

FISTMAS

Written by

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UTA  
Fourth Wall

EXT. CITY - NIGHT

A beautiful snowy cityscape. Frost in the air, holly on the light posts, just complete Christmas bliss.

SMASH.

SANTA CLAUS flies through a bar window, landing with a thud on the Street. He picks himself up and rushes back into-

INT. BAR - NIGHT

Seemingly everyone in the bar is dressed like Santa, from the full, thousand-dollar costume rentals to "shoplifted from CVS" cotton beards and plastic hats. They're drunk, angry, and absolutely destroying the place.

In the back of the bar, HARRISON POWELL (late 20s) tries his hardest to shield himself from the melee.

HARRISON  
Fucking SantaCon.

His cousin STEPH POWELL (late 20s) sips her beer, unbothered.

STEPH  
Personally, I enjoy the spectacle.

HARRISON  
We should get out while we still can.

STEPH  
They'll tire themselves out.

HARRISON  
I don't want to get punched!

STEPH  
Good luck with that. You've just got one of those faces, you know?

Next to them, a beefy Santa power-drives a tattooed Santa through a table, then pukes all over Harrison's shoes.

HARRISON  
Screw this. I'm out of here.

STEPH  
How am I the tough one in the family?

Harrison gingerly makes his way towards the exit, dodging bodies and fists as he pushes through the crowd.

HARRISON  
Excuse me... coming through...  
please don't hit me...

He looks to his left - two Santas are going at it like animals, their beards barely holding on mid-coitus.

HARRISON (CONT'D)  
Oh come on.

He spots the exit. Freedom. Just a few more feet.

SANTA CLAUS #1  
...Because it's the season of  
kindness, jerk!

SANTA CLAUS #2  
It's the season giving, fuckhole!

The first Santa takes a swing at the second, missing him by a mile but connecting with HARRISON'S FACE.

Harrison's world slows down to a crawl as he spins, stunned. Santa #2 catches Santa #1 with an uppercut. Beefy Santa pounds a pint of egg nog. The Santa lovers loudly climax. As the world returns to normal speed, he lands on-

The lap of a beautiful woman, EMILY (20s).

EMILY  
Are you ok?

Harrison looks up, lost in her big, expressive eyes.

HARRISON  
Hey.

EMILY  
Hey.

A real moment of connection in the middle of the scrum, despite the blood beginning to flow out of Harrison's nose.

EMILY (CONT'D)  
I'm Emily.

HARRISON  
I'm Harrison.

From across the bar, Steph cackles.

STEPH  
Fucking SantaCon.

As "All I Want For Christmas Is You" picks up-

-- Harrison and Emily walk out of urgent care, Harrison's nose taped up. She gives him her number.

-- As Steph opens presents under her Christmas tree, Harrison texts Emily. She texts back! He smiles.

-- Harrison and Emily at dinner. They're hitting it off!

-- Harrison and Emily walk down a busy street decked out in Valentines accoutrement. He hands her a card. She opens it - a picture of a lizard with "Iguana hold your hand." She laughs, then holds his hand. Bliss.

-- Harrison and Emily watch a movie in a theater. There's a jump scare! Harrison freaks out, Emily laughs.

-- Harrison and Emily, dressed in their Patriotic finest, party with Steph and their friends.

-- Harrison and Emily are out at dinner, this time much closer. She brushes her hand against his. You can see the love on his face.

-- Harrison and Emily visit a graveyard. Harrison lays flowers at a gravestone marked COLLEEN POWELL as Emily grips his hand.

-- Harrison, dressed like Mugatu, dances with Emily, who's rocking a pretty convincing Zoolander getup, in the middle of a packed Halloween party. They kiss.

-- Harrison eats Thanksgiving dinner with Steph and her parents. He keeps checking his phone, rapidly texting with Emily. She sends a message - "Miss you." Harrison smiles.

-- Harrison and Emily make out in his apartment.

EMILY  
Hey.

HARRISON  
Yeah?

EMILY  
Do you...want to come stay with my family for Christmas?

Harrison smiles, leans in and keeps kissing her.

INT. JEWELRY STORE - DAY

Rows and rows of rings glitter under that harsh light you only find in jewelry stores. Harrison points at a ring.

HARRISON  
That one's nice.

Steph, absolutely housing a meatball hoagie, shrugs.

STEPH  
Too small.

The CLERK stares daggers at her.

STEPH (CONT'D)  
Hey, chief, my cousin's proposing to a real top-shelf girl. Where do you keep the good stuff?

The clerk departs. Harrison clocks one of the price tags.

HARRISON  
Seven grand? Jesus.

STEPH  
What do you expect? This place is classy as shit.

One of the meatballs falls out of her sandwich. She quickly kicks it under a display case.

HARRISON  
The ring has to be perfect.

STEPH  
Totally.

HARRISON  
But also less than two grand.

STEPH  
I thought you loved this girl?

HARRISON  
This one seems nice.

He points to a very plain ring with a very small diamond.

STEPH  
Yeah, if you're getting shotgun married before shipping off to war.

HARRISON

Not the vibe I'm going for.

STEPH

You know, you'd be able to afford a better ring if you got a raise.

HARRISON

I know. Believe me, I've been trying. It's just that-

STEPH

That's your problem, Harrison. You never stand up for yourself.

HARRISON

Do too!

Steph grabs Harrison with her non-hoagie hand, twisting him towards the ground.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

Stop, Steph! You're getting meatball on my jacket!

STEPH

Do something about it!

CLERK (O.S.)

(clearing throat)

Can I help you?

Harrison and Steph snap to attention.

HARRISON

Yes. I would like to buy one engagement ring, please.

EXT. CITY - DAY

A beautiful, classic ring. Tiffany cut, white gold. Not the biggest diamond, but a real keeper. Pull back to reveal-

Harrison, with the biggest grin on his face, looks down at the ring.

HARRISON

I think she's going to love it.

STEPH

Emily's a lucky girl.

Harrison snaps the case closed, putting it in his pocket.

HARRISON

It feels like it's happening so fast, but also like it's the right time, you know?

STEPH

Totally. I'm beating off dudes left and right.

HARRISON

With a stick, right?

STEPH

That too.

HARRISON

What if-

STEPH

Don't overthink this, Harrison. If it feels right, it feels right.

HARRISON

Thanks, Steph.

STEPH

Someone's got to look out for you.

Harrison looks sad for a moment. Steph slaps his back.

STEPH (CONT'D)

You coming over for Christmas this year? My mom keeps asking.

HARRISON

Actually, Emily invited me to spend the holidays with her family.

STEPH

Oh, cool.

HARRISON

It's the perfect time to propose. The lights, the music, the holiday cheer...

STEPH

Plus, everyone's mildly drunk for, like, the entire month.

EMILY (O.S.)

Harrison!

Emily, bundled up in her winter finest, waves at them from the end of the block. Harrison turns to Steph, hugging her.

STEPH  
Be careful up there.

HARRISON  
Something tells me this will be the best Christmas of my life.

EXT. MOUNTAIN HIGHWAY - DAY

SCREECH. Harrison's car whips around a blind pass as snow falls in heavy sheets. He's white-knuckling the steering wheel, but Emily is oddly serene.

EMILY  
...Which is totally great for him.

HARRISON  
Yeah. Uh huh.

EMILY  
You ok, babe?

HARRISON  
Staying focused on the road.

She rolls her eyes.

HARRISON (CONT'D)  
I'm sorry, you were saying?

EMILY  
It's just that James is still in college, and he's already engaged.

HARRISON  
How did your folks take it?

EMILY  
Oh, they're thrilled. Daddy said he's never been prouder of him, and mom absolutely loves Isabelle.

HARRISON  
Can't wait to meet all of them.

EMILY  
They're the absolute best.  
(beat)  
And they'll love you, too. Plus, we'll be there for the pageant!

HARRISON  
You guys do a Christmas pageant?

EMILY  
It's so much more than that.

HARRISON  
I used to do the Christmas pageant  
when I was a kid. But they always  
made me play the-

HOOOOONK. A SNOW PLOW careens towards them. Harrison slams the brakes, sending the car spinning out. They come to a stop, facing the wrong direction.

HARRISON (CONT'D)  
-Asshole!

The window of the snow plow rolls down, revealing an OLD MAN (GUS).

GUS  
Watch where you're going, sonny!

HARRISON  
What? You almost hit me!

GUS  
Oh, a smart ass, huh?

Harrison shrinks in his seat.

HARRISON  
Just...keep an eye on the road, ok?

The old man glares at him, murder in his eyes. But after a moment, a smile creeps across his face.

GUS  
Merry Christmas.

And with that, he's gone. Harrison gives Emily a look. She shrugs.

EXT. SUMMIT VALLEY - DAY

They pass a hand-painted sign on the roadway-  
"WELCOME TO SUMMIT VALLEY: THE FRIENDLIES TOWN IN AMERICA."

The sign's not lying. Summit Valley is picturesque - Norman Rockwell meets Whoville. The town is bursting at the seams with holiday cheer.

They drive past a packed skating rink, a Christmas tree farm, a life-sized snow globe, even a petting zoo full of honest-to-God reindeer. Just a shotgun blast of goodwill towards men.

EMILY

We're really into the holidays up here.

HARRISON

I'm starting to understand that.

They pass a town square where bleachers are being erected. Below, a group of carolers serenade the town.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

Are those carolers? I didn't know they existed in the wild.

BZZT. Emily checks her phone.

EMILY

Do you mind if we swing by the market? My mom needs us to grab the turkey.

HARRISON

Yeah, no problem.

Harrison turns off the street, not noticing the copious MEDICAL SUPPLIES being loaded off a truck in the town square.

INT. MARKET - DAY

Harrison browses the shelves while Emily waits at the butcher counter. He flags down a sullen teenage STOCK GIRL (MAGGIE).

HARRISON

Excuse me? Ma'am?

Maggie stares through him.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

I'm looking to get something for my in-laws. Well, my future in-laws. We're not there yet, but, hey, if I play my cards right this week...

Maggie continues to stare through him.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

Uh, I'm looking for a gift. Do you have...gifts?

MAGGIE

Yeah.

HARRISON

Ok. Could you suggest a gift?

MAGGIE

Yeah.

HARRISON

What would you suggest?

She turns very, very slowly down the aisle.

MAGGIE

We've got candles.

HARRISON

Great. That's what I was thinking.  
Where are they?

MAGGIE

Uh...

HARRISON

Can you point me towards them?

MAGGIE

Yeah.

HARRISON

WHERE ARE THE CANDLES?

Shoppers stop to look at the grown man yelling at a teenager.  
Harrison immediately regrets it.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, I didn't mean to yell.  
It's just been such a stressful  
day, and-

Maggie gets the same grin as the old man in the snow plow.

MAGGIE

Aisle six.

(menacing)

Merry Christmas.

HARRISON

Yeah, you too.

MAGGIE

See you at the pageant.

Harrison gives her side-eye, walking backwards into-  
EMILY, holding a large wrapped turkey.

HARRISON

Aah!

EMILY

Are you ok? I heard yelling?

HARRISON

Yeah. It's all good. I was grabbing  
a gift for your folks.

EMILY

Well, hurry up. This sucker's going  
to take a while in the oven.

EXT. MARKET - DAY

They walk down the busy sidewalk towards their car. A  
Salvation Army Santa, propped on a stool, rings a bell down  
the block.

HARRISON

I got you mom a candle. She'll like  
it, right?

EMILY

She'll be happy you brought a gift.

HARRISON

That wasn't a yes.

Harrison looks in the bag at the candle - "Bird Wind."

HARRISON (CONT'D)

Hope it smells nice.

He bumps into the Salvation Army bucket, knocking it loose  
and spilling coins everywhere.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

Ah, crap. My bad, dude.

The Santa stands up to-

OH SHIT HE'S JACKED.

JACKED SANTA

How about you pull your head out of  
your ass, buck-o?

HARRISON  
Hey, no need to get upset.

JACKED SANTA takes a bell out of his belt, ringing it threateningly close to Harrison's head.

JACKED SANTA  
Merry Christmas.

Harrison back away towards Emily.

HARRISON  
(sotto)  
I can't make a friend in this town.

EXT. BALLARD FAMILY HOME - DAY

They roll up to a beautiful ESTATE. Luxury cars litter the driveway - a Lexus, a high-end Volvo, a shiny silver Mercedes G Wagon. A bronze plaque on the side of the stone house informs them this is the BALLARD FAMILY HOME.

INT. BALLARD FAMILY HOME - FOYER - DAY

Emily opens the door, peering inside.

EMILY  
Hello?

JUDITH (O.S.)  
Emily! Tom, Emily's here!

TOM (60s, silver fox) enters from the kitchen.

TOM  
Hello there, pumpkin.

EMILY  
Daddy!

She races across the room, jumping into her father's arms.

TOM  
I missed you so much.

Judith (60s, silver vixen) pops out from the family room.

JUDITH  
There's my baby girl.

Emily hugs her mom.

EMILY  
So good to see you, mom.

Harrison stands in the entryway, laden with bags.

HARRISON  
Uh, hi! I'm Harrison!

Silence in the room for a moment. Then Tom puts on his million-dollar smile.

TOM  
Mayor Tom Ballard.

Harrison shakes his hand.

HARRISON  
It's so great to meet you. Emily's told me so much about you.

TOM  
All nice things, I hope.

JUDITH  
Wouldn't want our daughter to lie now, would you Tom?

They laugh at their clearly poll-tested bit.

JUDITH (CONT'D)  
Tom was just reelected.

TOM  
What can I say? The people love me.

EMILY  
Dad won in a landslide.

TOM  
Eighty five percent of the vote.  
Not too shabby.

HARRISON  
Wow. Those are, like, Eastern European dictator numbers.

Judith CHORTLES. Tom frowns for a moment, then returns to his stock politician smile.

TOM  
I know what it takes to keep the town happy.

Judith offers her hand.

JUDITH  
Judith Ballard.

Harrison fumbles the bag towards her.

HARRISON  
So nice to meet you! I got you a  
little something.

She opens the bag, giving a very small but polite smile.

JUDITH  
Oh, a candle. How thoughtful.

Harrison glances at Emily, who gives him an encouraging look.

TOM  
James! Come say hi to your sister.

JAMES (frat boy), accompanied by his girlfriend ISABELLE (sorority girl), pop out of his upstairs bedroom, disheveled.

JAMES  
Hey, Em.

ISABELLE  
Hey girl!

EMILY  
(to Harrison)  
That's my brother James and his  
fiancée Isabelle.

She holds out her hand, a MASSIVE DIAMOND on her ring finger.

ISABELLE  
What gave it away?

EMILY  
How are your parents, Isabelle?

ISABELLE  
Oh, you know, thriving in  
retirement.

HARRISON  
What did your parents do?

ISABELLE  
They were bon vivants.

EMILY  
(to Harrison)  
Isabelle comes from the Marchand family.

HARRISON  
Wait, didn't they own-

ISABELLE  
Ships. That moved people. From one continent to another.

HARRISON  
Oh boy.

EMILY  
(looking around)  
Dad, where's Kacey?

Tom and Judith exchange a look.

TOM  
She's at work.

JUDITH  
You know Kacey. Always the difficult one.

Tom slaps Harrison on the back.

TOM  
How about you two get unpacked?

EMILY  
Come on, I'll show you to your room.

HARRISON  
Don't you mean our room?

INT. BALLARD FAMILY HOME - GUEST ROOM - DAY

Emily opens the door to a beautiful, ornate guest room.

EMILY  
You're lucky. The bed in here is the best one in the house.

HARRISON  
Yeah. Great.

EMILY  
Something wrong?

HARRISON

I just thought that, you know...

She looks at him blankly.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

I thought we'd be staying in the same room.

EMILY

My parents are super old fashioned about that sort of thing.

HARRISON

Can't help but notice your brother and his girlfriend are together in his room.

EMILY

They're engaged. That's different.

HARRISON

Ok. Got it. So I propose to you and we can be in the same room! Everyone wins.

Emily laughs. Harrison reaches into his bag. Is this it? The big moment?

EMILY

How about we take things one step at a time? You just met my parents, after all. And we haven't even been to the pageant.

Harrison drops the ring in his bag. Guess not.

HARRISON

Yeah. Totally.

EMILY

We'll have a great Christmas no matter where in the house you're staying.

HARRISON

You're right.

EMILY

Plus, you can always sneak out at night.

She gives him a wink and departs. Harrison flops back on the bed, checking out the room.

The wall across from him is dotted with family photos - and quite a few of them feature Emily with her arms around a mysterious, handsome man.

HARRISON

What the-

JUDITH (O.S.)

Harrison?

Judith sticks her head into the bedroom.

JUDITH (CONT'D)

Could you be a dear and give me a hand in the kitchen?

INT. BALLARD FAMILY HOME - KITCHEN - DAY

It's a tidy mess, scores of pots and pans with various sauces and food-related goos cooking on the stove.

JUDITH

Thank you for picking up the turkey, by the way.

HARRISON

Of course! Thank you and Tom for-

JUDITH

When I saw those wonderful teeny tiny little hands of yours, I knew I had just the job for you.

Harrison looks down at his hands.

HARRISON

They're totally normal-sized.

JUDITH

(ignoring him)

Why, they're perfectly petite enough to stuff the turkey without tearing it.

HARRISON

Above-average, even.

She pulls the turkey out of the fridge on a large chrome baking sheet.

JUDITH

Take a handful of stuffing and just go to town.

Judith opens the turkey's, for lack of a better word, butthole. Harrison stares down the chamber.

JUDITH (CONT'D)  
Whenever you're ready.

A grin is plastered on her face, but her eyes are clearly saying "DO IT RIGHT FUCKING NOW." Harrison SIGHES, shoving stuffing into the turkey.

JUDITH (CONT'D)  
So tell me about yourself,  
Harrison. Where are you from?

HARRISON  
Philadelphia.

JUDITH  
College?

HARRISON  
Penn-

Judith's eyes light up.

HARRISON (CONT'D)  
-State.

Her expression drops.

JUDITH  
What do you do for work?

HARRISON  
Influencer marketing.

JUDITH  
I'm sorry?

HARRISON  
We pay loud teenagers to talk about  
how much they enjoy Pepsi. Until  
they turn into Nazis. Which happens  
way more often than you'd think.

She gets behind him, shoving his arm further in the turkey.

JUDITH  
How did you and my daughter meet?

HARRISON  
We kind of ran into each other-

JUDITH  
And your family?

HARRISON  
Excuse me?

JUDITH  
Tell me about your parents.

HARRISON  
My dad died before I was born. And  
my mom passed away a few years ago.

Judith pulls back.

JUDITH  
How terrible.

HARRISON  
I'm an only child, so I've been on  
my own for a while.

The turkey SQUELCHES. Harrison frowns.

HARRISON (CONT'D)  
My cousin keeps an eye out for me,  
but it's not the same, you know?  
Especially around Christmas.

Harrison pulls his arm out of the carcass.

HARRISON (CONT'D)  
Not sure how much more this bird  
can take.

Judith slides another bowl of stuffing towards him. As he  
grabs a handful-

JUDITH  
I'm just happy Emily met such a...  
nice young man.

HARRISON  
Well, thank you. Your daughter  
really means the world to me. If  
fact, I know it's kind of early,  
but I was wondering if-

JUDITH  
She needs a nice partner.  
Especially after what happened with  
Nathan.

Harrison pauses.

HARRISON

Pardon?

JUDITH

Oh, Emily's former boyfriend.  
He was practically a member of the  
family. But then again, if they  
hadn't have broken up, you wouldn't  
be here right now, would you?

HARRISON

Well, unlike him, I don't think I'd  
be foolish enough to lose Emily.

Judith seems to relax, just a little. Harrison's phone  
buzzes. He loudly clears his throat.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

Excuse me for a moment.

INT. BALLARD FAMILY HOME - RESTROOM - NIGHT

Harrison's barricaded in the restroom, FaceTiming with Steph.

HARRISON

They're super nice, I promise.

STEPH

I'm sensing a "but" here.

HARRISON

But they are kind of weird.

STEPH

There we go.

HARRISON

They're also, like, ridiculously  
wealthy.

STEPH

Sounds like you hit the jackpot.  
See if they'll buy you something  
dope for Christmas, like gold bars  
or a yacht.

KNOCK KNOCK.

HARRISON

I've got to go.

STEPH

Are they monitoring you? Blink twice if you need me to send the National Guard.

HARRISON

No. It's fine. I've got this.

STEPH

Love you! Don't get murdered!

Another KNOCK. Harrison hangs up, runs the faucet, then opens the door to reveal-

HARRISON

Who are you?

KACEY (30s) wipes the sleeve of her EMS jumpsuit across her sweaty forehead.

KACEY

Same question.

HARRISON

I'm Harrison.  
(a blank look)  
Emily's boyfriend.

KACEY

Oh. I'm Kacey.

HARRISON

Emily's sister! Nice to meet you.

He extends his hand. She clocks the moisture.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

I just washed my hands. I didn't piss on them. Don't know why I said that.

She pushes past him into the bathroom, running the faucet.

KACEY

Sorry, long day with my patients.

HARRISON

Are you a doctor?

KACEY

EMT. I run the clinic in town.  
Dad's not the only one in public service.

TOM (O.S.)  
How nice of you to finally join us,  
Kacey.

They turn to see Tom and the rest of the family waiting for them.

TOM (CONT'D)  
I see you met Hamilton-

HARRISON  
Harrison.

TOM  
-Harrison.

KACEY  
Always nice to meet Emily's  
boyfriends.

She glares at her sister.

KACEY (CONT'D)  
We'll see if this one sticks  
around.

GONG. An ancient GRANDFATHER CLOCK chimes at the end of the hallway. The mood in the room shifts immediately.

TOM  
You heard the clock, folks! Time to  
get going to the pageant!

JAMES/ISABELLE/EMILY  
Pageant! Pageant! Pageant!

Harrison looks at Kacey, who gives him an pitying look.

KACEY  
Got to get to my next shift.

HARRISON  
You're not coming?

KACEY  
Not my scene. Good luck.

INT. BALLARD FAMILY HOME - GUEST ROOM - NIGHT

Harrison slips on his coat while Emily lounges on the bed.

HARRISON  
Your family's nice.

EMILY

Aren't they? Daddy and mother are  
so warm and welcoming.

HARRISON

...Sure.

EMILY

Something wrong, babe?

HARRISON

No, nothing. Just heard an awful  
lot about Nathan tonight.

EMILY

Oh, him? He's no one.

HARRISON

Promise?

EMILY

Promise.

Out of the corner of his eye, he catches a glimpse of Kacey  
smiling bemusedly in the hallway.

EXT. SUMMIT VALLEY - TOWN SQUARE - NIGHT

The town is truly beautiful. People, dressed in their  
Christmas best, stream towards a large set of bleachers  
erected in the town square.

Tom at a podium in front of a massive, unlit CHRISTMAS TREE.  
Harrison, Emily and the rest of the family stand behind him.

TOM

Hello, Summit Valley!

CROWD

Hello Mayor Tom!

TOM

Thank all of you for coming out  
tonight. And what a night it is.

Happy murmurs from the crowd.

TOM (CONT'D)

We all know how lucky we are to not  
have the problems that others do.  
We love each other. We respect each  
other.

(MORE)

TOM (CONT'D)

And, most importantly of all, we forgive each other. Take Dave and Sandy here.

A middle-aged man and woman step out from the crowd.

TOM (CONT'D)

Earlier this year, they both came to me. See, it turns out they couldn't decide who owned that beautiful old peach tree right between their houses.

DAVE

That's my tree.

SANDY

Over my dead body!

The townspeople LAUGH.

TOM

But don't you think they should put all that behind them? Isn't that the spirit of the season?

The crows CHEERS as Dave and Sandy walk into the clearing. Harrison is getting caught up in the spirit of the pageant - it's magical.

TOM (CONT'D)

What do you say, folks? Do you want to see them settle this silly argument once and for all?

Much louder cheering. But this time, it's a bit more menacing. In the clearing, Dave and Sandy HUG each other.

HARRISON

Aww.

From the crowd, Maggie, Gus and Jacked Santa all glare at Harrison grinning on the stage like an idiot.

TOM

Well then, let the pageant begin!

Tom hits a button on his lectern. Music kicks in: a spirited version of JOY TO THE WORLD. The Christmas tree lights up like a Roman Candle.

And down below them, Sandy winds up and **PUNCHES DAVE RIGHT IN HIS JAW.**

HARRISON  
WHAT THE FUCK?

TOM  
Merry Christmas everyone!

Dave SCREAMS, dive tackling Sandy into the frozen grass. She flips him over, pummeling his face.

SANDY  
Those are my peaches you sack of shit!

DAVE  
Then you can eat them in hell!

He shoves Sandy off of him, springing to his feet. She sweeps his legs, bringing him crashing back down. The crowd SCREAMS with ecstasy as they grapple.

On the stage, Harrison's frozen in complete horror.

HARRISON  
No. No no no no.

Emily laughs, squeezing his hand.

EMILY  
My money's on Sandy.

Sandy lets our a ROAR, then delivers the knockout blow.

EMILY (CONT'D)  
Called it!

Harrison stands there in complete shock. His ears ring. His vision blurs. Holy fuck, what did he get himself into?

INT. BALLARD FAMILY HOME - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Harrison sits at the dining table, still shell shocked, as the Ballards tear into the bird like ravenous beasts.

JAMES  
...So I tell the dean it's not cultural appropriation, it's just a dark tan!

The whole table laughs, except for Harrison, who looks like he saw a ghost made out of nightmares.

TOM  
Harrison, you play any football at  
Penn State?

HARRISON  
Huh?

JUDITH  
James is the captain of the Yale  
rugby team.

JAMES  
You should play with us sometime.

ISABELLE  
Don't be silly, James. Look at him.  
You guys would eat him alive.

Emily slides her arm around Harrison's shoulder.

EMILY  
Nuh uh. My boyfriend could totally  
hang. Isn't that right, babe?

HARRISON  
Uh huh.

EMILY  
See? He's totally down. Whenever,  
wherever.

James WINKS at Harrison.

JAMES  
Could be fun.

Harrison stares down at his food, less hungry than he's ever  
been before in his life.

INT. BALLARD FAMILY HOME - GUEST ROOM - NIGHT

Harrison lays in bed, FaceTiming with Steph.

HARRISON  
This town, they...

STEPH  
What is it, a cult?

HARRISON  
No.

STEPH  
Satanic ritual?

HARRISON  
No. They started-

STEPH  
Fucking each other?

HARRISON  
No! They were fighting. Like, fist  
fighting.

STEPH  
Huh. That's new.

There's a loud MOAN from the next room, along with the sound  
of vigorous love making.

STEPH (CONT'D)  
You sure they're not also fucking  
each other?

HARRISON  
That's Emily's brother and his  
fiancée. It's bullshit. Her parents  
won't even let us stay in the same  
room and those two are going at it  
like overeducated rabbits.

ISABELLE (O.S.)  
Not in my hair!

HARRISON  
Jesus, how did I get myself into  
this situation?

STEPH  
Want my advice? Leave. Like, right  
now.

HARRISON  
Steph-

STEPH  
Get your shit, pack up the car, and  
bail. It'll be like it was all a  
bad dream.

HARRISON  
I wish I could.

STEPH  
That's the great part. You can.

HARRISON

But I really, really like this  
girl.

STEPH

Stop thinking with your dick!

HARRISON

I'm not! I'm thinking with my heart  
AND my dick!

STEPH

You can find another girlfriend,  
dude. That's what the internet is  
for.

HARRISON

No. I love Emily.

STEPH

Yeah, and you'll love the next one  
even more, because she won't come  
from a town full of violent  
psychopaths!

HARRISON

Maybe I'm overthinking this. Maybe  
I just need to, I don't know,  
expand my horizons.

STEPH

They're punching each other. In the  
face. For fun.

HARRISON

Who am I to judge?

Steph SIGHS.

STEPH

Honestly, dude? You can do better.  
Trust me.

HARRISON

I don't want "better." I want her.

STEPH

I hope you know what you're getting  
yourself into.

HARRISON

Trust me. I do.

KNOCK KNOCK.

STEPH  
For the love of God, be careful.

Harrison hangs up, crossing to the door. He lets out a deep breath.

HARRISON  
It's ok. I got this.

He opens the door, revealing-

HARRISON (CONT'D)  
Kacey?

KACEY  
I bet you have a lot of questions.

HARRISON  
You have no idea.

INT. BALLARD FAMILY HOME - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Kacey pours whiskey into two glasses. She hands one to Harrison, who's trying to bury his feelings in an ice cream sandwich.

HARRISON  
So what is this?

KACEY  
It's kind of complicated.

HARRISON  
No shit.

KACEY  
You know how this town is the friendliest town in America?

HARRISON  
Yeah. It literally says that on your welcome sign.

KACEY  
Well, there's a reason for that.

HARRISON  
Enlighten me.

KACEY  
Decades ago, Summit Valley was like any other small town.  
(MORE)

KACEY (CONT'D)

People treated each other like garbage, everyone was angry. It wasn't a great place to live. Tourism cratered, downtown was falling apart, just a real death spiral.

HARRISON

So what? That happened to tons of small towns.

KACEY

The mayor - my great grandfather - came up with a solution. Instead of people being pissed off all the time, they swallowed their pride and saved any disputes they had for the three days leading up to Christmas. And then they got a chance to let out their rage. Hence, the pageant.

HARRISON

...Seriously?

KACEY

The idea was that everyone would settle their arguments and go into Christmas as happy, friendly neighbors.

HARRISON

Ok. Sure.

KACEY

But there's rules. It's not a free-for-all.

HARRISON

Oh, of course. Wouldn't want to think the neighborhood fighting tournament was uncivilized.

INT. BALLARD FAMILY HOME - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Kacey takes a sip of her whisky while Harrison fidgets nervously in an arm chair.

KACEY

Number one: the fight ends when one person admits they're wrong. Every fight needs a winner and a loser.

HARRISON  
Makes sense.

KACEY  
Knocking them out also counts as  
winning.

HARRISON  
Ah jeez.

KACEY  
And no weapons. You can only use  
what you've got attached to you.  
Makes it more personal that way.

HARRISON  
Uh huh.

KACEY  
Number two: as much as you may want  
to, no immediate family members. No  
moms, dads, brothers or sisters.  
Cousins are kind of a grey area.

HARRISON  
Why?

KACEY  
Because some wounds stick around  
even after the argument is settled.

HARRISON  
So you've never fought James or  
Emily?

KACEY  
Unfortunately no. Rule number  
three: what happens in town, stays  
in town.

HARRISON  
Yeah, this seems like the kind of  
thing the outside world wouldn't  
exactly approve of.

KACEY  
And do you think they'd believe you  
if you told them?

HARRISON  
Nope.

KACEY

It's my dad's way of keeping the peace.

HARRISON

So this is something of a family tradition?

KACEY

Yeah. The town seems to love it. And they keep voting for him, so I guess they think he's doing something right.

HARRISON

Sounds like a real man of the people

KACEY

There's been an un-broken line of Ballard mayoral succession since our great grandfather.

HARRISON

But isn't this all...

KACEY

Insane?

HARRISON

I was going to say bugnut banana pants, but yeah, insane is much more succinct.

KACEY

It is. But it's also tradition.

HARRISON

Do you partake?

KACEY

God no. I usually try to skip town around the holidays.

HARRISON

But you're here.

KACEY

My coworkers beat me to the punch this year.

She takes a sip of whiskey.

HARRISON

You seem, and don't take this the wrong way, way too normal and smart to be here.

Kacey blushes.

KACEY

I guess I'm the only person in the county actually trying to save lives this week.

INT. BALLARD FAMILY HOME - HALLWAY - NIGHT

They stroll down the hallway, Harrison eating another ice cream sandwich.

HARRISON

And the rest of your family is into this?

KACEY

Yup. They really seem to get off on seeing their friends and neighbors kicking the shit out of each other.

HARRISON

So if I stick it out, they'll respect me.

KACEY

That's your takeaway from all this?

They arrive at his bedroom.

KACEY (CONT'D)

A little advice. You're in love with my sister, right?

HARRISON

Yes.

KACEY

Then try not to piss anyone off and maybe you'll be a part of this family sooner rather than later.

HARRISON

Uh...

KACEY

What?

HARRISON

What if I already made a couple of  
enemies?

Kacey LAUGHS.

KACEY

Wow. You work fast.

HARRISON

I didn't know the rules!

KACEY

Honestly? I'm impressed.

HARRISON

Thanks. I'll take that to heart  
when I'm spitting out my own teeth.

EXT. SUMMIT VALLEY - TOWN SQUARE - DAY

Tom glad-hands his constituents as the family strolls through town.

TOM

Merle, great to see you buddy...  
Keisha! That sure is one healthy  
looking pup you've got... Big Nick,  
coming through!

Emily and Harrison trail behind him. Harrison looks like a wreck.

EMILY

The Silver Dollar has the BEST  
pancakes. You're going to love  
them.

HARRISON

Emily, listen, I-

EMILY

I was thinking about last night.

HARRISON

Yeah, me too. Couldn't stop  
thinking about it, actually.

EMILY

I know it can be a lot to handle. I  
should have told you about it, but-

HARRISON  
Rule number three.

Emily cocks her eyebrow.

HARRISON (CONT'D)  
I... heard someone talking about  
it.

EMILY  
I know our traditions may seem a  
little strange.

HARRISON  
A little?

She stops, taking both of his hands.

EMILY  
And if you want to leave, I  
completely understand.

Harrison considers it for a moment. He looks into her eyes - the same eyes he fell in love with at the bar, then shakes his head.

HARRISON  
No. It's totally cool.

EMILY  
Are you sure?

HARRISON  
Completely. So your town comes  
together once a year to beat each  
other up. Is it really that  
different than running with the  
bulls or eating your weight in hot  
dogs or any of the other insane  
shit people do?

Emily squeezes his hands.

EMILY  
I don't care what daddy says. I  
know you're a fighter.

HARRISON  
Wait, he what now?

EMILY  
And you really do have the cutest  
little hands.

HARRISON

They're the size of normal adult  
male hands!

EMILY

(ignoring him)

I knew you were up for it.

They continue down the street.

HARRISON

Although, as long as we're on the  
subject, there's a lot you didn't  
tell me.

EMILY

Like what?

HARRISON

Like the fact that your parents are  
loaded.

EMILY

I didn't think it mattered.

HARRISON

Such a rich person thing to say.

EMILY

I don't want people treating me  
differently just because I come  
from means.

HARRISON

I kind of figured it out, but you  
never told me.

EMILY

How did you know?

HARRISON

When I asked you what your favorite  
brand of bologna is, you said "ours  
was not a luncheon meat household."

EMILY

Touché.

HARRISON

Also a very rich person thing to  
say.

EXT. SUMMIT VALLEY - MARKET - DAY

A group of carolers serenade the town from a street corner.

CAROLERS

*God rest ye merry gentlemen/ Let  
nothing you dismay/ For Jesus  
Christ our savior/ Was born upon  
this day/*

Tom exits the market with a large cup of hot cocoa, handing it to Harrison.

HARRISON

Thanks.

TOM

Acquainting yourself with our humble little berg?

HARRISON

Yeah. It's beautiful. And normal. Totally normal.

TOM

(laughing)

Relax, Harrison. We like to have a little fun around here.

HARRISON

Totally.

TOM

We're the friendliest town in America, after all.

HARRISON

Do you ever, uh, take part in the festivities?

TOM

You know? I don't. But only because no one ever seems to have a problem with me.

HARRISON

That's reassuring.

TOM

Trust me, Harrison. Stick with me, and everything will be-

MAGGIE (O.S.)  
I want a piece of that little  
bitch!

The family stops cold. Maggie, the teenage stock girl from the market, stares Harrison down. He looks around, unsure.

HARRISON  
Did you mean Tom or-

MAGGIE  
You, needle dick.

Tom gives Harrison a grin.

TOM  
Already made yourself popular, I  
see.

Maggie bee-lines for them.

MAGGIE  
This guy was a complete jerk to me  
in the store last night.

HARRISON  
I didn't mean to yell at you! You  
just weren't being that helpful.

MAGGIE  
Are you saying I'm bad at my job?

HARRISON  
Kind of? You couldn't tell me where  
the candles were.

MAGGIE  
I swear to God-

Tom steps between.

TOM  
Woah! Hey, come on now, Maggie.  
Let's settle this like reasonable  
people.

MAGGIE  
Yeah, sure Mayor Tom.  
(to Harrison)  
I'm going to eat your bones.

HARRISON  
The fuck?

CAROLERS (O.S.)  
*O tidings of comfort and joy/*

EXT. SUMMIT VALLEY - SKATING POND - DAY

A large crowd has gathered to watch the carnage. Harrison stands on one edge of the pond, Maggie on the other.

HARRISON  
 This is insane! I don't want to punch a girl!

MAGGIE  
 And I don't want to beat up a pussy, but that seems to be on my agenda today.

Harrison looks at Emily, pleading.

HARRISON  
 This isn't real, right? She's a teenager!

EMILY  
 A teenager you picked a fight with.

HARRISON  
 I didn't mean to!

MAGGIE  
 Let's get this show on the road. I have PSATs to take.

Tom steps up in front of the crowd.

TOM  
 Sounds like a real he-said, she-said situation folks.

Mild LAUGHTER.

TOM (CONT'D)  
 Well, let's get to it! You know the rules. Whoever apologizes loses.

HARRISON  
 Wait, I can apologize?

EMILY  
 Yeah, if you did anything wrong.

She stares him down. He's not wiggling out of this one.

HARRISON

I didn't.

EMILY

That's my guy.

HARRISON

(to Tom)

Question.

TOM

Yes?

HARRISON

What about them?

Harrison points across the pond to a YOUTH SKATING CLINIC.

TOM

The pond was double booked. Try and  
keep your distance.

MAGGIE

Enough! I'm gonna smash his face  
in!

Tom gives the crowd a winking look.

TOM

You heard the lady. Begin!

Harrison awkwardly waddles out towards center ice.

HARRISON

Look, it's just you and me out  
here. We can talk about this.

Maggie looks unsure.

MAGGIE

Oh yeah?

HARRISON

I know we had a bit of a  
misunderstanding, but I don't think  
there's any reason we can't-

Maggie head butts him in the nose.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

Fuck!

She kicks him in the shin, dropping Harrison to the ice.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

Hey!

MAGGIE

Say you're wrong.

HARRISON

No!

She lifts her leg high, bringing her heel down hard towards Harrison's nuts. He splits his legs, her heel punching a large CRACK in the ice.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

Not cool!

Harrison scuttles back. Maggie glides across the ice, grabbing him by the hair.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

Let go of me!

She tugs hard, sending Harrison spiraling across the ice and directly towards-

The child skaters.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

Look out!

The children skate past him, fast, blades slicing up the ice. He tries his best to move out of the way. A CHILD SKATER comes perilously close to slicing off his ear.

CHILD SKATER

Watch where you're going, boomer.

HARRISON

I'm twenty eight!

Maggie slides past the kids, coming to a stop above Harrison.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

I'm not going to hit you.

MAGGIE

Great.

She starts wailing on him. Harrison looks over to Emily, who's chanting along with the crowd. Even the kids are getting in on it.

CROWD

Fight! Fight! Fight!

SKATERS  
Fight! Fight! Fight!

CHILD SKATER  
Eat his bones!

Harrison lightly shoves Maggie. She loses her footing, slipping backwards on the ice and banging the back of her head.

HARRISON  
Oh my God. I'm so sorry! Are you ok?

Her eyes slam open. She spins, pushing herself on her stomach towards Harrison like a murderous penguin.

HARRISON (CONT'D)  
Screw this.

Harrison gets to his feet, doing his awkward best to run away from her. She pushes herself up, gaining on him.

HARRISON (CONT'D)  
Shit shit shit.

He makes it to center ice but loses his footing, crashing onto his chest and sliding towards-

The crack in the ice.

HARRISON (CONT'D)  
Huh.

Maggie closes the gap quickly. She lifts her heel again, going for the knockout blow. As she brings it down, he pushes himself backwards across the ice.

Her foot punches THROUGH the ice. It splinters, sending her plunging into the freezing water.

MAGGIE  
Aah!

The crowd gets nervous. Tom look to Emily.

TOM  
Call your sister.

On the ice, Harrison scoots towards the hole.

MAGGIE  
Help me!

Harrison wedges himself against the open hole, reaching down and grabbing her hand.

HARRISON

Come on.

He HEAVES, pulling the teenager out of the pond. She flops on her back, catching her breath.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

Are you ok?

MAGGIE

Gaaaaaaah!

She lunges for Harrison one last time. He SCREAMS, kicking her back into the ice hole.

HARRISON

Sorry.

He reaches back down, pulling her out.

MAGGIE

Thank... you...

HARRISON

Do you still want to kick my ass?

MAGGIE

No.

HARRISON

We cool?

MAGGIE

Yeah. Fine. You win.

Harrison looks to Tom and Emily.

HARRISON

So what do I do-

TOM

We have a winner!

The crowd CHEERS. Harrison can't help but smile.

INT. SILVER DOLLAR DINER - DAY

Harrison sits at the head of a large table, wolfing down a stack of pancakes. He's receiving a hero's welcome - all eyes in the restaurant are on this awesome new outsider.

At the other end of the table, James is recounting Harrison's victory to Isabelle.

JAMES

...And then she was all "sploosh"  
and he was all "take my hand if you  
want to live!"

Harrison shakes his head at the story already spinning out of control. Tom puts his hand on Harrison's shoulder.

TOM

Great job out there, son.

HARRISON

Thanks, Tom.

Tom gives him a cock-eyed look.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

Thanks, Mayor Tom.

TOM

You're a winner. We like winners.

Harrison's heart swells as Judith slides another plate of pancakes in front of him.

JUDITH

Our little champion needs to eat  
up.

Harrison leans towards Emily.

HARRISON

If I knew fighting a teenager would  
win your parents over, I would have  
done it much sooner.

EMILY

In all fairness, gravity and water  
did most of the work.

HARRISON

Yeah, but I helped.

NATHAN (O.S.)

Well aren't you adorable.

NATHAN (late 20s), the handsome guy from so many Ballard family photos, stands at the doorway.

NATHAN (CONT'D)  
You didn't tell me you had a new  
boyfriend, Emily.

EMILY  
What do you want, Nathan?

The diner goes silent. Nathan sizes up Harrison.

NATHAN  
Is this the tough guy who beat up  
Maggie?

HARRISON  
I didn't actually beat her up-

TOM  
Now now, Nathan, no reason to make  
a fuss.

Nathan straightens up at Tom's words, clearly intimidated.

NATHAN  
I was just introducing myself,  
Mayor Tom. Wanted to know what I'm  
up against.

He gets up in Harrison's face, menacing.

NATHAN (CONT'D)  
But now that I got a look at him?  
Nothing to be afraid of.

EMILY  
Nathan!

Tom pats him on the back.

TOM  
That's enough for now. Tell your  
parents we were asking about them,  
will you?

NATHAN  
Yeah, sure. See you around.

He turns, slamming the door on his way out.

EMILY  
Sorry about him.

HARRISON  
What's his deal?

EMILY

He's been a total jerk ever since  
we broke up.

HARRISON

Seems like he might actually kill  
me given the chance.

EMILY

I wouldn't worry about it. Nathan's  
harmless. I mean, sure, he's bigger  
than you, stronger than you, he  
spends most of his life in the  
gym...

HARRISON

Really hope there's a "but."

EMILY

But he's all talk. Those muscles  
are for show. And anyway, even if  
you two did fight, you'd kick his  
ass.

Harrison clocks Tom and Judith watching him. Do they want him to... do something? Harrison hops up.

HARRISON

Excuse me.

He rushes for the door.

EXT. SILVER DOLLAR DINER - DAY

Harrison spots Nathan across the street.

HARRISON

Hey, prick!

Nathan stops in his tracks.

NATHAN

Can I help you, pal?

HARRISON

You got a problem with me?

NATHAN

Nothing we can't solve like  
civilized men.

Harrison looks over his shoulder. Emily, Tom, Judith and the rest are all pressed against the windows of the diner, watching the confrontation. Tom gives him an appreciative nod.

HARRISON

Great.

He takes a step into the street, emboldened.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

How about have a little talk?

NATHAN

I think we're beyond talking.

HARRISON

Exactly what I was thinking. You and me-

WHOOOOSH. Harrison jumps back as the SNOW PLOW speeds past him, inches away from total obliteration.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

Fuck!

The snow plow comes to a stop. Gus rolls down his window.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

What the hell?

GUS

You again? I thought I told you to stay out of my way.

HARRISON

You've almost killed me twice in two days.

GUS

Maybe take that as a sign, young man.

Harrison looks over the hood of the truck. Nathan is gone.

HARRISON

Shit.

GUS

What'd you say to me?

HARRISON

I was in the middle of something.

GUS  
Yeah, the street.

Harrison' blood is pumping, testosterone coursing through his veins. It's a side of him we've never seen before.

HARRISON  
You wanna go? I already beat up a teenage girl, an old man shouldn't be a problem  
(sotto)  
That doesn't sound great.

GUS  
Gladly. How about you and me have ourselves a little conversation at-

Tom grins from the restaurant window.

GUS (CONT'D)  
-The Christmas Tree Farm?

EXT. CHRISTMAS TREE FARM - DAY

A crowd of townspeople have gathered around a small clearing amidst the pine trees. Emily gives Harrison a kiss on the cheek.

EMILY  
You've got this.

HARRISON  
Thanks. Hey, maybe after this, maybe you and I can grab a bite to eat. Alone.

Gus, sans shirt, points at Harrison.

GUS  
Come at me, baby paws!

HARRISON  
What is it with people in this town commenting on the size of my hands?

GUS  
It means your dick's small.

HARRISON  
I got that part.

Harrison squares up.

EMILY

Demolish him.

HARRISON

Gladly.

TOM

You know the rules, fellas. First one to yield or get knocked out loses.

The old man spits on the ground.

GUS

By the time I'm done with you I'm going to be wearing you like a hat.

HARRISON

That doesn't sound pleasant for either of us.

TOM

And... begin!

Harrison inches closer to Gus, fists raised.

HARRISON

Listen, you old fuck. I'm gonna give you one last chance to apologize before I turn your guts into-

Gus kicks Harrison square in the dick.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

Aaah!

Harrison drops to his knees. Gus grabs a handful of snow and blows it into Harrison's face.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

Hey!

Harrison swings his arms, blinded. He wipes the snow from his eyes-

But Gus is gone.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

What the...

GUS (O.S.)

Come and get me.

His voice carries from the trees. Harrison hesitates for a moment.

EMILY

What are you waiting for? Go kick his ass!

HARRISON

Aaaaaaah!

Harrison charges into the trees. Suddenly, he's alone. Isolated. Cut off. Surrounded by what seems like endless pine trees.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

Come out, old man.

He hears a CRUNCH behind him. Harrison turns -

But there's no one there.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

Where are-

SLAP. Gus' hand smacks Harrison in the face.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

Quit it!

Harrison turns, but he's still alone. He hears a RUSTLING in the branches. Hands up, he approaches a tree.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

You can't hide forever.

A branch flies out, hitting him in the nose.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

Shit!

GUS (O.S.)

You'll never catch me.

Harrison looks around. Still isolated.

WHAP.

A PINECONE hits Harrison in the forehead. He looks up. Gus is on top of a twelve footer.

HARRISON

How in the fuck?

GUS  
Bombs away!

He pelts Harrison with a handful of pinecones.

HARRISON  
No weapons!

GUS  
They're pinecones, dipshit!

Harrison dodges, running through the trees. Branches slap him, needles tear at him.

It's hell.

And once again, he's alone. Harrison doubles over, trying his hardest to catch his breath.

HARRISON  
This is it. This is how I die.  
Beaten to death by an old man on a  
Christmas tree farm.

A pair of hands push him backwards, causing Harrison to stumble over an exposed root. He lands on his tailbone, hard. Before he can process it, Gus is on top of him, landing blow after blow.

GUS  
This will teach you... to get in my  
way... when I'm trying to work!

Harrison SHOVES him off.

HARRISON  
You almost killed me! And worse,  
you almost killed my fiancée.

Gus looks puzzled.

GUS  
You're engaged to the Mayor's  
daughter?

HARRISON  
I mean, not yet, but I'm working my  
way up to it.

GUS  
The day you marry that girl is the  
day I hang up my boots.

HARRISON

Both are coming sooner than you  
think.

Harrison CHARGES the old man, shoving him through a ticket of trees.

They emerge on the other side, in full view of the crowd. The townspeople CHEER as Harrison pile drives Gus into the ground.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

Apologize!

GUS

Never!

Harrison raises his fist.

HARRISON

Do it!

GUS

Make me!

Harrison looks into the crowd. They're cheering him on. He's a hero.

And then he spots Nathan in the crowd, whispering something to Emily. She rolls her eyes, but can't hide her smile.

HARRISON

The fuck?

GUS (O.S.)

Should have finished me when you  
had the chance.

He turns back to Gus, who's on his feet and grinning like a jack o'lantern.

HARRISON

Oh come on.

BLAM. Gus clobbers Harrison with a haymaker. Harrison collapses to the ground, world fading to black.

INT. CLINIC - DAY

Harrison GASPS, sitting upright under harsh fluorescent lights.

HARRISON  
What the- Where am I?

Kacey pops her head in from the other room.

KACEY  
Oh good, you're not dead.

HARRISON  
What happened?

KACEY  
You got knocked out by a man who  
was born during the Hoover  
administration.

Harrison holds his head in his hands.

HARRISON  
My head is killing me.

KACEY  
Makes sense. You're concussed.

HARRISON  
That's not great.

KACEY  
You'll be ok in a day or so. Try  
not to do any strenuous activity.  
Or think too hard. Something tells  
me that won't be a problem.

HARRISON  
Where's everyone else?

KACEY  
Back at the house.

Harrison slumps down.

HARRISON  
I was so close.

KACEY  
Can I ask you a question? As a  
medical professional?

HARRISON  
Sure.

KACEY  
Why are you still here?

HARRISON  
Because I love your sister.

Kacey looks at him for a moment, then bursts out laughing.

KACEY  
Oh shit, you're being serious.

HARRISON  
I am!

KACEY  
Don't get me wrong, Emily is great  
in small doses. But surely she's  
not worth traumatic brain injury.

HARRISON  
She is to me.

KACEY  
Bullshit.

HARRISON  
Hey!

KACEY  
You can just leave. You know that,  
right? Go home and spend Christmas  
with the people who love you  
instead of letting strangers treat  
you like a punching bag.

HARRISON  
I... I don't really have that.

Kacey pauses.

KACEY  
I'm sorry, I-

HARRISON  
Life's been real tough since I lost  
my mom. This whole fucking month  
I'm told that Christmas is about  
family and the people you love. And  
the fucked up thing is, even when  
I'm with my cousin and her folks, I  
see what they have and it makes me  
miss what I lost even more. What if  
the only way to get what I used to  
have is to do... this?

KACEY

Well, "this" has a real chance of giving you permanent brain damage.

HARRISON

Then that's my choice to make.

The door swings open. Emily rushes in.

EMILY

Oh, babe, I'm so happy you're awake.

HARRISON

Just a little bump to the head.

Emily looks at her sister.

EMILY

Thanks for taking care of him.

KACEY

Emily, you can't let him fight anymore. For his own sake.

EMILY

He's a grown man. He doesn't need protecting.

She hugs Harrison.

EMILY (CONT'D)

Come on. Let's get dinner. You and me.

She helps him up. Kacey watches them go, a mix of sadness and worry on her face.

INT. FANCY RESTAURANT - NIGHT

A waiter pours wine as Harrison reclines in his seat.

EMILY

You look rough.

HARRISON

You should see the other guy.

EMILY

I'm proud of you.

HARRISON

Why? I lost.

EMILY

But you fought. Like, actually  
fought.

HARRISON

What do your parents think?

EMILY

They... appreciate your effort.

He looks at Emily - she's stunning in the candlelight. He fumbles with his jacket pocket, checking on the ring.

HARRISON

You know how much I love you,  
right?

EMILY

I do.

HARRISON

This has really been the best year  
of my life.

EMILY

Yeah, it's been pretty fun.

HARRISON

And I didn't know if this was the  
right time but then you invited me  
up to meet your parents and  
everything seems perfect, you know?

Emily's mouth drops.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

I want every year for the rest of  
our lives to be as great as this  
one was. And we can do that,  
together.

He gets out of his chair, getting on one knee. Emily GASPS.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

Emily Dianne Ballard, will you  
marry-

NATHAN (O.S.)

Oh my God, is he proposing?

Nathan, seated with a DATE a few tables away, wears the  
biggest shit eating grin.

NATHAN (CONT'D)  
Sorry. Didn't mean to interrupt.  
Interested to see how all this  
plays out.

Harrison goes beet red.

NATHAN (CONT'D)  
You might be barking up the wrong  
tree. As memory serves, Emily isn't  
really into that sort of thing.

EMILY  
Nathan!

Harrison springs to his feet, wheeling on Nathan.

HARRISON  
Seriously, dick hole. What's your  
problem with me?

NATHAN  
Just saving you the hassle of a  
rejection, bro. You don't belong  
here.

HARRISON  
I do a whole hell of a lot more  
than you do.

NATHAN  
You want a piece?

HARRISON  
Yeah, I do. You and me. Tomorrow  
morning. We're settling this.

Nathan gets right up in his face.

NATHAN  
Snow globe. 9 o'clock.

HARRISON  
Looking forward to it.

NATHAN  
Merry Christmas.

INT. BALLARD FAMILY HOME - GUEST ROOM - NIGHT

Emily kisses Harrison.

EMILY

Thanks for standing up for me.

HARRISON

You're welcome. It's kind of my  
thing now.

EMILY

So, about what you were going to  
ask me earlier...

HARRISON

God, I'm so sorry that happened.  
It's so embarrassing.

EMILY

It wasn't ideal.

HARRISON

But I'm going to make it up to you.  
I'm going to do it right. Promise.

She kisses him.

EMILY

Good night, Harrison.

HARRISON

Good night, Emily.

She departs. Harrison flops down in the bed, physically and  
emotionally drained.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. BALLARD FAMILY HOME - GUEST ROOM - LATER

Harrison lays in the same position in the dark, wide awake.

HARRISON

Screw this.

He hops out of bed, throwing on a sweater.

INT. BALLARD FAMILY HOME - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Harrison tiptoes through the hallway, trying to stay quiet.  
From down the hall, he hears a low, rhythmic THUMPING.

HARRISON

What the-

Suddenly, MOANS and SCREAMS. James is absolutely railing Isabelle in their bedroom.

HARRISON (CONT'D)  
So unfair.

He creeps down the hallway towards Emily's door. At the end of the hall, a LIGHT comes on.

HARRISON (CONT'D)  
Shit.

He ducks into a room, shutting the door quietly behind him.

INT. BALLARD FAMILY HOME - OFFICE - NIGHT

Tom's office is magnificently appointed. Harrison's impressed - this is a man who knows what he's doing. He spots more family photos on the walls, including one of a teenage Kacey.

In a MARTIAL ARTS GI.

HARRISON  
What the-

He leans in closer to inspect the photo. It's Kacey with her parents and a massive trophy - "State Judo Champion 2010."

HARRISON (CONT'D)  
Huh. Kacey, you are full of surprises.

Harrison crosses to Tom's desk, sitting down in the massive leather office chair. He feels powerful in a way he hasn't before.

HARRISON (CONT'D)  
This is the life.

He spots a piece of paper jammed into the top of a shredder under Tom's desk.

PRECINCT REPORTS.

HARRISON (CONT'D)  
Huh?

He pulls a paper towards him, looking closer. They're voting tabulations. But the numbers are off. Tom's not winning by eighty five percent. He's losing by twelve.

HARRISON (CONT'D)  
What the...

He hears muffled VOICES from the hallway, coming towards the office.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

Ah, crap.

He spots a closet door ajar, rushing over and smushing himself in amongst the office supplies. He closes the door just as-

Tom and Judith enter.

TOM

...But I really thought he was  
really going to be something.

JUDITH

I like Nathan so much more.

TOM

Now there's a winner.

JUDITH

It's a shame she couldn't make it  
work.

TOM

That's Emily for you.

JUDITH

But this Harrison... I'm not sure  
he's Ballard material.

TOM

He tries hard.

JUDITH

Too hard. It's embarrassing.

Harrison holds in a tear.

TOM

And he's spending a lot of time  
with Kacey.

JUDITH

Maybe that's a good thing. He could  
bring her back into the fold.

TOM

You know our daughter. Such a mind  
of her own.

JUDITH

I'm afraid you're right. She always  
was one to stray from the flock.

TOM

That's a nice way of calling her an  
ungrateful little shit.

JUDITH

I always had a way with words.  
Maybe I should have been the  
politician.

Tom rummages in his desk, grabbing a blue pill bottle.

TOM

Bingo.

JUDITH

Don't be too long now.

She leaves as Tom pops a pill. He reclines in his chair-  
And notices the papers sticking out of the shredder.

TOM

Shit.

He jostles the paper, feeding it into the shredder.

JUDITH (O.S.)

Whenever you're ready.

WHIRR. The shredder destroys the evidence. Tom grins, exiting  
the room. After a moment, Harrison falls out of the closet.

HARRISON

Oh my God.

A loud THUMPING from the next room.

ISABELLE (O.S.)

Oh my God!

HARRISON

Everyone in this house is getting  
laid but me.

INT. GIANT SNOW GLOBE - DAY

Harrison stands in an eerily-quiet Christmas scene. Twenty  
yards away from him is Nathan, grunting like a bull.

They're inside a giant plastic SNOW GLOBE, with the Ballards and the rest of the town watching from outside like hungry jackals. Tom stands in front of a DJ booth-like set-up.

TOM  
(muffled)  
You boys ready?

Harrison looks at Nathan, then back at Tom.

HARRISON  
Yeah.

NATHAN  
Hold on a second.

Nathan fiddles with his Apple watch.

HARRISON  
Seriously, dude?

NATHAN  
Gotta track the workout. Do you  
think this counts as yoga?

HARRISON  
...No.

NATHAN  
Wait. Found it.

He looks up from his watch, face glowing.

NATHAN (CONT'D)  
HIIT.

HARRISON  
God I hate you.

NATHAN  
So how about I turn your face into  
a new asshole?

HARRISON  
Woah! Too far!

TOM  
(muffled)  
Begin!

The carolers behind him launch into a spirited rendition of "The Twelve Days of Christmas."

CAROLERS

*On the first day of Christmas, my  
true love gave to me/ A partridge  
in a pear tree.*

Nathan SCREAMS, sprinting towards Harrison.

HARRISON

(sotto)

You got this.

Harrison ROARS, rushing Nathan. Nathan hops over a plastic reindeer and dodges an inflatable Santa, closing in on his prey.

NATHAN

You don't belong here!

HARRISON

I do a lot more than you!

Nathan tackles Harrison, sending him sprawling on the ground.

NATHAN

You show up, unannounced, making my life worse.

HARRISON

I didn't know you existed until yesterday!

CAROLERS (O.S.)

*Two turtle doves/ And a partridge  
in a pear tree.*

Outside the bubble-

TOM

What do you say, folks? Should we show them the real spirit of Christmas?

The crowd CHEERS. Tom grins demonically, pushing a button on his console.

Inside the globe, Nathan's on top of Harrison, slapping him.

NATHAN

Give up. She still loves me. I know it.

HARRISON

Stop slapping me!

There's a loud RUMBLE.

NATHAN  
What the-

CAROLERS (O.S.)  
*On the fifth day of Christmas, my  
true love gave to me/ FIVE GOLDEN  
RINGS.*

Nathan's blasted with a jet of SNOW, flying off of Harrison. Harrison gets up, steadying himself in the maelstrom.

HARRISON  
Hey, Nathan-

Harrison smirks.

HARRISON (CONT'D)  
-Chill out.

Nathan leaps up, furious.

NATHAN  
It's not fair!

HARRISON  
Well, life's not exactly fair. You  
think I want to be spending  
Christmas in the middle of bumfuck  
nowhere fighting my girlfriend's  
jealous ex?

CAROLERS (O.S.)  
*Two turtle doves-*

They're blasted by another wallop of snow. Nathan stands firm, but Harrison stumbles.

HARRISON  
I thought we weren't allowed to use  
weapons?

NATHAN  
We're not.  
(lowers voice)  
He is.

Harrison looks at Tom, having the time of his life making their existence miserable.

TOM  
(muffled)  
Keep fighting!

Tom cranks a knob. A loud RUMBLE sounds from beneath them.

HARRISON  
Oh what fresh hell is this?

A massive INDOOR SKYDIVING FAN whirs to life. The snow in the globe starts circulating like a blizzard as Harrison and Nathan are lifted off their feet. Harrison smacks into the side of the globe.

HARRISON (CONT'D)  
This sucks so, so much.

Nathan pushes himself off the glass of the far wall, darting through the snow and knocking right into Harrison's gut.

HARRISON (CONT'D)  
Fuck!

Harrison grabs Nathan by the back of the shirt, launching off the wall and dragging Nathan through the air. He THROWS Nathan towards the glass. Nathan spins, absorbing the impact with his legs.

HARRISON (CONT'D)  
Expected that to work better.

Nathan RUNS up the opposite wall, making it to the top of the globe and angling himself down.

NATHAN  
You're dead!

He straightens his body, dive-bombing towards Harrison. At the last moment, Harrison twists in mid-air, barely avoiding Nathan's hurtling body.

NATHAN (CONT'D)  
Uh oh.

WHAM. Nathan smacks into the floor. The crowd GROANS.

TOM  
How about we make this a fair  
fight?

Tom turns the dial down. The fan comes to an abrupt stop.

HARRISON  
Ah-

Harrison lands hard next to Nathan.

HARRISON (CONT'D)  
Fuck!

Nathan GROANS next to him.

NATHAN  
It doesn't stop. It never stops.  
That's why I've got to fight you.

HARRISON  
We don't have to fight.

NATHAN  
I do. I have to prove I'm Ballard  
material.

HARRISON  
I've been trying to do that the  
past few days. They don't exactly  
make it easy.

NATHAN  
You understand.

HARRISON  
I do.

TOM  
(muffled)  
Punch each other!

CROWD  
(muffled)  
Fight! Fight! Fight!

Another blast of snow. Harrison rises to his feet, shivering  
and miserable.

HARRISON  
Nathan-

NATHAN  
Ahhhhh!

Nathan takes one last wild, reckless lunge towards Harrison.  
Harrison ducks him, sweeping Nathan's leg and bringing him  
down to the ground. He gets on top, fist cocked, ready to  
knock Nathan out.

TOM  
(muffled)  
Finish him!

Harrison looks at his fist, then out to the crowd. He feels disgust - is this really who he is?

HARRISON  
No.

NATHAN  
What?

HARRISON  
I'm done fighting.

NATHAN  
For real?

HARRISON  
Yeah, I think I am.

Harrison helps Nathan to his feet.

NATHAN  
What are you-

Harrison HUGS him.

NATHAN (CONT'D)  
This, uh, feels nice.

HARRISON  
It's a whole lot better than  
getting punched in the face.

Nathan drops his fighting stance.

NATHAN  
Yeah. It kind of does.

He hugs Harrison back.

NATHAN (CONT'D)  
Maybe we could be friends?

HARRISON  
I'd settle for "not actively trying  
to kill each other."

NATHAN  
I understand. I don't have a lot of  
friends.

HARRISON  
Ok. Maybe. Jesus. No promises.

Outside, the crowd starts to BOO.

TOWNIE #1  
Fuck him up!

TOWNIE #2  
Kill each other!

TOWNIE #3  
Kiss!

Tom looks FURIOUS. Harrison gives him a withering look, then glances at Emily.

TOWNIE #3 (CONT'D)  
What?

The crowd GROANS.

EXT. GIANT SNOW GLOBE - DAY

Harrison and Nathan limp out, freezing, bloodied, but otherwise feeling amazing.

HARRISON  
You know, for a guy I was pretty sure was going to stab me in my sleep, you're not that bad.

NATHAN  
If I had stabbed you, it would have been to your face.

HARRISON  
Really starting to re-think this decision.

Emily rushes towards them, lips pursed tight.

EMILY  
Harrison, can we talk?

HARRISON  
Uh, sure?

Nathan hobbles away. Emily looks like she's about to explode.

EMILY  
What the hell was that?

HARRISON

What do you mean?

EMILY

What you did in there!

HARRISON

I talked to Nathan, man to man.

EMILY

Exactly!

HARRISON

I thought this whole thing was  
about coming together as a town,  
settling arguments.

EMILY

But neither of you won!

HARRISON

We reached an understanding. Isn't  
that better?

EMILY

No! You made me look like an  
asshole!

HARRISON

Emily, calm down-

EMILY

No, Harrison! You disappointed me,  
you disappointed daddy, you  
disappointed everyone!

HARRISON

Did you really want me to fight  
another man to prove to you how  
much I love you?

EMILY

Yes! Every girl wants that!

Tom storms over, looking even less enthusiastic than his  
daughter.

TOM

What kind of stunt did you pull in  
there?

HARRISON

I used my words instead of my  
fists. That's not a bad thing.

TOM

That's not how this works. That's not how any of this works.

HARRISON

You know what, Tom? When you actually listen to people, you tend to learn a lot about them.

TOM

You insolent little shit.

HARRISON

But then again, what do I know? It's not like I keep winning office with eighty five percent of the vote.

(grinning)

Or was it thirty eight?

Tom's eyes narrow. He speaks very, very softly.

TOM

I don't know what you think you know-

HARRISON

I've been hit in the head a couple of times, so maybe my math's a little off. But thirty eight percent seems like it's a lot less than fifty.

Tom grins that politician smile, but this time he can't hide the malice.

TOM

You know how this town works, Harrison? I provide the people what they want, and they make sure a Ballard stays mayor. And sometimes they need a little help remembering how great they have it.

HARRISON

You're cheating, Tom.

TOM

I'm doing what I have to do to win, Harrison. You know, it's a real shame. I thought that you'd have figured that out by now.

Tom pulls back, putting his arm around his daughter.

TOM (CONT'D)

Your mother was right, Emily. I don't think this one is Ballard material.

Harrison looks at Emily, pleading. She hangs her head.

EMILY

He's right.

HARRISON

Fine. I know when I'm not welcome. I'm out of here.

Fighting back tears, Harrison heads for his car. Tom turns to James.

TOM

Do what has to be done.

JAMES

You got it, dad.

INT. CAR - DAY

Harrison's behind the wheel, FaceTiming with Steph. The sky above him has opened up, sending down driving snow.

HARRISON

...Which means they've been cheating for, like, decades to maintain power.

STEPH

Holy shit, Harrison.

HARRISON

I know, right?

STEPH

And here I was thinking a town-wide fight club would be the weirdest thing that happened to you this week.

HARRISON

Not even close.

A DEER leaps in front of Harrison's car. He HONKS, swerving to avoid it.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

Shit!

STEPH  
What happened?

HARRISON  
Almost hit a deer.

STEPH  
You're supposed to drive through  
them. You're more likely to die if  
you swerve.

HARRISON  
I don't want to kill it!

STEPH  
I don't want you to kill yourself!

Lights appear behind Harrison.

HARRISON  
Ugh. Some dick behind me put his  
brights on.

Harrison waves his hands.

HARRISON (CONT'D)  
Go around. Around!

The lights move closer.

HARRISON (CONT'D)  
Asshole.

Suddenly, the lights go off. Harrison sees a giant chrome  
Mercedes logo inches from him.

HARRISON (CONT'D)  
Shit!

The car slams into Harrison's bumper. He grabs the wheel,  
holding on for dear life.

HARRISON (CONT'D)  
He hit me!

STEPH  
The deer?

HARRISON  
The car!

STEPH  
Are you ok?

CRACK. Another direct hit.

HARRISON

No!

STEPH

Stay calm.

HARRISON

Stay calm? Someone's trying to  
murder me!

The Mercedes speeds up, catching the corner of Harrison's bumper. His car SPINS, hitting a guard rail.

STEPH

Harrison!

POP. The airbags deploy, slamming into Harrison's face. The last thing he sees before he passes out is James behind the wheel of a shiny silver Mercedes G Wagon.

INT. CLINIC - DAY

Harrison comes to on an examination table. Kacey's standing above him, smiling.

KACEY

Hey, look at that, you're still  
alive.

HARRISON

Why do I keep waking up here?

KACEY

I'm wondering the same thing.

HARRISON

What happened?

KACEY

You got in a wreck.

He sits up, wincing. She puts her hand on his shoulder.

KACEY (CONT'D)

You know, if you want to talk to  
me, you can just come find me.

HARRISON

How long was I out?

KACEY

A couple minutes. You've really got to stop getting concussed. Two in two days is super not good for your brain.

HARRISON

How did you find me?

KACEY

Your cousin called it in. You were still on the call when you crashed.

HARRISON

Crashed...

(realizing)

I didn't crash. I was hit.

KACEY

What?

HARRISON

I think it was your brother.

KACEY

Yeah.

HARRISON

Not the reaction I was expecting.

KACEY

My brother's an idiot, but I'm sure he got the idea from my shit head father.

HARRISON

So your family's trying to kill me?

KACEY

Probably.

HARRISON

And you saved my life.

KACEY

It's my job.

HARRISON

But, why? Why do you stay in this town? Why not leave?

KACEY

Because, as much as I hate to admit it, I'm scared. My family's here.

(MORE)

KACEY (CONT'D)

And, yeah, they're crazy, but  
they're the only one I've got.

HARRISON

That's the thing I've learned being  
on my own. Sometimes, it's better  
to choose your own family. Tell me  
something.

KACEY

What?

HARRISON

Why don't you participate in the  
pageant? I saw you used to be a  
judo champion. You've got to be a  
decent fighter, right? I mean, you  
could probably kick my ass.

KACEY

A roll of paper towels could kick  
your ass.

HARRISON

Fair enough.

Kacey sits down next to him. Surprisingly close.

KACEY

I did judo in high school. Made it  
to the state championship. But when  
I got to my final match, right as  
we were about to fight, my opponent  
dropped to the ground. She was  
having a seizure, right there on  
the mat.

She looks shaken. We've never seen this look on her before.

KACEY (CONT'D)

I tried helping her. I was  
screaming and crying, frustrated  
that there was absolutely nothing I  
could do. She was helpless. I was  
helpless.

She looks back at Harrison, determined.

KACEY (CONT'D)

But the paramedics that showed up?  
They saved that girl's life. So I  
decided "fuck this." I wasn't going  
to fight anymore.

(MORE)

KACEY (CONT'D)

I was going to do what those paramedics did. Save lives.

HARRISON

Wow.

KACEY

Yeah.

HARRISON

For what it's worth, I'm starting to realize you're the only truly good person in your family.

KACEY

And I'm starting to get what my sister sees in you.

The comment hangs in the air. Kacey gives him a look. THE look. Holy shit, is this actually going to happen?

RIIIING. The phone startles them.

KACEY (CONT'D)

I need to get that.

As she gets up-

HARRISON

Thank you, Kacey.

KACEY

For what?

HARRISON

For showing me that there's something in this town worth fighting for.

As a particularly haunting rendition of O HOLY NIGHT picks up-

TOWNSPEOPLE (O.S.)

*O holy night/ The stars are  
brightly shining/ It is the night  
of our dear savior's birth/*

--Harrison stands with Maggie in the market. He mouths "I'm sorry." They hug. Maggie smiles.

--Harrison hands Gus a sixer of beer through the window of his truck. Gus cracks a grin, opening a beer and tipping it towards Harrison with a nod.

--Harrison and Nathan hug it out in the Silver Dollar Diner. Nathan starts CRYING. Harrison, unsure about what to do, pats him on the back.

NATHAN

Thanks, Harrison. You're my best friend.

HARRISON

You're... welcome?

EXT. TOWN SQUARE - NIGHT

All the townspeople have gathered, holding candles as flurries descend on them

TOWNSPEOPLE

*Fall on your knees/ Oh hear the angels' voices/*

A figure appears cloaked in shadow at the far end of the town square.

TOWNSPEOPLE (CONT'D)

*O night divine/ O night/ O holy night.*

Harrison steps into the candlelight, looking badass for the first and only time in his life.

HARRISON

Ballards!

Harrison steps into the middle of the town square. Now all attention is on him.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

We've got a whole lot to fucking discuss.

TOM

(to James)

I thought I told you to take care of him?

JAMES

I did! I mean, I thought he was dead. I ran him off the road.

TOM

Are you insane? I meant intimidate him, not murder him!

JAMES

Sorry, dad. You should have been  
more specific.

TOM

Idiot child.

Emily rushes down from the podium.

EMILY

What are you doing here?

HARRISON

Had something I needed to get off  
my chest.

EMILY

This isn't really a good time.

HARRISON

Why did you even invite me here,  
Emily? Why did you put me through  
all this shit?

EMILY

Because I really, really thought we  
could make it work. I wanted my  
family to like you. I believed in  
you. But you're just not-

HARRISON

-Ballard material. Yeah, I got the  
hint after I got concussed, kicked  
in the dick, run off the road,  
concussed-

EMILY

You said "concussed" twice.

HARRISON

Yeah, because I got my brains  
scrambled trying to prove myself to  
your scumbag family!

TOM

That's enough, Harrison. You're  
upsetting people.

HARRISON

Oh, you want to upset people? How  
about you come clean about how  
you've been winning election after  
election?

The crowd goes completely silent.

TOM

Choose your next words very, very carefully.

HARRISON

I saw the results, Tom. You lost, fair and square. And something tells me it wasn't the first time.

TOM

I assure you, I value the democratic process of our fine town.

HARRISON

Bullshit. You're nothing but a petty tyrant.

Harrison turns to the crowd.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

This pageant isn't about letting your rage out. It's about keeping you angry all year so you won't notice the Ballard family ruling you like kings.

Maggie, listening from the crowd, glowers.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

They don't give a shit about you.

Gus' hand tightens around a snow shovel.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

They don't give a shit who they hurt.

Nathan glances up at Emily.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

All they care about is staying on top.

HUBBUB from the crowd. Harrison's making a whole lot of sense.

TOM

Please, folks, don't listen to him. He doesn't know what he's talking about.

EMILY

You need to stop, Harrison.

HARRISON

Why?

EMILY

Because you're ruining everything!

HARRISON

Emily, I promise you, your family  
ruined this town long, long before  
I ever got here.

Emily SHOVES Harrison. He falls backwards, astonished.

EMILY

You want to know why you're not one  
of us? Because you're a loser!

KACEY (O.S.)

Fuuuuuuuuuuuuck you!

SMACK. Kacey runs in, sucker punching her sister. Emily drops her candle, stumbling into a TOWNIE. The candle rolls away as the Townie loses his balance, knocking into a second townie.

TOWNIE #2

Hey, watch where you're going!

TOWNIE #1

Make me, why don't you.

Townie #2 takes a swing at Townie #1, catching him in the jaw and sending him sprawling into another one of their neighbors. The neighbor shoves Townie #1.

TOWNIE #3

Back off!

The crowd around them starts shoving.

Then throws punches.

HARRISON

That's not good.

The violence spreads like a wave, enveloping the entirety of the assembled town. Everyone is screaming decades worth of rage and resentment towards each other, punching, kicking and shoving while they do.

It's a town-wide brawl.

Emily SHOVES Kacey.

EMILY  
No family, Kacey!

KACEY  
Does it look like there's any rules  
anymore?

She's right. It's complete madness.

EMILY  
This is between me and Harrison!

KACEY  
Not anymore. I've been waiting my  
whole life for this.

They start grappling. A dozen feet away from them, Emily's candle comes to a stop under the Christmas tree. The flame ignites a decorative present, which quickly spreads to the tree itself. It's a fire fight.

Harrison picks himself up off the ground. He scans the crowd bathed in flickering orange light, trying to find Tom. His eyes land on James.

HARRISON  
Good enough.

Harrison rushes James, fist connecting with his flawless teeth. James drops, incapacitated.

HARRISON (CONT'D)  
Huh. That was easy.

ISABELLE  
Aaaaaaah!

Isabells jumps on Harrison's back, tearing into him.

HARRISON  
Get off me you slave owning psycho!

ISABELLE  
(struggling)  
They were slave SHIPS.

HARRISON  
Not better!

Harrison FLIPS her off his back, bringing her down next to James with a thud. She's not getting back up. He tries to catch his breath as he hears-

JACKED SANTA (O.S.)  
That one is mine!

He turns to find Jacked Santa beckoning him towards him.

HARRISON  
Oh, come on.

JACKED SANTA  
You and me, buck-o.

HARRISON  
Can't we call a truce?

Jacked Santa RIPS a leg off his Salvation Army tripod, swinging the change-filled kettle around his body like a flail.

HARRISON (CONT'D)  
I thought you couldn't use weapons?

Jacked Santa gestures to the chaos swirling around them.

HARRISON (CONT'D)  
Right. Anarchy.

JACKED SANTA  
I'm gonna jingle your bells.

HARRISON  
Does that mean... you're gonna jerk  
me off?

JACKED SANTA  
What? No. What's wrong with you?

HARRISON  
Just, in context, that's what it  
sounded like.

Jacked Santa rockets the metal bucket towards Harrison, who barely dodges it.

HARRISON (CONT'D)  
Fuck this.

Harrison sprints away, Jacked Santa following on his heels like a bloodhound. Harrison skids around a corner, finding himself in-

EXT. PETTING ZOO - NIGHT

Harrison ducks behind a hot chocolate stand, gasping for air.

HARRISON  
This fucking town.

WHAM. The kettle obliterates the sign above Harrison's head. He dives forward, leaping into an enclosure as Jacked Santa closes on him like a yuletide Terminator.

HARRISON (CONT'D)  
Why do you want to hurt me do  
badly?

JACKED SANTA  
You've just got one of those faces.  
Time to deck the halls.

Jacked Santa takes a swing at him with the improvised mace. Harrison backs away from him, bumping into-

DONKEY  
Hee-haw.

He's in a live-action nativity scene. The DONKEY he's run into rears up, KICKING Harrison towards Jacked Santa. Jacked Santa kicks him back towards the donkey, who kicks him towards Jacked Santa, who kicks him back towards the donkey.

Bad time to be Harrison's internal organs.

The donkey gives one last hard kick, sending Harrison tumbling into Jacked Santa. Santa grabs Harrison by the throat, hoisting him into the air.

JACKED SANTA  
I've been waiting two whole days to  
do this.

HARRISON  
Hey, Santa-

He pulls the BELL out of Jacked Santa's waistband.

HARRISON (CONT'D)  
Season's beatings, motherfucker.

DONG. Harrison literally rings his bell, brass connecting with temple in a thunderclap. Jacked Santa stumbles, dropping Harrison. Harrison gives him a KICK, sending Santa crashing through a gate.

Santa lands with a thud in the middle of a heard of REINDEER. The reindeer eye the interloper, then the now-open paddock. As they GRUNT and stamp their hooves-

JACKED SANTA

Oh no.

HARRISON

Run!

The reindeer stampede, chasing them out of the petting zoo and back into-

EXT. SUMMIT VALLEY - TOWN SQUARE - NIGHT

Harrison leaps out of the way as reindeer thunder around him. He takes in the scene. Neighbor is fighting neighbor. The town is literally on fire. It's a Christmas hellscape. And at the center of the town square, Emily and Kacey are rolling around, trying to get the upper hand.

EMILY

You've always been such a problem, Kacey! No wonder mom and dad like me more!

Kacey flips Emily, pinning her on the ground.

KACEY

State Judo champion, bitch.

Harrison is YANKED backwards by a bruised, bloodied Jacked Santa.

HARRISON

Oh for fuck's sake.

JACKED SANTA

Any last words?

HARRISON

Get out of the street.

JACKED SANTA

What?

WHOOSH. Jacked Santa is hit with a massive snow drift as Gus' snow plow careers down the street. He goes flying, landing in a crumpled heap.

HARRISON

Told you.

Gus' snow plow jumps the curb, townspeople diving out of the way as the truck slams into a tree. The engine catches on fire, slowly spreading to the rest of the vehicle.

HARRISON (CONT'D)  
Gus? GUS?

Harrison runs to the cab, opening the door. Gus' face is blue. He's clutching his heart. Shit.

HARRISON (CONT'D)  
Kacey!

Kacey decks Emily then looks up.

HARRISON (CONT'D)  
Emergency!

She spots Gus.

KACEY  
Keep him alive!

The riot around them starts to die down, everyone's attention turning to the snowplow. Harrison pulls Gus from the driver's seat, laying him on the grass.

HARRISON  
Don't die on me.

Gus is looking real, real bad. Harrison starts doing chest compressions.

HARRISON (CONT'D)  
Come on. Stay with us.

Gus' eyes spring open. He's alive! A loud SIREN fills the square. Kacey maneuvers her ambulance forward, crowd parting before her. She hops out, full EMT mode.

TOWNIE #1  
Is Gus going to be ok?

Kacey drops down next to Harrison. She checks Gus's pulse.

KACEY  
Yeah. He'll make it.

Kacey and Harrison sling Gus over their shoulders, moving him towards the ambulance. Kacey straps him in.

KACEY (CONT'D)  
You saved his life.

HARRISON  
Just trying to do the right thing.

Kacey gives him a warm look. She speeds off, revealing Tom, Emily, and the rest of their family.

JAMES  
Do something, daddy.

JUDITH  
You heard your son, Tom. Be a man.

Tom winces, SCREAMS, and runs towards Harrison.

HARRISON  
Enough!

Harrison catches Tom with a punch to the stomach. The mayor hunches over, wind knocked out of him.

TOM  
Listen to me, you little bastard-

HARRISON  
No. Listen to me. All of you.

He faces the crowd.

HARRISON (CONT'D)  
I know you guys are angry. I'm angry too. I came here because of love, but this town is drowning in hate. And this-

He waves his hand towards the burning Christmas tree.

HARRISON (CONT'D)  
-Is what happens when you hold onto that hate instead of dealing with your problems.

The townspeople are hanging on his every word.

HARRISON (CONT'D)  
Assholes like Tom? They thrive on hate. They keep us mad at each other so we won't notice that they have all the power.

Townie #1 gives him a nod. Harrison grins.

HARRISON (CONT'D)  
So, yeah, get angry. But not at each other. Work your shit out. Compromise isn't weakness. It's the foundation of a strong community.  
(MORE)

HARRISON (CONT'D)  
 Alone you're weak. Together you're  
 strong.

TOWNIE #1  
 He's right!

TOWNIE #2  
 Listen to the new guy!

HARRISON  
 And for the love of God, stop  
 saying Merry Christmas to each  
 other when you really mean fuck  
 you.

Smiles from the crowd. Townie #1 turns to Townie #2.

TOWNIE #1  
 Fuck you, Jerry.

TOWNIE #2  
 Fuck you right back, Marty. Merry  
 Christmas.

TOWNIE #1  
 Love you, buddy.

Maggie turns to her BOSS.

MAGGIE  
 Hey, Mrs. Snyder, suck my whole  
 ass.

Nathan gives his neighbor a big bear hug.

NATHAN  
 You're a gigantic piece of shit,  
 Maurice.

The townspeople begin smiling, embracing, loudly laughing.

TOWNSPEOPLE  
 Go to hell, Tracy! / Gargle my dong,  
 Mark. / Get fucked on a table leg,  
 Stanley / I love you, bro.

Tom gathers himself up, doing his best to save face.

TOM  
 You're right, Harrison. You've  
 given us all a lot to think about.  
 It's time this town-

TOWNIE #1  
Hey, fuck you Mayor Tom!

TOWNIE #2  
I didn't vote for you.

TOWNIE #3  
Me neither!

Jacked Santa picks himself up from the ground.

JACKED SANTA  
I voted for him.

Nathan kicks him in the face, sending him back to the snow.

TOWNIE #2  
Mayor Tom made us do this!

TOWNIE #3  
Let's get him!

Tom stumbles back towards his family.

TOM  
You don't understand! We were only  
doing this for your own good.

JUDITH  
We?

TOM  
You played your part in this,  
Judith.

JUDITH  
Shut up, Tom. For once in your  
goddamn life, just shut the fuck  
up.

TOM  
Don't undermine me in public!

JAMES  
Don't yell at mom!

TOM  
James, I mean this with all love,  
the only reason you're here is  
because your mother said birth  
control made her feel "too  
bloated."

Judith winds up, DECKING Tom. He drops to the snow as the crowd CHEERS.

JUDITH  
You'll be resigning. Effective  
immediately.

Tom scrambles away as the townspeople chase him. Harrison can't help but smile. Emily approaches him.

EMILY  
Harrison?

HARRISON  
What?

EMILY  
I'm sorry. It was really awful of  
me to do, well, all of this. You  
didn't deserve it.

The on-fire tree collapses into the snow.

HARRISON  
I appreciate that.

EMILY  
So I'll see you around?

HARRISON  
Nah.

And with that, he walks away. James steps in front of him.

JAMES  
Where do you think you're going?

Harrison raises his fist. James flinches, hard.

HARRISON  
Merry Christmas.

He takes the car keys from James' hand, heading towards the beautiful, shiny Mercedes G wagon.

EXT. TOWN - NIGHT

Harrison's behind the wheel of the G wagon. He spots the welcome sign, swerves the car and SMASHES it. He LAUGHS, flipping off the town as he drives away.

STEPH (O.S.)  
Merry Christmas!

INT. AUNT'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Steph tosses a gift towards her cousin. Her MOM and DAD sit with them in the charmingly tacky living room.

STEPH

Jesus, you look like you lost a fight with a steam roller.

HARRISON

You should see the other guys.

Harrison opens the gift - a framed photo of Harrison and his mom.

STEPH

Thought it would be nice to remind you how loved you are.

HARRISON

It's perfect.

Harrison hands her her gift.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

Merry Christmas, Steph.

She rips off the paper, revealing a MEATBALL HOAGIE.

STEPH

Harrison!

HARRISON

It's all I could find last minute.

STEPH

I love it.

DING DONG. Steph crosses to the door.

AUNT

Are you still seeing that nice girl?

HARRISON

Nah, it wasn't meant to be.

STEPH (O.S.)

Harrison? It's for you.

INT. AUNT'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - DAY

Steph's standing at the door with-

HARRISON

Kacey? What are you doing here?

SLAP.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

What the hell?

KACEY

That's for leaving without saying  
goodbye.

STEPH

(sotto)

This chick rules.

Harrison rubs his jaw.

HARRISON

You were kind of busy.

KACEY

And you could have waited around a  
little while longer.

HARRISON

Why are you here?

She leans in, kissing Harrison. It's absolute heaven. Steph backs away.

STEPH

If you'll excuse me, I've got a  
date with a meatball hoagie.

Harrison pulls back.

HARRISON

Merry Christmas, Kacey.

KACEY

Merry Christmas, Harrison.

HARRISON

Do you want to meet my family?

KACEY

More than anything.

She steps into the house. He closes the door behind her, smiling, as a new, updated version Darlene Love's hit holiday song "Fistmas (Baby Please Come Home)" plays us out.