

Plowing Through

By

Anna Watts

Anna Watts  
612-799-4045  
[annawatts@gmail.com](mailto:annawatts@gmail.com)  
[www.annawattsnyc.com](http://www.annawattsnyc.com)

**Cast of Characters:**

***Janice:*** Mother of Charlotte and Sophia. Ex-wife of Charles. Daughter of Ingrid.

***Ingrid:*** Janice, Bert, and Harper's Mother. Grandmother of Charlotte and Sophia.

***Bert:*** Janice's Older Brother. Son of Ingrid. Oldest of the siblings. Retired and living in Florida.

***Harper:*** Janice's Older Sister. Middle child. Her son married and moved to Portugal. Her husband and highschool-sweetheart died ten years ago.

***Charlotte:*** Janice and Charles' Eldest Daughter. Mid twenties moved to California for college where she stayed after graduation.

***Ian:*** Charlotte's Boyfriend, Born and Raised in New York. Met Charlotte in California.

***Sophia:*** Janice's youngest daughter. Dated Soren in High School. Now Sophia competes on a College Nordic Ski Team in New Hampshire.

***Soren:*** Sophia's ex-boyfriend and son of Parker. Very into Nordic skiing.

***Parker:*** Sophia's High School Ski Coach. Soren's father. Very into Nordic skiing.

***Charles:*** Janice's ex-husband. Father of Sophia and Charlotte.

***Stella:*** Dating Charles. From Willmar, Minnesota.

**Locale:**

Janice's Living/Dining room in her small house in the Twin Cities, Minnesota. There should be four separate exits/entrances to indicate the following: Upstairs, The Basement, The Garage, The Front Door.

**Note:**

When tension rises, that does not mean that the volume in the room rises. In Midwestern culture, it is very difficult to say exactly what you mean. You never ever want to offend someone or hurt someone. This is family a play that explores the comedy of what is said and what is left unsaid.

**List of Scenes:**

Scene 1: Christmas Eve Morning

Scene 2: Christmas Eve Afternoon

Scene 3: Christmas Eve Cocktails

Scene 4: Christmas Eve Dinner

Scene 5: Christmas Eve Night

Scene 6: Christmas Morning

Scene 7: Christmas Morning Cont.

**SCENE ONE: CHRISTMAS EVE MORNING**

**JANICE**

First snow of the year. Look at it out there. We'll have a white Christmas this year. Yes, we will.

*(CHARLOTTE enters from upstairs.)*

**JANICE**

Oh, Charlotte, did you see the snow? Oh, it just keeps on coming down. You know, you were born on a first snow of the year. It was an early snow, but it stuck. It did back in those days, ya know.

**CHARLOTTE**

Good morning.

**JANICE**

I'm gonna have you pick up Grandma Ingrid once you're up and going. The plows already came through this morning, but we don't like to make her drive in the snow. She's getting older, ya know?

**CHARLOTTE**

Ya, sure Mom. Coffee?

**JANICE**

Oh! Yes, I made you a coffee with frothed milk. It's so good, have you tried it before? My frothed milk? Like a latte in your coffee.

**CHARLOTTE**

Ya, I had it the last time I was home -

**JANICE**

No, this is my new frother, here - let me show you. This one is electric, it heats up your milk at the same time, you really need to see this, Charlotte.

*(CHARLOTTE sinks back into couch)*

**CHARLOTTE**

Uh-huh.

**JANICE**

Charlotte?

**CHARLOTTE**

Ya, mom?

**JANICE**

Come, let me show you.

**CHARLOTTE**

Okay.

**JANICE**

No, come here, it's so fun!

**CHARLOTTE**

Coming.

**JANICE**

You pour the milk, and then you hold the button down until both rings turn red, and then you wait. Then you pour it over your coffee- you can use it with cocoa too.

**CHARLOTTE**

Amazing.

**JANICE**

You never were much of a morning person, but this here is just so low. Have a little too much fun last night? Who all was there? The usual?

**CHARLOTTE**

Mom, just don't. Less talking please.

**JANICE**

I'm glad you're still friends with those boys- You know they were such good kids. Even though you ran off to California instead of marrying one of them.

**CHARLOTTE**

First cup of coffee in silence. Second in chatter. That was your motto.

**JANICE**

You forgot Third in the car. Fourth in the classroom. Fifth at lunch. And the sixth to keep the family together.

**CHARLOTTE**

There were six cups a day?

**JANICE**

Sometimes five and six were just to warm my hands, you know how cold that old house of ours used to get. This whole great state.

*Plowing Through*

*(CHARLOTTE takes a sip of coffee and winces)*

**JANICE**

What's wrong? Oh dear, was the milk sour? You said you don't like sugar in your coffee, but I have some syrup.

**CHARLOTTE**

It's cold.

**JANICE**

I thought you were gonna wake up awhile ago.

**CHARLOTTE**

I- uh,

**JANICE**

Here, let me microwave it.

*(JANICE exits into kitchen. CHARLOTTE settles)*

**JANICE**

I haven't heard your sister get up, but I have eggs for her. She's still not a coffee drinker. Good for her. Keeps her focused. Not a drinker drinker either. That's even better. You know, she's got to keep that ski scholarship. No way we could afford one of those fancy East Coast colleges without it.

*(Microwave dings)*

**JANICE**

There it is.

**CHARLOTTE**

Thanks mom. I should see if she's alive.

**JANICE**

You stay right there. You'll wake that poor girl up! I'll go check on her.

**CHARLOTTE**

Alright.

*(CHARLOTTE cuddles back up into a pile and pretends to sleep. SOPHIA enters from garage door in flannel pajama pants and a large winter coat. SOPHIA exits into kitchen.)*

**JANICE**

She's not here. She's not upstairs. Charlotte! Where is your sister?

**CHARLOTTE**

What?

**JANICE**

What the H-E-Double Hockey sticks happened to your little sister?

**CHARLOTTE**

I don't know mom, she drove my drunk ass home last night, so obviously she's here.

**JANICE**

Language! She is not here. Who was there last night? Was Soren there? They're still the best of friends-how funny is that? He was there, wasn't he?

**CHARLOTTE**

Mom, she's not with her ex-boyfriend. He wasn't even there.

*(SOPHIA enters from kitchen with a box of cookies, a box of cereal, and a jar of Skippy peanut butter. Plops down next to CHARLOTTE.)*

**SOPHIA**

Good Morning!

**CHARLOTTE**

What the hell?

**JANICE**

Charlotte.

**CHARLOTTE**

What?

**SOPHIA**

Good Morning.

*(SOPHIA proceeds to make a cookie, peanut butter and cereal sandwich.)*

**JANICE**

Sophia, where were you?

**SOPHIA**

*Plowing Through*

In the car. It was comfy, so I just stayed there.

**CHARLOTTE**

Seriously?

**SOPHIA**

Ya, you were like drunk and annoying -

**CHARLOTTE**

Shut up!

**SOPHIA**

See?

**CHARLOTTE**

Sophia!

**SOPHIA**

I didn't want to deal with your B.S. about Soren or whatever.

**JANICE**

Charlotte, why can't you leave your sister alone?

**CHARLOTTE**

I didn't do anything!

**SOPHIA**

She was all like "Sophie and Soren sitting in a tree K-I-S-S-I-N-G"

**CHARLOTTE**

Was not!

**SOPHIA**

Mom, she was, I swear. So, I was like "Charlotte, I'm not getting out of this car until you stop."

**CHARLOTTE**

Ya, and I flipping stopped.

**JANICE**

Charlotte-

**CHARLOTTE**

Mom!

*Plowing Through*

**SOPHIA**

I was pretty comfy so I think I just fell asleep.

**JANICE**

Weren't you cold?

**SOPHIA**

Meh. I was in this.

*(SOPHIA punches her winter puffy.)*

**CHARLOTTE**

Ya, that was weird, you came to pick me up in literally your pajamas. She wouldn't come in and say hi to the ski boys.

**SOPHIA**

Ya, that was kinda the point.

**CHARLOTTE**

You suck.

**SOPHIA**

You suck.

**CHARLOTTE**

At least I have fun when I'm home.

**SOPHIA**

At least I don't still hang out with half the guys I dated in high school while I'm dating Ian.

**CHARLOTTE**

At least I'm not best friends with my high school boyfriend.

**SOPHIA**

At least I have friends

**CHARLOTTE**

At least I'm not a bitch.

**SOPHIA**

At least I'm not lame.

*Plowing Through*

**JANICE**

Charlotte.

**CHARLOTTE**

What?

**JANICE**

Don't talk to your sister that way!

**CHARLOTTE**

Mom, she started it.

**JANICE**

Charlotte! Enough.

**CHARLOTTE**

Fine. I'm going back to bed.

*(CHARLOTTE storms off leaving her coffee.)*

**SOPHIA**

She's mad about something.

**JANICE**

I just love our mornings together. Sophia, it snowed this morning.

**SOPHIA**

No way! Best news ever.

**JANICE**

Oh look, this is great for the ski season.

**SOPHIA**

Ya, last year was pretty cruddy.

*(SOPHIA takes a bite of cookie sandwich.)*

**JANICE**

What are you eating?

**SOPHIA**

Protein.

*Plowing Through*

**JANICE**

Sophia! Where did you find the cookies? I was hiding them from you and your sister. Sophia! I have plenty of good food for you.

*(JANICE picks up the boxes and the peanut butter.)*

**SOPHIA**

It's really good, want to try a bite?

**JANICE**

Sure.

**SOPHIA**

Here.

*(JANICE takes a bite of cookie sandwich out of SOPHIA's hand.)*

**JANICE**

Yummm.

*(JANICE removes the food to the kitchen.)*

**JANICE**

You and your eating habits are as bad as that father of yours, you know that? You don't want that.

*(JANICE Exits with food. SOPHIA looks around. SOPHIA notices CHARLOTTE's coffee, and gives it a sniff and then a taste.)*

**SOPHIA**

Nope. No. No.

**JANICE**

What was that?

**SOPHIA**

Nothing.

*(SOPHIA looks out window.)*

**SOPHIA**

Your neighbors are building a fort.

**JANICE**

*Plowing Through*

Oh, aren't they cute?

**SOPHIA**

Is that my old ski jacket? It's huge on that girl!

**JANICE**

Oh. Yes it is, but she didn't have one, so I gave her yours.

**SOPHIA**

They're doing it all wrong. Has no one taught them how to build a snow fort?

**JANICE**

They moved here from Somalia. I don't think it snows much there.

**SOPHIA**

Hold on - I got some business.

*(SOPHIA exits down into the basement.)*

**JANICE**

Sophia? Careful down there! Your presents are hiding! Sophia?

*(JANICE enters with a plate of scrambled eggs)*

**JANICE**

Sophia? Sure is good to have them home.

*(JANICE exits back into kitchen. INGRID enters through front door with a small dog.)*

**INGRID**

Janice?

**JANICE**

Mom? You're early - You drove?

**INGRID**

I'm early. I'm sorry.

**JANICE**

Glad you made it in the snow

**INGRID**

Well, the forecast said the snow would pick back up. I wanted to get here before it got too bad out there.

**JANICE**

Charlotte was going to pick you up when she got up. But, oh well.

**INGRID**

Well, she's on vacation -She'll want to see this little guy. I know that.

**JANICE**

Oh, Gibson. Are you having fun with Grandma? Is she being good to you? Oh, yes.

*(SOPHIA comes barreling up the stairs in an old 80's style snowmobile suit, old Sorels, and a woven hat and mittens. SOPHIA presses the garage open button. SOPHIA starts to exit out garage.)*

**INGRID**

Oh hi Sophia, I drove the truck in.

**JANICE**

What?

**SOPHIA**

YES! I love you Grandma!

**INGRID**

What're you doing going out in my old ski suit?

*(INGRID holds SOPHIA's hands which are inside wooly mittens.)*

**INGRID**

Who made these?

**JANICE**

Harper did.

**INGRID**

Oh, she did, didn't she? How cute.

**SOPHIA**

Aunt Harper actually sewed these out of old wool sweaters you made us when your cousin still had that farm in in in in like....

**INGRID**

Willmar. Oh for cute- they are! Now, go out and play!

*Plowing Through*

**SOPHIA**

I have to show some kids how to build a proper snow fort!

**INGRID**

You do!

**JANICE**

Sophia, hold on, bring them that sled that's downstairs.

**SOPHIA**

Which one?

**JANICE**

Oh, it's with your presents. Stay here!

*(JANICE exits to basement.)*

**INGRID**

I made your favorite.

*(INGRID displays a tupperware of peanut butter blossoms.)*

**SOPHIA**

Yes!!

*(SOPHIA opens the Tupperware and stuffs two or three cookies in her mouth. SOPHIA talks while chewing.)*

**SOPHIA**

Thank you Grandma!

*(JANICE enters from basement. JANICE carries a big sled with Olaf on it)*

**SOPHIA**

That is epic!

**JANICE**

I thought they would like it. I saw it at Target and I just I had to get it for them.

**INGRID**

Ohhh, oh, is that Elsa?

*Plowing Through*

**SOPHIA**

It's Olaf!

**INGRID**

Oh for cute!

*(SOPHIA grabs the sled and one more cookie and runs out the door.)*

**JANICE**

Sophia! Enough cookies.

**SOPHIA**

Bye!

**JANICE**

Don't be too long, Parker and Soren are coming to pick you up to ski! You have a training schedule.

**SOPHIA**

Ya, k, bye.

**JANICE**

Seriously!

*(The door slams)*

**JANICE**

She still doesn't listen. Is it worth putting all this into her skiing when she doesn't seem to want to take it seriously.

**INGRID**

You can't think that.

**JANICE**

How can I not?

**INGRID**

Janice...

**JANICE**

Ok. I know. *(Pause)* The truck?

**INGRID**

Well, I wanted it for the girls while they're in town. They love the truck.

*Plowing Through*

**JANICE**

It still smells like Dad.

**INGRID**

Well. *(Pause)* It's four wheel drive.

**JANICE**

Love you Mom. Coffee? I got this new frother.

**INGRID**

I suppose. Just a titch. How about a cookie?

**JANICE**

I suppose. We have to get rid of them. Sophia will start going crazy with them.

*(INGRID sits with dog, CHARLOTTE enters rushing down the stairs.)*

**CHARLOTTE**

Mom? Mom! Oh, Hi Grandma! Gibson!!

**JANICE**

Charlotte, where are you going?

**CHARLOTTE**

Hey, so crazy news. Um, so, um, Ian just called me. He surprised me. Ian's at the Humphrey Terminal right now.

**JANICE**

Excuse me?

**CHARLOTTE**

Ian! My boyfriend!

**INGRID**

Who?

**JANICE**

Her boyfriend, Ian

**INGRID**

The one from the phone face?

**JANICE**

Ya, FaceTime, Charlotte, why is he coming here?

**CHARLOTTE**

I guess a last minute gift to me, so we can spend Christmas together. I don't know. He's so dumb.

**JANICE**

Oh ya, but he's so nice though.

**CHARLOTTE**

He's so nice. Can I take the car?

**INGRID**

Take the truck.

**CHARLOTTE**

What?

**JANICE**

Grandma drove the truck here.

**CHARLOTTE**

Oh my god! I love the truck. Thanks Grandma.

**JANICE**

Drive careful.

*(CHARLOTTE goes to leave.)*

**JANICE**

Wait, so is he spending Christmas here?

**CHARLOTTE**

Ya, I think so, that's cool right?

**JANICE**

I suppose so. Wait, Charlotte, can you two pick up Uncle Bert too? His flight is landing in an hour and a half- I was going to pick him up, but if you could, that would just save me oh so much trouble.

**CHARLOTTE**

Ugh, fine. Uncle Bert is so like, he's just so Uncle Bert.

**JANICE**

Charlotte, please? That would just help out so much. Take Ian to the Mall Of America while you wait.

**CHARLOTTE**

No, no one wants to do that this close to Christmas.

**JANICE**

Charlotte, Please?

**CHARLOTTE**

Ok, fine. I just like, I just don't want him to say anything stupid to Ian.

**JANICE**

Thank you, Charlotte.

**CHARLOTTE**

Whatever. Love you.

*(CHARLOTTE Exits.)*

**INGRID**

Well, It's a good thing you're serving hotdish again this year- no need to go get another serving.

**JANICE**

Oh he is so nice. Ian is.

**INGRID**

Oh I suppose.

**JANICE**

I suppose.

**INGRID**

So, um, Charles is coming to dinner?

**JANICE**

He, ya, he's coming to dinner.

**INGRID**

Uffda.

**JANICE**

*Plowing Through*

I know, I just felt like I had to invite him, you know? Like the girls aren't home for long. He doesn't get much family time with them.

***INGRID***

I suppose.

***JANICE***

I think the girls might go with him to the candlelight service tonight. You know I don't go into that church anymore- it's just too much after the uh divorce.

***INGRID***

I suppose.

***JANICE***

I don't think anyone would say anything. But, you know, Charles still volunteers there.

***INGRID***

Oh does he now?

***JANICE***

I'm so glad your new hearing aids work.

***INGRID***

You know, it was very odd when I wore them for the first time, and did you know that my new refrigerator beeps when you leave the door open? How odd is that?

***JANICE***

*(Sighs)*

Uffda.

***INGRID***

I suppose.

**SCENE 2: CHRISTMAS EVE AFTERNOON**

*(HARPER enters the front door with a few large paper grocery bags. No one else is in the living room/kitchen.)*

**HARPER**

Hello?

*(No one answers)*

**HARPER**

Anybody home?

*(HARPER walks in and takes off her boots.)*

**HARPER**

Oh this snow has me so nervous.

*(HARPER wanders around the living room and kitchen, but she can't find anybody, so she starts setting out the cheese and crackers she brought. HARPER ad libs comments about driving in the snow. Eventually, JANICE enters from basement with her arms full of a large pile of presents. HARPER is so busy talking to herself that she doesn't hear JANICE come up. HARPER gets spooked and lets out a yelp.)*

**JANICE**

Oh dear!

**HARPER**

Uffda...you scared me!

**JANICE**

When did you get here?

**HARPER**

Just a few minutes ago. I was setting out cheese and crackers.

**JANICE**

Oh good, did you pick up lutefisk for Mom?

**HARPER**

Oh shoot. I knew there was something. I got her pickled herring though-

**JANICE**

Oh, that'll be fine.

**HARPER**

Where is everyone?

**JANICE**

Sophia went skiing with Parker and Soren.

**HARPER**

Who?

**JANICE**

You know- Parker, her high school ski coach and of course you know Soren.

**HARPER**

Oh ya, I know Soren. What's going on with Sophia and Soren? Anything anymore?

**JANICE**

Oh, who knows. She doesn't live here anymore.

**HARPER**

Is Mom here?

**JANICE**

Yes, Ingrid and Gibson are sleeping upstairs, and Charlotte went to go pick up her boyfriend Ian, who I guess surprised her by flying in this morning... and Bert.

**HARPER**

Ah, I see.

**JANICE**

Are you going to be ok with Bert here?

**HARPER**

Are you going to be ok with Charles here?

**JANICE**

Oh, but that's different.

**HARPER**

Ya, you can punch your big brother in the face and get away with it, but it's harder to pull that off with an ex-husband.

**JANICE**

Oh, I don't know.

**HARPER**

My. That was really sweet of Ian though, that's his name, right?

**JANICE**

Oh yea, definitely. Charlotte's mood flipped right around. I think she's a little hungover today. That girl, I tell you she scares me how much she acts like Charles sometimes.

**HARPER**

Oh, don't worry about that. Was she out with buddies?

**JANICE**

Ya, from the high school ski team.

**HARPER**

Oh, what a good bunch of kids.

**JANICE**

Oh for sure. It's a shame she didn't marry one of them and stay here you know?

**HARPER**

Oh, who knows? This Ian might be a good guy.

**JANICE**

He's wonderful. He makes Charlotte so happy.

**HARPER**

You've met him?

**JANICE**

Just on the facetime, you know?

**HARPER**

Aw, I see. It should be good.

**JANICE**

Should be; it um, yup it should be. I just, it's just the older they get, ya know?

*(Garage door opens, BERT enters without any bags in his hands and wears a Tommy Bahama shirt under his ski jacket.)*

*Plowing Through*

**BERT**

Oh, all this motherlovin' snow. I left Florida for the tundra. Mom!

*(JANICE and HARPER stand up to hug him.)*

**JANICE**

Bert!

**BERT**

Janice, just a twig as ever, you know what they say about those Swedish babes.

**JANICE**

Bert, watch yourself.

**BERT**

Oh, why I oughta just keep my mouth shut these days, or I'll be getting backtalk from the baby sister.

**JANICE**

Aww, I love you too Bert.

**BERT**

That Ian is a good kid, you hear that good and clear?

*(IAN enters with two bags followed by CHARLOTTE.)*

**CHARLOTTE**

Did you hear that, Mom?

**BERT**

Ian paid me to say that.

**JANICE**

Ian, what a lovely surprise. How nice to meet you, in person, of course. Wow, look at the two of you. You too are so beautiful.

*(BERT walks over to HARPER and they exchange an awkward hug.)*

**HARPER**

Good to see you.

**BERT**

Yup.

**CHARLOTTE**

Ya, Uncle Bert, you're right. My phone says the snow is supposed to really start picking up in the next hour or two.

**BERT**

I felt the snow in my toes ya know.

**HARPER**

Hey, Janice, maybe Charles will be snowed out.

**CHARLOTTE**

Hey dad, that's my dad.

**HARPER**

I'm only kidding. Good to see you beautiful.

**JANICE**

Charlotte, go wake your grandma up. Ian, dear, can you follow Charlotte with Bert's bag?

**IAN**

Sure thing, Janice.

**JANICE**

Bert, you and Ingrid are sharing the guest room.

**BERT**

Oh great, it's gonna sound like Marine on St. Croix.

*(BERT Snores loudly imitating a sawmill.)*

**HARPER**

What are you talking about?

**BERT**

The old saw mill, come on, Harp. With tonsils the size of Ingrid's and mine we're gonna be competing with those retired lumberjacks.

*(JANICE laughs as BERT imitates the sawmill.)*

**JANICE**

Oh Bert, how was the flight from Florida?

**BERT**

*Plowing Through*

Now, I'm going to be honest with you Janice. I only fly first class these days. It's just so much goddamn easier on my knees. You know?

**HARPER**

Oh, I know.

**JANICE**

If only. A teacher's salary doesn't cover first class.

**BERT**

You're still young, Janice, you don't know a rat's ass what I'm talking about. Well, those coach seats they just-

**INGRID**

Bert?

**BERT**

Ingrid?

**INGRID**

What?

**BERT**

INGRID?

**INGRID**

Oh, don't you Ingrid me.

**BERT**

Mom, so good to see you. You have a snore up there?

**INGRID**

What?

**BERT**

You LOOK GOOD.

**INGRID**

Janice? Can you help me turn these hearing aids on? The button is so small.

**JANICE**

Sure Mom.

*Plowing Through*

*(JANICE exits followed by INGRID.)*

**BERT**

That snow though.

**HARPER**

There's a lot of snow.

**BERT**

Yup. A lot of snow, Harper.

**HARPER**

Just a lot of it, and it's still going to come down more tonight.

**BERT**

Ya. Felt it in my toes. *(Sighs.)* Well, I need a smoke.

**HARPER**

Ok.

**BERT**

I know these will kill me one day.

**HARPER**

They will.

**BERT**

I suppose you would know better than anyone.

**HARPER**

You know, I just wish you wouldn't.

**BERT**

Well, you know what they say about to do about old habits and rattlesnakes?

**HARPER**

Bert -

**BERT**

Leave them alone.

*(BERT exits onto the porch to smoke. CHARLOTTE and IAN come down the stairs as INGRID enters from the kitchen.)*

**INGRID**

Oh, that is so much better.

**CHARLOTTE**

Grandma, you need to meet Ian. Honey, this is Grandma Ingrid.

**INGRID**

Sophia- Charlotte. I met Ian on your mom's phone, but Ian, look at you. You're so lovely.

**IAN**

Thank you. Pleasure to meet you uh, Mrs...

**INGRID**

The girls call me Grandma or Grandma Ingrid, you can too.

*(CHARLOTTE chuckles.)*

**IAN**

Nice to meet you Grandma Ingrid.

**INGRID**

You two sure are cute. Oh, Ian, have you met Gibson yet?

**IAN**

I'm afraid I haven't.

**INGRID**

I'll go get him.

*(INGRID exits as JANICE enters from the kitchen.)*

**CHARLOTTE**

He's the dog.

**IAN**

Cool, right.

*(SOPHIA, SOREN, and PARKER enter from front door in their ski gear from the garage with a box of pizza.)*

**JANICE**

Soren, Sophia?

*Plowing Through*

**SOPHIA**

Hi mom.

**JANICE**

Parker!

**PARKER**

Janice, Merry Christmas.

**CHARLOTTE**

Merry Christmas, Parker.

**PARKER**

Merry Christmas. Hi, I'm Parker.

**IAN**

I'm Ian, I'm Charlotte's uh Boyfriend.

**PARKER**

Oh, cool nice to meet you.

**CHARLOTTE**

Oh, sorry, uh, Ian, Parker was my ski coach in high school. Because like it's normal here to be on your high school's cross country ski team.

**IAN**

That's cool, normal I guess.

**CHARLOTTE**

He's also Soren's dad. Sophia's sort of sometimes boyfriend.

**PARKER**

I don't know about that.

**JANICE**

Charlotte, don't tease your sister like that.

**CHARLOTTE**

Whatever.

**IAN**

I actually don't know how to ski.

*Plowing Through*

*(BERT laughs)*

**BERT**

Boy doesn't know how to ski, you hear that Janice? Doesn't even ski.

**CHARLOTTE**

Mom!

**IAN**

Come on Uncle Bert, I thought we were cool

**PARKER**

Oh, you know, I can teach you if you're staying in Minnesota long enough.

**BERT**

Don't bother, this state ain't worth it.

*(INGRID enters with GIBSON. SOPHIA and SOREN are already sitting on the couch eating pizza SOREN and SOPHIA's coats are scattered in the living room.)*

**JANICE**

Bert, hush! Parker, you got her pizza, you know she's in training!

**PARKER**

It's Christmas.

**JANICE**

Sophia, We're about to have a good healthy meal tonight.

**CHARLOTTE**

Mom, Hotdish is not healthy.

**JANICE**

At least there are vegetables!

**PARKER**

Oh, you guys are having hotdish tonight?

**SOREN**

Tater-Tot hotdish?

**JANICE**

No, no, no,

*Plowing Through*

**INGRID**

Oh, I brought the Tater-Tot hotdish.

**SOPHIA**

Yes, Grandma!

**PARKER**

Hello Ingrid.

**INGRID**

Merry Christmas, Parker, Soren.

**SOREN**

Hey Grandma Ingrid!

**SOPHIA**

Gibson!

**JANICE**

Parker, Soren. Stay for dinner.

**PARKER**

Oh we can't do that.

**INGRID**

Ian, this Gibson, Gibson- ooh Sophia (*SOPHIA takes GIBSON from INGRID*) well, Gibson, that's Ian.

**JANICE**

Of course you can, we have plenty.

**PARKER**

It's a family thing, Janice.

**IAN**

Um, nice to meet him, I guess.

**CHARLOTTE**

Ian already crashed it.

*Plowing Through*

**IAN**

Hey, what's that about me?

**CHARLOTTE**

You're cute.

**IAN**

Uh-huh..

*(CHARLOTTE takes GIBSON from SOPHIA.)*

**SOPHIA**

Hey!

**CHARLOTTE**

Shut up, you are, and this is Gibson.

**IAN**

We already met...

**JANICE**

Parker, you and Soren need to stay. You don't have any dinner plans tonight do you?

**SOREN**

I mean, I think we were planning on the pizza leftovers.

**JANICE**

Just stay.

**SOPHIA**

Ya, Stay for dinner, please! I need to school your butts in Cribbage.

**PARKER**

Oh, really you think you can?

**SOPHIA**

I can at least kick Soren's butt.

**SOREN**

Hey now, I don't know bout that.

**SOPHIA**

Prove it!

***PARKER***

Alright, alright.

*(BERT enters from outside and hands his coat to JANICE. JANICE begins to collect SOREN and SOPHIA's coats.)*

***BERT***

This snow just started back up.

***JANICE***

Pish-posh. Nothing a true blooded Minnesotan can't handle. Charlotte, Ian, put these on my bed. Parker, hand them your coat.

***HARPER***

Oh, I don't know. It will only be ok if the plows can get through, you know?

***INGRID***

Oh, you know.

***PARKER***

We really couldn't intrude.

***JANICE***

Shhh sh sh, you're staying for dinner.

**SCENE 3: CHRISTMAS EVE COCKTAIL HOUR**

*(BERT reads the paper until he falls asleep. SOPHIA and SOREN are playing an oddly intense game of Cribbage on the floor. HARPER and INGRID come out of the kitchen carrying stacks of plates.)*

**HARPER**

I just love these Christmas plates. I can't believe that you got them at Target. What a great gift.

**INGRID**

I got you the same ones, didn't I?

**HARPER**

Oh, yes. I just love them. I just love these Christmas plates.

**SOPHIA**

BOOM!

**SOREN**

Noooooo!!! How did you?

**SOPHIA**

Magic, Bada-Bing, Bada-Boom.

**HARPER**

I just hope the plows can make it through. Oh the Plows.

**INGRID**

Oh for sure.

**HARPER**

I'm just so nervous that this snow is going to block the plows.

**INGRID**

Oh ya, the plows.

**SOREN**

When did you get so good at Cribbage?

**SOPHIA**

When did you get so bad at Cribbage?

**SOREN**

Um, when you moved away...

**SOPHIA**

What?

**HARPER**

I can't believe that Janice invited Charles. Oh dear.

**INGRID**

Oh dear, ya know.

**HARPER**

I don't know. Everything is all just so different now. It's all just so different than it used to be.

*(INGRID sets a hand on HARPER's shoulder and they both stand in silence.)*

**SOREN**

I didn't have anyone to practice with.

**SOPHIA**

You did too! All your roommates and like the other guys from the U and like the ski shop.

**SOREN**

But they're so much better than me, you know?

**SOPHIA**

Ya, they're kinda mean. They're Charlotte's friends.

**SOREN**

Ya, they're dicks.

**SOPHIA**

That's not what I said.

**SOREN**

But they are.

**HARPER**

Who would have thought it ten years ago? Ya know?

**INGRID**

Oh, you can't think about that.

**HARPER**

Flash forward ten years, and my boy would move to Portugal and marry a beautiful wife and live happily ever after in Portugal.

**HARPER**

Erik, well, Erik would pass before the beautiful wedding ceremony in Portugal. Erik would have loved Portugal.

**INGRID**

Enough, now.

**SOPHIA**

Anyone can school you, Soren. It's cuz you let them.

**HARPER**

Janice's girls would grow up and move away. Charles would turn out to be a lying, cheating, drinker. *(Pause.)* Dad would pass.

**SOREN**

It's a game of chance!

**INGRID**

Harper, come on now.

**SOPHIA**

You're not playing to win.

**HARPER**

And both Erik and Dad would die of lung cancer. Same damn disease for both.

**SOREN**

It's a game of chance.

**INGRID**

Oh, Harper.

**SOPHIA**

It's a game of strategy

**SOREN**

It's a game of pure chance.

**HARPER**

We are just so lucky to have you as a mother. You really are so good to us.

**SOPHIA**

There's no way chance would let you lose so bad. Like, Soren, play for real.

**SOREN**

I am playing for real.

**INGRID**

Shh, shhh.

**SOPHIA**

Soren!

**SOREN**

What?

**HARPER**

Oh, how times have changed. I'm worried about Bert's health.

**SOPHIA**

Stop playing like you're afraid of losing!

**INGRID**

Oh, you know.

**SOREN**

What? It's a game of chance.

**HARPER**

It's not like he would ever listen to me.

**SOPHIA**

Stop losing on purpose. It's not funny.

**HARPER**

He never liked me- even when were kids. He got along with everyone else. It's like he did it on purpose.

**SOREN**

I'm not losing on purpose.

**INGRID**

Oh, just ignore him

**SOPHIA**

Yes, you are! I'm done.

**HARPER**

I try, I try.

*(JANICE comes upstairs from basement.)*

**JANICE**

Sophia, where are your skis? Parker is waxing all the skis for this new snow.

**SOPHIA**

Uhhhhh I think they're in the garage.

**JANICE**

Can you bring them downstairs?

**SOPHIA**

I'm kinda in the middle of- ya I can.

**JANICE**

Wait, your presents are all scattered down there.

*(JANICE gets skis from garage.)*

**SOPHIA**

Ok.

**HARPER**

Janice, you still haven't finished wrapping, that's not like you.

**JANICE**

Oh, oh, oh, oh, oh,.

*(JANICE opens door to basement)*

**HARPER**

Janice, wait-

**JANICE**

Ya?

**HARPER**

Is the card table down there- we're gonna need a kids table.

**JANICE**

Oh, good idea. I can grab it.

**HARPER**

I can help.

**JANICE**

Oh, it's ok.

**HARPER**

It's no big deal.

**JANICE**

I can get it.

*(SOPHIA and SOREN get back into their game of cribbage.)*

**HARPER**

Sophia and Soren will have to sit at the kids table. So will, hey- where's Charlotte?

**INGRID**

She and Ian are sleeping upstairs. She had a late night, he had an early morning.

**HARPER**

They seem happy.

**INGRID**

They do seem very happy.

*(JANICE comes up the stairs with an obnoxiously Christmasie tablecloth.)*

**JANICE**

Parker is down there working away.

**SOREN**

With the new snow, ya know, we have to get all the skis waxed.

**JANICE**

*Plowing Through*

I know. Oh, he is too much. Too sweet.

**SOPHIA**

He's a ski coach. That's what he does.

**JANICE**

Too much, that's too much.

*(PARKER enters from basement with the card table. SOREN immediately gets up to help PARKER. SOPHIA stays on the floor.)*

**PARKER**

Oh, thank you Soren.

**JANICE**

Sophia, help them.

**SOREN**

We got it.

**SOPHIA**

I think they're good.

**JANICE**

Sophia!

**PARKER**

Is this a good spot?

**HARPER**

Oh, that's perfect.

**PARKER**

Oh, I didn't know, you know. I don't know where the kids table usually goes.

*(JANICE puts the table cloth on top.)*

**JANICE**

It's great. Where are Charlotte and Ian?

**HARPER**

They're upstairs- finally getting some rest.

**BERT**

*Plowing Through*

It would be great if someone could let me rest.

**HARPER**

Oh go upstairs.

**JANICE**

Actually, I'm gonna wake them up. It's about time for hor dourves

**BERT**

I guess I can stay awake for that. You have Lutefisk?

**HARPER**

I forgot. I just got the pickled herring.

**BERT**

Hmpf.

**JANICE**

Charlotte, Ian! Come on down here.

**INGRID**

Oh, I do love pickled herring.

**JANICE**

Why am I yelling? I have legs.

*(JANICE exits. PARKER helps HARPER set the table.)*

**HARPER**

How many forks do you have there?

**PARKER**

2,4,6

**HARPER**

Let's see- you, Soren, Sophia- do you have her favorite fork?

**PARKER**

Yes.

**HARPER**

Good, so, Soren, Sophia, Charlotte, Ian, Bert, Ingrid, Myself, Janice- Charles. We need four more.

**PARKER**

Charles?

**HARPER**

Oh ya, Janice felt bad that this would be the only time that he could spend time with the girls, but you know.

**PARKER**

Oh, ya, ok. Oh dear. Really?

**HARPER**

Right?

**PARKER**

Uffda. I'll go get more forks.

**HARPER**

Can you get knives too?

**PARKER**

Sure thing.

*(JANICE enters from Upstairs.)*

**JANICE**

Oh, everything looks so lovely.

*(PARKER walks in with the knives.)*

**JANICE**

Oh, Parker- you go sit down. You don't need to help now.

**PARKER**

It's really not a problem.

*(CHARLOTTE enters from upstairs dressed up nicely for Christmas dinner. She is five times perkier than she was before.)*

**JANICE**

Charlotte, take those knives from Parker. Help Harper with the table.

*(IAN comes down the stairs.)*

*Plowing Through*

**BERT**

I was promised a cocktail. Somebody make me a Manhattan.

**INGRID**

Oh. Shhh, shhh,shhh.

**BERT**

Somebody make Ingrid a Manhattan. You young man, I like you. Tell me, you know how to make a Manhattan?

**IAN**

I'm from Manhattan.

**BERT**

You don't say. I didn't take you for a city boy.

**IAN**

Thank you?

**BERT**

Charlotte, sweetheart, where'd you find this city boy?

**CHARLOTTE**

Oh, Uncle Bert.

**BERT**

Can he make a Manhattan?

**IAN**

I can try.

**CHARLOTTE**

Two parts Canadian Whiskey, one part that nasty tasting stuff.

**INGRID**

I'll make them, Bert.

**BERT**

Vermouth- she's got it, Ingrid.

**JANICE**

Make sure you hold the cherry juice.

***JANICE, BERT, HARPER, and INGRID***

This isn't a Shirley Temple.

*(They Laugh. CHARLOTTE and IAN exit.)*

***JANICE***

I miss Dad.

***HARPER***

He sure smoked and drank a lot, but he was a good man.

***JANICE***

And cursed a lot. He cursed a lot.

***BERT***

And drank.

***HARPER***

I'll say.

Uffda

***JANICE***

***INGRID***

Oh, you know.

***JANICE***

Mom

***INGRID***

shhhh, shhhh.

***SOREN***

Hey Sophia, I think it's your turn

***SOPHIA***

Meh, I'm not playing anymore. Are you?

***SOREN***

I guess not, no, ya.

***CHARLOTTE***

Ok, I think we got it right.

*Plowing Through*

*(CHARLOTTE and IAN enter with cocktails.)*

**IAN**

Can we get anyone anything else?

*(The front door opens. A gust of wind and snow. CHARLES enters in a Stormy Kromer, a down jacket, khaki pants and leather boots. A cowboy of the winter.)*

**CHARLES**

Ho, Ho, Ho!

**SOPHIA**

Papa!

**CHARLOTTE**

Papa!

*(SOPHIA and CHARLOTTE hug CHARLES.)*

**CHARLES**

Merry Christmas girls.

**CHARLOTTE**

Papa, I want you to meet Ian.

**CHARLES**

Ian, so nice to meet you. I've heard so much about you. I didn't know you were coming for Christmas.

**IAN**

Ya, uh, I kinda made it a surprise. Pleasure to meet you.

**CHARLES**

And, uh, there's someone that I want you to meet. This is Stella.

*(CHARLES moves slightly out of the way. There is a tall blonde woman standing behind him. She is almost an exact replica of Janice.)*

**STELLA**

Oh, hello!

*(Mumbled greetings, but mostly silence.)*

**INGRID**

*Plowing Through*

Stella, you look so very familiar.

***STELLA***

Oh, you are all so kind.

***BERT***

Hey Mom, did you ever tell Janice about her secret twin?

***HARPER***

Oh for pete's sake.

*End Scene.*

**SCENE 4: CHRISTMAS EVE DINNER**

*(Everyone around the dinner tables. The snow outside is getting increasingly worse. Everything is very quiet. INGRID, JANICE, and HARPER, are bringing food in and out of the kitchen setting it on the table.)*

**INGRID**

The snow sure is coming down now.

**PARKER**

Supposed to snow all night.

**INGRID**

Something is missing.

**CHARLES**

You know, Stella and I were going to try and go to the Candlelight service tonight.

**JANICE**

Oh, how lovely.

**CHARLOTTE**

Pops, I love that service.

**SOPHIA**

Remember when you tried to play the electric guitar?

**CHARLOTTE**

The baby Jesus starting crying.

**CHARLES**

Couldn't handle the rock and roll Christmas spectacular.

**JANICE**

It's a candlelight Church Service, Charles, not a rock concert.

**CHARLES**

Why not? Why can't it be? Kids love rock and roll.

**HARPER**

Oh boy.

*(HARPER exits back into the kitchen.)*

**SOPHIA**

No, they don't- we like acoustic.

**CHARLOTTE**

But, like acoustic pop, not like hymns.

**CHARLES**

Acoustic Pop? How's that any different?

**STELLA**

Charles, you're playing at the candlelight service tonight, right?

**JANICE**

You know he wouldn't miss a chance to show off.

**CHARLOTTE**

Mom.

**STELLA**

I am just so amazed by how much time he volunteers at Messiah Lutheran.

**SOREN**

Wow.

**SOPHIA**

Charlotte, can I have your fork?

**BERT**

Did ya sneak this nun out of the convent, Charles?

**CHARLOTTE**

Where's your fork?

**STELLA**

We met on Tinder.

**JANICE**

Well....

*(JANICE exits back into the kitchen.)*

**SOPHIA**

I'll trade you- you have my favorite fork.

**IAN**

She has a favorite fork?

*(SOPHIA and CHARLOTTE trade forks.)*

**BERT**

*(A little too loudly)*

So what's this Tinder anyhow?

*(Silence.)*

**INGRID**

Something is missing. Is everyone here?

*(HARPER enters from the kitchen to set another plate of food down.)*

**IAN**

I'm here.

*(CHARLOTTE giggles.)*

**HARPER**

I'm here, let's eat.

**SOPHIA**

There's no ranch.

**IAN**

It's lasagna.

*(CHARLOTTE, SOPHIA, and SOREN just stare at IAN in shock.)*

**CHARLOTTE**

Ranch is good on everything.

*(JANICE enters from the kitchen.)*

**JANICE**

Ok, that's everything. Everyone sit down.

*Plowing Through*

**INGRID**

I think something's missing.

**JANICE**

I got everything out of the kitchen, Mom. Don't worry.

*(SOPHIA stands and goes to kitchen.)*

**JANICE**

Sophia, don't - what?

**SOPHIA**

I need Ranch.

**CHARLES**

Bring the Sriracha.

**SOPHIA**

Ok.

**JANICE**

Sophia, come here.

*(SOPHIA exits. INGRID tries to stand up.)*

**JANICE**

Mom, sit down.

**INGRID**

My Manhattan.

**BERT**

I'll take a refill.

**IAN**

I've got it.

**JANICE**

Everyone just sit down! Manhattans after. Please.

**INGRID**

Just a titch, Ian?

*Plowing Through*

**IAN**

What?

**JANICE**

Ok.

**CHARLES**

Ian, my man, can you grab me a pop?

**IAN**

A what?

**CHARLES**

Just, uh, um, a soda.

**IAN**

Ya sure.

*(CHARLOTTE gets up with IAN to go to the kitchen. SOPHIA enters from kitchen with a Costco size container of ranch and a normal size sriracha.)*

**HARPER**

Oh, look at the snow coming down.

**JANICE**

Charlotte- oh, nevermind.

**PARKER**

Sure will be good for the ski season. We needed it.

**SOREN**

Last year was a bust.

**JANICE**

The team is looking pretty good this year, isn't it Parker? I heard you might make it to state again.

**PARKER**

If the team's lucky and we keep getting this snow, there's a chance ya know.

**HARPER**

I hope we can all still drive tonight.

**PARKER**

*Plowing Through*

Uffda.

**STELLA**

Charles, we'll be ok, right?

**CHARLES**

I put snow tires on the Prius, so vroom vroom

**STELLA**

Is it four wheel drive?

**CHARLES**

No, it's an electric hybrid...

**STELLA**

Oh dear, I should have driven.

**HARPER**

Stella, how do you know Charles? From church?

**STELLA**

Um, from an app.

**PARKER**

Jesus/

**JANICE**

/Christ was born tomorrow.

*(CHARLOTTE and IAN re enter with the full drinks, and hand them out.)*

**JANICE**

Oh good, sit down, sit down, everyone come eat!

*(CHARLES starts to take everyone's hands.)*

**CHARLES**

Take each other's hands, and let us say grace.

*(No one says anything it's very awkward. Lots of hand shuffling. Especially at the kids table.)*

**CHARLES**

Let us all just give thanks, come on.

**JANICE**

Ok, kids, take each other's hands and just bow your heads. Just this once. Thank you.

*(IAN looks at CHARLOTTE, CHARLOTTE nudges IAN. IAN participates.)*

**CHARLES**

We are gathered here today Lord to give thanks to you and all that you have supplied us. We want to thank you for sending your son into the world on this day in history. Thank you. Amen.

**ALL**

Amen.

**BERT**

Sing it again sister.

**JANICE**

Thank you Charles .

*(Smoke starts coming from the kitchen, but nobody notices.)*

**IAN**

Is this a bad time to tell them I'm Atheist?

*(CHARLOTTE nudges Ian to shut up.)*

**INGRID**

Something is missing.

**SOPHIA**

What?

**BERT**

You're losing it mom.

**CHARLOTTE**

Sophia, don't judge.

**HARPER**

Oh Mom, I just love your potatoes.

**SOPHIA**

I'm not, I just- *(SOPHIA starts giggling.)*

**CHARLOTTE**

You were judging.

**JANICE**

*(Passing a plate of food to PARKER.)* Here you go!

**PARKER**

Thank you, Janice.

**SOPHIA**

Shut up.

**JANICE**

Girls stop fighting.

**INGRID**

No, I know I'm forgetting something.

**SOPHIA**

I'm just saying that it's surprising.

**CHARLOTTE**

So?

**JANICE**

Girls.

**INGRID**

Is the bread on the table?

**SOREN**

You're an aerialist? Like circus stuff?

**HARPER**

Right here Mom. I do love bread. Pass this to Ingrid.

*(HARPER passes the bread basket in the direction of INGRID)*

**IAN**

Atheist.

**SOREN**

Oh snap, cool

**CHARLES**

What's that son? Stella, can you pass the potatoes?

**IAN**

I'm Atheist.

**STELLA**

What?

*(STELLA drops the potatoes. Silence. Everyone scampers to clean up. The fire alarm.)*

**INGRID**

The Tater-Tot Hotdish! That's what I forgot.

*(Smoke begins to fill the room. INGRID, JANICE, and HARPER get up to save the Hotdish. PARKER immediately starts to clean up the plate shards.)*

**HARPER**

Mom!

**BERT**

That's our Ingrid. Always forgetting something. Hey mom did you remember to put on your underwear?

*(SOPHIA laughs snorting out water onto her lap.)*

**STELLA**

Ian, it's Ian, right?

**IAN**

I um, yes, that's me.

**STELLA**

You are a very interesting person.

**CHARLOTTE**

I'm sorry, what?

**IAN**

Uh, Thank you?

**CHARLES**

Ian and Charlotte, how's the weather in California this time of year?

**BERT**

There's Palm trees in Florida all the year long.

**STELLA**

You know, Ian, Charles and I would love to talk to you later about your belief system. We would just find you atheists so interesting.

**CHARLES**

Stella, honey, why don't we just leave the poor man alone.

**CHARLOTTE**

Thanks, Papa.

**SOPHIA**

Soren, can I have your napkin?

**SOREN**

Get your own napkin. That's gross.

*(SOPHIA wipes her nose with SOREN's sleeve.)*

**SOREN**

Um, do you mind?

**SOPHIA**

Thanks dude.

**SOREN**

You're disgusting.

**SOPHIA**

Thanks, bud.

*Plowing Through*

*(PARKER has cleaned up the broken dish and JANICE enters with a charred hotdish followed by INGRID and HARPER who continue to fan the smoke detectors.)*

**JANICE**

open the door we gotta get this outside!

*(IAN RUSHES AND opens the door JANICE stands outside airing it off.)*

**BERT and CHARLES**

She always knew how to make an entrance. They both chuckle at their own joke.

HARPER

Oh shut it!

*(JANICE re-enters with the cooled off price of charcoal that is the tater tot hot dish)*

**JANICE**

Ok, no damage done, Mom.

**HARPER**

Looks delicious.

**INGRID**

Oh dear, what a mess.

**BERT**

Hey, it's just a giant lump of coal; looks like Santa's present for Harper.

*(Everyone laughs among themselves as the lights fade.)*

**Act 2**

***Radio/Alexa***

Due to extreme snow, I-35W, I-35E, I-694, I-94, and most state highways have been closed until further notice. Plows will be working through the night to clear the streets for Christmas. We advise all you Minnesotans, to stay inside with the family, stay warm, and stay safe. Ain't no reason to be out there catchin' hypothermia this Christmas.

**SCENE 5: THE NIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS**

*(SOPHIA, SOREN, CHARLOTTE, and IAN are all scattered around the living room in various sleeping bags and piles of blankets. They finish a game of cribbage.)*

***IAN***

I still don't get it. How did they win?

***SOREN***

It's just a game of chance.

***CHARLOTTE***

And it's not a team sport.

***SOREN***

Literally a game of chance.

***SOPHIA***

Oh, shut up, Soren. We won. And We schooled all of ya'll. Boom! West coast is the worst coast!

***CHARLOTTE***

Wow, what great sportsmanship. Is that what they teach you in NCAA's?

***SOPHIA***

No, not really.

***CHARLOTTE***

That's too bad. I would really love to see cross country skiers hockey-fighting it up in their spandex. Honestly that would be iconic.

***SOPHIA***

That would be dumb.

***SOREN***

No, it would actually be pretty funny.

***IAN***

Do people do that?

***SOPHIA***

No, they don't, and it's not funny.

***CHARLOTTE***

Jeez, Soph, we're just rustling your feathers.

***SOPHIA***

Ya, well it's not funny. You can't fight.

***CHARLOTTE***

Well, obviously you can't, but it'd be funny if you did.

***SOPHIA***

No it wouldn't be, ok?

***CHARLOTTE***

What did you like get ina fight or something?

***SOPHIA***

I did.

***SOREN***

WHAT?!

***SOPHIA***

Shhhhhhhh. No, it was really bad. This girl pushed off the course, so I found her after to be like "Not Cool" and she started yelling at me.

***CHARLOTTE***

What??

***SOPHIA***

So I started yelling back and then she sorta shoved me and I like blocked her and she fell down. But, I almost got suspended from the team- I woulda lost my scholarship. It was really scary.

***CHARLOTTE***

That's really funny.

***SOPHIA***

No it's not.

***SOREN***

Ok, but it's kinda funny.

***SOPHIA***

Ok, kinda. But you can't tell Mom.

***CHARLOTTE***

Duh.

***SOPHIA***

But, Papa knows. He sent me boxing gloves after I told him.

***IAN***

Are you for real?

***SOPHIA***

Ya, he's really funny.

***CHARLOTTE***

I don't like Stella. She looks too much like Mom. It's weird.

***IAN***

I totally thought she was like an aunt or something.

***SOREN***

Dude, same.

***SOPHIA***

Stella's better than Gertie though. Remember how drunk Gertie got Last New Year. Ew.

***CHARLOTTE***

Ya, I'm going back before New Years because of that.

***SOREN***

What happened?

***SOPHIA***

Like nothing, they were just like gross. Like old people making out.

**SOREN**

Ew.

**CHARLOTTE**

Ya, the two of them just drank a lot. But like so did Pops, like Mom and Pops did. Pops more than Mom.

**SOPHIA**

But like, not *that* much. And like, not in front of us.

**CHARLOTTE**

That's true. Mom doesn't drink at all anymore. Like girl needs to relax.

**SOPHIA**

I think Pops still does, probably not around Stella, and probably not as much as you.

**CHARLOTTE**

Oh Shut Up, that was just last night. One Night!

**IAN**

You were pretty gone. Do you remember calling me?

**CHARLOTTE**

NO!!!

**IAN**

*(Laughing)* Shhhhh

**SOPHIA**

I Remember!

**SOPHIA**

You were all like "Baby I miss you come herrreeeeeeee"

**IAN**

Meanwhile, I was already waking up to get myself to the airport.

**CHARLOTTE**

Wait, that's so funny.

**IAN**

Who were you partying with?

**SOPHIA**

Her ex-boyfriend's

**IAN**

Excuse me?

**CHARLOTTE**

I was with the old ski team from High School.

**SOPHIA**

Who she dated.

**CHARLOTTE**

I dated two of them. Many years ago. Whatever. They're annoying. It's fine.

**SOREN**

They are annoying.

**CHARLOTTE**

Oh shut up. There was other people there too. I don't know. I don't have any other friends here anymore.

**SOPHIA**

Ya, that's true. I guess I don't have any friends here either.

**SOREN**

What am I?

**SOPHIA**

I mean besides you.

**SOREN**

I don't really hang out with anyone from high school anymore either.

**IAN**

Ya, me neither.

*(They all laugh.)*

**CHARLOTTE**

I love you, Babe.

**IAN**

I love you too.

*(They Kiss)*

**SOPHIA**

*Plowing Through*

K-I-S-S-I-N-G

*(SOREN chuckles)*

**CHARLOTTE**

Give us a break you eternal love-birds.

**SOPHIA**

That's not funny.

**SOREN**

Hey, Now.

**CHARLOTTE**

I'm messing with you.

**SOPHIA**

*(Mimicking)* I'm messing with you. Save your lip smacking for California.

**CHARLOTTE**

Oh, come on Sophia.

**SOREN**

I've never been to California. The farthest west I've ever been is Montana I think? Ya, Dad and I went Glacier one time.

**IAN**

You should come visit sometime, we have a guest room you can crash- you both can, we're five minutes from an In and Out.

**SOREN**

Ah what?

**CHARLOTTE**

It's like a Culver's but with less options and less old people.

**SOPHIA**

And no cheese curds, so like what's the point? I went to their place for Spring Break last year, but like ew there wasn't anything for me to do.

**IAN**

What?

**CHARLOTTE**

You went to Disney and you loved it!

***SOPHIA***

Ya, that was it.

***CHARLOTTE***

Fine, next time we'll drive out to Joshua Tree and go hiking- Ian and I loved it there.

***IAN***

There were a lot of bugs.

***SOPHIA***

Why don't you guys ever come visit me?

***CHARLOTTE***

You live in a dorm!

***SOPHIA***

Ok, but like after.

***SOREN***

I'd come visit you.

***SOPHIA***

Ok, then do it.

***CHARLOTTE***

You gonna stay out there after you graduate?

***SOPHIA***

Ya, I don't know, I really like it. But, maybe I'll move somewhere with even more skiing like Alaska or Sweden or I don't know Wanaka, New Zealand.

***SOREN***

We have a lot of skiing here.

***SOPHIA***

Eh, it's not the same. Soren, you gotta get out and ski the world, you know? Let's quit it all and become professional ski bums!

***SOREN***

Oh, I don't know.

***CHARLOTTE***

Grandpa woulda loved that!

***SOPHIA***

Come on, Soren- make a pact with me that when we graduate, we sell everything but the ski's and become professional ski bums!

***IAN***

What's a ski bum?

***CHARLOTTE***

Shhh, this is important.

***SOREN***

You know, ski-bums are generally like down hill-

***SOPHIA***

We'll be trailblazers, blazing the continent!

***SOREN***

No, that's ok, I couldn't. It's nice here.

***SOPHIA***

Lamesauce.

***SOREN***

Things are really good here.

***SOPHIA***

Things are really good like lots of places.

***SOREN***

Nothing's the same as here though.

***CHARLOTTE***

Nothing's as plain as here. Great place to come home to though.

***SOPHIA***

Great place to come home to. I like that.

***CHARLOTTE***

Thanks girl. Good night. I'm tired.

***SOPHIA***

*Plowing Through*

Whatever.

***CHARLOTTE***

Merry Christmas little sister whom I love and adore.

***SOPHIA***

Merry Christmas weirdo.

***SOREN***

Merry Christmas to all/

***IAN***

/and to all a good night.

*(They all laugh as the scene ends.)*

**SCENE 6: 2AM on CHRISTMAS MORNING**

*(Lights up on CHARLES having a drink as he watches the snow fall. IAN, SOREN, SOPHIA, and CHARLOTTE still all sleep in sleeping bags on the floor. After a few beats. JANICE enters from basement with her arms full of stuffed stockings. She sees CHARLES drinking, and furiously begins to hang up stockings for each of the “kids”.)*

**CHARLES**

Janice.

**JANICE**

Shhhh.

**CHARLES**

How can I help?

**JANICE**

Shhhh.

**CHARLES**

What? Let me help.

*(This wakes SOPHIA and SOREN up. SOPHIA talks nonsensically and half asleep.)*

**SOPHIA**

No it's not. There's no Santa.

**SOREN**

Sophia?

**JANICE**

Charles!

**CHARLES**

Sorry, Sophia

**SOPHIA**

But, where's Santa?

**SOREN**

Santa hasn't arrived yet.

*Plowing Through*

**CHARLES**

What is she saying?

**JANICE**

She's not awake.

**SOREN**

Go back to sleep, Sophia.

**SOPHIA**

What? .... You guys are too loud.

*(SOPHIA stands up and gathers her sleeping bag.)*

**JANICE**

Where are you going?

**SOPHIA**

To the car.

**JANICE**

Sophia!

**CHARLES**

What?

**SOPHIA**

Soren, you wanna sleep in the car?

**SOREN**

Not particularly. I don't.

**SOPHIA**

Ok, come on.

*(SOREN gets up and follows her like a lost puppy.)*

**CHARLES**

Are they going/

**JANICE**

/to sleep in the car? Yes.

*Plowing Through*

They aren't still parking are they?  
**CHARLES**

What?  
**JANICE**

Parking- like you know- like parking.  
**CHARLES**

What?  
**JANICE**

Kissing?  
**CHARLES**

Charles!  
**JANICE**

Can I hang up some stockings?  
**CHARLES**

I'm fine.  
**JANICE**

Let me help.  
**CHARLES**

Leave it. *(pause)* Still drinking, I see?  
**JANICE**

Mhm.  
**CHARLES**

So, um, how are you?  
**JANICE**

I'm - The girls seem good. Glad to see them.  
**CHARLES**

I'm glad that you could see them.  
**JANICE**

**CHARLES**

They moved so far away.

**JANICE**

Mhm. Sophia already moved out two years ago. I think she's happy being an East-coaster.

**CHARLES**

Who'd a thunk our girls would want a coast.

**JANICE**

I thought they loved it here.

**CHARLES**

I don't think it was Minnesota that drove them away.

**JANICE**

I suppose you're right. I suppose that something could have pulled them.

**CHARLES**

Oh, I suppose.

*(CHARLES takes a drink.)*

**JANICE**

Why do you have to do that in my house? Why do *you* have to drink in *my* house?

**CHARLES**

Oh, you know.

**JANICE**

No, I don't know. So, don't please. I moved out of that house to start my own life.

*(No response from CHARLES.)*

**JANICE**

This is my house now, you know?... Why'd you- Oh never mind.

**CHARLES**

Why did I bring Stella?

**JANICE**

I uh. Ya, I guess. It was a family thing.

**CHARLES**

I can tell you, but you won't like it.

**JANICE**

Oh, you don't know about that.

**CHARLES**

I brought Stella because Sophia said that Parker was here.

**JANICE**

What?

**CHARLES**

Oh, come on.

**JANICE**

Charles.

**CHARLES**

I've known you for a long time now. Oh Geez, we were married for twenty years. I know those eyes, Janice. You've always laughed at Parker the way we used to laugh.

**JANICE**

Oh, geez. Don't be ridiculous.

**CHARLES**

I mean, I didn't notice it until after Sophia moved to college.

**JANICE**

You're being ridiculous. This is ridiculous.

**CHARLES**

Is it?

**JANICE**

I'm not the one who snuck around on Kinder Dates while we were married.

**CHARLES**

Tinder.

**JANICE**

Excuse me. Where did you even discover that thing?

**CHARLES**

Charlotte.

**JANICE**

Jesus Christ - was born today!

**CHARLES**

Merry Christmas.

**JANICE**

Thank you. Those girls are growing up. You know, they remind me more and more of you everyday.

*(CHARLES chuckles.)*

**CHARLES**

You say that like it's bad.

**JANICE**

What? With Charlotte's partying and Sophia's just general lack of concentration.

**CHARLES**

Charlotte's living and Sophia's having fun.

**JANICE**

Having fun? She has a scholarship to keep. My god. She could be one of the best in the country, we could send her to the olympics. Could you imagine? Our little girl in the Olympics. I just don't want her to give it up like, well, like/

**CHARLES**

Like I did? Like I did when I quit a so called music career? When I quit it to have a family.

**JANICE**

Ya, you half assed it, excuse me, You half-butted it, your music, the family all of it.

**CHARLES**

I never had a chance at making anything of my music career here. This state already produced one Blues star, Minnesota wasn't gonna have another Bob Dylan. And I'll never leave. I'm too darn stubborn.

**JANICE**

Well, you're right about that.

**CHARLES**

And trust me, Sophia is not half-butting it.

**JANICE**

Hey. Wait, what do you mean?

**CHARLES**

I think she's trying to take her intensity down a titch.

**JANICE**

Now, why would she want to do that?

**CHARLES**

Oh, I don't know. Sometimes we all just need to lighten up.

**JANICE**

Oh Charles. Won't you quit it?

**CHARLES**

Maybe it's time for Parker?

**JANICE**

Oh, stop it. Will you look at the snow.

**CHARLES**

I mean it. I might not have been the best husband, but we stopped loving each other like we used to long before the uh, the divorce - you have had plenty of time to develop a uh oh, you know.

**JANICE**

Uffda, not now.

**CHARLES**

When?

**JANICE**

Never, Charles, Never. Good night.

*(JANICE turns to go upstairs gets halfway up the stairs stops. Turns around. CHARLES looks at her precariously.)*

**JANICE**

Ingrid and Harper are in my bed.

*(CHARLES shrugs, laughing.)*

*Plowing Through*

**JANICE**

There's the old couch downstairs.

**CHARLES**

I thought you put Parker on that couch.

**JANICE**

Oh shoot. Oh you're right. There's one of the old cots in the camping supplies.

**CHARLES**

Have fun with Parkie.

**JANICE**

Oh, shushhh!

*(JANICE exits downstairs. CHARLES stays staring out the window. IAN looks at a little wrapped package in his hand. CHARLES starts to leave. IAN makes sure that CHARLOTTE is asleep and meets CHARLES at the window.)*

**IAN**

Hey, uh, Mr. Wilson?

*(CHARLES jumps a little bit.)*

**IAN**

Hey, um, can I ask you something?

**CHARLES**

Ian, my man, of course.

**IAN**

I have something very important to talk to you about.

**CHARLES**

Call me Charles, by the way.

**IAN**

Well, I just. I have a very special present for Charlotte tomorrow, and well, I don't know how to say this.

**CHARLES**

Oh?

**IAN**

I wanted to run it by you first because well, I know Charlotte wouldn't like it if she knew that I talked to you first, but I feel like you're kinda traditional and that you wouldn't like it if I didn't run it by you first. But, I'm going to ask Charlotte to marry me tomorrow- is that cool?

**CHARLES**

Are you asking for my permission?

**IAN**

Ya, yes, I guess I am.

**CHARLES**

I honestly never thought I would have this conversation with someone. *(Sighs)* Uffda.

**IAN**

What does that mean?

**CHARLES**

My girls have wild imaginations of their own, I never took them for the type to settle down. They headed for the coasts donchaknow?

**IAN**

I mean, I know, that's why I fell in love with Charlotte.

**CHARLES**

I suppose it's not settling down unless you settle down. You two are still going to go on adventures right? You know she went to Italy one time- that can't be the last of her adventures.

**IAN**

I mean, of course, we're hoping to go to Japan this summer. Charlotte and I have been saving up for a long time to have a travel fund.

**CHARLES**

Have you now?

**IAN**

Ya, I mean we've been trying.

**CHARLES**

Uffda. It's hard.

**IAN**

Ya.

**CHARLES**

You know you don't need my permission, it's the twenty-first century. You can marry another man nowadays you don't need to go asking a father for his daughter's hand.

**IAN**

I know.

**CHARLES**

You know, Janice and I always thought one of the girls would turn out gay.

**IAN**

Oh, okay?

**CHARLES**

It's kinda disappointingly boring they didn't. Statistically, someone in the family should be.

**IAN**

I'm sorry. Don't you work for the church?

**CHARLES**

I volunteer, but that doesn't matter. Jesus loves everybody, right?

**IAN**

Ok.

**CHARLES**

Except you Atheists.

**IAN**

Oh.

**CHARLES**

I'm pulling your leg, kid. I volunteer so that I can still perform my music.

**IAN**

Ok. That's cool.

**CHARLES**

I suppose you never would come around if my girls were gay. And Soren's a good guy too.

**IAN**

Sophia and Soren aren't together...

**CHARLES**

No, but they were, and they may be again. He's too afraid to leave this goddamn state.

**IAN**

I see....So?

**CHARLES**

Do you have my permission? You don't get my permission because you don't need it. You two are free as a pair of birds, and you always will be. What you do get is my blessings and my airline miles. Go to Japan. Use your money to do something big over there. I'm never going to use them.

**IAN**

Thank you, thank you, thank you Charles .

**CHARLES**

You know I'm not the one you should be talking to right? If you really want permission, you should be talking to a different parent.

**IAN**

Excuse me?

**CHARLES**

You need to talk to Janice first, not me.

**IAN**

Ok, thank you.

**CHARLES**

Well, I suppose. Be an angel and put this glass away for me, will you Ian?

**IAN**

Sure.

**CHARLES**

Goodnight now. Merry Christmas our Lord Savior was born today.

**IAN**

Goodnight. Charles. Thank you.

*(CHARLES exits upstairs. IAN stands smiling out the window.)*

**SCENE 7: CHRISTMAS MORNING**

*(All the presents are underneath the tree. IAN and CHARLOTTE sleep on the couch. JANICE is already busy in the kitchen. JANICE is quietly in and out. She is clearly slightly distraught. INGRID comes down the stairs. INGRID is half whistling, half breathing loudly. This, of all things, wakes CHARLOTTE up.)*

**CHARLOTTE**

eerrgh.

**IAN**

Shhh, it's just your grandma.

**CHARLOTTE**

She doesn't have her hearing aids in yet.

**IAN**

Huh?

**CHARLOTTE**

She whistles when she thinks no one can hear it. Watch. Merry Christmas Grandma.

*(No Response.)*

**CHARLOTTE**

Grandma!

*(No Response.)*

**CHARLOTTE**

GRANDMA! MERRY CHRISTMAS!

**INGRID**

Oh, hello. I didn't wake you up now, did I?

**CHARLOTTE**

Uhhhh. NO.

**INGRID**

Go upstairs, sweetie. Sleep in your mother's bed. Merry Christmas, my love.

*(INGRID gives CHARLOTTE kiss and her tush a little pat as CHARLOTTE passes her to go upstairs. IAN gives a little snort. CHARLOTTE gives IAN a quick glance. CHARLOTTE goes upstairs, INGRID whistles her way into the kitchen, and IAN stays put. )*

***INGRID***

Janice!

***JANICE***

Mom, I'm right here.

***INGRID***

Janice, Can you turn my hearing aids on for me? The button is so small.

***JANICE***

Mom, of course. WHERE ARE THEY?

***INGRID***

Oh dear. I forgot them in my room. Uffda.

***JANICE***

I'll GO GRAB THEM.

***INGRID***

Janice- Sophia- Harper, Charlotte - Charlotte's sleeping in there.

***JANICE***

That's OK.

*(JANICE exits kitchen and enters living room. IAN is standing tentatively. IAN surprises JANICE.)*

***JANICE***

Oh, hello. Good Morning Ian- Merry Christmas.

***IAN***

Merry Christmas. Janice, um, do you have a second?

***JANICE***

I was just going to grab Grandma's hearing aids.

***IAN***

Ok, ya, sure.

***JANICE***

But, what's up? That can wait.

***IAN***

*Plowing Through*

Ok, great. Um, I have something to ask you.

**JANICE**

Oh?

**IAN**

Today is very important to Charlotte, and I want to make it extra special.

**JANICE**

Oh dear.

**IAN**

I would like to marry your daughter, and I was wondering if -

**JANICE**

Oh my goodness, Oh my goodness, oh my.

**IAN**

Yea.

**JANICE**

Oh my goodness. Of course. Oh geez. Yes, I mean please.

*(JANICE hugs IAN.)*

**IAN**

Thank you.

**JANICE**

Ian, is that why you flew all the way out here? No one just comes to Minnesota without a reason.

**IAN**

Well, I mean, it's very nice here.

**JANICE**

Awww. Oh dear. Oh Dear. Yes, Yes, Yes.

**IAN**

Please don't tell anyone. I still want it to be a surprise for Charlotte.

**JANICE**

Oh of course. Oh obviously. Of course.

*Plowing Through*

**IAN**

Thank you.

*(INGRID enters from Kitchen.)*

**INGRID**

Janice, is that you? I put the Butter Braid in the oven- is that ok with you?

**JANICE**

Of course mom!

**INGRID**

What?

**JANICE**

I'M GRABBING YOUR HEARING AIDS.

**INGRID**

Oh, thank you.

*(JANICE exits upstairs. INGRID enters from kitchen still whistling. BERT enters from upstairs.)*

**BERT**

You know, down in Florida, you don't see the likes of this. I suppose you don't either down in Californ-I-A.

**IAN**

Um, no, not really.

**BERT**

Snow like this. Uffda, you ever seen anything like it?

**IAN**

I mean we used to get snowstorms in New York as a kid.

**BERT**

Nothing like this.

**IAN**

Uh, I mean-

**BERT**

Sure is something.

*Plowing Through*

*(BERT exits into Kitchen. IAN takes a moment to take it all in before going upstairs. INGRID follows BERT into the kitchen still whistling very loudly. HARPER enters from upstairs. HARPER doesn't see anyone to talk to, but she knows they're there. )*

**HARPER**

The plows. Oh the plows didn't make it through last night. Oh. Dear. What a Christmas. Uffda. I suppose now you know plowmen have families too.

*(BERT and INGRID enter from kitchen with a cups of coffee.)*

**HARPER**

Oh dear. Did you see? The plows never came through. Oh, you know, how're families going to get together with no plows? Oh those poor plowmen. Oh dear. Oh the plows.

**INGRID**

Harper, the plows didn't come through.

**HARPER**

Um, Mom?

**INGRID**

I don't know if they can make it through. That's a lot of snow. You know back on the farm we'd be snowed in for a week at a time.

**HARPER**

Oh the plows. Those poor families.

**INGRID**

Oh the plows.

**HARPER**

The Plows.

**INGRID**

Those plows, ya know.

**HARPER**

Oh, those plows.

**INGRID and HARPER**

Uffda.

*Plowing Through*

*(INGRID and HARPER sip coffee simultaneously. BERT enters in his ski jacket.)*

**BERT**

Jesus, Mary and Joseph, I'm gonna have a smoke.

*(BERT slams the door behind him. HARPER shudders and INGRID waves it off.)*

**HARPER**

Mom, why does he do that? Why does he still try to treat me like I'm his annoying little sister. Oh for Chrissakes. He doesn't have to do that to me anymore.

**INGRID**

Mhm.

**HARPER**

And the smoking. Oh, the smoking makes me so mad. The smoking's what killed Dad and Erik. Oh, WHY DOES HE KEEP DOING IT? He makes me so mad.

**INGRID**

Keep doing what?

**HARPER**

SMOKING? Why does Bert keep smoking?

**INGRID**

Oh, he quit. He quit almost nine years ago. After Erik died.

**HARPER**

WHAT?

**INGRID**

Erik, your husband. He just has a cigarette or two if he's upset, you know. Like when his house collapsed in that there hurricane they had down in Florida.

**HARPER**

Is he upset right now?

**INGRID**

What?

**HARPER**

Is Bert upset right now?

**INGRID**

Oh there he is, having a smoke now- he must be upset right now.

**HARPER**

But, why? It's Christmas. Maybe it's the PLOWS.

**INGRID**

The plows never came through.

**HARPER**

They never did.

**INGRID**

He gets upset around you, you know. He misses Erik and Dad. That's why he sold Grandpa's company and moved down to Florida. He never wanted to retire- he just didn't want to live here without them.

**HARPER**

Mom, I love you.

**INGRID**

What dear?

*(HARPER gives INGRID a big hug.)*

**HARPER**

I'm gonna go talk to him.

**INGRID**

But the plows never came through.

**HARPER**

Thanks Mom, Merry Christmas.

*(HARPER puts her boots and coat on. Perhaps she just grabs a blanket from the couch to bundle herself up in.)*

### **SCENE 8: CHRISTMAS MORNING OUTSIDE THE HOUSE**

*(Outside has a couple of staging options. It can be a split scene where the outdoors is out on an apron. It could be that the outdoors is just a special on the stage where the light is white and snow falls. It could be off to one side of the stage. It could be up in a balcony. If outside doesn't take place in the same place as the living room, then the action in the living room should proceed as normal.)*

*Plowing Through*

*(HARPER sits/stands next to BERT. Neither of them say anything for a long time. Once they finally get the impulse to talk. They talk over each other.)*

**HARPER**

It's a shame the plows didn't come through.

**BERT**

Don't you dare say anything about the plows.

**HARPER**

Oh, sorry.

**BERT**

Uffda.

*(Silence.)*

**HARPER**

Can I ask you something?

**BERT**

Ask away.

**HARPER**

Why um, why do you treat me like this?

**BERT**

Oh, Harper, I don't know what you're talking about.

**HARPER**

Bert, my child is grown up and married. You're retired living in Florida. I don't know, you don't have to treat me like your annoying freshman sister.

**BERT**

I haven't treated you any different now than from the day you were born.

**HARPER**

Exactly. Why can't you stop doing that?

**BERT**

Stop doing what? I've been doing the same thing for so many goddamn years. I don't have any reason to change.

**HARPER**

You changed once.

**BERT**

Hmf.

**HARPER**

You were so good to Erik. You were so good to me when Erik was alive. I just, I just. Oh, I don't know.

**BERT**

Hmf.

**HARPER**

And why do you smoke those? They killed both my husband and our father. Lung Cancer got both of them. Erik had even quit them years before. It followed him. Poisoned him. So why do you have to keep it up?

**BERT**

Jesus Harper. I quit smoking the day your husband died. The day we lost Erik, I smoked my last pack.

**HARPER**

Ya, but-

**BERT**

Ya-butts live in the woods.

**HARPER**

See, there you go again. I'm just trying to be a sister.

**BERT**

Harper, I don't think you know how hard it is to be around you.

**HARPER**

Oh dear. What is that supposed to mean?

**BERT**

Outside of the constant -

**HARPER**

Is this about the damn plows?

**BERT**

This is about you being the widow of my best friend.

**HARPER**

*Plowing Through*

Oh.

**BERT**

Uffda.

**HARPER**

I- uh. I um never thought about that.

**BERT**

Ya.

*(Silence.)*

**HARPER**

After Erik and I got married, you two weren't as good of friends, were you?

*(BERT says nothing for a long time. BERT lights another cigarette. BERT hands the pack to HARPER.)*

**BERT**

Want a smoke?

**HARPER**

Bert, you have got to be kidding, after what we-

**BERT**

Ok, that's fine, I was just offering.

*(They sit in silence as HARPER pouts. And BERT smokes.)*

**HARPER**

Have you had a good friend since Erik?

**BERT**

Harper, I had Dad, and I had work. I had enough. Have a smoke, girl.

**HARPER**

Do you miss him?

**BERT**

Come on, just like in the old days when we'd sneak onto the roof with Dad's cigarettes.

**HARPER**

We were so dumb. We didn't even know how dumb we were.

**BERT**

You still feel dumb?

**HARPER**

Eh, I guess I do. Hand me one of those killer sticks.

*(HARPER lights and smokes a cigarette.)*

**HARPER**

Were these always so terrible?

**BERT**

Eh.

**HARPER**

What was it like? Losing Erik- for you, I mean.

**BERT**

I lost him twice. I lost him when he fell in love with you and I lost him when he died.

**HARPER**

I miss him. I think about him at least once every hour. On the dot at the :03 of every hour. Even in my sleep you know?

**BERT**

Harper, I was never in love with the man, but I talk to Dad and Erik once a day down in my condo. I lift my drink to the sky and thank them for the good times. To everyone who's lost, you know?

**HARPER**

I do.

*(She Lifts her Cigarette to the sky. A moment of poignant silence.)*

**BERT**

Well, you know what they say? She walks, she talks, she crawls on her belly like a reptile.

**HARPER**

Why? We were just about to-

**BERT**

I know, I know- calm down.

*Plowing Through*

*(HARPER flicks the cigarette and turns to leave.)*

**HARPER**

I'm done, Bert.

**BERT**

Aw, come on, Harp.

**HARPER**

I'm trying, but whatever I do, you hate. You've hated me from the minute I was born. I never did anything to you.

**BERT**

You did it all. You did. You got your college degree. You got the loyal husband, the kid. You did it all. Congratulations.

**HARPER**

That's what this is about all these years?

**BERT**

Look at me. Never went to school. Divorced twice, no kids. I sold Dad's company so I could just retire early and move to Florida. I don't know.

**HARPER**

My husband died and my baby boy moved away to a new family in Portugal. I don't know.

**BERT**

Oh, but you had it and you were happy, and I was drinking and smoking and working for Dad. Not much else.

**HARPER**

Janice did the same thing as me.

**HARPER and BERT**

But, Janice is the baby.

*(Mildly uncomfortable laughter.)*

**BERT**

Janice sure is a handful. Always has been.

**HARPER**

You see Charlotte and Sophia? She still has her hands full.

**BERT**

Don't even get me started on those two.

**HARPER**

They are crazy.

**BERT**

I like that Ian of Charlotte's. He's a good kid; he gets it.

**HARPER**

What's wrong with this state? All the kids run away.

**BERT**

Maybe that's for the best.

**HARPER**

How?

**BERT**

They won't end up all alone like the three of us.

*(JANICE enters dressed in snow gear head to toe. She is carrying a shovel. She cannot contain how happy she is. She shovels as though she were just fluttering around in the snow. She doesn't even notice BERT and HARPER. BERT exits. HARPER ponders for a moment before talking to JANICE.)*

**HARPER**

Janice- do you need any help?

**JANICE**

What? No, I'm good- you can see if Mom's hearing aids are actually working- I had to replace the batteries again today.

**HARPER**

Oh, ya sure. Sure, Sure.

*(HARPER exits to Inside. CHARLES enters from Inside. CHARLES is in his ski jacket and dress pants. He has a shovel.)*

**CHARLES**

Hey, uh, thought you could use some help.

**JANICE**

*Plowing Through*

Well you know, I've been doing alright by myself for a time now.

**CHARLES**

Oh ya, sure. (*CHARLES shovels anyways.*)

**JANICE**

No, oh, go inside. I've got this.

**CHARLES**

No, I can do this, you can go inside.

*(CHARLES and JANICE shovel stubbornly but say nothing. CHARLES finally breaks the ice.)*

**CHARLES**

Did Ian talk to you?

**JANICE**

Oh geez, did he talk to you too?

**CHARLES**

Oh sure.

**JANICE**

Oh Charles, I am so excited. I. I. I. Oh my dear.

**CHARLES**

Our girls are growing up.

**JANICE**

That they are.

**CHARLES**

Umm, I might have mucked up in a lot of ways, we both might have, but Charlotte and Sophia sure turned out to be something special.

**JANICE**

Who woulda thought they would move so far away.

**CHARLES**

I'm sorry for what I said about Parker last night.

**JANICE**

Oh, are you now?

**CHARLES**

Janice, I'm serious. I know he was there for you when you needed him after all the crud I did.

**JANICE**

Well, he's a good friend. That's what friends do.

**CHARLES**

Ok. It would be a weird if you dated the father of the boy Sophia still crushes on.

**JANICE**

Charles, come on now.

**CHARLES**

Janice, take a joke.

**JANICE**

Not everything's a joke.

**CHARLES**

This snow's no joke.

*(They both shovel the last bit of snow in silence. They finish and look at their work.)*

**JANICE**

Looks good. We did a nice job.

**CHARLES**

Sure did.

**JANICE**

Help me grab the salt. Wouldn't want this to ice over.

**CHARLES**

Oh, that's for sure.

**SCENE 9: CHRISTMAS MORNING CONTINUED**

*(Inside the living room. INGRID is setting the table with the Butter Braid. BERT is reading the paper. HARPER is there. PARKER enters and exits from the basement periodically with ski supplies.)*

**HARPER**

So the paper would come through, but not the plows.

**BERT**

It's yesterday's.

**PARKER**

Merry Christmas, oh will you look at that snow. Gonna be great for the ski team this year, I tell you.

**HARPER**

Oh for sure.

**BERT**

Watch out where those huskies go, don't you eat that yellow snow.

**PARKER**

Harper, do you know where Janice keeps the um the, does Janice have a tool kit? I need to straighten the bindings on her classic skis.

**HARPER**

Oh ya, oh sure, it's in the garage above the air compressor.

**PARKER**

Thank you.

*(CHARLOTTE enters from upstairs. PARKER exits to Garage.)*

**HARPER**

Oh, there you are my sunshine.

**CHARLOTTE**

Is there any coffee?

**HARPER**

In the kitchen.

*Plowing Through*

*(INGRID gives CHARLOTTE a kiss and gives her little butt tap. STELLA enters from upstairs with her bag. PARKER enters from Garage.)*

**PARKER**

Found it thank you, Harper. Merry Christmas, um-

**STELLA**

Merry Christmas.

**BERT**

Merry Christmas Lisa.

**STELLA**

It's Stella.

*(PARKER exits to basement with toolbox)*

**BERT**

Merry Christmas all the same.

*(JANICE and CHARLES enter from outside in an amicable mood. This causes clear tension.)*

**JANICE**

Stella, would you like some coffee, there should be more in the pot.

*(HARPER already has a mug in her hand to give to STELLA.)*

**HARPER**

Here you are, we got the Caribou Reindeer blend. It's that time of year.

**STELLA**

Thank you.

**JANICE**

I have a milk frother if you'd like some -

**STELLA**

This is fine. I take my coffee black.

**HARPER**

Oh, ya, ok.

**STELLA**

*Plowing Through*

Thank you.

*(IAN enters from upstairs. He's the only one who looks nice. Everyone else is in either the same clothes as yesterday or their pajamas.)*

**CHARLOTTE**

Good Morning, Handsome. Where'd that outfit come from?

**STELLA**

Charles, dear, I really need to get home, we really need to get to Willmar for my family's dinner tonight.

*(PARKER enters with a ski in one hand and a sharpie in the other.)*

**HARPER**

Oh dear. The plows still haven't cleared anything.

**PARKER**

Janice, can you just stand on this ski real quickly?

*(PARKER sets the ski down on the floor. JANICE stands on one foot on the ski one hand on PARKER's shoulder as he marks the ski with a marker.)*

**STELLA**

Charles, you can drive in this though?

**JANICE**

Oh ya, sure.

**CHARLES**

I don't know if the car could handle this.

**PARKER**

I just need to adjust the wax pocket now that I straightened out the bindings.

**STELLA**

Oh dear. I should have driven. Charles, I have four-wheel drive- I should have driven. Jesus Christ!

**CHARLES**

Was born today!

**JANICE**

Is it ok?

***PARKER***

Ya, barely moved. Thank you, Janice.

*(PARKER picks up the ski.)*

***STELLA***

We need to get to all the way to Willmar, so we'll need to leave soon. Charles, honey, I should have driven. Look at this.

***INGRID***

Willmar? I have family in Willmar.

***HARPER***

Oh, I forgot about that.

***INGRID***

My cousin still lives on the farm in Willmar. Cheryl Anderson. Stella, do you know a Cheryl Anderson?

***STELLA***

No, I'm afraid I don't.

***INGRID***

Well, she married a Johnson. Gerald Johnson. Do you know a Gerald and Cheryl Johnson.

***STELLA***

Those are my Grandparents.

***INGRID***

Oh, I knew I recognized you! You're Margot and Sven's daughter.

***STELLA***

Yes?

***INGRID***

Janice, meet your second cousin, Stella Johnson. You probably last saw each other when you were just babies.

***STELLA***

Lordy.

***JANICE***

Oh dear.

*Plowing Through*

**STELLA**

Charles. I think we should try driving.

**CHARLES**

Ya know? Maybe.

**HARPER**

How about presents?

**JANICE**

Yes, presents. Charles, presents. Ian?

**IAN**

Yes, Janice? Oh, yes, ya, cool.

**JANICE**

Where's my other daughter?

**HARPER**

Sophia?

**CHARLES**

She and Soren are parking in the garage.

**PARKER**

What?

**CHARLOTTE**

Did she do the thing where she sleeps in the car?

**INGRID**

Oh, I don't know.

*(SOPHIA and SOREN enter from the garage.)*

**SOPHIA**

Merry Christmas, Everyone!

*(SOPHIA and SOREN giggle.)*

**SOPHIA**

Do I smell Butter Braid?!

**HARPER**

Oh, let me get you both a plate!

**JANICE**

Well, I suppose since everyone's here, we can do presents.

*(PARKER exits downstairs with the ski.)*

**SOPHIA**

Me first!

**JANICE**

Actually, Charlotte, you go first.

**SOPHIA**

Mom!

**CHARLOTTE**

Mom, that is so embarrassing!

**CHARLES**

Charlotte, open that little one down there.

**CHARLOTTE**

This one?

**JANICE**

That one, Sweetheart.

**CHARLOTTE**

But, it's not from you- it's from Ian.

*(CHARLOTTE opens it. When she turns around IAN is on one knee.)*

**IAN**

Charlotte, I want to go on adventures with you for forever. I love you to the ends of the earth. Charlotte Jan Wilson, will you marry me?

**CHARLOTTE**

Oh my God! Yes, yes, Ian. I will marry you. Merry Christmas.

**CHARLES**

Congrats you too. I am so happy for you. I talked to Ian last night, and I'm giving you my airline miles so you two can finally go on that trip to Japan. I want you to keep on adventuring- no settling down for my girls.

**IAN**

Thank you, thank you so much.

**CHARLOTTE**

Thank you Papa! Oh my goodness.

**BERT**

You're welcome down to Florida at anytime.

**CHARLOTTE**

Thanks Uncle Bert.

*(HARPER enters with two plates of Butter Braid.)*

**HARPER**

Ok, so what did I miss? Charlotte what did you get?

**CHARLOTTE**

Aunt Harper- I'm getting married!

**HARPER**

What! Oh, Ian, oh Charlotte. Oh! Oh, my Goodness. You are! You are, you two, oh my dears.

**BERT**

You'd think Harper was getting married.

**JANICE**

Shush!

**INGRID**

What?

**JANICE**

Oh! Stand there! I'm sending a picture to my boy. He'll look love that so much. Smile! Oh, Ian that ring is just so beautiful.

*(A loud sound is heard outside. It's the plows. Everyone looks to the window.)*

**HARPER**

The plows! Oh thank goodness!

*(PARKER enters from basement with his bag.)*

**STELLA**

Oh great, Charles. I've got my things right here. We can still make it to Willmar for my Christmas dinner.

**CHARLES**

Oh, ya, ok. For sure. Charlotte, Ian, Congratulations. I am so happy for you. So honored to have you in the family, Ian. And you, Sophia, keep skiing hard! I am so proud of both of you. Love you. Goodbye, girls.

**CHARLOTTE**

Bye, Pops, Love you!

**SOPHIA**

Love you, Papa.

**BERT**

Bye, Charles, have fun in Willmar.

**INGRID**

Oh, ya, Willmar sure is nice.

**STELLA**

Charles?

**CHARLES**

Goodbye Charlotte, congrats.

**CHARLOTTE**

Love you.

**JANICE**

Drive safe now.

*(CHARLES and STELLA exit out the front door.)*

**CHARLOTTE**

Parker! Look, Ian and I are getting married.

***PARKER***

Wow, congratulations- did this just happen?

*(PARKER and 'the kids' talk amongst themselves)*

***BERT***

I can't believe Charles's dating your second cousin, Janice. The world just keeps getting smaller.

***HARPER***

What a scum.

***INGRID***

Those Johnsons are good folks. I'd say a little stuck on the farm, but good folks.

***CHARLOTTE***

Oh, Ian, Mom, I'm just so happy Papa was here to see this. Like, that I got to share the happiest moment of my life with all of my family.

*(JANICE hugs CHARLOTTE. HARPER Joins.)*

***HARPER***

And we're glad that we got to spend it with you.

***SOPHIA***

Can I open my presents now?

***JANICE***

Sophia!

***SOPHIA***

What? I didn't do anything.

***SOREN***

Uhhhh.

***JANICE***

Who needs more coffee?

***INGRID***

I'll take a titch more.

*Plowing Through*

**JANICE**

Great, let me heat up another pot.

*(JANICE exits into kitchen)*

**PARKER**

Well, I don't suppose we should impose any longer. Soren, you about ready to go?

**SOREN**

Uhhhh- sure.

**PARKER**

Congratulations, Charlotte. Ian- congrats.

**INGRID**

You're not leaving, are you?

**PARKER**

Oh sure, Ingrid, thanks for having us.

**INGRID**

Did you get any Butter Braid?

**PARKER**

Oh, no, I'm fine.

**HARPER**

Here, let me pack some up for you.

*(HARPER exits to kitchen)*

**SOREN**

No, no.

**PARKER**

Oh, no, no, come on now.

**SOPHIA**

Hey! It's mine!

**CHARLOTTE**

Oh come on, Soph, you don't want all that!

*Plowing Through*

**SOPHIA**

You don't know that.

**PARKER**

Soren, can you bring your skis up please?

**SOREN**

Ya, sure.

**SOPHIA**

I'll get 'em!

**SOREN**

Hey, don't touch my skis.

*(SOREN and SOPHIA race into the basement.)*

**PARKER**

Great- Merry Christmas everyone!

*(JANICE enters with the pot of coffee. HARPER enters with an old cottage cheese container.)*

**JANICE**

Oh, Parker, you can't go so soon.

**BERT**

Janice, let the man go if he wants to go.

**PARKER**

This is a family thing, we can't intrude.

**JANICE**

Oh, that's not true

**BERT**

What's that mean?

**HARPER**

Shhhh.

**PARKER**

Oh, I don't know.

*Plowing Through*

*(SOPHIA and SOREN enter from basement with two sets of skis.)*

**JANICE**

What else were you going to do?

**PARKER**

Oh, I don't know, maybe go for a ski?

**SOPHIA**

You're gonna be breaking trail out there.

**SOREN**

Do you still have my old rock skis?

**SOPHIA**

Ohh, ya- I think I do.

**SOREN**

Boom.

**SOPHIA**

I'll go grab 'em. Mom, Can I go skiing with Soren and Parker today?

**INGRID**

Sophia, don't you want to open presents?

**JANICE**

Sophia, no, Parker, Soren, just stay here a little longer enjoy Christmas morning.

**CHARLOTTE**

I would let them go.

**JANICE**

Charlotte! Everyone, please! Stay, just one more cup of coffee? Parker?

**PARKER**

Oh, alright. Just one more cup of coffee, Janice, just for you.

**BERT**

Janice, you've always had a way of making the men do what you want.

**HARPER**

Bert, shush!

**JANICE**

Charlotte, can you make another pot of coffee? Please?

**SOPHIA**

Does this mean we're not going skiing?

**HARPER**

Sophia, I'm so happy you're here. You too, Charlotte, Soren.

**JANICE**

I'm just so happy everyone is here. Parker?

**PARKER**

Janice?

**JANICE**

Thank you.

**BERT**

What a funny little Christmas crew we've got here.

**HARPER**

Oh for cute.

*(PARKER watches out the window.)*

**PARKER**

Those kids out there are sure having fun

**JANICE**

Oh, the neighbor kids!

**PARKER**

Sophia, is that you're old ski jacket?

**HARPER**

That is Sophia's old ski jacket!

**SOPHIA**

Soren, let's go! We gotta go play in the snow.

**SOREN**

Oh, ok, ya ,sure.

*(SOPHIA and SOREN frantically put on snow clothes.)*

**INGRID**

Charlotte, you and Ian go play too.

**IAN**

I'm allergic to the snow.

**JANICE**

Ian, stop that- go get a jacket on and play with those kids.

**CHARLOTTE**

Come on, honey! Let's go!

*(CHARLOTTE and IAN get bundled up.)*

**BERT**

Ian, you think you can handle this snow? I Know a city boy like you-

**IAN**

Uncle Bert, Man, we had snow in New York.

**BERT**

But not in California.

**IAN**

Shoot, you got me this time, Uncle Bert.

**HARPER**

Get out there now!

**JANICE**

Look at them out there.

**INGRID**

Oh for heaven's sake, how cute.

*(IAN and CHARLOTTE exit to outside. HARPER, BERT, JANICE, INGRID, and PARKER all stand with mugs of coffee watching out the window. Silence except for the sipping of coffee and sound of children playing in the snow.)*

**HARPER**

Makes me miss my boy. He sent me pictures this morning, look Mom-

*(HARPER gives her phone to INGRID. INGRID keeps flipping the phone around and adjusting her glasses. She can't see for shit.)*

**INGRID**

Oh for cute.

**BERT**

So, Parker, Janny? What's going on with you two?

**PARKER**

Uhh excuse me?

**JANICE**

Bert, not right now.

**BERT**

Nobody here is getting any younger.

**INGRID**

Let them be.

**BERT**

You know, the youth is wasted on the young.

**HARPER**

Bert's right, Mom, Jan?

**JANICE**

Parker, don't listen to them.

**BERT**

I'm just saying if not now, when?

**PARKER**

I, uh, I ya, know?

**JANICE**

Parker, I'm sorry....let's go break some trail. Get your ski gear on.

*Plowing Through*

**INGRID**

What about presents?

**JANICE**

That can wait, the kids are playing.

*(PARKER and JANICE exit to basement.)*

**INGRID**

Oh, what a Christmas.

**HARPER**

What a Christmas.

**BERT**

Merry Christmas.

*(The three stand in silence again as they watch out the window.)*

**BERT**

Dad would have loved to watch them play.

**HARPER**

I wish he were here. I wish Erik were here- that everyone were here with us here.

*(Pause)*

**INGRID**

I drove the truck here yesterday.

**BERT**

Sam's truck- Dad's truck.

**HARPER**

It's almost as if Dad were here.

**INGRID**

It's four wheel drive in the snow, ya know.

**BERT**

Oh for sure. I'll tell you what, four wheel drive and some snow tires can change the way you look at snow ya know.

*Plowing Through*

**HARPER**

I'm just glad the plows came through.

*(JANICE and PARKER enter in ski gear with skis.)*

**PARKER**

The wax on these should be good with the new snow, but let's take this extra kick wax in case.

**JANICE**

Great, ok.

**INGRID**

You two be careful out there.

**JANICE**

Oh mom, of course.

**BERT**

Don't get too into breaking trail if you know what I mean.

**HARPER**

Bert!

**JANICE**

Ok, ready?

**PARKER**

Ready.

**JANICE**

We'll be back soon!

**INGRID**

Merry Christmas.

**PARKER**

Merry Christmas.

*(PARKER and JANICE exit.)*

**BERT**

Merry Christmas.

*Plowing Through*

**HARPER**

Sure is a strange Christmas.

**BERT**

Sure is.

*(Pause.)*

**INGRID**

I love the time we get to spend together.

*(Pause. The sound of a snowball.)*

**CHARLOTTE**

*(in the distance)*

Sophia, you're gonna pay for that!

**BERT**

Oh shit. I tell you what, this is going to be fun.

**HARPER**

I've got to send a picture of them to my boy..

*(The lights fade as Ingrid, Harper, and Bert ad lib comments of the shenanigans out the window.)*