

THE SANTA CHAIR

Written by

Tom Stohlgren

Representation:
Eleni Larchanidou, LLM
Literary & Talent Manager
GREECE: +30-697-9619813
(WhatsApp, Viber)
USA: +1-714-702-5507
movieselenilllm2014@gmail.com
Copyright 2017

THE SANTA CHAIR

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

EXT. CAFÉ AND GIFT SHOP - SUNSET

We SEE a Sheriff's patrol car pull up to the small "Mountain Café and Gift Shop," a roadside stop in a tiny community, blanketed with snow and surrounded by trees.

We SEE two wooden "Adirondack Chairs" for sale in front of the gift shop window.

We SEE a long strand of Christmas lights hanging over the entrance and café windows, but only FIVE COLORED BULBS remain lit.

In the window, we SEE a cute little girl, HANNAH (9), wearing a pink winter jacket, green blouse, and red pants, coloring with colored pencils in the first booth.

The inside of the café and gift shop is heavily and colorfully decorated for Christmas.

Managing the empty gift shop register, is Hannah's mom, GINGER (early 30s), with a sadness hanging over her.

We also SEE ANGELA (18), a cute Latina, in a short skirt and matching top, wiping down an empty counter. Angela can't keep her eyes off Denny, who has a girlfriend (Suzi).

SHERIFF GRANT (early 40s), in full uniform and cowboy hat, steps out of his patrol car and strides to the café like there's going to be trouble.

INT. CAFÉ AND GIFT SHOP - CONTINUOUS

Sheriff Grant swings open the door, and sets his hat on the hat-rack without looking. The Sheriff always speaks in a western/Texas accent.

GINGER

Looks like the dinner rush has begun. Hi, Sheriff.

SHERIFF

Howdy, Ginger. Lookin' mighty perty this evenin'.

HANNAH
 (mumbles loudly)
 Looks like somebody's watched too
 many westerns.

The Sheriff turns to see Hannah and her unusual Christmas drawing with a red tree, gray soil, and green sunset.

SHERIFF
 There's my favorite li'l girl,
 Hannah. What cute red trees you're
 drawin'.

Hannah rolls her eyes in disgust.

HANNAH
 (mumbles, western accent)
 Aw shucks, Sheriff, twern't nuttin.

GINGER
 (scolding Hannah)
 Now, Hannah!

HANNAH
 (still western)
 Sorry, Maw...

SHERIFF
 Punch anybody in the gut lately?

HANNAH
 Not since Halloween, when Jimmy
 Dugan accidentally stole my candy
 bag, and I accidentally reminded
 him it was mine.

Ginger puts an arm around her daughter.

GINGER
 Hannah is using to use her words,
 instead of her fists these days,
 Sheriff.

The Sheriff ignores Ginger and Hannah, while he sits at the counter to better eye Angela.

ANGELA
 What'll it be, Sheriff?

SHERIFF
 Is that fantastic chef workin'
 tonight?

From the kitchen, we SEE DENNY (18), a handsome hunk, lean in from the stove-top.

ANGELA
(winks at Denny)
Your son? Oh, he sure is!

DENNY
Howdy, Pops!

SHERIFF
There's the Head Chef, and star
kick return specialist! One more
practice before the big game? Don't
stay out too late tonight.

DENNY
Yes, Sir! Or, no, Sir, whichever is
correct. Need all the strength I
can mustard!

HANNAH
(mumbles)
Muster!

DENNY
Still got my lucky socks on a month
later. Three wins in a row. If I
run one back for a touchdown, I'm
thinking my teammates will carry me
off the field.

HANNAH
(laughing)
I wish they would, just to change
your socks.
(whispers in Denny's
voice)
I heard that, Hannah Banana.

Ginger and Hannah smile at each other.

DENNY
I heard that, Hannah Banana!

Hannah puts a finger down her throat for Angela's viewing.

Angela chuckles, shaking it off.

SHERIFF
I'd better stick with the winning-
tradition combo: triple
cheeseburger, fries, and coffee.

ANGELA

The regular? I could cook you up some healthy tamales? A vegetarian chili relleno with my grandmother's red-pepper sauce?

The Sheriff glares at Angela.

ANGELA (CONT'D)

The regular, then! Coming up!

Angela expertly pours coffee for the sheriff.

GINGER

(warmly)

Ahh, someday we'll let you try your cooking skills, Angela. Just not tonight.

DENNY

I'm the Head Chef around these parts, hey, Pops?

SHERIFF

It's what brings in the crowd.

Hannah looks round the empty café.

HANNAH

(mumbles)

Hope the triple cheeseburger comes with a defibrillator.

The Sheriff ignores Hannah, then flirts with Ginger.

SHERIFF

Ginger, why don't you get that landlord of yours to fix those Christmas lights outside?

Ginger is moving a six-foot-tall cardboard Santa Claus from the gift shop to the register.

GINGER

He says I can decorate the inside, but he doesn't want more nails or hooks on the historic structure. But, really, he's just cheap!
(yells)
He's so cheap...

ALL

How cheap is he?

GINGER

He's so cheap, he took his refrigerator back to the store because it wasn't frost-free.

Everyone laughs.

HANNAH

He's so cheap...

ALL

How cheap is he?

Everyone, but Ginger, sees the mean-looking Russian, MR. RANKER (60s), sneak into the café wearing dark suit, black hat, and gloves.

Hannah tries to stop her mom from speaking, but she is on a roll.

HANNAH

He's so cheap, he moved to America because he heard it was land of the free.

No one laughs. Mr. Ranker COUGHS.

Ginger turns, embarrassed.

GINGER

Oh, Mr. Ranker. Nice of you to drop by. Coffee? Piece of pie?

HANNAH

(mumbles)
À la moody?

MR. RANKER

What's that, little girl?

HANNAH

(louder)
À la mode. It means pie with ice cream, commonly vanilla.

Mr. Ranker glares at Hannah.

MR. RANKER

I know what it means.
(see Hannah's drawing)
Green sunset? Troubled little girl.

Ginger is firm and instructive.

GINGER
She's colorblind.

Hannah turns sad.

HANNAH
But I wish all people could see the
beautiful colors of Christmas in
their hearts. Even you, Mr. Ranker.

Angela fist-bumps Hannah before dashing off to the kitchen.

Ginger steps between Hannah and Mr. Ranker.

GINGER
Sheriff Grant, you remember our
benevolent landlord, Mr. Ranker.

SHERIFF
Howdy.

Mr. Ranker laughs.

Denny and Angela look in from the kitchen as the sheriff
turns red with anger.

MR. RANKER
Howdy? What is this, 1850?
(laughs)
The Wild West?

SHERIFF
This was all open range. Why, my
family grazed cattle here...

MR. RANKER
(interrupts)
Yes, when land was a buck an acre,
and there were shootouts at the
somewhat-okay corral.
(beat)
Now, it's the land of ski resorts,
and summer estates.

GINGER
A little nostalgia...

MR. RANKER
Stands in the way of progress.
(beat)
That's why I'm here.
(MORE)

MR. RANKER (CONT'D)

I'll be showing the place around tomorrow morning to international investors before the land auction Christmas Eve. Dropped by as a courtesy to give you plenty of time to clean this dump up.

GINGER

But you promised it would be after Christmas!

HANNAH

First I heard of it! Ma, you didn't tell me?

GINGER

Knew it would upset you, darling.

SHERIFF

Didn't give much notice, Rankor?

MR. RANKER

(to the Sheriff)

When I need your help for the eviction, I'll ask for it.

Mr. Ranker puts on his gloves and hat.

Hannah forms two fists, but her mother runs to hug her.

Mr. Ranker SEES the cardboard Santa standing.

MR. RANKER (CONT'D)

Hum, Bed bugs.

HANNAH

Don't you mean, Bah Humbug?

MR. RANKER

Not for this dump. And I'll need that rent check in two days, before the land auction. I'm off Christmas, ya know!

Mr. Ranker slams the door as he leaves.

Ginger hugs Hannah, who is fit to be tied.

GINGER

You're right, Sweetheart. I wish all people could see the beautiful colors of Christmas, too!

EXT. CAFÉ AND GIFT SHOP - DAY

Early in the morning, Ginger and Hannah are sweeping the entrance to the café and gift shop. The parking area is empty. Ginger is nicely dressed in clean *Northface* or *REI* color-coordinated clothing. Hannah is dressed in clean, un-matching clothes.

An old pickup truck pulls up with another wooden Adirondack chair in the bed of the truck. Out of the truck steps ever-smiling ALBERT CHONG (60s; a jolly Asian man with gray hair) in a UPS-driver's uniform.

Hannah runs over to hug him.

HANNAH

Hi, Mr. Chong! Or should I say, Santa? Bringing all those presents to people in your truck?

Albert laughs heartily.

ALBERT

Hi ya, Hannah. Does that make me the Easter Bunny at Easter? And what about Groundhog Day?

Ginger laughs, and steps lively to Albert.

GINGER

Lovely to see to you, Albert. I know my orders have been fewer and farther between.

ALBERT

I'm on my way to pick up my truck. Thought I'd drop off another chair. Fifty-fifty if you sell one. I just love to make them, and there's no shortage of salvage wood around here.

Albert lifts it the chair out of the truck and sets it next to the others.

GINGER

Business has been slow, Albert.

ALBERT & HANNAH

(giggling)

How slow is it?

GINGER

Okay. It's so slow, the bank
repossessed our burglar alarm.

They laugh nervously.

ALBERT

Good one, Ginger. Business should
pick up! It's Christmas! I'll see
you tonight for dinner. Save me a
slice of your apple pie.

GINGER

Will do. Thanks, Albert!

Ginger and Hannah wave to Albert as he drives off.

HANNAH

Bye, Mr. Chong.

GINGER

Such a sweet man.

HANNAH

Can you adopt a grandpa, Ma?

GINGER

We adopted him years ago. He knows.
Wish we could sell some of his
chairs for him.

HANNAH

And for us.

A rusty, old dump of an RV pulls up to the café.

Ginger and Hannah stare as the RV coughs and sputters, ending
in a small explosion and large plume of black smoke coming
from the motor.

Out of the side door of the RV step a pastor and son. The
pastor is LOUIS GAUTHIER (early 40s; pronounced "Go-Tee-A"),
a handsome Frenchman, in a gray sport coat, black short-
sleeve shirt, and white Priest collar. He removes his sport
coat and white collar while exiting. His handsome, smiling
son, RAPHAEL (13) is right behind him, in black baggy pants
and a black hoodie.

Ginger whispers to Hannah.

GINGER

Visitors?

Hannah shakes her head at the young boy and whispers to her mom.

HANNAH

Charity cases? Or disguised prison escapees? This can't be good.

Louis comes over to Ginger with his hand out to shake. Louis has a soft, sexy French accent. Raphael is a kind-hearted, shy, and grumpy teenager.

LOUIS

Bonjour! Hello! I am Louis Gauthier, and this is my son, Raphael. I have a call into a mechanic now. We may be here for a few hours.

GINGER

I'm Ginger Paisley. This is my daughter, Hannah. Big help around here. You're a priest?

LOUIS

Episcopal Pastor. Held a service in the last town before heading to the ski resort, when God made other plans.

Raphael rolls his eyes. He speaks with a French accent.

RAPHAEL

Engine trouble.

LOUIS

Raphael believes that because we have an in with man upstairs,
(point up)
We should be immune from troubles here on Earth.

Louis shakes Ginger's hand, then casually moves in to kiss her cheeks. Hannah's eyes open widely and suspiciously.

Louis shakes hands with Hannah, who steps back in extreme caution.

Raphael is embarrassed and angry by his Papa's behavior.

RAPHAEL

Papa, this is not the custom here!

Ginger extends a handshake to Raphael.

GINGER
I know! Pity!

It is clear that Raphael and Hannah disapprove of each other's clothing.

Raphael awkwardly extends his hand to Hannah.

RAPHAEL
(grumpy)
Bonjour. Nice to meet you, Hannah.

Hannah shakes his hand with a suspicious eye.

GINGER
Despite the modest crowd, the café is open for breakfast, lunch, and dinner, but the real rush is after four PM, when the kids get out of high school. Hannah and I can serve you coffee and pastries?

LOUIS
Coffee sounds bien, good. We have a minor issue with our recreational palace.

HANNAH
Palace? Looks more like a pile of...

Ginger interrupts Hannah, puts down her broom, and guides Louis and Raphael into the café.

Louis stops to admire the Adirondack chairs on the way in.

LOUIS
Magnifique!

Hannah keeps the broom in her hands for defense. She follows them at a safe distance.

INT. CAFÉ AND GIFT SHOP - CONTINUOUS

Ginger guides Louis and Raphael to Hannah's favorite booth.

On the way, Raphael glances at the six-foot-tall cardboard Santa in the gift shop and smirks.

Hannah scowls toward Raphael, as she puts down her broom.

They see her colored pencils and drawing on the table. Hannah folds up her art work quickly.

GINGER

Louis, let me bring your coffee.
And for you, Raphael?

RAPHAEL

Mocha latte, s'il vous plaît.

Hannah's eyes open widely, as she stands next to the table.

GINGER

I'm afraid we don't know how to
make those. Coffee or tea?

Raphael glares at his father, then looks away.

RAPHAEL

Water will be fine. Merci.

Ginger heads to the kitchen.

Raphael pulls out his cell phone, and grunts.

RAPHAEL (CONT'D)

No Wi-Fi. Zut!

HANNAH

I wish we had Wi-Fi. But then, I
wish we lived in the big city.

LOUIS

I have Wi-Fi in the RV if you need
it, but I suggest we enjoy the
scenery. The trees rejuvenate the
spirit.

RAPHAEL

(upset, to Hannah)
Does your phone get service?

HANNAH

(snickers)
My phone used to be a phone booth
in the gift shop, 'til they took it
out when I was five.

Ginger returns with a tray containing coffee, little creamer
containers, and a glass of water, and two slices of warm,
homemade apple pie.

Louis and Raphael devour the pie.

GINGER

Can't bear to see good pie go to
waste. It's on the house.

Louis smiles at Ginger, and they share a moment, until he looks at the weak, "café" cup of coffee and can't hide his disappointment.

LOUIS

Merci.

Louis examines the little non-dairy creamer containers with curiosity.

HANNAH

Those come from non-dairy cows.
They have a longer shelf-life than
real dairy cows, who fall off the
shelves anyway.

Ginger, Louis, and Hannah chuckle, but Raphael appears distracted.

Louis puts an arm around his son.

LOUIS

Raphael misses his Maman.

Raphael glares at his dad. Ginger shows compassion.

GINGER

It's difficult at the holidays...

Raphael slides out the booth, and sulks on the way to the rest room. Louis whispers.

LOUIS

His second Christmas alone with me.
My ex-wife shares custody, but
spends less and less time with the
boy. I thought this trip away from
Quebec might take his mind off
things.

GINGER

You're Canadian.

LOUIS

Like many of your fur traders two
centuries ago. That is our rustic
canoe outside. Oui!

Raphael returns sullenly.

HANNAH

(jokingly)
It's a lovely canoe.
(MORE)

HANNAH (CONT'D)
Will you be trapping small,
defenseless, rare and threatened
species for their pelts?

Raphael glares at Hannah, while Louis chuckles.

LOUIS
Taking my son to explore his
genetic roots. Gauthier Mountain,
one of the peaks at your ski
resort, was named after our
ancestor, the first white explorer
in the area.

GINGER
How exciting!

Hannah is bewildered.

HANNAH
Hmmm? Many Native Americans
explored the area for thousands of
years before the fur traders, and
they don't have peaks named after
them!

A weak smile emerges from Raphael's face.

They HEAR and SEE a fancy black SUV with heavily tinted
windows pulls up outside the café. Everyone eyes the fancy
car, but especially Raphael. Raphael whispers in a hopeful
voice, but everyone HEARS him.

RAPHAEL
Maman? She found us!

Ginger glances at Louis quickly, then looks out the window.

Mr. Ranker exits the drivers-side door, and throws up his
hands towards the trees and the mountains.

Raphael looks disappointed.

A Businessman (40s) and Businesswoman (30s) step out of the
back seat with smiles and black briefcases. They seem
impressed by the possibilities.

LOUIS
It's not Raphael's Maman.

HANNAH
They're here to throw us out, level
the place, and put up more condos
for the ski resort up the road.

RAPHAEL
They allow snowboarding, eh.

GINGER
(sad)
We know. And fast-food! Generation
Expresso. We can't compete.

Louis sees Ginger sincerity.

LOUIS
Sorry, Madam.

They SEE Mr. Ranker look to the café and gift shop, and make motions with his hands about leveling and removing the place.

They SEE Mr. Ranker shakes the hands of the Business executives, and it looks like they've reached a deal. They load up in the SUV, and spin away.

Inside the café, Ginger's and Hannah's chins drop.

Hannah looks up to stare at the Christmas lights around the café window.

HANNAH
Oh, no! Another bulb went out!
There're only four left!

They all look at the four remaining Christmas bulbs that are lit.

RAPHAEL
Two red, one green, and a blue.

Hannah begins to stomp towards the door.

HANNAH
Easy for you to see!

Hannah storms out the front door and plops in one of the three Adirondack chairs. She sulks.

GINGER
This place is all she's known.

Louis looks around.

LOUIS
It's quaint, quiet, and peaceful.

GINGER

(smirks)

Too quaint, quiet, and peaceful to turn a profit since the ski town developed up the road. A few regular customers is all. It's the local high school kids who work here I worry about. We could always admit defeat, and go live with my dad in the big city.

LOUIS

Your Papa is a city-type?

GINGER

And my daughter! They love the hustle and bustle.

LOUIS

But you live here?

GINGER

Shack behind the café. My Grandpa built the place, but he couldn't afford the taxes, so he rented it from the bank. It brought the family together at first.

LOUIS

Then?

GINGER

Business slowed down when there were more restaurant options up at the ski resort.

LOUIS

Family had a tough time?

GINGER

My dad loved it. My mom hated it. When my mom died, my dad just couldn't stay here. Everything reminded him of her.

Raphael and Louis look on Ginger with compassion.

LOUIS

We know what it's like to lose someone.

GINGER

When Hannah's father learned he had to pick up the slack around here after my dad left, he hit the road. Hannah's third Christmas.

RAPHAEL

Zut!

GINGER

A place likes this either brings everyone together, or it tears them apart. Hannah won't talk about her father.

LOUIS

A Papa is important. Oui?

GINGER

The only male Hannah likes now is old Albert Chong, the man who makes those Adirondack chairs.

Raphael looks out the window at Hannah sulking in the chair.

RAPHAEL

Excuse me. Merci for the pie and water. I'll wash the dishes in a moment.

He gets up and exits, and he plops down outside in the Adirondack chair furthest from Hannah. They don't say a work.

GINGER

That's a polite son you have.

LOUIS

Doing the best I can given many demands on my time.

GINGER

A pastor? But you married and divorced?

LOUIS

(laughs)

Like regular people, except for a bit more scrutiny from everyone!

GINGER

What do we call you? Father Gauthier? Pastor?

LOUIS

Louis. I wear the vestments only in church. I take vacations like normal...

GINGER

I'm sorry. I get it. And sorry for boring you about our troubles, and too many questions. Nice to have an adult to talk to. More coffee?

Louis covers his coffee cup with his hand, politely.

LOUIS

No, thank you.

Ginger slumps in the booth.

GINGER

Not very good coffee, is it?

LOUIS

I use a French press. Too strong for most. You can stand a spoon straight up in it.

GINGER

Float a horseshoe in it, my Gramps would say.

They chuckle and share another moment.

Ginger turns sad as she looks outside.

GINGER (CONT'D)

I have to think of some way to turn this business around. Maybe you could pray for me?

CUT TO:

EXT. CAFÉ AND GIFT SHOP - CONTINUOUS

Hannah and Raphael stare out in opposite directions.

RAPHAEL

No school today?

HANNAH

Christmas Break. Except for high school kids taking extra classes or playing football.

RAPHAEL
American football, eh?

HANNAH
Is there another one?

RAPHAEL
We call soccer, football, but now
there's Canadian Football too.

HANNAH
(snarky)
That's more confusing! But, I like
your metric system.

RAPHAEL
Ha! Must be the only American who
does.

Raphael turns to Hannah.

RAPHAEL (CONT'D)
Why are you worried about the four
Christmas bulbs, eh?

Hannah glares back.

HANNAH
They used to all work. Beautiful,
even if I couldn't tell the green
ones from the red ones. The
landlord won't replace 'em, and Ma
can't spare the money.

RAPHAEL
Just lights, ey?

HANNAH
I've watched them slowly burn out.
There were five bulbs working
yesterday.

RAPHAEL
Yes, but they're just lights.

Hannah stands, angry and defiant.

HANNAH
They're Christmas lights, and
Christmas is special, and I don't
want it to disappear, eh?

She stomps away a few steps, and stops herself.

HANNAH (CONT'D)
Sorry. I think with more Christmas lights, more people would stop here, and Ma would be able to save the place.

Hannah's eyes open widely, and they seem to light up.

HANNAH (CONT'D)
That's it!

Raphael looks at Hannah like she's nuts.

RAPHAEL
What's it?

HANNAH
I need to sit on Santa's lap!

RAPHAEL
(snickers)
Way down in the big city? You gotta be kidding? You gotta car?

HANNAH
No, Mr. Chong brings us the things we need.

RAPHAEL
Who's Mr. Chong?

HANNAH
He's like Santa Claus, but without the suit.

RAPHAEL
The red suit?

HANNAH
How would I know?
(beat)
Kidding! I know it's red. I can read!

Hannah looks around. She stares at the Adirondack chairs.

RAPHAEL
What?

HANNAH
If I can't go to Santa, I'll have to bring Santa to me!

Raphael looks at Hannah like she's crazy.

Hannah races into the café and gift shop. She returns carrying the six-foot tall cardboard Santa under her arm.

We SEE Ginger and Louis standing and staring out the window at Hannah.

Hannah stands the Santa up in front of the center Adirondack chair.

HANNAH (CONT'D)
Can you help me fold him?

Raphael helps fold Santa near the waist and knees, so he fits into the chair.

Ginger's and Louis's eyes open widely, with smiles on their faces.

Hannah sits in Santa's lap and closes her eyes.

BACK TO:

INT. CAFÉ AND GIFT SHOP - CONTINUOUS

LOUIS
Genius!

GINGER
Genius? She just ruined a forty-dollar stand-up Santa.

LOUIS
Everybody's going to want one. How much are the chairs?

GINGER
Fifty bucks. Albert's been making them for years out of salvage wood.

LOUIS
Forty plus fifty? Ninety dollars is too low. Sell them for a hundred and twenty dollars.

GINGER
Nobody's going to...

LOUIS
I'll take two!
(beat)
If you promise not to tell the children right away. I want the magic to settle in.

Louis hands her a well-used *Credit Card*.

GINGER
Magic? On a pastor's salary?

BACK TO:

Ginger and Louis SEE, but can't hear the kids out front.

GINGER (CONT'D)
At least they're talking.

LOUIS
They're getting along. That's nice.

They smile as they look out the window. Ginger gets excited.

GINGER
Let me show you two the land.

Louis is excited to follow Ginger out of the café.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

Ginger leads Louis, and ten yards behind them, Hannah leads Raphael up a forest trail. Louis looks around in awe.

LOUIS
This is right behind your café.
Magnifique!

GINGER
I hike this every day to remind me
of our inseparable connection to
nature.

Hannah and Raphael hear them.

HANNAH
Did you say, 'Insufferable
connection to nature'?

GINGER
Inseparable! You heard me.
(beat)
We differ in opinion on the
importance of solitude for
contemplation and meditation.

HANNAH
Did you say, 'medication'?

GINGER

Please be polite, Hannah! Mr. Gauthier is a pastor.

HANNAH

Right when I thought it couldn't get any more boring around here!

Raphael laughs, then Hannah apologizes.

HANNAH (CONT'D)

Sorry Pastor, or Father, High Priest or whatever.

LOUIS

No worries. And Mr. Gauthier or Louis is fine.

HANNAH

Mr. Gauthier. Sorry.

RAPHAEL

It would be perfect here if they built a snowboard park, a skateboard park, and had one fast-food place, ey?

LOUIS

Appears it's too quiet for Raphael and Hannah.

GINGER

What about you, Louis?

LOUIS

I'm not sure what I want, except to see my son happy! Oh, and world peace!

HANNAH

Finally, a good answer!

They chuckle and have a snowball fight as they hike back down the trail.

Hannah and Raphael return to the Adirondack chairs, while Ginger and Louis return to the café.

EXT. CAFÉ AND GIFT SHOP - CONTINUOUS

Hannah returns to the Santa Chair with her eyes closed tightly.

She opens them, and looks back at the Christmas lights around the window.

HANNAH

Nothing!

RAPHAEL

He is made out of cardboard.

Hannah whispers angrily.

HANNAH

No excuse! It's Christmas! I'm a little girl! I don't ask for much!

RAPHAEL

Sounds like you want an entirely different life! That's not asking for much, eh?

HANNAH

Sounds like you and your parents can't agree on anything, and all you want to do is go snowboarding!

RAPHAEL

I'm not that one-dimensional! I like skateboarding too!

HANNAH

That's what I call 'range.'
(beat)
Boring!

RAPHAEL

Boring? What do you like?

HANNAH

Museums: history and art museums.

RAPHAEL

Boring.

HANNAH

Bookstores and libraries.

RAPHAEL

Boring.

HANNAH

Plays!

RAPHAEL

Movies?

HANNAH

No! Plays! With live people. In the big city, you can do anything you want!

RAPHAEL

Can't snowboard!

HANNAH

(imitates Raphael)

Can't snowboard!

INT. CAFÉ AND GIFT SHOP - CONTINUOUS

Ginger returns to hear the landline phone at the register RINGING.

GINGER

Excuse me.

Ginger goes to answer the phone, turning away from Louis. She whispers into the phone.

GINGER (CONT'D)

Yes, Mr. Ranker?

(pause)

Yes, Mr. Ranker. I'll try to have it for you.

(sadly)

Yes, Mr. Ranker.

Ginger struggles to return to the table. Louis looks up and knows things are not well. They turn their attention outside.

CUT TO:

EXT. CAFÉ AND GIFT SHOP - CONTINUOUS

Raphael whispers back in snippy tone.

RAPHAEL

Maybe that Santa Chair of yours only listens to good little girls, eh!

Hannah and Raphael stand, as Ginger and Louis look on.

HANNAH

What do you have? Irritable Vowel Syndrome - eh? There's an irritating "A" after every sentence!

Raphael cowers.

RAPHAEL
Harmless expression.

Hannah smirks at the Santa Chair, then glares at Raphael.

HANNAH
Here's one Christmas wish I'm gonna
get, eh!

Hannah steps over to Raphael, clenches her fist, and punches him in the belly.

Raphael buckles over in pain.

Ginger and Louis RACE out of the café.

We SEE the Santa Chair.

End Act One

ACT TWO

EXT. CAFÉ AND GIFT SHOP - DAY

Sheriff Grant speeds into parking area, swerving to avoid hitting the RV. He slams on the brakes.

We see Denny in the passenger seat of the sheriff's car. He has a bandage on his head holding a blue reusable ice pack.

Raphael is holding his stomach, being comforted by Louis, as Ginger is shaking her index finger and scolding Hannah.

Sheriff Grant hops out of the car, and glares at Hannah.

SHERIFF

What's going on here? Let me guess!

GINGER

Nothing much, Sheriff.
International relations with Canada
suffered a minor setback, but our
guests are okay.

HANNAH

I'm sorry, Raphael.

RAPHAEL

No problem. Kinda funny thinking a
stupid chair was gonna grant
Christmas wishes.

Raphael chuckles, as Hannah glances back at the chair, disappointed.

SHERIFF

Canada, huh?
(to Louis)
Gonna have to move that RV. That's
where I park.

LOUIS

Certain difficulties make that
impossible, Sheriff. But I've
called an automotive mechanic.

Sheriff Grant has difficulties understanding the man.

SHERIFF

Foreigners, huh? But I've got
bigger problems right now.

The sheriff opens the passenger door, and helps Denny out of his patrol car. Denny holds his bandaged head.

Ginger goes to assist him.

GINGER

Denny, what happened to you?

Denny points to Hannah.

DENNY

Her fault.

HANNAH

What?

DENNY

She wished that my teammates would carry me off the field, and that's exactly what happened.

SHERIFF

Got a concussion at football practice returning a kick. Like hitting a brick wall at thirty miles per hour.

HANNAH

(sarcastic)

Who wouldn't want to do that?

(compassionate)

But I'm sorry you got hurt.

DENNY

Just like she wished last night.

HANNAH

Still got your lucky socks on?

Denny looks down.

DENNY

Yeah.

HANNAH

Then they weren't that lucky!

Denny lunges at Hannah, but is held back by his dad and Ginger.

SHERIFF

Anyway, I gotta go see about a shoplifter at the hardware store.

(MORE)

SHERIFF (CONT'D)

Wondered if you'd watch Denny for a few hours.

GINGER

Watch him?

SHERIFF

Concussion protocol. Not supposed to nap, keep him walking around, but he can't drive or do anything complicated.

HANNAH

(mumbles)

Never seen him do anything complicated yet.

(louder)

Sorry about wishing you'd be carried off the field, Denny. Sit here in our new Santa Chair. If you make a wish, it might come true.

RAPHAEL

(chuckles)

Maybe if you've been good. I'm Raphael. My Dad's, Louis.

DENNY

(chuckles)

Nice to meet ya. I'm Denny.

Denny is helped to the Santa Chair by his dad and Ginger.

SHERIFF

Great, gotta go. Check in on ya later, son. Thanks, Ginger. You too, Hannah.

The Sheriff takes off.

GINGER

We'll let you three kids talk. I need to learn how to make coffee.

(to Louis)

Can you show me the French press?

LOUIS

I'll grab it from the RV, and meet you inside.

Ginger heads into the café, and Louis grabs the French press coffee maker, and follows her.

Denny sits in the Santa Chair, with Hannah and Raphael on either side.

Denny looks over at Raphael.

DENNY
Hi, my name's Denny.

RAPHAEL
We met.

DENNY
We did? The Santa Chair? How's this thing work?

RAPHAEL
Poorly.

HANNAH
Supposed to make a Christmas wish, and then it comes true, 'cause you're sitting on Santa's lap.

DENNY
He's lost some weight, but I'll try.

Denny closes his eyes.

RAPHAEL
Lucky socks? A kid on my ski team believed in his lucky underwear. Never lost a race, until he hit a tree and broke his leg.

They laugh. Denny turns to them.

DENNY
I need to concentrate. Big game tomorrow. And if I don't pass the post-concussion questions, I can't play.

Denny closes his eyes.

HANNAH
Any Dizziness, blurred vision, vomiting questions?

DENNY
That's the test.

Hannah stands up and steps over to Denny's chair.

HANNAH
Switch chairs with me.

DENNY
Uh uh. I need the Santa Chair. I
need to get my brain back!

HANNAH
I need the Santa Chair, too! I'm
stuck here!

RAPHAEL
I need it, too. The RV is busted!

HANNAH
Wait your turn, Canadian!

Denny switches chairs with Hannah.

Hannah sits and closes her eyes.

HANNAH (CONT'D)
Done. I wished that I could spend
Christmas with my Grandpa in the
big city.

RAPHAEL
I'm gonna wish for Christmas up the
road at the ski resort, instead of
here.

Denny looks confused.

DENNY
Christmas is coming?

HANNAH
Been hit in the head a few too many
times, Denny. I'd wish for a brain
transplant if I were you.

RAPHAEL
That's not nice!

HANNAH
Nobody said Christmas at the café
would be nice!
(beat)
I hope the Santa Chair works. I'll
be in the big city!

Hannah gets up, and dances a 'happy dance.'

CUT TO:

INT. CAFÉ AND GIFT SHOP - CONTINUOUS

Louis finished showing Ginger how to use the French press. Ginger glances out the window at Hannah, Raphael, and Denny.

GINGER
They all seem happy here.

LOUIS
Why wouldn't they be?

GINGER
Thanks for showing me how to make French press coffee.

LOUIS
Two ingredients, and a gentle press from above, oui?

Louis pours them each a cup. He grabs a small container of fresh cream, and pours a tablespoon in, and stirs.

GINGER
Secret weapon?

LOUIS
Real cream. Divine, eh?

Ginger sips the coffee and closes her eyes.

GINGER
A dream come true.

Albert's old pickup rumbles up to the café.

GINGER (CONT'D)
Albert?

Ginger stands at the window to see a dejected Albert exit his truck holding a tablet computer.

GINGER (CONT'D)
It's Albert, the kind man I told you about who makes the chairs. He's supposed to be driving his delivery truck!

Ginger races out, and Louis follows.

BACK TO:

EXT. CAFÉ AND GIFT SHOP - CONTINUOUS

Albert stomps around like a madman, waving his tablet computer.

Hannah races to Albert first.

ALBERT
That's a fine Christmas present!

HANNAH
Everything okay, Mr. Chong?

ALBERT
Two weeks off! Forced vacation! I'm in trouble!

GINGER
What's wrong?

Albert continues to wave the tablet computer.

ALBERT
They said I didn't learn the new computer software well enough for the busy holiday rush. Two college kids are taking my route, until I learn how to use this darn thing!

GINGER
Two weeks off with pay doesn't sound bad!

DENNY
I'd like two weeks off with pay!

ALBERT
It's their polite way of saying I'm too old for my job. I can't keep up in the computer age.

RAPHAEL
Maybe my Papa can help.

LOUIS
I'm Louis Gauthier. That's my son, Raphael. I know a bit about computers. My hobby.

Albert shakes their hands heartily.

ALBERT
Albert Chong, delivery man. Until today.

LOUIS

You made these fine chairs. I love them!

ALBERT

Got a dozen more in my barn. Those are the first two I made. Ha! It's my hobby. Love building 'em.

Hannah collapses into the Santa Chair. Albert sees the chair and laughs.

ALBERT (CONT'D)

Whose idea was this? As if I didn't know.

HANNAH

I wish someone would buy more of your chairs, Mr. Chong.

Louis winks at Ginger.

GINGER

Pastor Gauthier bought two of them this morning.

Hannah jumps out of the chair, astonished.

HANNAH

It works! It works! The Santa Chair works. I wished that someone would buy Mr. Chong's chairs!

Everyone looks suspiciously at the Santa Chair, except Hannah, who rolls her hand softly against the cardboard Santa.

GINGER

Hannah, dear, it's not that easy to make wishes come true.

Hannah looks perplexed.

HANNAH

Sure, it is, Ma. Last night, I wished Denny would be carried off the football field by his teammates, and today, he did!

Denny chimes in merrily.

DENNY

With a concussion!

HANNAH

And I wished we could sell some of Mr. Chong's chairs, and we did.

LOUIS

That's true, too. After the fact, but true.

RAPHAEL

I heard you wish for Wi-Fi in the café, and that didn't happen.

Hannah glares at Raphael, who sees Hannah get upset.

LOUIS

Raphael!

RAPHAEL

(protects his stomach)

Sorry.

Ginger puts and arm around Hannah, and turns serious.

GINGER

You and I both wished that all people could see the beautiful colors of Christmas, even Mr. Ranker, and that may not happen.

Hannah gets defensive, and takes a few steps from her Ma.

HANNAH

It might happen! It's Christmas!

LOUIS

I'll pray that it does, too.

Ginger lightens up the mood.

GINGER

I know! Why don't we take a hot chocolate break?

Denny, Raphael, Albert, and Louis happy, cheering, and head into the café.

Hannah hesitates.

HANNAH

Mr. Ranker is shutting us down, isn't he, Ma?

Ginger looks away.

GINGER

I'm afraid so. I'm short on the rent again. And, he has buyers who want to tear the place down and put up condominiums, a gourmet restaurant, and fancy coffee shop! Felt it was coming!

HANNAH

Why didn't you tell me?

GINGER

Told me on the phone this morning.

HANNAH

Anything we can do?

GINGER

Take a lot of wishing in that clever Santa Chair of yours.

Hannah fights back the tears as she takes her mother's hand. After a few steps, she hugs her mom.

GINGER (CONT'D)

Not even sure paying the rent would help, but we have to try!

We SEE Denny, Raphael, Albert, and Louis looking out the window of the café at Ginger and Hannah.

Hannah looks back at the Santa Chair, with a hopeful face.

INT. CAFÉ AND GIFT SHOP - DAY

Everyone is sadly drinking hot chocolate, when Angela bounces in happy as can be. Denny still wears an ice pack bandaged to his head.

ANGELA

Hola, everyone! Guess what? I ran into Sheriff Grant, who told me about Denny's concussion.

(to Denny)

I'm so sorry, Sweet-thing, how can I help you?

HANNAH

(smirks to Denny)

He's dazed and concussed. We couldn't tell the difference.

DENNY
 (smirks back)
 Thanks, Hannah Banana!

GINGER
 Needs to rest up, but not sleep.

Angela sees Louis and Raphael. Raphael eyes Angela.

GINGER (CONT'D)
 Oh, Angela, I'd like you to meet
 Louis and Raphael Gauthier. That's
 their RV out there. This is Angela,
 our waitress and dishwasher.

All but Raphael look outside to see an Auto Mechanic (40) in
 a truck pull up to the RV.

Raphael can't take his eyes of the beautiful Angela, and
 Hannah sees this.

LOUIS
 Nice to meet you, Angela!

Louis shakes Angela's hand and kisses her on both cheeks.

Angela is smitten with Louis as much as Raphael is smitten
 with her.

LOUIS (CONT'D)
 We'd better hear what the mechanic
 has to say.

RAPHAEL
 I'll stay here, Papa.

Angela smiles warmly as Louis exits.

ANGELA
 He shouldn't handle anything sharp,
 like a knife; or hot, like a stove
 or the fryer.

GINGER
 Didn't think of that! Better make
 you the cook tonight. Denny, you
 can wait tables.

Denny is angry.

DENNY
 And bus tables?

HANNAH

And do dishes. Suck it up! Angela's been doing it for two years!

RAPHAEL

(to Angela)

I can help.

GINGER

How sweet. But your Papa said you'd be leaving when the RV is fixed.

Raphael races out the front door.

Angela hops around in the kitchen, happy. Denny complains to Ginger, while pointing at Angela.

DENNY

She doesn't know how to cook burgers and fries!

HANNAH

(to Denny)

You don't know how to do dishes.

GINGER

Have to make it work tonight, until Denny is healthier tomorrow.

Angela cheers and dances around the kitchen.

Hannah goes into the kitchen to instruct Angele.

HANNAH

We turn the fryer on to four-hundred to heat the oil for French fries.

ANGELA

Si!

Angela turns on the fryer.

HANNAH

While the fryer warms up, we prepare the grill for the burgers.

Raphael races in the door, smiles, and watches every move that Angela makes.

Ginger yells.

GINGER
Keep training, Hannah. I'm going
out to check on Pastor Gauthier.

Ginger exits.

EXT. CAFÉ AND GIFT SHOP - CONTINUOUS

The auto mechanic inspects the engine, while Louis stares at
the Santa Chair.

GINGER
Any news on the RV?

LOUIS
Strangest thing.

GINGER
What? The RV?

LOUIS
No, the Santa Chair.

GINGER
What's so strange?

LOUIS
A moment ago, Raphael raced out the
door, jumped into the Santa Chair,
closed his eyes, and his lips began
to move.

GINGER
Making a wish?

LOUIS
Exactly. Then, he hopped up and ran
back into the café, without saying
a word to me.

GINGER
Big smile on his face?

LOUIS
Very big.

GINGER
Angela.

Louis is puzzled.

LOUIS
Huh? Strangest thing!

Louis and Ginger hear the clanging of wrenches. They turn to SEE the Auto Mechanic's face covered in oil. The mechanic shakes his head 'no.'

GINGER

Better leave you two alone.

Ginger heads back into the café.

INT. CAFÉ AND GIFT SHOP - CONTINUOUS

The Café is blaring with CHRISTMAS MUSIC, and all the kids are dancing and working, happier than ever before.

Raphael is wiping down counters and tables with Denny, smiling at Angela every chance he gets.

Denny has added a feminine "waitress hat" to better hide his ice pack bag.

GINGER

Gonna get another cardboard Santa from the storeroom in case someone else wants to make a Santa Chair. Hannah, watch the register.

Ginger disappears.

SUZI, (18), a cute cheerleader-type enters, and stares at Denny oddly.

SUZI

Denny, heard you got a concussion.

She runs up to hug and kiss him wildly.

DENNY

Hi, Suzi. I'm getting better.

SUZI

Poor, poor thing.

Suzi looks at Denny's feminine waitress hat.

SUZI (CONT'D)

Didn't expect brain damage.

HANNAH

(mumbles)

I did.

Suzi glares at Hannah. Suzi sees Angela in the cook station.

SUZI
Still Head Chef, aren't you, Denny?

DENNY
I can't handle anything sharp.

HANNAH
(snickers to Suzi)
It's why he dates you.

Suzi tears after Hannah, but Ginger re-enters the register area carrying another large cardboard Santa Claus, so Suzi backs off.

Suzi smiles disingenuously.

SUZI
Hi, Mrs. Paisley. I hope business doesn't drop off when people find out Denny isn't the Head Chef.

GINGER
I'm sure Angela will do fine.

Suzi shrugs, turns, and flirts with Raphael.

SUZI
May have to come back for dinner, and see for myself. See you've hired an underage bus boy.

Suzi poses for Raphael, whose eyes open widely.

GINGER
Stopped in with his father in the RV out front.

Raphael swoons at Angela.

RAPHAEL
Made a wish in the Santa Chair.

Suzi perks up.

SUZI
I saw it outside! You mean, it really works?

HANNAH
Every time!

SUZI
Huh? Okay. Gotta run. Back for dinner to test the new cook.
(MORE)

SUZI (CONT'D)
Better be good, or I'll post
comments on social media.

GINGER
Sure your it'll be fine, dear.

Suzi turns, and mumbles in a huff.

SUZI
We'll see.

Suzi exits. They all watch out the window as Suzi goes
straight to the Santa Chair, sits down, and closes her eyes.

Louis enters the café and sees them all looking out the
window.

LOUIS
Who's that?

HANNAH
That's Denny's girlfriend. She's a
rocket scientist.
(beat)
Or a cheerleader. Can't remember.

GINGER
Stopped at the Santa Chair.
Interesting.

HANNAH
Beginning to think it doesn't work
if you wish things for yourself.

RAPHAEL
Huh? You sure?

HANNAH
Very sure. No children's books
reward selfish behavior. Only makes
sense you have to wish good things
for others.

GINGER
Suppose it does.

Denny is dazed and confused, as usual.

DENNY
Wonder what she wished for?

Ginger cover's her daughter's mouth.

Suzi stands, and stomps away, as a black limousine pulls in front of the restaurant.

LOUIS

Uh oh.

Raphael's eyes open widely, as do everyone's.

GINGER

Back to work everyone!

No one leaves the window.

A Driver (30s, handsome, in black suit) hops out and opens the door.

LOUIS

How did she find us?

MRS. BREA GAUTHIER (late 30s), a gorgeous French woman steps out in tight black dress and fur-lined jacket. Her driver waits by the car, as Brea SNARLS at everyone looking out the window of the café.

RAPHAEL

Maman!

Raphael races out to meet her, as everyone watches her turn to the Santa Chair, and scoff, before marching to the door.

Raphael meets her just outside the door with a hug.

INT. CAFÉ AND GIFT SHOP - CONTINUOUS

Angela and Denny race back to work.

LOUIS

Raphael's mother, Brea!

HANNAH

She's beautiful!

LOUIS

How did she find us?

HANNAH

And rich!

GINGER

(to Hannah)

Not helping.

LOUIS
(sadly)
She's come to take Raphael away.
Pray for us.

Raphael opens the door for Brea.

GINGER
Welcome to the Mountain Café.

BREA
There you are! You Christmas-
kidnapper! Child-endangerer!

LOUIS
Our boy wanted to go snowboarding
in America...

BREA
(interrupted)
So, you drove that death trap, and
stole my son?

RAPHAEL
Maman, I told you I was...

BREA
(interrupting)
I didn't know you were going to
another country! Stay out of this!

Hannah whispers to Raphael.

HANNAH
She's a delight.

GINGER
Can I bring you some coffee?

Brea gives Ginger an icy glare.

LOUIS
Brea, I'd like you to meet Ginger
Paisley, her daughter, Hannah, and
the Café's finest employees, Denny
and Angela.

Everyone waves at Brea.

Denny, still wearing the waitress hat, delivers a cup of
coffee with a shaking hand. It's spills all over the table.

Brea looks disgusted at Denny.

BREA

I won't be staying. I have an estate rented at the ski resort up the hill. Quite luxurious in every respect. Right on the slopes.

Brea smiles at Raphael, who looks at his father with pity.

LOUIS

How did you find us?

BREA

That satellite Wi-Fi set up you bought for your rolling trash can outside. You had me set up as an emergency contact if it had mechanical problems. It did!

RAPHAEL

Needs a new oil pan. Papa will have it fixed in the morning.

Angela comes to the table with her head down, and sadly delivers a plate of heavily burnt French fries.

ANGELA

Just getting the hang of the deep fryer, but they're French!

Brea looks with pity to Ginger, then laughs.

BREA

Head Chef?

Raphael steps in to defend Angela.

RAPHAEL

Her first day! She'll be marvelous when she gets some practice.

Brea grabs Raphael's hand.

BREA

We won't be here to see it!

LOUIS

What do you mean? I get Raphael for these two weeks!

Brea points out at the RV.

BREA

To sleep in a freezing junkyard
outside this deplorable café, when
he could be snowboarding during the
day, eating gourmet food, and
sleeping in luxury?

HANNAH

(mumbles)

There's a tough choice.

Louis's chin drops.

Raphael glances back at Angela, then to Brea.

RAPHAEL

Maybe we can come back here, and
have dinner with Papa?

Brea nods, unconvinced.

BREA

Maybe, my son. Go grab your things.

Louis is speechless and hurt, as Raphael hugs him briefly
before racing out to the RV.

Brea waits until Raphael exits, before laying into Louis.

BREA (CONT'D)

My attorneys will hear about this
crazy stunt of yours! You should be
ashamed of yourself thinking that a
Papa can so easily replace a Maman
at the holidays!

Brea storms out. Ginger looks out the window at her.

Hannah sees Louis in despair, and gets an idea. She races out
of the café and straight to the Santa Chair. She sits and
closes her eyes tightly.

Brea watches Hannah and smirks.

Raphael exits the RV carrying a snowboard, thick jacket, and
a backpack. He sees Hannah in the Santa Chair, and freezes.

Brea snaps her finger and points to the driver opening the
back door of the limousine.

Raphael hesitates before getting in.

Brea gets in. The Driver shuts the door, hops in, and RACES
off.

Inside the café, Ginger sits next to Louis to comfort him with an upbeat voice.

GINGER
Maybe they'll be back for dinner.

Louis looks at the spilled coffee and burnt French fries.

LOUIS
Maybe.
(beat)
I'll pray on that.

Ginger stands, and lets Louis out of the booth.

Louis stands, and begins to walk out sadly and slowly, as Hannah races in happy as can be.

HANNAH
Nothing to worry about. Got it covered. Fix is in the bag! I have it on the highest authority.

Louis pats Hannah on the head as he leaves.

LOUIS
Thank you for trying, Hannah, but you shouldn't underestimate the powers to be.

Ginger and Hannah watch Louis exit the café. He goes to the Santa Chair, stares at it sadly, and looks up to the sky, before entering the RV.

INT. CAFÉ AND GIFT SHOP - NIGHT

Ginger holds a staff meeting in the café. Hannah, Denny, and Angela listen intently in a huddle like a football team. Christmas Rock 'n Roll songs play in the background.

GINGER
Team, big game tonight.

Hannah, Denny, and Angela grumble like old football players.

GINGER (CONT'D)
We can expect the regulars, the Sheriff and Albert, and maybe Suzi.

Again, Hannah, Denny, and Angela grumble louder.

GINGER (CONT'D)
 Pastor Gauthier may come out his
 RV.

They all turn to look out the window. The RV has a lone light on. They turn back to the huddle.

GINGER (CONT'D)
 And, there's an outside chance that
 Raphael may return with his mom.

Again, Hannah, Denny, and Angela grumble even louder.

GINGER (CONT'D)
 We'll need the best cooking ever!

ANGELA
 You got it, Mrs. Paisley!

GINGER
 We want the best service available.

DENNY
 You got it, Mrs. Pai...!

Everyone breaks the huddle, and stares at Denny.

GINGER
 Paisley! Are you okay, Denny?

DENNY
 Got a little confused. I'm okay.
 I'm fine. Thinking about Suzi.

Angela rolls her eyes and snarls at Denny, who doesn't notice.

GINGER
 Gotta concentrate on waiting tables
 and doing dishes tonight. Hannah,
 help bus tables.

HANNAH
 You got it, Ma!
 (mumbles)
 Forget those pesky child labor
 laws.

Ginger ignores her daughter.

GINGER
 Denny, you'll need to work very
 closely with Angela tonight. Do
 everything she says.

Angela gets in Denny's face with a seductive smile.

ANGELA

She means, everything!

GINGER

Push the basics: hamburgers, French fries, soda, and coffee! Got it?

ALL

Got it.

GINGER

Let's get to work!

The staff cheers, and takes their positions.

Suzi walks into the Café wearing a gorgeous, sexy outfit.

GINGER (CONT'D)

Welcome, Suzi. Hannah will see you.

Suzi sees Denny is still wearing the feminine hat as Hannah escorts Suzi to the far end of the café.

HANNAH

We're expecting a crowd.

SUZI

'Cause of the new, handsome waiter?

HANNAH

'Cause he's not cooking. Here we are.

Suzi sits way in the corner.

HANNAH (CONT'D)

Your waiter will be here shortly, if he can find you. Bump on the head, you know.

SUZI

Yes, but in the Santa Chair I wished he would be able to play in the big football game tomorrow.

Hannah leans over to whisper to Suzi.

HANNAH

So, you could see him with muscular shoulder pads and tight football pants? That's a wish for you.

(MORE)

HANNAH (CONT'D)
You have to wish for something for
others for it to come true!

Denny begins to walk to Suzi's table with his order pad, when
Suzi stands, and begins to race out.

SUZI
Back in a minute.

Denny looks confused.

Sheriff Grant and Albert enter the café, as Suzi leaves to
sit in the Santa Chair.

GINGER
Hi, Sheriff. Hi, Mr. Chong.

Hannah runs up to hug Albert, as the sheriff sits at the
counter.

Denny no longer has the ice pack on, but he continues to wear
the feminine waitress hat.

DENNY
Hi, Pops. How was your day at work?

SHERIFF
Fine, son. Fine. You feeling okay?

DENNY
A little dazed and concussed, as
Hannah Bandana says.

Hannah comes over to fist-bump Denny.

HANNAH
But, how can you tell? Right?

Denny laughs, but the Sheriff looks at his son strangely.

SHERIFF
Maybe you should see a doctor.

Denny looks around the restaurant.

DENNY
Here? Now? Don't see one.
(beat)
What can I get you started with?
Water? Coffee? Or Water?

Hannah consoles the sheriff by patting his back, as Albert
takes the seat next to the sheriff.

Denny welcomes Albert without taking his dad's order.

DENNY (CONT'D)

Hi, Mr. Chong. What can I get you started with? Coffee? Water? Or Coffee?

SHERIFF

Water's fine.

DENNY

Yes, Pops, the water here is very fine. Made from fresh snow melt. But I was taking care of this gentleman.

ALBERT

Coffee sounds fine, Denny, thanks.

Denny struggles to write "coffee" on his order-pad.

DENNY

It just sounds fine? Or is that what you want?

HANNAH

First day on his new job. We think he'll do fine.

DENNY

One coffee and one...

SHERIFF

Water.

DENNY

That's right!

Denny races to the kitchen.

Louis walks in, and sits at a booth. He's sullen.

Ginger greets him, smiling.

GINGER

Glad you could join us. Bit hectic. Training a cook and waiter tonight.

Denny returns with a cup of coffee and a glass of water, but he can't remember who ordered them.

Denny panics when he sees Louis in a booth.

DENNY
Oh, my God! The dinner rush!
(yells to Louis)
Be with you in a moment, sir.

GINGER
Stay calm, Denny. Doing fine.
(whispers to Hannah)
Better help him, dear.

Hannah takes the coffee out of Denny's hand and sets it front of Albert.

Denny stares at the water.

DENNY
Then, who ordered the water?

The sheriff raises his hand slowly.

Denny looks around, and finally delivers the water to his dad.

HANNAH
Oh, brother!

Denny races to Louis's table, just as Suzi enters the café again, and runs back to her seat.

Denny watches Suzi, while he talks to Louis.

DENNY
What can I get you started with?
Water? Eyelashes? Perfume?

Angela peeks in from the kitchen, and SNARLS at Suzi.

LOUIS
Water will be fine for now.

Angela leans in the from the kitchen.

ANGELA
Denny, may I speak with you?

Hannah races to Suzi in the corner, and whispers to her.

HANNAH
What did you wish for?

SUZI
I wished that he'd feel better
tonight. That's all.

HANNAH

So, he could take you out after
work, maybe park at Lover's Lane?
For you, again!

SUZI

Darn!

Denny starts over to Suzi's table, but she runs out of the
café again.

Denny races to the kitchen.

In the opening to the kitchen, we SEE Angela as close as
possible to Denny's face.

ANGELA

Take dinner orders from your Dad,
Albert, and Louis -- that's the
order they walked in.

DENNY

(whispers)

What about Suzi? She was here
first.

ANGELA

She came in and left. If she ever
comes back, she'll be last! Now,
go!

Denny races out to get his dad's dinner order.

DENNY

What'll it be, Pops?

SHERIFF

The regular: triple cheeseburger,
fries, and coffee.

Denny starts writing slowly.

SHERIFF (CONT'D)

Aren't you gonna ask me how I want
that cooked?

DENNY

We cook 'em all the same way! On
the stove top!

Hannah yells back to Angela.

HANNAH

One regular for the Sheriff.

DENNY
(to Hannah)
I could've done that.

HANNAH
Jury's still out on that one. Get
Albert's order.

ALBERT
I'll have a regular hamburger and
fries.

DENNY
A regular-regular hamburger, or a
regular triple cheeseburger?

ALBERT
Just a regular single hamburger,
hold the cheese.

Denny turns to yell the order to Angela.

DENNY
A regular, regular, regular...

ALBERT
And fries.

Angela looks confused.

Raphael drags Brea in the front door. Raphael joins his
father in the booth immediately.

HANNAH
(yells)
Burger and fries.

ALBERT
Well done.

DENNY
Thank you.

Brea rolls her eyes, disappointed.

RAPHAEL
Papa!

Louis is overjoyed. Raphael hugs his dad.

LOUIS
Raphael, I'm so happy you came
back! You too, Brea.

BREA

He insisted. Something about an angel.

Hannah glances at Raphael briefly, as Ginger enters from the gift shop. She addresses everyone.

GINGER

Thank you all for joining us.
Hannah, can you help Denny get water for everyone?

HANNAH

Glad to help. I gotta be extra good to get my wishes.

Hannah goes to the kitchen for ice water, glancing back and smiling at Raphael.

Suzi struts back in, and tries to attract Denny's attention with sultry moves on the way to her seat.

Denny sees Brea and Suzi in opposite ends of the café.

Angela calls for Denny.

ANGELA

Denny, may I see you for a moment?

Denny is confused, and races to the kitchen.

ANGELA (CONT'D)

Denny, because Louis arrived before Suzi, you must serve him, and his entire table before serving Suzi.

DENNY

Really?

HANNAH

Absolutely. Those are the rules.

Hannah delivers water to Louis, Raphael, and Brea.

HANNAH (CONT'D)

Your waiter will be right with you.

Hannah races over to Suzi and whispers to her.

HANNAH (CONT'D)

Poor Denny is overwhelmed, what with the serious brain injury and all. Please be patient. We wouldn't want to see him fired.

SUZI
(begging)
If I could get some wat...

HANNAH
(interrupts)
If only it were that easy for the
poor boy. Heavily dazed and
concussed.

SUZI
Still dazed?

HANNAH
Much more than usual.

SUZI
In the Santa Chair, I took back all
my selfish wishes.

HANNAH
Oooh. That's not good?

SUZI
Why not?

HANNAH
Because the Santa Chair is a golden
opportunity to wish for something
good for others!

SUZI
I'll be right back.

Suzi races out the door to the Santa Chair.

Denny sees Suzi leave, and races to Louis's table.

DENNY
Ready to order?

BREA
Nothing for me thanks.

RAPHAEL
I'll have the Chef's Special.

DENNY
The Chef's Special?

Raphael stares toward the kitchen with big eyes.

RAPHAEL
Whatever she wants to make me.

LOUIS
Do you have veggie burgers? I'm a
vegetarian.

 DENNY
You mean, like a hamburger without
the meat?

 LOUIS
And French fries.

Brea glares at Denny, then at Louis.

 LOUIS (CONT'D)
They're training him.

 BREA
They couldn't train him to fetch!

Ginger goes to hide in the gift shop.

LATER

Suzi enters and returns to her seat, seeing a madhouse of
customers confused by their meals.

Albert stares at a triple cheeseburger and fries.

Sheriff Grant stares at a regular hamburger. He switches
plates with Albert.

Louis has a hamburger bun with only lettuce and tomato in it.

Raphael has a large plate of burnt French fries.

Suzi still hasn't gotten her water.

Ginger comes in from gift shop. She's horrified by the looks
on everyone's face.

Denny is frantic, and brings three glasses of water to Suzi.

 DENNY
One glass for each time you came
in? I don't know.

Ginger covers her face as she heads to the kitchen, where
Angela is crying.

 ANGELA
American food is hard!

Ginger smiles weakly.

GINGER
I'll be outside in the Santa Chair.

EXT. CAFÉ AND GIFT SHOP - NIGHT

Ginger sits in the Santa Chair staring into the café, when Mr. Ranker drives up in his black SUV.

Mr. Ranker steps out of the vehicle with a stack of legal papers in his hand.

GINGER
Mr. Ranker, I didn't expect to see you tonight.

MR. RANKER
Wishing away in Santa's lap?

GINGER
Everything is running smoothly in the café and gift shop without me tonight. Good help.

MR. RANKER
I heard good help was hard to find.

GINGER
Nonsense! Look at the crowd in there.

Mr. Ranker stares into the café window, and sees Denny running around like a chicken with his head cut off.

MR. RANKER
Won't have the full rent check tomorrow, will you?

GINGER
So hard to say. My wish is that a busy breakfast, lunch, and dinner, and a Christmas sale in the gift shop might do the trick!

MR. RANKER
Your wish? For you?

GINGER
No, entirely for Hannah!

MR. RANKER
Ah, Hannah.

GINGER

We're happy here. You ever been happy, Mr. Ranker?

He pauses and looks away. He sits in the Adirondack chair next to Ginger.

MR. RANKER

Once, for a summer, when I was eighteen.

GINGER

The year of big decisions. Should I go off to college? Stay in town with my high school sweetheart. Join the military. Leave home. Eighteen is a very tough year in a person's life.

MR. RANKER

I had a girl, a lot like you. Smart, independent, loved everyone around her.

GINGER

What was her name?

MR. RANKER

Barbara Henderson.

GINGER

The Barbara Henderson? Dr. Barbara Henderson? The famous heart surgeon who perfected the quadruple by-pass surgery?

MR. RANKER

That's her. Ran off to med school in New York, and dropped me like a stone. Never wrote once.

GINGER

But she saved so many lives.

MR. RANKER

As I lost mine. So, I went into real estate.

GINGER

You did well for yourself.

MR. RANKER

That's the key phrase: for myself. Locals hated me for urbanizing a quiet little town. Environmentalists sued me every month. Blamed me for doubling the size of the ski town.

GINGER

Did you?

MR. RANKER

I tripled it. Made a killing. Kept my mind off Barbara.

GINGER

Those papers in your hand? Did you come here to sign this land over to me to make up for ruining our quiet little town?

MR. RANKER

Not exactly.

GINGER

Didn't think so.

MR. RANKER

The two business people I was with this morning completed their analysis. Their boss will be at the land auction.

GINGER

They want my place?

MR. RANKER

They want the land for the person they work for.

GINGER

The person they work for?

MR. RANKER

They didn't tell me until they finished their cost-benefit analysis. Just now.

GINGER

Let me guess. Mrs. Brea Gauthier?

MR. RANKER

I'm sorry. It's Mr. Louis Gauthier.

Ginger drops her head.

GINGER
Where's a pastor get that kind of
money?

Mr. Ranker stands, shrugs, and heads to the RV.

GINGER (CONT'D)
Thanks for telling me.

MR. RANKER
I'm dropping the draft contract
off. Coming up with the rent
tomorrow will delay it a month, but
it's inevitable.

GINGER
I guessed it would be.

Mr. Ranker walks to the RV, opens the door, and tosses the
legal papers on a chair by the door.

He shuts the door, glances back sadly at Ginger in the Santa
Chair, gets in his car, and drives off slowly.

Ginger cries.

EXT. CAFÉ AND GIFT SHOP - NIGHT

Ginger sits in the Santa Chair with Hannah in her lap. Both
are bundled up. Hannah is sleepy.

GINGER
That couldn't have gone any worse
tonight. I've got something
important to tell you, but I'll
wait 'til morning.

HANNAH
Good, 'cause I'm tired.

GINGER
Me, too.

HANNAH
Poor Angela.

GINGER
Should have let her cook her chili
rellenos and tamales.

HANNAH

Hear they're pretty good!

GINGER

And poor Sheriff Grant.

HANNAH

He could have got that stomach ache from anywhere! I shouldn't have called it the triple-bypass burger!

(beat)

And, poor Albert.

GINGER

(laughs)

Just looking at a triple cheeseburger did him in.

HANNAH

(laughs)

It was terrifying.

GINGER

Did everyone get stomach aches?

HANNAH

No, Suzi just had water.

GINGER

Denny and Angela did the best they could. I wish them all a speedy recovery.

They whisper.

HANNAH

Raphael's mom didn't look very happy.

GINGER

She looked happiest when she left with Raphael, but that made Louis sad.

HANNAH

He still hiding in his broken RV?

GINGER

Hiding in his RV is a good way to put it.

Louis exits the RV wearing a winter coat and a Santa cap, and carrying a bottle of wine and two glasses.

LOUIS
Mind if I join you?

Ginger hesitates.

GINGER
Sure. Why not?

LOUIS
Sipping fine wine should never be
done alone.

Ginger glares at Louis, but Hannah doesn't see it.

GINGER
I could use a glass.

HANNAH
None for me, thanks. I ate most of
Raphael's burnt French fries.

Louis chuckles, and pours two glasses of wine, and sits next
to them in an Adirondack chair.

LOUIS
I understand. That's how I feel on
the inside.

Louis hands the glass of wine to Ginger.

HANNAH
Pastor Gauthier, will we get to see
Raphael tomorrow? There is
something I want to tell him.

LOUIS
I pray we do, but that's up to his
Maman. There are things I need to
tell him also.

GINGER
I'm in the Santa Chair. I'll wish
that you're going to be okay,
Louis. You just want what's best
for Raphael.

Louis looks away.

LOUIS
Maybe the child needs his Maman
more than his Papa.

Silence. Hannah closes her sleepy eyes.

HANNAH

I wish Raphael needed his Papa
more.

Louis looks over to Hannah and Ginger with a tear in his eye.

LOUIS

I can't compete with everything his
mother provides for him.

GINGER

Love is not a competition.

LOUIS

It turns that way after a divorce.

GINGER

That's sad.

LOUIS

Sad is not realizing it, before
it's too late.

HANNAH

(sleepy)

We didn't have much choice.

LOUIS

I know. I'm sorry.

GINGER

I'm not. I still have Hannah.

LOUIS

I have my faith, and my faith in
everyone.

(beat)

But, why do we find it difficult to
know what other people want?

Ginger reaches a hand over to Louis's arm, and pats it.

GINGER

We have a tough enough time trying
to figure out what we want
ourselves.

Hannah's words tail off in sleepiness.

HANNAH

That's what the Santa Chair taught
me today!

Hannah falls asleep in her mother's arms, as Ginger and Louis sip the wine.

Ginger checks if Hannah is fully asleep. She is.

GINGER
Why didn't you tell me?

LOUIS
In a minute. Let me carry Hannah into the RV where she'll be more comfortable. I'll make hot tea.

Ginger turns away.

GINGER
Thought I could trust you.

Louis puts a finger to his lips requesting silence. He points to Hannah.

Ginger reluctantly nods her head "okay."

Louis carries Hannah to the RV, with Ginger right behind him watching him like a hawk.

Louis enters the RV and turns on accent lights showing a spectacularly luxurious and ultra-modern motorhome.

Ginger can't believe her eyes as she enters. It's breathtaking.

GINGER (CONT'D)
Looks like such a dump on the outside.

Louis puts Hannah down on a beautifully decorated full-sized bed, with a down comforter, and soft pillows all around. A large flat-screen TV is on one wall.

Hannah turns her head away from Louis and Ginger, and looks asleep.

LOUIS
That's so Brea doesn't try to take it away from me.

GINGER
She's never been in here?

LOUIS
Never.

Louis turns on accent lights in the kitchen area. They sit in nice comfortable chairs.

Louis turns on an electric water kettle to heat water.

GINGER

Amazing.

LOUIS

It's all solar and stored electricity.

On a counter, Ginger sees a *Blue Comso IsatHub Portable Satellite Wi-Fi Hotspot*, next to an *Apple MacBook Pro* computer.

GINGER

What's that?

LOUIS

That's what you need to bring Wi-Fi to your café. Works directly off a satellite.

GINGER

Everything you told me has been a lie.

LOUIS

What?

GINGER

You dress poorly, and you drive up in a dump of an RV that looks like the Taj Mahal on the inside.

LOUIS

But...

GINGER

(interrupts)

You act poor except for over-tipping and buying the two chairs with an old credit card. I was sure it was going to be rejected, but I didn't bother to call to check your account.

LOUIS

It would have been good. You're too trusting.

Ginger gets angry. She yells.

GINGER
That's my problem?

They glance to see if Hannah looks asleep. She does.

LOUIS
I said I was taking Raphael to go
snowboarding. That was true.

GINGER
Uh huh.

LOUIS
My RV had real mechanical problems.
A broken oil pan!

GINGER
You must have been looking at this
property online for months!

LOUIS
More than a year.

GINGER
I was such a fool!

Louis makes two cups of tea, and delivers one to Ginger.

LOUIS
Decaffeinated, okay?

GINGER
Fine.
(beat)
What are you planning? Condos?
Upscale restaurants? Overpriced
bars?
(angry)
You really a priest?

LOUIS
Pastor. In a major investment
group. Didn't take a vow of
poverty!

GINGER
Or a vow of honesty!

LOUIS
Someone will buy it if we don't.
Your landlord threatened to sell it
to my ex-wife's real estate
investment firm, if we don't buy
it.

GINGER

Sounds like I lose either way.

LOUIS

I'm between a rock and a hard place. Oui? My investors need to show an immediate profit by involving commercial developers. If I don't, they will.

GINGER

Good-bye café!

LOUIS

I want to build the perfect town for Raphael. I came up here to find the spot I could build him his dream town. A fast-food restaurant, a skateboard park, snowboarding nearby, a few condos and neighbors, but not too many. And dependable Internet and Wi-Fi.

GINGER

A luxurious RV outside a café and gift shop won't do?

LOUIS

Not to Raphael.

GINGER

Why not buy a home up the road at the ski resort?

LOUIS

He likes it a little quieter. Not as big as the ski resort town, not as small as one café. But the choice isn't mine. It's his! If I fail, his Maman will swoop in like a vulture and steal him away. I've asked for God's guidance.

Ginger is sad.

GINGER

Hannah wants us to move to the big city with my father. This is too quiet for her. Suits me fine up here.

Louis puts his hand on Ginger's, but she quickly moves it away.

LOUIS

You see, parents and their children are different. Brea loves Quebec City, but there's over eight-hundred thousand people! Too crowded.

GINGER

And Raphael?

LOUIS

His perfect town has one fast-food restaurant, dependable Wi-Fi, a skateboard and snowboard park, and loud music. That much noise would drive me nuts!

Ginger looks away.

GINGER

The big city will drive me nuts, but I'll do it for Hannah. She needs schools that offer advance placement classes, big libraries and museums, and a university.

LOUIS

We want what's best for our kids. Is that so wrong?

Ginger looks away.

GINGER

Is it wrong to believe people can be happy anywhere as long as they are with the ones they love?

Ginger stands, exits the RV, and stares at her café.

Louis peeks out.

We SEE only three working Christmas bulbs around the front window of the café.

GINGER (CONT'D)

Just three bulbs left.

(looks back toward Hannah)

I haven't got the heart to tell her. Her only nightmare is that this café will close when the last Christmas bulb goes out, and that will make me sad, and tear us apart.

LOUIS
That might not happen!

GINGER
It's happening now. She just
doesn't know it.

Ginger looks at the three working Christmas bulbs, and then
the Santa Chair.

We zoom in on Hannah who looks asleep, because her head is
turned away. Her eyes are wide open.

End Act Two

ACT THREE

EXT. CAFÉ AND GIFT SHOP - DAY

The sun is up, and Hannah sits in the Santa Chair, sadly looking at the café. Only two Christmas bulbs remain lit on the lights strung around the building.

Ginger, wearing a green and red Christmas dress, looks worried as she secretly eyes at Hannah from inside the café.

Hannah closes her eyes and concentrates, wishing.

Ginger looks away. The Santa Chair lights up, glowing red behind Hannah.

Ginger pokes her head out of the café door, as the Santa Chair stops glowing.

Mother and daughter have an epiphany.

HANNAH & GINGER

Christmas is a wish you make for others!

GINGER

What? I had the strangest thing happen. Like I could hear your wish!

Hannah jumps from the chair, and runs into the café.

INT. CAFÉ AND GIFT SHOP - DAY

HANNAH

I know. I heard your wish too!

Hannah hugs her mom.

GINGER

We can save the café!

HANNAH

Doesn't matter how many Christmas bulbs are lit on the outside.

GINGER

It's what's inside that counts!

HANNAH

I heard it, too! It was from the Santa Chair!

GINGER

Or from your heart, dear.

(beat)

Either way, we have to make some changes around here! I could bake cranberry scones from my mother's recipe, blueberry muffins, and pumpkin pies.

HANNAH

And your famous apple pies, right, Ma? They're my favorite.

GINGER

Of course, dear. See if you can borrow that satellite Wi-Fi system from Pastor Gauthier.

(beat)

And that French press coffee maker! I'll call Angela, and have her cook up Mexican chili rellenos and tamales. We need vegetarian options if we're going to survive.

Hannah looks unsure of herself.

HANNAH

I have to ask the pastor?

GINGER

You're a big girl.

HANNAH

But he wants to take the café away from us!

Ginger scoots Hannah out the door.

GINGER

Hearts can change, especially at Christmastime. The Santa Chair?

EXT. CAFÉ AND GIFT SHOP - DAY

Hannah stares at the Santa Chair as she knocks on the door of Louis's RV.

Louis answers, surprisingly nicely dressed and well-groomed.

Hannah is taken back by the handsome man.

LOUIS

Good morning, Hannah. I was about to come up and say good-bye.

HANNAH

Good-bye? But your RV is broken.

LOUIS

(sad)

It's nine A.M. The mechanic came at dawn and fixed it. Raphael is with his mother now, and I guess I'm no longer needed here! I'm heading back to Quebec.

HANNAH

You can't go back! We need you!

LOUIS

That's sweet, but I must be going. Sermons to write, and services to conduct.

HANNAH

My Ma needs to borrow your satellite Wi-Fi system and your French press coffee maker. She's making big changes to the café, so we can pay the rent and keep it, at least until I'm grown up!

LOUIS

You're grown up now.

(beat)

I'll tell you what. I'll give you my Wi-Fi system and the coffee maker, if you send me one colorful drawing each Christmas.

HANNAH

One colorful drawing each month, or it's no deal.

Louis smiles.

LOUIS

I'll take it!

HANNAH

Deal.

Hannah shakes Louis's hand.

HANNAH (CONT'D)

But are you still going to buy this
land and tear down the café?

Louis hesitates, and looks away.

LOUIS

I'll have to convince the other
investors to help me buy it alone.
I asked for help from above!

Hannah looks at the Santa Chair.

HANNAH

Maybe Santa can help too!

Hannah races to the Santa Chair as Louis heads to the café
with his Wi-Fi system and a large bag of French roast coffee
beans and a grinder. He turns to Hannah, who has her eyes
closed tightly in the Santa Chair.

LOUIS

For your Maman's sake, I hope
you're right!

INT. CAFÉ AND GIFT SHOP - DAY

Ginger is busy baking when Louis steps in with the Wi-Fi and
a large bag of French roast coffee beans and a grinder.

GINGER

Bonjour, Louis.

LOUIS

Bonjour, Madame. Hannah tells me
you're making some changes.

GINGER

We need a broader and younger
clientele. We need Wi-Fi service
for our customers, and vegetarian
options. We can't afford to pay you
right away.

LOUIS

I've struck a bargain with Hannah.
She's a strong negotiator. St.
Peter's gonna have is hands full
someday.

Ginger laughs as Louis begins hooking up the Wi-Fi system.

GINGER

Are those coffee beans?

LOUIS

Yes, the secret to good coffee isn't the French press, as much as it is the dark French roast coffee beans. We'll have you up and going in no time!

Angela bounces in, dressed in a chef's outfit, wearing bright-red lipstick, and carrying bags of groceries.

GINGER

Angela, what's this?

ANGELA

Buenos días, Mrs. Paisley y Father Gauthier. I'm excited to cook like I know how! You won't be disappointed.

(beat)

Until I go off to college next year. Mi mamá helped me shop. She loves you, Mrs. Paisley!

Ginger stops baking to glance out the window at Hannah, who is sitting in the Santa Chair with her eyes tightly closed.

GINGER

What's she wishing for now?

Angela and Louis stare out the window briefly.

ANGELA

Customers, I hope!

Ginger, Louis, and Angela return to work.

We SEE Hannah through the window. The Santa Chair is glowing red.

LATER

Inside the café, Hannah pulls more Christmas decorations from the gift shop into the café proper.

Albert enters with a smile, and in his delivery uniform. He's holding a package. Hannah stops decorating and goes to hug Albert.

HANNAH

Mr. Chong, you're working again!

ALBERT

They let me handle special deliveries.

(yells)

I have a special delivery for a Ms. Hannah Paisley.

Ginger looks surprised as she greets Albert.

GINGER

We didn't order anything.

Hannah looks outside at the Santa Chair.

HANNAH

Can I open it?

LOUIS

I'm curious.

Hannah opens the box, and begins to unwrap a present inside.

Ginger inspects the box. She sees the name, "Louis Gauthier."

Louis glances at Ginger quickly and smiles.

LOUIS (CONT'D)

I'm sure it's from Santa.

Hannah unwraps the box. We see *"Enchroma -- glasses for the colorblind."*

HANNAH

Glasses for the colorblind?

Hannah inspects the glasses that look like everyday sunglasses.

Before putting them on, Hannah looks around at the Christmas decorations in the café.

We SEE what Hannah's eyes (lenses) see every day, with little distinction between reds and greens, and more gray tones.

Hannah puts on the glasses suspiciously and slowly.

HANNAH (CONT'D)

I don't know about this...

Suddenly, Hannah looks around the café again and SEES many more green tones and red tones, and more vibrant colors all around.

It's an emotional time for Hannah, seeing what others have seen all along.

HANNAH (CONT'D)

I... I... I can't believe it. It's like a rainbow with dozens of more colors. It's like it exploded in the room. Our Christmas decorations are... are... magically beautiful!

She wipes tears from her eyes. Others do too.

GINGER

What about me, sweetheart?

Hannah studies her Ma's green and red dress. Hannah wraps her arms around her.

HANNAH

You could never be more beautiful or colorful with or without these special glasses.

GINGER

And Albert?

Hannah examines Albert's brown pants and tan shirt uniform. Hannah hugs Albert again.

HANNAH

Mr. Chong has always worn his prettiest colors on the inside.

GINGER

And Pastor Gauthier?

Hannah examines the nicely dressed Louis. Hannah hugs him.

HANNAH

Pastor Gauthier looks softer in many colors.

LOUIS

Softer?

HANNAH

(whispers)

Like everyone here who couldn't afford such a wonderful gift, Pastor Gauthier.

(beat)

That's why I can't accept it.

Hannah removes the glasses and hands them to Louis.

GINGER

It is too extravagant. I agree.

LOUIS

I just thought...

HANNAH

It was very kind of you.

Hannah touches Christmas decorations as she walks around the café.

LOUIS

You don't like them?

HANNAH

I knew I couldn't see every color, but I see well enough. I see the people who are important to me. I see colors and textures, and contrasts in my own special way. I'm used to them. I do like the glasses, but I don't need them to be happy.

LOUIS

Because your colors are also on the inside. In your heart.

Hannah smiles.

HANNAH

They have always been there. My Ma gave me all the colors I will ever need.

(beat)

The colors of Christmas.

Ginger hugs her daughter.

GINGER

The real colors of Christmas.

EXT. CAFÉ AND GIFT SHOP - DAY

Sheriff Grant races into the parking area with Denny in the passenger seat. They exit the patrol car, and trudge into the café. Denny wears his green and black football uniform.

SHERIFF

Got any coffee? Gotta get the star quarterback to the game.

GINGER

Quarterback? I thought Denny was the kick return specialist.

DENNY

Our first-string quarterback came down with a bad flu. Throwing up all over the place. Can't get out of bed.

SHERIFF

Denny will have to do both, and his last effort at quarterback was, to put it gently, disastrous!

DENNY

Wasn't that bad!

SHERIFF

Five interceptions?

DENNY

Hard to tell 'em apart down the field.

HANNAH

That's because Denny is colorblind, too.

DENNY

What!

SHERIFF

Impossible!

HANNAH

Denny pokes fun at me for everything. He knows it doesn't bother me.

GINGER

In fact, she likes the attention.

HANNAH

But he never made a negative comment about my colored pencil drawings?

DENNY

That don't mean nothing!

HANNAH

Anything!
(beat)

(MORE)

HANNAH (CONT'D)

Denny, what color is my mother's dress.

SHERIFF

This is ridiculous! The boy...

HANNAH

He threw interceptions because he can't always tell the differences in the uniforms! What color is my Ma's dress?

Denny glances at Ginger's dress. We SEE what Denny SEES, Ginger in a bland, grayish-greenish-brown dress.

DENNY

(softly)

Grayish-greenish-brown?

(beat)

You little...this doesn't prove nothin'.

Hannah politely takes the Enchroma glasses from Louis and hands them to Denny.

HANNAH

Put 'em on. Look around. Then look at Ma's dress again.

Denny reluctantly puts on the Enchroma glasses, and his mouth opens, stunned. Denny goes and touches all the Christmas decorations.

DENNY

Wow! I don't believe it. I don't believe it.

He sees Angela smile at him with her bright-red lipstick. He's smitten.

SHERIFF

What is it, son?

DENNY

I'm partly colorblind. Always have been. Didn't care.

SHERIFF

We would have known?

DENNY

How? Even I didn't really know how bad it was, until today.

(MORE)

DENNY (CONT'D)
Everything is so different. Can I
borrow these today?

LOUIS
They belong to Hannah.

HANNAH
Of course, you can, Denny. We're
friends -- and in a strange way,
connected.

Denny hugs Hannah.

DENNY
Thanks, but you're still Hannah
Banana to me!

Hannah breaks off the hug.

HANNAH
I know that!

SHERIFF
Hold that coffee for me 'til after
the game. Thanks y'all for helping
out my boy!

ALBERT
I've got a few more special
deliveries to make.

Albert smiles and exits.

DENNY
We gotta go, Pops. I'll be late for
the game!

Denny, wearing the Enchroma glasses stares at Angela again.

DENNY (CONT'D)
I've been missing a lot of good
colors!

Denny and the Sheriff race out, as Raphael and Brea enter.
Raphael is carrying a backpack and a skateboard. He's dressed
in a tacky, colorful Christmas sweater, and well-groomed.

GINGER
Bonjour, Mrs. Gauthier and Raphael.

Ginger and Louis share a moment, which is not missed by Brea.

RAPHAEL

Hey, Papa. Bonjour, Mrs. Paisley,
Hannah.

LOUIS

Bonjour, I was about to leave and
go home.

Raphael is excited.

RAPHAEL

The RV is fixed, eh?

LOUIS

Oui! All fixed.

BREA

Don't appear anxious to leave,
Louis.

Louis ignores Brea, as the others go back to work.

LOUIS

What's in the backpack, Raphael?

BREA

Idiot son of yours. I gave him
fifty dollars for lunch and dinner
at the ski resort, because I had
meetings, and he spent it on that
stupid sweater at a thrift store
and Christmas lights at the
hardware store!

Hannah smiles, as she looks outside at the exterior lights.
Only one bulb remains lit.

HANNAH

He did? That was another Christmas
wish!

(pulls on Raphael's
sweater)

Except for the sweater, which I'm
glad I can't see well.

Raphael laughs.

RAPHAEL

Thought you could use a little
help!

HANNAH

No time to spare! Only one bulb
remaining!

Hannah pulls Raphael out the door, while Raphael tries to steal glances at Angela. Louis and Ginger see him.

BREA

Don't know what's gotten into him.
Didn't want fast food. Insisted on
coming here for apple pie! He's not
himself!

Brea sniffs the air.

BREA (CONT'D)

What smells so delicious in here?

Angela peeks in from the kitchen.

ANGELA

Freshly made chili rellenos and hot
tamales with my grandmama's red
sauce.

BREA

And real coffee?

GINGER

The secret is French roast beans.
I'll get you some.

Ginger exits to the kitchen. Brea glares at Louis.

LOUIS

I was just on my way home.

BREA

In that roving junkyard?

LOUIS

I assumed you would be taking
Raphael, and spoiling him all
Christmas.

BREA

Your foolish son wants to stay with
you. He knows it's your turn for
Christmas.

LOUIS

His choice?

BREA

All his choice! But he doesn't want
you to return home quite yet!

LOUIS

He wants to snowboard up at the resort?

BREA

No. Our silly son wants to eat apple pie all day, sit in that ridiculous Santa Chair outside, and sleep in the decrepit RV right here!

(beat)

Are those cranberry scones I smell?

(beat)

And, those chili rellenos are driving me wild!

LOUIS

Order some.

Brea paces, looking at the kitchen.

BREA

I'm on a diet.

Brea looks out the window and sees Raphael laughing and smiling like never before.

BREA (CONT'D)

I've haven't seen Raphael laugh and smile like this after our divorce.

LOUIS

Something about this place.

BREA

The food here smells magnifique!

LOUIS

Always! Live a little! It's Christmas! Oui!

Brea looks around at the café, and smiles warmly.

Ginger comes in with a cup of coffee, sugar, and real cream.

GINGER

Cream with your coffee?

LOUIS

Real cream?

GINGER

I needed a dash making my mother's cranberry scones, Angela needed a dash for her red sauce for her famous chile rellenos, and we always make fresh whipped cream for my apple pies.

BREA

Cranberry scones! Chili rellenos. Apple pie! Oui! I must have them all!

LATER

Brea has three empty plates before her, and apple pie around her lips. She is smiling like never before, when Mr. Ranker stomps through the door.

MR. RANKER

Who said you could put new lights on the exterior of the café?

GINGER

Just children having fun at Christmas.

MR. RANKER

Take them down immediately!

GINGER

After the holidays!

Mr. Ranker angrily stomps around the café.

MR. RANKER

We'll see what the new owner has to say about it after the land auction!

(looks around)

No other bidders showed up?!

LOUIS

Guess not.

Mr. Ranker pulls out a sales contract (blank lines for the price and buyer), and sits down with Louis and Brea.

MR. RANKER

Let the bidding war begin!

Ginger comes with fresh coffee, and stops at the table, stunned!

GINGER
Bidding war? On Christmas Eve?

Ginger glares at Louis, then at Brea.

Hannah and Raphael, laughing and giggling, race in the door and take another six-foot tall cardboard Santa Claus out the door.

The adults look out the window to see the kids folding the Santa into another Adirondack chair that Albert is delivering in his pickup truck.

The adults see Hannah and Raphael plop themselves into the Santa Chairs and close their eyes tightly.

Louis looks sympathetically at Ginger.

LOUIS
Once my ex-wife saw I might be interested in this property, she wanted a chance to outbid me. Monsieur Ranker was happy to oblige since he is in a rush to sell to avoid paying property taxes the first of the year.

BREA
We compete for everything these days.

Ginger slams down the coffee pot, and steps back to glare at them all.

GINGER
I'll have the rent money by tonight!

MR. RANKER
Let's find out who you'll be handing the check to.
(beat)
The bidding will start at four-hundred thousand.

Brea glances at Ginger, when no one is looking, and winks at her and smiles.

BREA
I know you have to sell in a hurry to avoid the property taxes, and you won't find any other buyers for this dump, but I wouldn't give you half that for this property!

MR. RANKER

And the surrounding land! Don't forget the forest! The timber alone...

Mr. Ranker looks out the window at the forest.

Louis glances at Ginger, when Mr. Ranker isn't looking, and winks and smiles.

LOUIS

My ex-wife is very shrewd. She knows property values. She must have read about the contaminated old mine on the property.

Mr. Ranker spins and glares at Louis.

LOUIS (CONT'D)

I would give you half of what she wasn't going to give you!

Mr. Ranker, confused, storms and paces, and he yells as he tries to calculate.

MR. RANKER

Let me see. Mrs. Gauthier would give me half of four-hundred thousand, which is two-hundred thousand.

BREA

Oui.

MR. RANKER

And, you, Pastor Gauthier, would give me half of the money Mrs. Gauthier wouldn't give me. That's half of two-hundred thousand. That's only one-hundred-thousand dollars! That's what I paid for it!

Louis stands and shakes Mr. Ranker's hand.

LOUIS

It's a deal!

Mr. Ranker looks confused as Louis fills in the amount and signs the contract. Mr. Ranker is red-faced angry.

MR. RANKER

I'm happy to get rid of the place! Merry Christmas, indeed!

Mr. Ranker growls as he signs the contract, then storms out the door.

The adults watch as Mr. Ranker drives away. They SEE glowing red lights around the Santa Chairs.

Albert waves good-bye to Mr. Ranker like Santa Claus in a parade.

Louis puts his arm around Brea.

LOUIS
You're not so bad for an ex-wife,
Brea. Merci!

Brea and Ginger smile at each other.

BREA
We want to see our children happy.

Ginger puts an arm around Brea, and kisses her cheek.

GINGER
I can't thank you both enough.

LOUIS
Raphael hasn't been this happy for
years.

Louis turns to Ginger and kisses her sweetly on the cheek.

BREA
Besides, I think you'll make a
fortune with your new Internet
Mountain Café with French coffee,
British scones, Mexican chili
rellenos, and American apple pie! I
want to invest!

Everyone laughs. Ginger joins them in the booth for coffee. Christmas music plays in the b.g.

A LITTLE LATER

They look out the window to see Albert walking toward the café door, while Sheriff Grant race up in his patrol car with Denny in the front seat.

EXT. CAFÉ AND GIFT SHOP - DAY

Denny steps out of the patrol car. His head is bandaged again, and he's holding his stomach.

Hannah runs over to Denny, and gives him a hug.

The sheriff gets out and smiles at all the new Christmas lights on the café.

SHERIFF

Place looks great!

HANNAH

Are you okay, Denny?

DENNY

I'm fine, Hannah Banana! We won the game! I threw the ball to our team this time, thanks to the glasses you loaned me.

SHERIFF

He could finally tell the home and away uniforms apart. Didn't throw one interception.

HANNAH

But, you still got injured?

DENNY

Team carried me off the field after our big victory. Then they dropped me by accident, when they put me down.

HANNAH

That's terrible!

DENNY

Then Suzi broke up with me.

Raphael's eyes light up!

RAPHAEL

She's single?

DENNY

A pretty girl walked by with a colorful dress, and I was wearing the new glasses...

SHERIFF

Suzi smacked him right in the gut! That's why he's returning your glasses.

DENNY

Too dangerous.

SHERIFF

And he has to wash dishes again.
Concussion protocol. Can't handle
sharp objects.

Hannah hugs Denny again.

HANNAH

Never been an issue with our Denny!

Sheriff Grant and Denny chuckle as they head toward the café door.

Hannah and Raphael linger behind to sit in the Santa Chairs.

HANNAH (CONT'D)

Speaking of unsharp objects, you're
interested in Suzi?

Raphael closes his eyes tightly.

RAPHAEL

I wish I was eighteen, eh!

HANNAH

That's wishing for yourself again.
That's not the way the Santa Chair
works.

RAPHAEL

Right! Wish for others.

(beat)

Okay, I wish Suzi was thirteen!

Hannah leans over, slaps his arm, and laughs.

HANNAH

Boy's! When will they ever learn?

Raphael laughs.

RAPHAEL

Never, I hope!

HANNAH

You'd better do more than wish in a
Santa Chair.

They chuckle as they hop up, and race to the café.

LATER

As the sun sets, we see several cars and trucks pull up to the café. [Ten to Twelve Customers (various ages and types) enter the café.]

Ginger and Louis exit the café holding hands. We HEAR Christmas-rock music emanating from the diner.

We SEE Ginger and Louis stop, and glance back into the windows of the café.

LOUIS

You did it! You turned the place around right in time for Christmas.

GINGER

All thanks to you!

LOUIS

God helps those who help themselves! You saw what needed to be changed, and you did it. You should be proud, oui?

Ginger turns to Louis, kissing close.

GINGER

You didn't tell me you were rich.

LOUIS

Rich? That was it. Sold my house. Bought the R.V. Put the rest aside for Raphael's college fund, that was my retirement fund.

GINGER

What will you do now?

LOUIS

I suppose I'll be your landlord, at least until Raphael has to return to school in two weeks.

Suzi drives up in a fancy sports car, and hops out in a very colorful dress.

SUZI

Hi, Mrs. Paisley. Is Denny working tonight?

GINGER

He's on dishes.

SUZI

Thought I'd show him my new dress.

GINGER
I'm sure he'll love it.

LOUIS
(whispers)
If he doesn't, Raphael will.

Suzi bounces into the café.

Ginger turns to Louis.

GINGER
And then? After two weeks?

LOUIS
I think Raphael likes it here. He
said he wished for something
special for me.

GINGER
That's odd. A few minutes ago,
Hannah told me that she wished
something special for me.

Ginger and Louis sit in the two Santa Chairs.

GINGER (CONT'D)
That was sweet of Raphael to buy
the Christmas lights.

LOUIS
A real change has come over him,
since he got here.

Louis shakes his head and giggles.

LOUIS (CONT'D)
That ugly sweater is the best!

GINGER
And it was overly generous of you
to buy the special glasses for
Hannah.

LOUIS
She stole my heart when she told us
that she already had all the colors
of Christmas in her heart.

GINGER
She says she'll use them when she
goes to the movies!

LOUIS
She's sweet!

GINGER
I think it's the Santa Chairs!

Louis stares over at Ginger. They smile.

LOUIS
It's not such a silly idea Hannah
had, oui?

GINGER
Wish something good for yourself,
and nothing happens.

LOUIS
Wish something good for someone
else, and your wish comes true.

GINGER
Nothing silly about that at all.

Ginger reaches out a hand to hold Louis's hand. They stare into the café, and smile. They lean to kiss each other, with the Christmas music blaring in the café.

The Santa Chairs glow red behind them.

End Act Three

FADE OUT.

THE END