. (flipping the page) There you are. Follow me to your table.

Moira impersonates Gollum behind The Host, “Follow me, I know the way...”
He brings them along... Among the glorious tables near a fireplace. Through areas with fish tanks and flaming lamps upon the wall, near quiet alcoves and even a harp player to-

This terribly plain table at the very back of the place right near the kitchen where there’s a lot of racket. Moira and Joseph sit for a moment, then look up at him.

JOSEPH
Is this the best you have?

Moira’s demon eyes are back.

MOIRA
Yeah! Is this the best you have?!

THE HOST
I’m afraid you made reservations for the busiest time of the day and the busiest time of the year. As you can see, we’re all full up.

Moira stands up to The Host...

MOIRA
Do you know what’s going on in my life right now? Do you know the people I’m trying to help by building a place where they can come and feel safe while they get their lives in order? Do you know that the only place that I’ve been able to acquire is a Haunted House that nobody’s going to want to come to because it’s-- it’s--

Joseph is staring, amazed.

THE HOST
Haunted?

MOIRA
Yes! It is haunted. And I’m going to look like a complete fool and a failure when nobody wants to even set foot in the place and at that point, nothing will matter because I’ll be possessed by whatever is inside of the place myself.

THE HOST
Actually, you do look a little possessed...
Moira’s hands rise like she’s about to strangle The Host. Joseph stands up.

JOSEPH

Moira!

MOIRA

And I’ll be calling myself Moira or something like that.

JOSEPH

But you ARE Moira.

MOIRA

No I’m not!!! I’m the actress who’s playing Moira!

JOSEPH

Oh my God, she’s possessed. Did you go into the house before it was cleansed?

MOIRA

No. I don’t think I did. Did I?

THE HOST

Would you like drinks to begin?

Joseph gently pushes Moira down.

JOSEPH

Yes, yes I’ll have a lemon gin on the rocks.

MOIRA

Get me a FLAMING BLACK RUSSIAN!

JOSEPH

Maybe it’s good that we’re back here by the kitchen. Moira you wouldn’t believe it, but my Party Palace that I’ve been dreaming of for all these years is going to become a reality.

MOIRA

That’s wonderful Joseph. I’m happy for you. I just wish that I could be happy for myself too.

JOSEPH

Moira, I’ve got the same problem as you.
MOIRA
What?

EXT. HAUNTED HOUSES
Moira and Joseph stare in amazement.

MOIRA
You mean you and I are going to be neighbors? This is wonderful—well, kind of. But who’s gonna wanna—

JOSEPH
We’ll figure it out OK? But first we’ve gotta do something about that demon inside of you.

MOIRA
I have a demon inside me?

JOSEPH
It would appear so. It thinks she’s an actress only playing you.

MOIRA
Oh my God! I’m an actress playing me? Are you serious?

INT. ALICE ROSEMOND’S HOUSE
Alice bundles up Bella in her prettiest coat and hat.

BELLA
But Mom, I’m gonna miss the field trip to Rumley’s. And he needs help with the cake.

ALICE ROSEMOND
I know Bella, but your Grandma gets so lonely at this time of the year and we’re lonely and I’ve decided that the only way to get her here is that if we go and bring her back ourselves. She’s afraid of flying, but I’m going to put my foot down.

BELLA
Do you think Santa will get my letter back before Christmas?
ALICE ROSEMOND
I’ll bet it will be back by the
time we get back.

INT. FATHER BENNY’S OFFICE

Father enters his office to notice the letter’s gone. His
desk pristine, all paper’s stacked neatly. He begins to
rummage through the stacks, checks the drawers – no letter.

FATHER BENNY
Shoot.

EXT. ARISTOCRATIC COFFEE SHOP

Father and Rabbi cross paths again. Rabbi starts to tell a
joke.

RABBI
So did you hear about...

Father’s deadpan.

FATHER BENNY
I should have listened to my
mother. She said that being messy
would get me into trouble one day.
Well, guess what-

INT. SIMPLY SHAMAN

The place is all hoodoo voodoo. Moira and Joseph follow SARAH
SHAMAN through the clattering of wooden beads.

But not until, Sarah un-sticks, one of her braids from them.
They sit down near an indoor fountain that burbles gently.
Sarah runs her hand around Moira’s auric field.

SARAH
You are not possessed.

MOIRA
I’m not?

SARAH
No. It’s hormones.

MOIRA
Hormones?
SARAH
Yes, hormones. Congratulations.

MOIRA
What are you talking about?

SARAH
You’re pregnant.

MOIRA
Pregnant!

JOSEPH
Pregnant!

SARAH
Is there an echo in here? Yes, I said pregnant. And I think it’s going to be a boy.

MOIRA
But I can’t be pregnant. Joseph and I have taken every precaution.

Sarah smiles.

SARAH
This isn’t an ordinary baby. I think it’s a divine conception and these kinds of things move along very swiftly; so be very easy on yourself in the next nine hours.

The Shaman exits for a moment and returns with a whole whack of baby supplies.

She THRUSTS them into the arms of Moira and Joseph.

SARAH
Here, you’ll be needing these.

Moira and Joseph stand with their mouths open wide.

SUPER: NINE HOURS LATER

INT. MOIRA AND JOSEPH’S HOUSE

Moira paces the floor. Her face full of fear, her tummy full of baby, as round as if nine months just went by. Joseph neatly adjusts a blanket in the cradle.
MOIRA
I can’t believe this is happening,
but how and why?

Joseph walks over to Moira to stop her pacing.

JOSEPH
I think maybe this is my fault.

MOIRA
What do you mean?

JOSEPH
Well you know that letter to Santa
I gave to you for your mom’s letter
writing ritual?

MOIRA
You didn’t!!!

JOSEPH
I didn’t know it was gonna work!

MOIRA
You wrote to Santa for me to become
pregnant?!

JOSEPH
I’m sorry?

Moira softens. Then tries to hug Joseph, but forgets she’s so
big and bounces off him.

SUPER: A FEW DAYS LATER

EXT. ALICE ROSEMOND’S HOUSE

Mrs. Rosemond and Bella return home with GRANDMA.

GRANDMA
I’m so glad to be on solid ground
again!

Bella jumps to the pile of letters inside the door and hands
it to her mom.

BELLA
Is there anything for me from
Santa?

Mrs. Rosemond checks through. Her lips grow tight.
MRS. ROSEMOND
I’m sorry Honey. It’s just that everything gets slow this time of year. Santa gets bogged down. I bet it will be here any day now.

Bella turns around and runs to the window. Looks out to-

INT. FREEMONT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
HALLS

Bella stares out that same window at the tree. Seems that same raven is back and favors it.

BELLA
Are you a Freedom Bird?

MRS. FELIX
Who are you talking to?

Bella turns around.

BELLA
The raven. His name is Craven The Raven. Rumley says that birds are symbols of freedom because they fly in the air with their wings.

MRS. FELIX
Well I think Rumley’s a smart man.

BELLA
That’s what I said.

MRS. FELIX
Why don’t you come and write another letter to Santa.

BELLA
He’s not answering.

MRS. FELIX
What?! Well maybe it got lost in the mail. The Post Office is swamped at this time of-
BELLA
No. I took it to Father Benny because I knew that he could pray to God because he’s close to the Source and that’s better than trusting it to regular old mail delivery.

MRS. FELIX
So you took it to Father Benny?

BELLA
Yep.

Mrs. Felix gets a look.

MRS. FELIX
Would you write another letter to Santa just for me?

Bella looks straight in the eyes of Mrs. Felix who is talking at her level.

BELLA
OK, Mrs. Felix. Because I think you’re a really good teacher.

MRS. FELIX
I’ve wandered my share of halls in my life too...

Mrs. Felix’s voice trails away as they walk back to class.

INT. VICE PRINCIPAL’S OFFICE

GLENDA
He what?!

MRS. FELIX
He forgot or something, I don’t know what happened.

GLENDA
Well I’ll deal with him. Glenda wraps a scarf around her, splats a hat upon her head and struggles angrily into her coat—

GLENDA
He might be Father of St. Augustine’s .... Oh.... Wait until I get a hold of that man....
INT. MRS. FELIX’S CLASSROOM

Bella writes her second letter.

Deer Santa, Y R U so meen?

She brings the letter to Mrs. Felix.

    MRS. FELIX
    Is that all?

    BELLA
    If I write anymore then I’ll sound mean and I don’t want that.

Mrs. Felix gives a sad smile over to Bella.

    MRS. FELIX
    You know, how about we spell out your words properly for this.

    BELLA
    But I’m using texting language.

    MRS. FELIX
    I know, but let’s use old fashioned “letter writing” hand OK?

Mrs. Felix writes: WHY ARE YOU SO MEAN?

    BELLA
    OK. I think I know why they call it the good old days. Things were better then.

Mrs. Felix nods.

EXT. VICE PRINCIPAL’S OFFICE

Mrs. Felix has just told The VP the status with the first letter. The VP’s expression tells all.

EXT. ST. AUGUSTINE’S

The VP MARCHES up the sacred stairs as Father comes down.

    GLENDA
    What is wrong with you?!!
FATHER BENNY
I was just heading out to apologize to Bella’s mother.

GLENDA
Your apology to her mother isn’t going to help Bella!!!

FATHER BENNY
Glenda, I admit I screwed up, but you’ve got a lot of nerve to talk to a priest like that.

Glenda PULLS Father Benny DOWN the stairs. He is under the force and wrath of GLENDA THE PROTECTOR. She pokes him on the chest three times as she proclaims:

GLENDA
You might be a priest, but I’M THE VICE PRINCIPAL!!!

McAdams shows up.

MZ. MCADAMS
I think you’d better listen to her Benny.

Now Moira rolls up together with Joseph in the Van.

MOIRA
Mrs. Felix called me. Is this true? You forgot to write a letter back on behalf of Santa Clause?

FATHER BENNY
Moira you’re pregnant! Very pregnant!

Mz. McAdams looks, noticing, and is happily surprised.

MZ. MCADAMS
Now I’ve seen everything!

MOIRA
I know what I am. I’m the real Moira! Now did you or didn’t you?
FATHER BENNY
I DIDN’T forget. I lost the letter somehow and I couldn’t respond because I didn’t know what was written and I tried to call Mrs. Rosemond, but I couldn’t get a hold of her.

MOIRA
What do you mean you couldn’t get a hold of her. We’ve got cell phones!

FATHER BENNY
Yeah, but it must have clicked off or something.

THIS, Moira understands and gives a sad nod.

MOIRA
That does happen a lot doesn’t it?

MZ. MCADAMS
Well, fact of the matter is that Bella needs a sincere letter back from Santa Clause.

MOIRA
I have an idea! Not just a letter, but why doesn’t Father Benny dress up as Santa and pay Bella a visit in person? Better still, he can come to The Big House for the Grand opening. It’s ready right now isn’t it Father?

FATHER BENNY
They said they’re real close, but I still needs a good spiritual cleansing and that’s just not my forte.

GLENDA
Wait a minute, I don’t think it will work. Bella will know it’s Bennyboy.

FATHER BENNY
Did you call me Bennyboy?

MZ. MCADAMS
I think it’s rather endearing. Somehow I think I feel a little better than normal.
GLENDA
We need someone else to be Santa, but who?

Rabbi rolls up.

MOIRA
That’s who!

Rabbi looks confused and then awestruck.

RABBI VERDI
Moira you’re pregnant! How?

MOIRA
Sometimes these things just happen OK?! Life throws us all curve balls sometimes.

MZ. MCADAMS
As curvy as that “S” on the doors of the Haunted Houses of St. Augustine’s.

GLENDA
You’re gonna work together with Bennyboy here, dress up as Santa and help fix things for Bella.

FATHER BENNY
But we can’t be seen working together. A little chit-chat maybe, but people can be staunch in their religious views and-

MOIRA
This isn’t about religious views. This is about a little girl who needs to talk with Santa Clause and Santa Clause is busy at the North Pole right now so you two are going to make things right in her world!

GLENDA
That’s right!

JOSEPH
You know, seeing us altogether outside the Chapel makes me think this would be a great place to hold a party. Right out front, I can see it now-
Joseph realizes that no one’s in a party mood.

    MOIRA
    Joseph, quick. Start the Van and
take us to the Costume Emporium.

    GLENDA
    (to Benny)
    You’re getting measured for a suit!

    MOIRA
    (to Verdi)
    And you’re gonna write the letter
to end all letters.

Glenda and Moira begin shuffling Father and Rabbi to Joseph’s Party Planning Van.

    FATHER BENNY                RABBI VERDI
    You can’t kidnap us!        You can’t kidnap us!

    MOIRA
    You can’t stop us!

    FATHER BENNY
    Why?

    GLENDA
    Because you’re a good and holy man
who wouldn’t hurt a lady unless she
asked for it, right Bennyboy?

Moira suppresses a giggle.

INT. CABIN

Pseudos and the possessed Moira dance.

    PSEUDOS
    You know this is getting out of
hand.

    MOIRA
    Us or the script?

    PSEUDOS
    Both. You’re close to 120 pages. I
think you’re pushing it.

    MOIRA
    From a man who knows the real
meaning of pushing it - really.
Pseudos twirls Moira.

PSEUDOS
I really do miss Pseudessa.

MOIRA
I don’t have the power to write her in. You know that. She’s lost unless The Man can find her files... wait a minute... what if I write that he finds her files? Would that work?

Pseudos and Moira both raise happy eyebrows and sit down. Moira begins to type:

MOIRA
Oh no. This is going to be too long, I know it. This script will never do anything but wind up in the SimplyGraveyard for scripts.

Pseudos, shakes his head, sadly.

PSEUDOS
But the important thing is that you do the right thing, right?

Moira looks at him with kindness.

MOIRA
Pseudos, coming from you?!

PSEUDOS
Maybe someday I’ll tell you my story.

MOIRA
If you do, I’ll try to write it right.

INT. SIMPLYSCRIPTS COSTUME EMPORIUM

Rabbi is being squeezed into a Santa Clause suit.

MOIRA
You know it’s really becoming.

Father Benny stands with a notepad.
FATHER BENNY
I have to agree.

GLENDA
Got anything brilliant yet?

FATHER BENNY
Nothing. I feel totally stuck.

GLENDA
Why don’t you put on a suit too then.

MOIRA
Yeah. Make it real ya know? There’s this phenomenon where actors can become possessed by the characters they play. Maybe if you put on the suit, you’ll know what to write.

FATHER BENNY
You might have something there.

EXT. SIMPLY COSTUME EMPORIUM
The two Santa’s stand together Ho-ho-hoing.

FATHER BENNY
No like this, from the stomach.

Rabbi Verdi breathes into his diaphragm and lets out a hearty

RABBI VERDI
Ho-ho-ho!

FATHER BENNY
So what’s the plan?

RABBI VERDI
We’ll meet together.

FATHER BENNY
Your place or mine?

RABBI VERDI
Yours. It will get me all Christmassy I think.

INT. MOIRA’S OFFICE
Moira is packing up stuff.

MOIRA
Good bye stuffy little old office.
Hello Big House!

EXT. FREEMONT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

THE SCHOOL BUS for the field trip to Rumley’s stands waiting
as kids board excitedly.

INT. SIMPLY JEWISH SYNAGOGUE – OFFICE

Rabbi Verdi slips on a ski mask for secrecy and heads off.

EXT./INT. ST. AUGUSTINE’S

CHAPEL

Rabbi enters, still masked. He’s awe inspired as he gazes at
the beauty of the chapel.

RABBI VERDI
Nice. Verrry nice.

He does a genuflection then proceeds down a hall leading off
the chapel.

Leonard stands polishing a brass lamp-stand. His back is
turned away from Rabbi and he’s unaware of his presence.

Leonard sings a song to himself when he gets that feeling of
a presence. He turns and screams.

RABBI VERDI
No-no. It’s OK. I’m a- I’m a burn
victim and I’ve come to see the
Father.

LEONARD
Oh thank God. I mean not that
you’re a burn victim, but I thought
you had a gun.

Leonard points.

LEONARD
Just follow to your right and down
the hall at the end.
INT. FATHER BENNY’S OFFICE

Rabbi knocks and is called in.

FATHER BENNY
(grinning)
Burn victim?

RABBI VERDI
(taking off the mask)
You heard?

FATHER BENNY
If I tell a lie...

RABBI VERDI
God will punish me I know, but in this case-

FATHER BENNY
You know any Shamans?

RABBI VERDI
Wha?

FATHER BENNY
Heard they’re good for spiritual cleansings.

RABBI VERDI
I thought priests were experienced in that sort of thing. You know, like in the movie, The Exorcist.

FATHER BENNY
Yeah, but I’ve got a confession to make.

RABBI VERDI
Wait a minute. Other people make confessions to you, not you to them.

FATHER BENNY
I’m not really a Father. Well, my name is Benny, but that’s as far as it goes.

RABBI VERDI
You’re not really a priest?!
FATHER BENNY
No. I’m just acting. I went into that Haunted House years ago, and when I came out, I couldn’t help myself.

RABBI VERDI
What happened?

FATHER BENNY
Well, there was this ghost that said that there was a shortage of priests and that everything would fall into place if I wanted to take over and so I did. You think I’m convincing?

RABBI VERDI
Bloody well right! You had me fooled, but the question is, would you believe me if I said the same thing happened to me?

FATHER BENNY
No!

RABBI VERDI
Yeah!

FATHER BENNY
Well this is amazing! Truly amazing! I’m not alone! I always felt so very alone!

RABBI VERDI
Hey maybe we shouldn’t find a Shaman to cleanse the house.

FATHER BENNY
Why?

RABBI VERDI
Because if we do, then we lose the ghost that turns people into priests and rabbis and maybe even Baptist Ministers who knows?

FATHER BENNY
Maybe possession isn’t so bad after all.
RABBI VERDI
Maybe it’s not so much POSession,
but a kind of OB session.

FATHER BENNY
Well we better get busy. What do
you think are the best words for
Bella? ...

EXT./INT. RUMLEY’S BAKERY

The kids file in. Rumley welcomes them.

MONTAGE

A) The children decorate the five tier cake with every cool
thing a child can imagine.

B) Joseph and Moira walk happily between the hedgerows that
separate both Haunted Houses, that now look transformed.

C) Bella has a big smile on her face.

D) Moira CUTS the ribbon opening The Big House officially.

E) Rumley looks on happily at the cake.

It’s veiled by a wall, but we see PART OF ALL FIVE LAYERS

END MONTAGE

CRISSCROSS PATTERN - cause it’s better than plain old BLACK

RUMLEY O.S.
Truly beautiful!

EXT. ST. AUGUSTINE’S

Rabbi brushes past a stuffy looking JEWISH WOMAN #1, who
gives him a look of recognition. Dressed as Santa, this time
he has a phoney white beard over top of his real beard and
he’s put on different glasses, but still-

JEWISH WOMAN #1
Rabbi?

RABBI VERDI
(low voiced)
No. Must have me confused with
someone else.
JEWISH WOMAN #1
(looking down at his shoes)
It is you! What are you doing going into a Catholic church?

Rabbi walks quickly away, up the stairs into the church.

MONTAGUE
A) The Woman makes a series of calls.

SPLIT SCREENS
B) Several people, having been notified, are aghast!

END MONTAGE

EXT. YOU’D BETTER BE JEWISH HEADQUARTERS
Several people outraged by the behavior.

JEWSH MAN #1
Completely wrong!

JEWSH WOMAN #2
Outrageous!

JEWSH MAN #3
Follow him. I wanna know what he’s up to.

EXT. YOU’D BETTER BE CATHOLIC HEADQUARTERS
Same outrage, different people, different place.

CATHOLIC WOMAN #1
No wonder they’re always chatting it up on the street together.

CATHOLIC MAN #2
They have no respect for boundaries!

CATHOLIC MAN #3
Follow him, I want to know what he’s up to.
INT. ARISTOCRATIC COFFEE SHOP

The VP smooches up close to Father Benny in the booth. “The Catholic Police” on his tail, spy him from another booth.

GLENDA
Come on Bennyboy. Don’t you feel the magnetism between us?

FATHER BENNY
Glenda, not here.

GLENDA
Oooh then SOMEwhere?

Father Benny pulls her out of the restaurant.

EXT./INT. RABBI VERDI’S PLACE

A KNOCK at the door. It’s Belinda.

RABBI VERDI
Hello Belinda.

Belinda is a little stuck for words as she stands there in the cold.

BELINDA
I just wanted to- wanted to thank you for the referral. I’ve been eating more and my new prescription for the glasses is much better.

RABBI VERDI
Well come in.

Once inside, Belinda remains “stuck” on something. Her words can’t quite make it out and then,

BELINDA
Verdi- Verdi-

She kisses him. Rabbi is completely overtaken.

BELINDA
I think it’s wonderful what you are doing for the girl...

RABBI VERDI
Girl?
BELINDA
Bella?

RABBI VERDI
Oh yes. Which reminds me... Wanna come-?

BELINDA
Oh Verdi!!!

RABBI VERDI
I mean to Moira’s Big House. I’m going to be Santa.

They’re off.

INT. THE BIG HOUSE – FORMERLY JUST THE HAUNTED HOUSE

It’s beautiful inside. *Full of character and charm and decorated for Christmas to the hilt.*

If you look, you can see a couple of ghosts sneaking through doorways and halls here and there behind Moira who stands admiring-

Rabbi sits in a big Santa Clause size chair that’s red velvet and golden and studded with jewels.

RABBI VERDI
Ho-ho-ho, what is your wish this Christmas?

Bella crawls up on his knee.

BELLA
Santa, what I’d really like is to know where my brother is and even if he can’t be right here, if I could just have a dream. A dream where it’s as good as the real thing. Do you think I could have that?

RABBI VERDI
Well, let’s see. Sometimes the magic doesn’t always work. You know what? Santa gets a lot of letters each year and sometimes, I’m not able to respond to each one individually; so you know what I do?
BELLA
What?

RABBI VERDI
I send out one good letter that will work for everyone.

BELLA
Everyone? Wow, that must be a special letter.

RABBI VERDI
Dear Friends, I am so glad you want all this cool stuff. Some of you want toy trains. Some of you want Rock Band. I know a Johnny who wants a pair of skates, And a Susy who wants a dolly; I know a Nellie who wants a story book cause she thinks dolls are folly...

Bella laughs.

BELLA
That’s a song.

RABBI VERDI
Well it is now isn’t it? I know a Bella and she want to dream a very special dream, and if my magic works this year, then I won’t be so mean.

BELLA
I don’t think you’re mean, Santa.

RABBI VERDI
Well thank you, Bella. That “means” a lot to me, because sometimes, no matter how good I am with the magic—when it works—things don’t always work out.

BELLA
Why do you think that is?

RABBI VERDI
I think it’s because of the way life is built. It’s funny sometimes and sad sometimes too.

O.S. A commotion outside — the noise from an unhappy crowd.
They exit The Big House to see-

EXT. THE BIG HOUSE

The crowd hurling accusations.

JEWISH WOMAN #1
You’re in trouble Verdi!

JEWISH MAN #1
Yeah. Take off the Santa suit and own up to the truth.

JEWISH WOMAN #2
And that truth is that you’re not true to your faith.

Bella looks up confused.

BELLA
You’re name is Verdi? You mean you’re not Santa Clause?

CROWD PERSON #1
You’ll be removed from the office you hold.

Rabbi kneels down to Bella’s level.

RABBI VERDI
No. I’m sorry Bella, I’m only Santa’s helper.

Bella’s face is very still for a moment.

BELLA
That’s OK. You answered my questions.

She gives him a hug.

The VP screeches up in her vehicle with Father and a crowd of people in cars on their tale.

GLENDA
What is wrong with you people?!

JEWISH MAN #1
That imposter is going to be removed from his office.
GLENDA
Well that’s OK because THEY QUIT!!!

FATHER BENNY
We do?

RABBI VERDI
We do?

GLENDA
Yes you do because Moira needs a full time Santa here don’t you?

MOIRA
Of course! And Santa needs a twin, I mean I’ve read all about it in Christmas Digest and that’s the way it works.

CATHOLIC WOMAN #1
But you can’t just quit like that! We need our Christmas service.

JEWISH WOMAN #2
And we need our Hanukka!

At this critical moment, when the season’s special services seem doomed... THE MAN from the beginning steps up.

THE MAN
I could run a nice service.

SEVERAL OF THE CROWD
Who are you?

The Woman steps up.

THE WOMAN
He’s the Narrator!

THE MAN
You stole my line again!!!

THE WOMAN
Sorry. I’m just so happy to have you back!
THE MAN
Anyways, I’m not JUST The Narrator; I’m a Kabbalist. Point is, I could do a lovely service for you all at the Holiday Inn? Get it? Holiday Inn?!!! Ha-ha-ha. Or should it be Ho-ho-ho. Ha-ha-ho-ho.

He begins to laugh and he almost keels over in amusement. The Woman runs up next to him and grabs him in concern.

THE WOMAN
Careful Dear. You don’t want to get a hernia or something.

Mz. McAdams finally comes to the front also.

MZ. MCADAMS
I’m beginning to feel better and better.

MOIRA
That’s wonderful Mz. McAdams. Must be the magic of Christmas.

MZ. MCADAMS
Actually, I’ve worked out my conflict. You see, I could never figure out where to be. What church was the right one and whenever I thought about it: it made me crazy. But now I know, it doesn’t matter.

The crowd looks at each other. They start nodding their heads in agreement because Mz. McAdams has something there.

MOIRA
Oh no!

JOSEPH
What?

MOIRA
My water just broke!

Joseph helps her to Partheus.

INT./EXT. PARTHEUS – THE VAN

They speed away in an attempt to get to SimplyHospital. Moira has the look of anguish.
MOIRA
This can’t be.

JOSEPH
What?

MOIRA
I can’t wait. Joseph you must pull over.

Moira unbuckles her seat belt. Joseph pulls over to the side of the road. Moira lies down in the back.

MOIRA
This is happening so fast. The contractions - they’re coming one after another.

Joseph looks frantic and happy at the same time.

JOSEPH
I don’t know what to do.

MOIRA
Just hold my haaaaaand!

Moira pushes. And pushes. She has momentary relief, but then it happens again.

MOIRA
This baby is coming out
Nooooooooow... Uaarrrrhh...

And with that, the child enters the world and Joseph scoops him up, inverts him a bit for a moment and we hear THE CRY and he swaddles him up with his coat.

JOSEPH
It’s a boy! I have a son!!!

And Joseph is in tears and Moira is in tears.

MOIRA
And I’m alive! I didn’t die like Grandma!

JOSEPH
No sweetheart. You’re alive!

MOIRA
What should we name him?
JOSEPH
How about Jacob. Jacob Partheus
Vanish?

MOIRA
How about that!

EXT./INT. HOLIDAY INN - CHRISTMAS EVE
CONVENTION CENTER

Rumley wheels out THE 7 FT. CAKE. It’s loaded with childlike
expressions of peace and goodwill towards men.

A very magical miracle as stardust sparkles around us.

The Kabbalists and the not-so-Kabbalists stand together in
what is like a Remembrance Day minute of November 11, but
it’s Christmas Eve.

Moira and Joseph stand together. Joseph holds baby Jacob.

Father Benny and Rabbi Verdi stand together smiling along
with Mz. McAdams, Leonard and Belinda.

And when all this sublime joy fades, it’s time TO PARTY!!!

And they party so hard that a large decoration hanging above
FALLS! Oh-no right on top of the cake, smashing it to
smithereens!!! A moment of sadness and then-

RUMLEY
We’ll make another one!

He begins plating it anyways and serves it up to the guests.
Mrs. Felix and Bella help Rumley. Bella hands cake to her mom
and to her grandma.

Hard Hats have a kind of “Village People” vibe going on.
Joseph hands the baby over to Moira’s mom.

Moira and Joseph dance along with many of the others.
Mz. McAdams is swept off her feet by one of the Hard Hats.

Belinda and Rabbi Verdi dance.

Leonard dances with Hard Hat #5

The celebration suddenly stops when,

PSEUDOS walks in.
It’s an “aghast” moment. Fear all over. But following Pseudos is-

The Man, with PSEUDESSA, eternal 30, and-

The Man transfers Pseudessa to Pseudos, like a father giving away his daughter-

PSEUDOS
Do not be afraid. I have an announcement to make. This is not just any party. This is going to be a wedding. And this-

He puts his hand on The Man’s shoulder:

PSEUDOS
Is not ANY Man. This, is my BEST MAN.

The crowd applauds and happy faces drip tears of joy. Oh look: a big and brash transition

DISSOLVE TO:

THE BAR AREA

Principal Dale and The Man stand, drinking it up.

PRINCIPAL DALE
We’ve got ourselves a fine celebration here I must say.

THE MAN
We sure do.

PRINCIPAL DALE
Say have you seen Glenda?

Principal Dale looks around searchingly. On the other side of the room, Glenda pulls Benny along to the outside of the convention room.

THE MAN
I am going to receive so much flack from the General Entertainment People.

INT. JUST OUTSIDE CONVENTION ROOM

Glenda pulls Benny along in a hurry.
DOWN THE HALLS

INTO THE ELEVATOR AND UP TO

EXT. ROOM 311

Glenda grins eagerly as she swipes the key card. Benny’s eyes are all sparkles.

GLENDA
We are going to have so much fun!

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. HAUNTED HOUSE ON LEFT

Principal Dale exits the Haunted House and appears overwhelmed.

PRINCIPAL DALE
For some reason I feel rather odd.

The Woman and The Man stroll off.

THE MAN
Well, that went rather well I think.

THE WOMAN
Sure did except for Moira.

THE MAN
What do you mean?

THE WOMAN
I wonder if she is the “real” Moira from that movie?

The Man and The Woman continue to walk down this Main Street in this Christmas Wonderland.

The road parts again like The Simply Red Sea, a summer path blazing in the middle as they leave us wondering.

But it’s a half lie, because if you step back, you’ll see The Woman and The Man at the computer screen, and behind them is Moira.

MOIRA
That’s not the way it was supposed to end...
Joseph strolls up. Does a magical edit and then does this:

EXT./INT. REDSTONE - FINE DINING ESTABLISHMENT

The Host welcomes Moira and Joseph and baby Jacob with:

HOST
Do you have reservations?

JOSEPH
No Sir, we DON’T.

HOST
Well, in that case, welcome anyways because today happens to be the slowest day of the year for us and we have plenty of room. How about a nice table for two in front of the fireplace here.

MOIRA
This is absolutely grand. Can I get a Flaming Black Russian?

INT. MZ MCADAMS’ HOUSE

She busily rings all the bells in her bell collection over which the Christmas song plays-

COME ON RING THOSE BELLS

Everybody likes to take a holiday
Everybody likes to take a rest
Spending time together with the
*family*
Sharing lots of love and happiness
Come on ring those bells
Light the Christmas tree
Jesus is the king
Born for you and me
Come on ring those bells
Every-body say
Jesus we remember
This your birthday
Celebrations come because of something good-
Celebrations we love to recall
Mary had a baby boy in Bethlehem-
The greatest celebration of all
Come on, ring those bells
Light the Christmas tree
Jesus is the King
Born for you and me
Come on ring those bells
Every-body say
Jesus, we remember
This your birthday

EXT. CABIN - AERIAL
Fly down with the raven. Moira opens the door for him.

INT. CABIN
He flies to perch upon Wolvy.
She sits down at the #5 Underwood and continues to write.

THE END

FADE OUT: