

REMEMBER THE REASON

Written by

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EXT. HIGH ABOVE RESIDENTIAL COMMUNITY - DAY

It's a partly cloudy, picturesque autumn day. A Christmas song comes in LOW and slowly starts to GROW. The community is a cookie-cutter Middle Tennessee neighborhood. Charming craftsman homes outline a cul de sac.

SARAH (V.O.)  
CUT, the Buble!

Music STOPS.

SARAH (V.O.)  
It's Thanksgiving morning. This is bad enough.

One cul-de-sac home is fully decorated for Christmas.

SARAH (V.O.)  
Seriously, who raised these people?  
Now, it may surprise you to know  
that I've always loved the  
Christmas season, ever since I can  
remember.

At another home, neighbor flips front porch sign from "Happy Fall Y'all" to "Merry Christmas".

SARAH (V.O.)  
But I'm not feeling it this year.  
Maybe that can change. After all,  
it is about the coming of a child,  
and man am I there.

INT. ASHLEY'S HOUSE/BATHROOM - DAY

A woman taps bathroom counter anxiously dripping in hope, it's SARAH LAROUX, late 30s, appealing redhead.

She eyes her sister's family photo of four happy kids smiling just like their dad on the counter. She closes eyes, prays.

SARAH  
God, I know Your timing is perfect.  
You know, this'd be a great time.

She reads her pregnancy test strip... Drops her head. Throws the test in the trash, marches out of the bathroom.

EXT. COMMUNITY PARK - DAY

A Turkey Bowl belt on a bench looks like a Wrestlemania belt with a Heisman posing turkey in cammo.

Huddled up and sporting "It's Gamey Time" shirts, is JUKE CLAY, 30s, rugged, cowboy hat, and intensely focused. He's with his sons, KYLE, 10 and DAVID, 8, a twin.

JUKE

Ok little soldiers. Time to  
separate da wheat from da chaff.  
We're goin combat style.

He smears their eye black to match his. Boys are stoked.

JUKE (CONT'D)

History will be made here today. Ya  
neva forget yer first turkey bowl.  
Just one stop...  
(points to bench)  
And that belts ours.

KYLE

Uh, but dad, were tied. And ending  
in a tie is like drinkin  
unsweetened tea, YEUCK!

JUKE

So true, and no, we stopped'em on  
their last conversion.

KYLE

Aah, when Cam tripped and got  
baptized in fescue.

JUKE

Bingo! Now, we're gonna sag off.  
Kyle, ya got Cameron. David -  
Lucas. DON'T let'em get behind ya.

Boys nod, confident. Juke jams his mouth guard in.

NEARBY

Sarah's husband, CHANCE LAROUX, late 30s, Creole, chill as a winter attic, huddles with his son CAMERON, 10 and nephew LUCAS, 8, other twin. They're donning "Fowl Bowl" shirts.

CHANCE

This is the fun part gentlemen. Any  
ideas on what play you want to run?

Cameron, wearing Tebowesque John 3:16 eye black, fescue stains on his face and hair.

CAMERON

A "jump pass" Pops. It worked for Timmy T. against Oklahoma.

CHANCE

They're gonna sag off son. So, it'd be like grillin without a flame.

Boys eye each other, processing his food analogy.

CHANCE (CONT'D)

Let's try another play that cooked Oklahoma in the Fiesta Bowl. Then we go Fiesta. Here's what we gon' do.

Boys focus in, while Chance draws a play up on his hands.

JUKE (O.S.)

Ya know, I do wanna eat my turkey while it's still hot.

CHANCE

(pops out of huddle)

Don't fret Juke, you will. I just forgot a belt today, so I gotta win one right quick.

(smirks, back to huddle)

When you catch the ball Lucas, you run like over easy's, sound good?

LUCAS

You sure it should be me Unc?  
(holds up frozen hands)  
I haven't caught anything all day.

CHANCE

No wonder, look at those mitts.

CAMERON

I got some extra mittens from the tree lot I helped out at yesterday.

Lucas shivers thru a light blue hue. Chance tilts head at Cameron, annoyed.

CAMERON (CONT'D)

What?

CHANCE

Give up dem gloves son, before ya  
cousin becomes Jack Frost.

Cameron grabs gloves from his shorts, hands them to Lucas.

CHANCE (CONT'D)

Great, now let's finish off these  
turkeys. Lets hear it, Sharp eyes!

CAMERON

Fear not!

LUCAS

Go rise!

All hands meet in the middle.

CHANCE

Ready, break!

Chance strolls up to the line. Boys run into position.

JUKE

I know, ya didn't just do yer rise  
to da occasion chant from yer  
coachin glory days?

CHANCE

Sure did. Worked for me then, it's  
fin'n to work for me now.

JUKE

Here we go defense!

Chance holds out football, checks that his players are set.  
Lucas puts on his gloves, not noticing the sap stains.

CHANCE

Ready. Seeet. Go!

The boys take off, Lucas stumbles off the line, falls.

Chance glances over, shocked, throws the ball to Cameron who  
is cutting across the field. Cameron catches it, both  
defenders converge.

Just before they get to him, Cameron pitches the ball to  
Lucas, cutting the opposite way. Lucas holds on.

Juke's eyes widen, yells to his boys holding Cameron's flags.

JUKE

HOOK AND LADDER, HOOK AND LADDER!

Cameron shows the boys his empty hands. They're stunned.  
Lucas runs laser focused for the touchdown!

Lucas and Cameron celebrate. Lucas tries to spike ball, but it's fully stuck on his gloves.

Juke falls to his knees, hands on his cowboy hat. Chance jogs for the endzone to join the celebration. He stops to pat Juke on the back.

CHANCE

Rise up!

INT. ASHLEY'S HOUSE/KITCHEN - DAY

Soulful MUSIC. THERESA, 60s, elegant, gathers apple pie ingredients to show her granddaughter, HARPER, 6, sweet. Sarah cuts greens while her sister ASHLEY CLAY, 30s, brunette, dumps flour into a mixing bowl.

Two sticks of butter sit on the counter. Harper points to the filling recipe calling for one. Theresa ignores it, tosses them both in the pan.

Ashley searches for her butter, looks at Theresa annoyed. Theresa shrugs, smiling. Before Ashley can sass her, Sarah taps her and hands her a stick of butter from her purse.

Doorbell Rings

ASHLEY

(hands covered in flour)

Mind getting that Sarah?

MOMENTS LATER - FRONT ENTRANCE

Sarah takes a baking pan from Chance's parents, her in laws. MALCOLM (PA PA) and MAMA ROUX, both 60s, Creole.

THERESA

(from kitchen)

Happy Thanksgiving y'all. How was the drive up?

MALCOLM

A breeze.

Malcolm hangs up Mama Roux's coat. Sarah holds up baking pan as they move toward the kitchen.

SARAH

Is this what I think it is Mom?

MAMA ROUX  
Chance's favorite cornbread.

SARAH  
He's gonna be so excited.

MALCOLM  
You know, I'm excited, to know  
whether Theresa went with dressing  
or stuffing this year?

THERESA  
(preps turkey)  
Always a tough choice Malcolm. But  
I decided to go with... both.

Malcolm smiles, drops the dish he's holding on the island and  
puts his arm around Theresa. Speaks creole.

MALCOLM  
Bondye Beni Ou.

THERESA  
(leans into him)  
Well, God Bless you too.

Ashley closes the oven, then pops up and grabs a wine bottle  
from the counter.

ASHLEY  
We're looking good on the food  
front, family. Who's ready for some  
vino?

SARAH  
None for me.

THERESA  
(re: Sarah not drinking)  
Sar bear, is that because?

Sarah shakes head "no", downcast. Theresa, hands dripping  
with turkey innards, grabs her hand.

THERESA (CONT'D)  
Don't give up hope.

SARAH  
Hope? I've held onto it for eight  
years. It seems useless to me now.

AT THE FRONT DOOR

Door flies open. Young boys trample in, followed by Juke.

ASHLEY  
Who won babe?

Juke shakes his head, dejected.

JUKE  
How are my Boys doing Malcolm?

Malcolm leans over the couch staring at the NFL game on TV.

MALCOLM  
Already down fourteen.

JUKE  
It ain't my day!

Chance emerges through front door holding Turkey Bowl belt high above head, triumphant.

CHANCE  
FIRST ANNUAL TURKEY BOWL CHAMPS!  
That's right.

SARAH  
Congrats honey. Now wash up, y'all  
gotta dunk the bird in the fryer.

CHANCE  
K, but first, gotta say hi to Mama.

Chance slides over to Mama Roux. He puts his arm around her.

CHANCE (CONT'D)  
Am I smellin what I think, Mama?

MAMA ROUX  
Only the best for MY BABY!

HARPER  
And dad, I helped Tutu with the  
apple pie.

JUKE  
Nice Harper. After losin to an  
inferior opponent, nothin'll cheer  
ya up faster than Tutu's apple pie  
and Mama Roux's cornbread.

MAMA ROUX  
You got that right!



INT. ASHLEY'S HOUSE/KITCHEN ISLAND - DAY

Thanksgiving food is ready, it sits on the island buffet style. Everyone's gathered around holding hands, peaceful.

THERESA

I'm so thankful we're all here.  
 (to Malcolm)  
 Preacher, you mind doin the honors?

MALCOLM

Let's bow our heads. Heavenly  
 Father, everyday should be  
 Thanksgiving in our hearts as we  
 reflect on how good You are to us.  
 You sent Your son to pay the price  
 for our sins so that we might live  
 a meaningful life serving You by  
 serving others. May we count our  
 blessings on this holiday as we  
 enjoy family, friends, and a  
 fantastic smelling feast. In Jesus  
 name, Amen!

THERESA

Thank you. Now don't be shy y'all,  
 dig in!

MOMENTS LATER

As Chance plates up turkey, Harper approaches. She lifts her plate. He scans fork over white meat, she shakes head "no". "Ahh" he thinks and scans dark meat, she shakes head "no".

Puzzled, he scans turkey leg, she nods "yes", smiling. He plops leg on her plate, she bops over to the kids table.

MOMENTS LATER - DINING TABLE

Everyone sits, eating, enjoying conversation and laughs. Juke pours gravy on all the fixins, including cranberry sauce and yams. Chance dramatically reenacts football game, next to his triple stacked cornbread.

INT. ASHLEY'S HOUSE/LIVING ROOM/KITCHEN - NIGHT

Malcolm plays Monopoly with grandkids on the coffee table.

Grandmas sit at the dining table cutting coupons.

Ashley and Sarah stand at the island eyeing Juke as he hovers over a slice of pie, in a battle to finish her off.

SARAH

You know Juke, there's still four pies left. You got it in you?

JUKE

Da war is lost, but this battle ain't. Ole girls being stubborn, but I will have a victory today!

He jams in mouth guard, takes a bite, continues the fight. Ashley and Sarah stare, impressed by his determination.

INT. ASHLEY'S HOUSE/KITCHEN - NIGHT

At the sink, Chance washes dishes with the Belt around his waist. He's bouncing and humming "Last Christmas" by Wham.

CHANCE

Everything was great ladies. Neva seen such clean plates.

MAMA ROUX

You know Sarah, when Chance was a kid, someone would always have to go back and rewash the dishes he "cleaned". Has anything changed?

Chance jumps in before Sarah can respond.

CHANCE

Honey, tell my mama, how my dishes at home be as clean as Pa Pa's shoes on Sundays!

Malcolm laughs. Sarah glances at Mama Roux, shakes head "no".

SARAH

Yes they are honey.

THERESA

Speaking of home. It's time we retired Christmas at my house. I'm gonna kindly ask that one of y'all host this year.

CHANCE

We would love to host.

Sarah whips head in his direction, cracks mouth, sneering. Theresa shuffles over to Chance, views dishes he's "cleaned".

THERESA  
Thank you Chance.

CHANCE  
Not a problem Mom.

Theresa lifts up a dirty plate from the cleaned rack.

THERESA  
I'll bring the paper plates.

INT. SARAH'S HOUSE/BATHROOM/BEDROOM - NIGHT

Chance puts toothpaste on brush, in adjoining bathroom. He's wearing a-- Joyful Bride, Joyful Ride shirt.

Sarah, in bed, reads a book-- *Wanting Another Child*.

Her phone PINGS, she picks it off the night stand, a TEXT from Cousin Faith-- "Happy Thanksgiving, miss y'all. We're pregnant with #6 can you believe it :). Heard you're hosting Christmas, we'll be there." She frowns.

SARAH  
Of course you are.

She puts book down, responds: "Why you insensitive little... She halts, wanting to be snarky, but deep breathes then deletes it and sends: "Congrats, miss y'all too."

She closes out text and checks Instagram. The first few pictures show New Big Brother announcements.

She HUFFS and throws her phone, opens her laptop to her calendar and edits Christmas Day from "Mom Hosting" to "Chance Hosting".

CHANCE  
How you feel about hosting, honey?

SARAH  
Oh, I'm just jumpin for joy to host Faith and her tribe of towheads!

Chance's eyes widen as he stops brushing teeth.

SARAH (CONT'D)  
Being around Ash and her four is about all I can handle. Thank God they're done because if she got pregnant, we couldn't do life together for those nine months.

CHANCE  
Come on. Nine months?

SARAH  
You're right, then there's the  
baby... two years and nine months.

CHANCE  
(perplexed)  
What's really going on?

Sarah views computer calendar. December's completely full.

SARAH  
I'm just... I'm overwhelmed.

CHANCE  
Don't be, you got me, and...  
(points to shirt)  
It's an attitude this season!

SARAH  
Good luck with that, doesn't feel  
the same after last year.

INT. SARAH'S HOUSE/BATHROOM - DAY - FLASHBACK

Sarah stares in a mirror putting on makeup when her phone  
rings on the counter. She answers, anxious.

SARAH  
Hi DR. SPARKS.

She listens, drops her eye liner on the counter. Despair.

SARAH (CONT'D)  
So... it's me.

DR. SPARKS (O.S.)  
I'm sorry Sar. It's typically not  
this early, could be hereditary.

SARAH  
How much time do we have?

DR. SPARKS (O.S.)  
No telling for sure. We'll monitor  
the next twelve months.

SARAH  
Ok... Ok, goodbye.

She hangs up, stares in mirror. Her makeup runs thru tears.

CHANCE (O.S.)  
You almost ready honey?

Through the mirror, she spots Chance dancing in front of a full length mirror in a Christmas sweater.

CHANCE (CONT'D)  
Can't wait to two step in this ugly thang.

She finds the strength to crack a smile.

INT. SARAH'S HOUSE/BEDROOM - DAY - BACK TO PRESENT

SARAH  
What was once bright is now dim.

Chance opens medicine cabinet. A pregnancy test falls out. He picks it up, adds it to the LARGE stack of other tests on the shelf. Puts away his toothbrush, heads for bed.

CHANCE  
Well, I got a recipe to turn that sneer into holiday cheer. How bout, we make it a season to serve. We've been so focused on receiving lately. In serving, I think we can find our happiness.

SARAH  
You wanna make me happy? Don't volunteer us to host anything else, and give me a baby by New Years. Can you do that honey?

He climbs into bed.

CHANCE  
I can handle the first, but the second, well, I'mma need some help from the big man upstairs.

Sarah reaches over and wipes the little bit of toothpaste off the side of his mouth and shows him.

SARAH  
You definitely need some help.

CHANCE  
(shrugs it off)  
You should get to bed honey. Your mom likes to start Black Friday before the smoke hits the brisket.

She closes her computer.

SARAH  
You're right. Let the journey  
begin.

INT. STORE/TV DEPARTMENT - DAY

Store is chaotic with shoppers frantically emptying shelves.

A TV plays "The Grinch" scene - "Maybe Christmas means a little bit more". Two shoppers COLLIDE carts in front of the TV. A WOMAN, 40s, Keep Calm shirt, and SOUTHERN MAN, 30s.

WOMAN  
OUT OF MY WAY!

Her face full of rage, while Southern man's speechless. She pulls cart around him, stomps off, looking back in disgust.

She stomps by Ashley, who's texting on her phone, dishoveled.

SARAH (O.S.)  
Nice-a you to finally show up.

Ashley looks up from her phone down a toy aisle and spots Sarah and Theresa standing next to each other.

ASHLEY  
The boys were wired on sugar last night and didn't give me much sleep. I don't have the luxury of one boy to deal with.

SARAH  
Excuse me?!

A range of emotions wash over Sarah, from shock to anger. Ashley plops her phone in her purse.

ASHLEY  
Ehh, sorry, I didn't mean that. I'm just, I'm just tired.

SARAH  
That's no excuse to say...

THERESA  
Ok girls. We don't have time for the banter, cause these coupons...  
(holds up huge stack)  
Become tissue paper, if their shelves are empty.

ASHLEY

Coupons mom, really... But you're right.

THERESA

I know, and yes look, I got three for the price of one on these laser remote cars.

ASHLEY

Whaaaat?!!

Theresa rubs Sarah's shoulder in comfort as Ashley moves toward them to look on the shelf at the cars.

Kids are shouting around them; and a ball bounces hitting Sarah's leg. She turns, picks it up and steps over to return it to the boy who had it.

SARAH

I believe this is yours little man.

Sarah hands the ball to the young boy, it is MILES, 6.

MARIA (O.S.)

Hi Mrs. Laroux.

Sarah looks up to see a familiar face. Next to Miles, behind a cart, is MARIA, 20s, mixed race, tired baggy eyes.

SARAH

Maria. Wow, it's nice to see you. Haven't seen you since what... Cam was his size, in your class.

(ref: Miles)

You got a good looking boy there. I bet he keeps you busy.

Miles wildly bounces the ball around them.

MARIA

Never stops. And life isn't slowing down anytime soon.

She hand signals to her pink pregnancy shirt and bump.

SARAH

I see that, congratulations!

MARIA

Thank you. Would love to talk, but we're in a hurry. I gotta drop him off across town with his father.

SARAH

Ohhh. Ok, well, really good to see you and if you ever need anything, don't hesitate to reach out okay.

MARIA

Thank you, enjoy your day, and keep your head on a swivel. We've almost been taken out by three TVs.

SARAH

Thanks for the heads up. You too.

Sarah watches Maria waddle away, in envy. Theresa comes over, puts her arm around Sarah.

THERESA

Come on, I think I saw a Tebow book for Cameron in the next aisle.

#### CHECKOUT COUNTER

Sarah finishes loading the belt. Theresa and Ashley stand by.

THERESA

This is for our stuff Sar.  
(hands Sarah credit cards)  
We're going to the ladies room.

She and Ashley depart. Sarah moves up to cashier as their items begin to be scanned, and she searches for her name tag.

SARAH

Happy Black Friday, Nandi.

NANDI, 40s, African descent, frowns, not feeling small talk.

NANDI

Mmm hmm.

SARAH

Did I pronounce that right?

NANDI

Mmm hmm.

SARAH

It's pretty. Does it have a meaning?

NANDI

One who pleases others!



SARAH

Fitting.

A moment of awkward silence as Nandi scans her items.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Can you believe I got that movie  
for four dollars, It's a classic.

NANDI

Mmm hmm.

SARAH

Well, someone's not excited for the  
Christmas season, and I get it,  
I've got my reservations too.

NANDI

I'm working on two hours of sleep  
here... scarlet!

SARAH

Why didn't you just call your  
Manager and take a sick day?

Nandi looks down, sees her title is concealed by the lip of  
her shirt pocket. She pulls the lip down, reveals: Manager.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Ohhh.

NANDI

Had multiple employees call out  
sick. And you know who has to pick  
up the slack?

SARAH

You?

NANDI

BINGO SISTA! Now that'll be three-  
twenty, forty-six.

SARAH

Oh no! We wanted to separate. Do,  
do you think you could go back a...

As Sarah speaks, Nandi looks back at the long line of  
customers waiting. Sarah stops, and joins her gaze.

SARAH (CONT'D)

(hands over credit card)  
Nevermind. We'll figure it out.

NANDI

Good call.

Nandi swipes her card. Hands her the receipt.

SARAH

Well, you have a nice day Nandi.

NANDI

You too.

Sarah pushes cart to exit. Southern man is next at register.

SOUTHERN MAN

Happy Black Friday, Nandi!

(mispronounces it)

Did I pronounce that right?

Nandi turns head, locks eyes with Sarah, at the exit doors.

NANDI

Mmm hmm!

EXT. ED'S HOUSE FRONT DOOR

A man, 40s, every sunday golf type, exits his front door on the phone. It's ED; he strides down toward the curb.

ED

Yes, we just got in and there's no moving pod.

POD EMPLOYEE (V.O.)

I'm looking into it. Ya sure ya don't see it? Ya check the street?

Ed reaches his mailbox, astounded by such a question.

ED

Oh, there it is, hidden behind the mailbox.

POD EMPLOYEE (V.O.)

Ha, that's funny sir. You one of those comedian guys?

ED

No, I'm a come-drop off my stuff before the weekend guys!

POD EMPLOYEE (V.O.)

K sir, I got confirmation, it's being dropped off between 4 and 5.

ED  
Good, we'll be here.

Ed hangs up before employee can respond. He grabs a letter from the mailbox. It's a Christmas card, addressed to: Laroux Family. He turns, eyes the Laroux's home.

INT. CHURCH AUDITORIUM/STAGE - NIGHT

A dozen kids, some stand, some sit. Some play thumb war and fast hands. Cameron stands center, viewing the church Christmas play flyer. An irritating voice calls out.

SCOTTY (O.S.)  
Hi Cameron.

CAMERON  
SCOTTY!

SCOTTY, 10, Cameron's nemesis.

SCOTTY  
What role you looking to play?

CAMERON  
Joseph!

SCOTTY  
That ain't happening.

CAMERON  
Oh, it's fin'n to happen.

SCOTTY  
I have to admit, I didn't expect to see you auditioning this year.

CAMERON  
Why is that pray tell?

SCOTTY  
Because of how dejected you were last year, when you lost out, AGAIN, on playing Joseph, to moi.

CAMERON  
My parents didn't raise no quitter. Been practicing all year for this moment. You're gonna need a Christmas miracle greater than the virgin birth to beat me!

SCOTTY

Hmm. No need for practice if you're a natural born actor, like moi.

CAMERON

Why do you keep saying that?

SCOTTY

Saying what?

CAMERON

Moi!

SCOTTY

I don't know.

CAMERON

Well stop, it's annoying!

SCOTTY

Whatever. Good luck, you're gonna need it.

CAMERON

Pssssh!

Doors to auditorium shove open. A woman, 60s, frizzy, artistic, scampers down to the stage. It's MRS LOONEY-BYRD.

She has papers in hand. One page drops, she bends down to pick it up and continues.

MRS. LOONEY-BYRD

Sorry I'm late boys and girls. Had me a Hattie Bs hot chicken sandwich, and Lord knows you can't rush through that.

Sweat drips down her forehead.

MRS. LOONEY-BYRD (CONT'D)

Oooh, got me sweatin like a coke can in summer.

She wipes sweat from her head with backside of the papers.

MRS. LOONEY-BYRD (CONT'D)

Everybody off the ground. Come on up, y'all ain't communion cups.

Seated kids pop up.

MRS. LOONEY-BYRD (CONT'D)  
 Now, Mrs. Annie has decided to  
 volunteer on our missions trip this  
 year. So, I'm going to be filling  
 in for her as this years Christmas  
 Play Director.

Cameron smiles at the opportunity to impress her, while  
 Scotty's eyes bug and shoulders slouch.

MRS. LOONEY-BYRD (CONT'D)  
 My name is Mrs. Looney-Byrd.

Kids snicker.

MRS. LOONEY-BYRD (CONT'D)  
 And I'm new to the congregation,  
 but not new to the theatre!

She trips in her heels, pacing. Kids snicker again. She SNAPS  
 her head back at them, they quickly perk up.

MRS. LOONEY-BYRD (CONT'D)  
 Now, we've got a tight window to  
 put this together, auditions will  
 be Monday. I expect to see y'all  
 then, ready to "paform"... Any  
 questions.

Kids silent. Cameron turns to Scotty with a sarcastic smile.

CAMERON  
 Looks like you'll have to earn it  
 this year, as your Aunt Annie ain't  
 here to play favorites.

Scotty stares back at him, speechless.

INT/EXT. JOSIAH'S APARTMENT/PARKING LOT - DAY

Maria's just parked her car and turns off the engine. Miles  
 sits in the backseat, in his football uniform.

MILES  
 Do you think Dad'll take me to get  
 donuts after practice?

MARIA  
 I think, if you ask nicely,  
 anything's possible.

They share a sweet smile. She then gets out and moves around  
 to open his door when the car next to her BEEPS, unlocking.

She looks up to see JOSIAH, 20s, African descent, naturally athletic, stepping to his car holding a gym bag.

MARIA (CONT'D)

Hi Josiah.

Josiah looks up, somewhat surprised to see her.

JOSIAH

Uh, what are you doing here, Maria?

MARIA

Uh, you agreed to take Miles to practice today, so I can go to my doctors appointment.

Josiah opens the door behind drivers seat, and tosses bag in.

JOSIAH

Sorry, I got plans today.

MARIA

What? What's more important?

JOSIAH

If you must know, I'm goin to the gym, cause I missed out yesterday.

He SLAMS the door shut.

MARIA

SERIOUSLY!

Josiah moves up to the driver door, nodding "yes".

MARIA (CONT'D)

You're just like your father!

Josiah freezes as the statement cuts him to his core. He lets out a breathy sigh as he glares at her.

JOSIAH

Didn't I tell you to never mention him around me.

MARIA

I'mma call it like I see it.

Josiah shakes head, he's over the conversation.

JOSIAH

And I'mma get this workout in, so you can CALL someone else to help you out!

Maria shakes head, ticked, as he opens the door, jumps in his car and turns the engine on.

He then turns his head to look out the back window before reversing and he LOCKS eyes with Miles.

Miles puppy dog eyes him. A flash of guilt washes over Josiah's face, but he quickly snaps out of it and pulls off.

Maria watches him, then drops head into her arms, crushed.

INT. ASHLEY'S HOUSE/HALLWAY - DAY

Juke emerges, and adjusts his cowboy hat in the mirror which faces guest bathroom, where Ashley stands, back turned.

JUKE

How'd it go babe? Ya stay within budget.

Ashley doesn't respond. Juke turns and heads her way.

JUKE (CONT'D)

Babe? Do I need to move money?

Ashley turns around just before he reaches her. She's holding a pregnancy test, shocked.

ASHLEY

Been so off. Now I know why.

Juke's stunned, eyes darting, then he focuses.

JUKE

But the surgery?

ASHLEY

Guess ya swimmers can't be stopped!

He smiles, proud of their determination. He quickly picks up Ashley and spins her around the bathroom.

JUKE

Come on. We should be celebratin!  
I'm makin frito pie.

Once the spinning stops. Ashley drops her smile.

ASHLEY

Yes, but let's not announce until after Christmas. Sarah is on the brink and this news'll crush her.

JUKE

Uh, yer gonna have a doozy keepin  
it from her. She doesn't miss much.

EXT. TREE LOT - NIGHT

Chance, Cameron and Sarah peruse a busy tree lot. Chance hums  
"It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas". Sarah sees  
multiple happy families with newborn babies.

SARAH

I seriously can't leave the house.

CAMERON

Mom, why do we pick out the most  
flawed looking tree again?

SARAH

It stems back to happier times.

EXT. ASHLEY'S HOUSE/FRONT PORCH - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Sarah, pregnant, holding baby Cameron, says goodbye to Juke  
(bold mullet), Ashley. A pickup truck pulls in the driveway.

JUKE

Who in da world is that?

Chance steps out of truck in his Navy uniform.

SARAH

Oh, My, Gosh.

She hands Cameron to Ashley, then runs and jumps into  
Chance's arms.

SARAH (CONT'D)

You're home, you're home. What? I  
can't believe, how'd this, what...

CHANCE

I was gonna tell you, but I...

SARAH

Best, Christmas gift, ever!  
(beams, then smile falls)  
Oh no.

CHANCE

What?



SARAH

I didn't decorate the house. I don't, I don't even have a tree.

CHANCE

That's okay babe. Saw a lot on my way over, we'll stop before home.

Sarah dives back into his arms.

EXT. TREE LOT - NIGHT

Chance and Sarah step through an empty tree lot. Chance pushes stroller as branches break with each step/wheel turn.

The LOT OWNER, 60s, wholesome grandpa type, accompanies them.

LOT OWNER

Careful your steps... By the way, y'all got a name picked out?

SARAH

(hand on visible bump)  
We've yet to come to a consensus.

LOT OWNER

Hmm. Got three myself. Wish I'd had more, there all such a blessing. Cherish the little years.

SARAH

(warm smile)  
That's the plan.

Lot Owner returns a smile, then spots what they came to see.

LOT OWNER

There she is. Ain't she darlin?!

A horribly flawed Christmas tree leans up against the fence.

CHANCE

This the last one you got huh?

TREE LOT OWNER

It is Christmas Eve. Whatta ya think?

Chance and Sarah lock eyes. Sarah's unsure, but Chance through facial gestures gets her to reach the same conclusion. They turn to Owner.

SARAH/CHANCE  
We'll take it!

EXT. TREE LOT - NIGHT - BACK TO PRESENT

Sarah eyes Chance with that same warm smile.

CHANCE  
Twas our most memorable Christmas.  
And WE, made it our tradition.

CAMERON  
Oh, I thought we were drawing a  
parallel to Jesus coming to save  
the most flawed among us, therefore  
we bring home the most flawed tree.

CHANCE  
Wow, wow. That works too son. Now,  
you think you can find the right  
one for the house?

CAMERON  
Sure can Pop.

Cameron departs into a row of trees. Chance and Sarah stroll  
and browse.

SARAH  
How was the soup kitchen today?

CHANCE  
It was Soup...er!

SARAH  
(shakes head)  
By the way, I meant to tell you, I  
ran into Maria Vitale today.

CHANCE  
Cam's old preschool teacher?

SARAH  
Yep. She has a young son and she's  
pregnant, because who isn't. Sounds  
like her and the father aren't  
together.

Cameron calls over, standing next to a misshapen tree.

CAMERON (O.S.)  
How about this one?

CHANCE

Not bad, but I think you can do worse. Keep looking.

(to Sarah)

Do we know who the father is?

SARAH

Didn't ask, but I did open up our house if she needs anything.

CHANCE

Nice! So, you're embracing the season to serve.

SARAH

Let's not get ahead of ourselves.

Cameron calls over again, next to another awful looking tree.

CAMERON

I think this is the one Pops.

CHANCE

Looks terribly great son. Let's go buy it, cut it, and give it a home.

INT. SARAH'S HOUSE/KITCHEN ISLAND - DAY

Sarah opens an envelope, it's a Christmas card. Reveal: family of 7, farm background, she's envious.

She opens another Christmas card. Reveal: family of 8, mountains background, her envy deepens. She slides open drawer next to her, full of cards.

Chance strolls by, bin in hand, humming "Deck the Halls".

SARAH

You plan on hummin all season?

CHANCE

I can go Pentatonix if you want.

Chance drops bin and A-Capella's "little drummer boy" while drumming the bin for a few seconds.

CHANCE (CONT'D)

Pick me up hon!

SARAH

(unamused)

I guess I'll stomach the hummin!

Chance smirks and picks up the bin.

CHANCE  
I'mma get a smile outta you.  
(re: the mail)  
So, anything important?

SARAH  
Nope!

Sarah throws cards on top of the pile in the drawer.

INT. SARAH'S HOUSE/GARAGE - DAY

In a mirror, Cameron studies, focused and confident.

CAMERON  
Oh Mary, "hm hm".  
(clears his throat)  
Oh Mary, don't fret. The Lord will  
provide proper lodging.

Chance slips into the garage with bin and interrupts him.

CHANCE  
What you got going on son?

CAMERON  
Just practicing lines for the play.

CHANCE  
Well Denzel, I need you to take a  
break. We gotta outfit the house.  
(hands Cam oversize bin)  
Here, you get the nativity scene  
setup and I'll work on the lights.

CAMERON  
(hidden behind bin)  
Ok Pops.

INT. SARAH'S HOUSE/KITCHEN - DUSK

Sarah watches Youtube video for adding sugar water in your  
tree for preservation.

She grabs bag of sugar out of fridge, tries to pour in a  
pitcher on the island, it's empty.

She throws the bag in the trash, frustrated. She stares at  
the pitcher for a second, then goes back in the fridge, grabs  
a pitcher of Sweet Tea.

She strides over to the tree, pours Tea inside stand. She smiles, proud of her make-do. Finally, she puts pitcher on coffee table, and sits next to a bin of ornaments.

Theresa saunters over with hooks for the ornaments bin.

THERESA

Y'all still doing the misshapen tree I see.

SARAH

My husband and his traditions.

Theresa sits next to Sarah, grabs an ornament.

THERESA

Oh yes. Hey, have you seen some of the decorating ideas on social media, folks are getting pretty fancy this year.

SARAH

I'm taking a break from it. Just brings me down. Literally, everyone is expecting. Wouldn't surprise me at all, if you were too, seriously.

THERESA

I understand. I know how desperately you want it.

SARAH

I know I should be thankful for one, since some have none.

Theresa nods as if to say "yes you should".

SARAH (CONT'D)

But we could be empty nesters in eight years. Just eight years. I can't accept that. I want the dream feeds, first steps, first words, potty training.

THERESA

Potty training, really?

SARAH

Ok, I could skip that phase, but you get what I'm saying. All those magical moments.

THERESA

Hmm. You know, a couple years after we had Ash, your Dad and I... we wanted that boy. But it wasn't in the cards. My discouragement grew to the point it started to affect my marriage, and my parenting.

SARAH

How did you move on?

THERESA

You know, life can dish you rotten tomatoes or fresh apple pie, but it's important to remember who prepared the meal.

Sarah nods in thought.

THERESA (CONT'D)

So, I surrendered it to Him. Cuz you never let what you want, make you lose sight of what you have, or you'll end up regretting the memories. Get what I'm saying?

SARAH

Yes, I get it Mom.

THERESA

Good. You know, every one of these ornaments is a memory. Remember this one, from our girls trip to Destin a few Christmas' ago?

SARAH

Like "zit" was yesterday.

EXT. BEACH - DAY - FLASHBACK

Sarah sits in a beach chair applying sunscreen to her face. Ashley, small pregnancy bump, approaches with two cups of sweet tea in hand, looking at the ocean.

ASHLEY

What is Mom doing?

EXT. BEACH/SHORE - DAY

Theresa stands on a surfboard between two surfers. She's clearly flirting with the two hunks as she fake falls into one of their arms.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Ashley drops teas on the table between the chairs and sits. Sarah, face full of sunscreen.

SARAH  
Oh, she's having some fun. And good  
for her!

ASHLEY  
Yeah, but please, if I ever get  
that kooky...

BACK TO-- Theresa, now performing a limbo underneath the surfboard held by the surfers.

ASHLEY (CONT'D)  
Tell me.

SARAH  
(sarcastic)  
No... I don't think I will.

Sisters share a look that only sisters could. Sarah then lifts up sunscreen.

SARAH (CONT'D)  
You want some?

ASHLEY  
No, I'm not as pale as you!

SARAH  
Ehh! And I'm not as rude as you.

Sarah flips the sunscreen into her bag.

ASHLEY  
Sorry, the mood swings are a real  
thing.

SARAH  
Uh-huh.

Sarah grabs her cup and begins to take a sip of tea. With the cup to her nose, the smell immediately STOPS her.

SARAH (CONT'D)  
Ahhh! This smells awful.

ASHLEY  
What, really?

Ashley sips hers, and she's unfazed.

ASHLEY (CONT'D)  
Seems fine to me.

SARAH  
Uh-uh... It's makin me nauseous.

Sarah dumps her tea in the sand. Ashley eyes her, then realizes what's going on.

ASHLEY  
You're pregnant aren't you?!

Sarah looks back trying to keep a poker face, but can't hide her excitement.

SARAH  
I'm not announcing just yet, but I did get a positive this morning.

ASHLEY  
Yeeees! So happy for you.  
(hands on bump)  
Harper's gonna have a best friend.

SARAH  
Her, and big brother!

Sisters share a sweet smile.

ASHLEY  
Oh, and if you need to hide that acne like you had with Cam...  
(ref: her face)  
I think you've found a remedy.

Ashley smiles, Sarah's not amused. Theresa interrupts.

THERESA  
Hey girls, got us some surf lessons tomorrow... You're welcome.  
(eyes Sarah)  
And try not to embarrass me.

Theresa struts past them as they stare, slightly perplexed.

INT. BEACH HOUSE/ASHLEY'S ROOM - MORNING

Sarah charges into Ashley's room while she sleeps.

SARAH  
Ash, wake up, grits are ready.



Ashley rises out of bed, stretches her arms. Sarah gets a look at her face through her bed head, her eyes go bugged!

SARAH (CONT'D)  
OshKosh B'Gosh!

ASHLEY  
What? A zit?

Ashley turns, looks in mirror closet, face plastered in SUNBURN.

ASHLEY (CONT'D)  
AHHHHHH!

INT. BEACH HOUSE/KITCHEN - DAY

Microwave DINGS. Ashley pulls out a bowl of cornbread.

She sets it on the counter, grabs a spoon out of the drawer when Sarah strides by in a wetsuit, confident.

Sarah observes Ashley, her face now full of cream.

SARAH  
I take it you're not coming?

Ashley glares at Sarah, annoyed, points to her face, as if she should already know the answer to that question.

Theresa POPS into view from doing stretches in her wetsuit.

THERESA  
She sure ain't!

Sarah shrugs, continues to exit, then stops at dining table.

SARAH  
Oh wait, almost forgot.

She grabs sunscreen off the table, begins to apply it to her face while staring back at Ashley.

SARAH (CONT'D)  
With this pale skin, you can never  
be too sure.

Ashley's entire face frowns, as she firmly spoons cornbread down in her bowl.

EXT. SARAH'S HOUSE/FRONT LAWN - DUSK - BACK TO PRESENT

Cameron brushes Joseph's shoulder on the nativity scene. He hears a BANG across the street, and looks over, it was the sliding door from Ed's moving pod parked on the street.

He gives Joseph one last brush then stands back and admires his work. One sheep falls down. He picks it back up, stands back and another one falls.

CAMERON  
Ugh, useless sheep!

CHANCE (O.S.)  
Cam, come here.

Cameron runs over. Sarah and Theresa come out front door.

SARAH  
How we doing out here gentlemen?

Chance and Cameron stand on the lawn, Chance holds chords.

CHANCE  
Workin hard honey, bout to plug in.

SARAH  
Well that was quick.

CHANCE  
You know how I do it. Now come down  
and no peeking.

Sarah and Theresa meander down with backs turned. They stop just behind Chance, backs still turned.

CHANCE (CONT'D)  
Ok, encouragement please.

Sarah and Theresa lock eyes, start drumroll. Chance slowly brings cords together.

CHANCE (CONT'D)  
"He will bring us goodness..."

CAMERON (O.S.)  
Pop! Why do we do this every year?  
It's so strange.

CHANCE  
(stops hands)  
We'll show you that movie when  
you're old enough. Continue please.

Drumroll continues. Chance continues plugging in.

CHANCE (CONT'D)  
 "He will bring us goodness and..."

Chords connect, and lights pop on, illuminating the yard.

CHANCE (CONT'D)  
 (smiling ear to ear)  
 Wow, y'all gotta see this.

Sarah and Theresa turn around, reveal: PROJECTOR LIGHTS lighting the house.

SARAH  
 That was hard work huh? Well, I hope you have enough energy to say hi to our new neighbors.

MOMENTS LATER

Chance and Sarah step up to new neighbors. CATHY, 30s, innocent, holds a box, and Ed holding duffel bag.

SARAH  
 Hi there, welcome to the community. You must be Ed, and... Cathy.

CATHY  
 How did you...

SARAH  
 The Brown's showed us the contract. We had to see it to believe it.

CHANCE  
 Y'all Californians been goood for equity. We were wondering when y'all would show up.

ED  
 Well, we were looking to have the kitchen redone prior to moving in.

CATHY  
 And our contractor had a setback, but we couldn't wait any longer.

Theresa yells out from Sarah's front porch.

THERESA (O.S.)  
 SARAH! Pardon the interruption... Hope Grows is on the phone.

SARAH

Excuse me y'all, but I have to take this. It was so nice to meet you.

Sarah runs back to her house. Chance turns back to neighbors.

CHANCE

Sorry about ya kitchen. We have a working kitchen if y'all ever want to come over and use it.

CATHY

Thank you. We may take you up on that.

CHANCE

Well, I'll let y'all get back to it. Good to meet you.

INT. SARAH'S HOUSE/KITCHEN - DAY

Sarah's on the phone.

SARAH

Yes. Ok, thank you... You too.

She hangs up the phone.

THERESA

Well, what did they say?

SARAH

We passed the home study. In a week we can start searching for a child.

THERESA

That's great news Sar. That's what you've been waiting for.

SARAH

The wait ends, the day we bring that precious child home.

INT. SARAH'S LIVING ROOM - MORNING - FANTASY

Festive MUSIC plays. Sarah struts downstairs in Christmas Pjs. Her four kids, including Cameron, overjoyed, open gifts.

Sarah sits on the couch, in heaven. Chance, full head of hair, brings her a cup of coffee. The mug reads: "Best Mom of y'All Time!" She grabs it, beams.

Each kid opens a gift, mouths "Thank you Mom", then hugs Sarah. Cameron's last to open, after he does, he also mouths "Thank you", but then we HEAR him say...

INT. SARAH'S HOUSE/BEDROOM - MORNING - BACK TO PRESENT

CAMERON  
Mom, Mom wake up!

Cameron shakes Sarah, smiling in her sleep. She wakes, merry.

SARAH  
How can I help you sweetie?

CAMERON  
The toilet, tried like you showed.

Cameron holds up plunger, dripping on her bed, paper hanging.

CAMERON (CONT'D)  
No luck, it's headed out the door.  
(mimics creeping)  
Bout to Cindy Lou down the stairs.

Sarah's grin falls. She lays back down, closes her eyes.

CAMERON (CONT'D)  
What are you doing Mom?

SARAH  
(opens one eye)  
Lord willin... going back.

INT. SARAH'S HOUSE/KITCHEN - NIGHT

Soulful MUSIC. It's gotten into Chance's soul as he BOOGIES while bouncing between the sizzling pan and steaming pot.

Dining table's romantically set, candles and flowers. As he dances, Sarah comes downstairs, clears her throat above the song. He turns, gets a view of Sarah, looking flawless.

CHANCE  
Alexa, hold up! Dang girl, you  
lookin betta than catfish in a  
skillet! Happy Birthday.

SARAH  
(glum)  
I don't feel like it.

CHANCE

Stop it.

SARAH

What's smelling so good?

CHANCE

That'd be a little ol' shrimp and grits with a vinaigrette salad.

SARAH

Yummm.

Sarah's made her way to the dining chair. Chance notices.

CHANCE

Ah, ah, ah let me get that for you.

Chance hurries over, pulls her chair out. She gives him a half hearted smile, then sits down.

INT. CHURCH AUDITORIUM/STAGE - NIGHT

Cameron holds script facing Kyle, holding his own script.

KYLE

Mary is with child Joseph.

CAMERON

How can that be?

KYLE

It is part of God's plan. You will take her as your wife.

CAMERON

Now why would I do that when she's gonna have another man's baby?

KYLE

No. Mary is having God's son and you will name him Jesus.

CAMERON

Oh, well why didn't you start with that?

(turns to audience)

I will take her as my wife and love her till the end.

MRS. LOONEY-BYRD

And CUT...

(closes eyes, sniffs)

I love the smell of great acting in the evening. Amazing job Cameron.

Cameron smiles joyfully at the compliment.

INT. SARAH'S HOUSE/DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Sarah dabs her mouth with a napkin, throws it on her plate. Chance grabs plate, and while he heads to the kitchen.

SARAH

Thank you for putting this together. It was very thoughtful.

CHANCE

It's my pleasure... So, I've been thinking about our growing family.

He reaches sink and drops dishes in.

SARAH

You do know it could take years to find a child right?

CHANCE

I do.

SARAH

Well, that could be us. So, you should temper expectations.

CHANCE

You're right, but it'll happen, and when it does, my thought is, we'll need a bigger car. We won't have the space for all the kids gear.

SARAH

True. What vehicle you thinking?

CHANCE

You know I'm a big fan of your soccer mom look. What better way to compliment it than a minivan?

SARAH

Really... A minivan?

EXT. THERESA'S HOUSE/CURB - DAY - FLASHBACK

Theresa, old school 90's hairdo, sits in driver seat of minivan staring back at the house.

THERESA

SAR, ASH, Let's boogie! We don't want to be late for your games.

Sarah and Ashley, early teens, come out front door, shocked. Theresa's painted "Van you dig it" on the side of van.

THERESA (CONT'D)

Thought I'd spice up the van a bit. Come on now, we don't want to keep all your friends waiting.

Girls, deer in headlights, drop their soccer bags.

INT. SARAH'S HOUSE/DINING ROOM - NIGHT - BACK TO PRESENT

SARAH

I can't do minivan. How about SUV?

CHANCE

Think about the functionality, with the doors. You know how Cameron is.

INT. SARAH'S CAR - DAY - QUICK MEMORY FLASHES

Sarah parks her car in a lot sandwiched between other cars.

SARAH

We're here.

Cameron opens his door - BANG!

CAMERON

Sorry mom.

Sarah turns head toward him and drops it in frustration.

Repeat scene two more times with Sarah's frustration escalating. Then on the fourth time.

SARAH

We're here sweetie.

Before Cameron opens his door, Sarah snaps her head back.

SARAH (CONT'D)

HANDS OFF THAT HANDLE! I'll open it for you.

Cameron holds door handle, face absolutely terrified.



INT. SARAH'S HOUSE/DINING ROOM - NIGHT - BACK TO PRESENT

SARAH

Oh, I know. Wish they'd make SUV's  
with a sliding door option?

Alexa timer goes off.

SARAH (CONT'D)

What is that for?

CHANCE

Nothin, just peach cobbler.

Chance grabs it from the oven, puts it on the counter.

SARAH

Mmmm, you got ice cream?

CHANCE

Come on now, cobbler gotta have  
it's gravy.

SARAH

So, we going straight to dessert?

Chance, oven mitts on, marches back toward the dining table.

CHANCE

I was thinking we should work off  
dinner before digging in.

SARAH

Oh were you. What's your plan?

Chance ducks under the table, Sarah's puzzled. He comes up  
with Mario Kart and controllers, puts them on the table.

CHANCE

You down?

SARAH

Like Christmas lights in January.

INT. CHURCH AUDITORIUM/STAGE - NIGHT

Scotty faces Mrs. Looney-Byrd, both holding scripts. Prop Inn  
sits behind them.

MRS. LOONEY-BYRD

There are no Inns available for us  
Joseph. What are we going to do?

SCOTTY  
Oh Mary, there just has to be  
something available.

BACKSTAGE

Cameron watches them perform with Kyle.

CAMERON  
It can't be Scotty again this year.

KYLE  
You did a great job out there Cam.  
Potty Scotty's an over actor.

KATY, 9, cute, overheard them nearby.

KATY  
Why do you call him Potty Scotty?

KYLE  
Sorry Katy, didn't know you could  
hear me. It's cuz he wore a diaper  
through first grade... and he's  
still always running to the  
bathroom while in class.

KATY  
Oh. I agree with you Kyle. Cam, you  
did a great job.

CAMERON  
Thank you Katy. You nailed Mary.

Katy smiles.

INT. SARAH'S HOUSE/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Chance and Sarah sit ready to play Mario Kart from the couch.

SARAH  
You gonna take your jacket off?

CHANCE  
No need.

SARAH  
Ok. Suit yourself. I just don't  
want to hear any excuses.

CHANCE  
(brushes her off)  
Let's go.

MOMENTS LATER

First race has just ended.

SARAH  
Boom! That's game.

Chance sets down controls, takes off his jacket.

CHANCE  
Ok, Ok.

SARAH  
Won't make much difference.

CHANCE  
Run it back.

MOMENTS LATER

Towards the end of second game, Chance has moved up to the coffee table. Race ends, Chance shakes and taps the controllers, frustrated.

SARAH  
That's two. Anything else you'd  
like to take off?

Chance removes his tie, unbuttons his top shirt button.

CHANCE  
Time to get serious.

SARAH  
Uh huh.

CHANCE  
Let's do a new course.

Sarah flips through courses, picks one.

SARAH  
Ok, here we go.

MOMENTS LATER

Chance and Sarah in the middle of the third game. Chance now stands close to the TV, leans with car at every turn.

CHANCE

Come on Donkey Kong, pick it up.

Game ends showing Peach as the Winner. Sarah's hyped.

SARAH

That's a Trio for Meo! At this pace you'll be looking like Tarzan soon.

CHANCE

I'mma set out the ice cream, and get my mind right.

Chance, in slo mo, strides to the freezer, confident while removing suspenders. POTENTIAL: "It's a Man's World" by James Brown plays in his head.

He gets to the freezer, song reaches "It would be nothing", he looks back at Sarah. She mouths with the song "Without a woman or a girl". Chance cracks mouth, shocked that she's in his head.

Song ends, he opens freezer, takes out ice cream.

CHANCE (CONT'D)

I'm abandoning Donkey Kong and going with my boy Luigi.

SARAH

You could be Lightning Mcqueen, ain't no stoppin my girl Peach.

INT. SARAH'S HOUSE/BATHROOM - NIGHT

Sarah steps out, puts up her hair. She still looks flawless.

SARAH

You give up? That's twelve in a row on five different courses.

Chance slouches on the couch, towel on his head, in slacks and sweat through white tee, defeated.

CHANCE

My parents didn't raise no quitter.

SARAH

If anybody asks, you can tell them  
that I stopped the game.

CHANCE

I like that.

SARAH

Peach cobbler time?

CHANCE

Yes ma'am.

Chance leans forward to rise off the couch.

SARAH

Relax honey. You was workin so hard  
to get a win. I got this.

Chance smirks, falls back down on couch.

CHANCE

Thank you honey. Happy Birthday!

EXT. TREE LOT - NIGHT

In an aisle of trees, Maria browses while applying lipstick.

MILES (O.S.)

Do you like this one mom?

Maria turns, sees Miles standing next to a tree.

MARIA

That one looks great buddy.

MILES

Hopefully dad gets here soon to  
help us load it.

MARIA

Yes, I'm sure he's on his way.

Maria drops lipstick in her purse and takes out her phone.

She dials a number, puts phone to ear, then Josiah answers.

INTERCUT -- Maria and Josiah

JOSIAH

Hello.

MARIA

I hope that music I'm hearing means  
you're on your way to the tree lot,  
Josiah?

JOSIAH

That was supposed to be tonight?

MARIA

It's right now. So you're not on  
your way.

JOSIAH

Nah, I'm hanging with the fellas.

MARIA

But you promised me, and Miles.

Maria gazes at Miles who is admiring their tree.

JOSIAH

Just... tell him something came up.

MARIA

Ehh, I can't do that forever. You  
keep letting him down and  
eventually he's gonna stop wanting  
to hang with you.

JOSIAH

Yeah, yeah. Hey, you know we still  
have options regarding the baby?

Maria turns, ticked, to conceal her reaction from Miles.

MARIA

You're un...believable. You need to  
get help, seriously... How bout you  
call me when you're ready to step  
up and be a man, and stop acting  
like a little boy!

Maria hangs up. Josiah holds phone from his ear, offended.

JOSIAH'S FRIEND

What she say?

JOSIAH

She, she questioned my manhood.

JOSIAH'S FRIEND

In them skinny jeans, we all got  
questions bruh.

Josiah eyes him, irked.

END INTERCUT -- Maria and Miles

MILES

What did dad say? Is he close?

MARIA

No buddy, he got called into work.  
But he did promise to take you to  
buy a cool ornament for our tree.

Miles slouches shoulders, disappointed.

EXT. STORE PARKING LOT - DAY

Sarah strides past parked cars to cart corral. Before she reaches it, she's confronted by FAITH, 30s, stylish, from around her minivan, trunk full of wine.

FAITH

Sarah! Thank God you're here.

Faith shoves baby GRACIE, 6 months, into Sarah's arms.

SARAH

(startled)

Faith.

FAITH

Can you hold Gracie for a minute?

Sarah cradles Gracie, Faith dives headfirst into minivan.

FAITH (CONT'D)

So, here's my current situation.  
Matthew dropped his dog, Mark  
smeared chicken bake on my leather,  
Luke and John went to get berry  
smoothies, and somehow these boys  
managed to unhook the baby seat.

Sarah's taken aback by Faith's frantic behavior.

FAITH (CONT'D)

Why do they make it so hard to find  
these metal...

Her sentence drowns out, as Sarah focuses in on Gracie.

SARAH (V.O.)

Look at that face. Come on God,  
what are you doing to me?

Ain't she the most precious thing  
this side-a-heaven. Maybe I can  
sneak away and take her home. Faith  
could use the break.

Faith grunts, uses every ounce of strength she can muster to  
clip in the carseat. It connects.

FAITH  
Got it! Whew.

Faith pops up out of the van, brushes herself off.

FAITH (CONT'D)  
So, see you at your house Saturday?

Sarah snaps out of her baby fog. Mutteres to the sky.

SARAH  
So much for that idea.

Faith reaches out her arms, Sarah hands Gracie over.

SARAH (CONT'D)  
Yes you will.

FAITH  
Great, enjoy your shopping.

SARAH  
You too, I mean, enjoy your day.

Sarah continues to cart corral. Matthew holds the dog out the  
window, full of car floor fuzz.

MATTHEW (O.S.)  
Got it Mom! Good as new.

FAITH  
Eww, gross!

INT. SARAH'S HOUSE/KITCHEN/DINING TABLE - DAY

Chance carries, then drops a "Char-eatery" board (Charred -  
sausage, burnt ends, veggies, ritz crackers, gouda, BBQ sauce  
and pepper jelly) on the table, where Cathy and Ed sit.

CHANCE  
(grabs a sausage)  
Y'all ever had a Char-eatery board?

Ed and Cathy shake heads "no", bewildered.



CHANCE (CONT'D)  
 Nothin like the first time. Go on  
 and get ya one of them burnt ends.

Ed and Cathy grab a burnt end, take a bite. As they chew they look at each other, stunned at their enjoyment.

CHANCE (CONT'D)  
 So, what's the biggest adjustment  
 coming from LA to Middle Tennessee?

CATHY  
 Well, one funny thing, everyone we  
 meet asks, what church we attend?

ED  
 And it gets pretty annoying.

CHANCE  
 That's not surprising. Faith does  
 permeate the culture here.

ED  
 Yeah, well, we ain't interested.

Sarah drops Ed's water in front of him.

SARAH  
 Hate to break it to you Ed, but  
 there's no escaping it down here.  
 But maybe, just maybe, we can  
 change your mind.

ED  
 I doubt it. When it comes to  
 Christianity, thats...

CHANCE  
 A deeper conversation, for another  
 day... So, Ed, a job transfer bring  
 y'all here?

Ed pauses to gather a response to the shifting topic.

ED  
 No, I can work anywhere. We moved  
 here because of Rebecca.

#### LIVING ROOM

REBECCA, 12, wheelchair, watches Cameron, in Tebow jersey, mimic the "Jump Pass". She's unimpressed by it all.

#### DINING TABLE

ED (CONT'D)  
She has a rare lyme disease, and  
the best specialist in the country  
lives here.

CATHY  
Do you guys know a Doctor Walter  
Kriswicki?

CHANCE  
I'm not familiar.

ED  
Well, we're not scheduled to see  
him till summer... And time is  
precious for our little girl.

CHANCE  
If we can help, we'll try.

Kitchen timer goes off.

SARAH  
Foods heated.

Ed rises from chair, turns to kitchen, Rebecca confronts him.

REBECCA  
Dad, can we go home soon. I'm not  
feeling well.

ED  
Of course we can honey.

EXT. SARAH'S HOUSE/FRONT DOOR - DAY

Ed, Cathy and Rebecca stand on the outer front porch. Chance  
and Sarah stand near them.

CHANCE  
Nice talking with y'all, hopefully  
we can do it again soon.

CATHY  
You too. Have a nice night.

Ed pushes Rebecca down the driveway, holding food. Cathy has  
her arm around him, head rested on his shoulder. Chance and  
Sarah stare from the porch.

CHANCE  
We'll be a witness this Christmas.

Sarah nods in agreement. Chance notices a car on the curb.

CHANCE (CONT'D)  
Who's that in front of the house?

Maria gets out of the car with Miles and walks up to house.

MARIA  
You said I could come to you if I  
needed anything. Now a good time?

Sarah looks up at Chance. He raises eyebrows and tilts head.  
She turns back to Maria.

SARAH  
It's a great time. Come on in.

INT. SARAH'S HOUSE/KITCHEN - DAY

Maria, Miles and Sarah stand near the island. Chance and  
Cameron stand near the couch.

SARAH  
Are y'all hungry?

MARIA  
No thank you, we just ate. Can we  
talk in private?  
(to Chance)  
No offense.

CHANCE  
None taken. Gotta work on a speech  
anyway, and Cam you can take...

Chance pauses, unknowing of the son's name. Maria assists.

MARIA  
Miles.

CHANCE  
Miles up to play. If that's okay  
with his mom.

CAMERON  
Do you like Tim Tebow Miles?

MILES  
Who's that?

CAMERON  
Only the greatest college  
quarterback to ever lace em up.

MILES

My dad played college football.

CAMERON

Nice. Come up and I'll show you my memorabilia and you can tell me about your dad.

MILES

Is that okay mom?

MARIA

Yes, that's okay.

All the boys stomp upstairs.

Maria grabs business card off the island, holds it up.

MARIA (CONT'D)

Are y'all trying to adopt?

Sarah notices a Wiseman has fallen from the nativity scene on the island. She picks it up.

SARAH

Oh, yes. Like the Wisemen, we start looking for a child on Monday... So, how can I help?

MARIA

Well, I've been flyin solo in this pregnancy, without any breaks. Because any extra time I have gets poured into Miles. Figure he shouldn't be deprived due to my circumstances.

SARAH

Hmm. The selfless, sacrificial love of a mother, has no measure!

MARIA

True, but I'm at a financial crossroads. Just started a new job and my boss...

(shakes head)

He's the worst. Doesn't believe in paid maternity leave. I can't afford to quit to care for another child. And the father, well, he's been pressuring me to do something I'm not comfortable with.

Sarah nods in understanding. She's in deep thought as she gathers a response.

MARIA (CONT'D)  
Well... Any advice?

SARAH  
I'm tempted to go biblical?

MARIA  
Don't hold back for me.

SARAH  
You know, the season of Christmas is when we celebrate a child that was born, who offered each one of us a life of joy, strength, and peace in its abounding fullness. Every life has value, based not on a monetary position, but rather the position they hold in the kingdom.

MARIA  
Amen!

SARAH  
I would also say, no respectable parent, which you are, has ever looked back and regretted having any of their children. If you need help, we'd be happy to get the community to rally around you.

MARIA  
I definitely do.

SARAH  
Ok. I'll talk with our church. See what we can do. Now come on, I know one of y'all two is hungry.

Maria looks over at the dining table.

MARIA  
Char-eatery board?

Sarah cracks a half smile, nods "yes".

MARIA (CONT'D)  
Smoked gouda and pepper jelly?

SARAH  
Coming right up!

INT. ED'S HOUSE/LIVING ROOM - DUSK

Not a decoration in sight. Ed strides into the kitchen. Cathy sits at the island reading a shopping Christmas catalog.

CATHY

What do you think about hanging one stocking for Becca?

Ed stops in his tracks, looks over, stone faced.

ED

We agreed, nothing festive. You know today, it's the anniversary of her diagnosis.

Cathy slumps shoulders. Ed looks to counter, sees cocoa mix.

ED (CONT'D)

Ok, I'll do some hot cocoa, but that's as far as I'll go.

Ed strolls over to the cabinets, pauses to analyze.

ED (CONT'D)

Pots?

CATHY

Left of stove.

Ed opens cabinet, door falls off. He sighs, shakes his head. He picks up the door and plops on the counter.

ED

I'm not going to stress over it.  
I'm not gonna stress over it.

He grabs a pot, puts it on the stove. He then slides open a drawer, it slides all the way off, dropping contents.

ED (CONT'D)

You gotta be joking!

He drops down, picks up contents, puts them back, and sets drawer on the other counter.

ED (CONT'D)

Setbacks and shoddy work, an eternal feature of the family deal. I'm callin your corner cuttin cousin.

Ed grabs his phone off the island.

CATHY  
He's snorkeling in Destin!

Ed shakes head, incredulous. He punches buttons in phone with authority. He puts phone to his ear when a noise grows from outside, singing?

ED  
Wait, what is that? Is that, what  
I... Better not be!

He hangs up the phone, hastens to go investigate.

CATHY  
Now Ed, be nice.

EXT. ED'S HOUSE/FRONT YARD - DUSK

Group of Carolers sing on the edge of Ed's front yard.

CAROLERS  
"We wish you a Merry Christmas, we  
wish you a Merry Christmas..."

Ed storms out of the house to confront them.

ED  
No, no, no, no. Get out of here,  
get out of here.

Ed waves his arms to move. The lead caroler halts singing.

LEAD CAROLER  
Song request sir?

ED  
(astonished)  
A request?... Really? Yeah, here's  
a request, go away!

CAROLER LEAD  
But it's Christmas time sir.

ED  
You think I don't know that? Let's  
take a little inventory shall we.

Ed marches down to the caroler.

SARAH'S FRONT PORCH

Sarah reads *Wanting Another Child*. She's overheard their exchange, pulls book down.

ED'S YARD

Ed stands with lead caroler, arm around him and facing home.

ED (CONT'D)  
 Now tell me, do you see crummy  
 lights on our roof?  
 (caroler shakes head no)  
 Or a jankity wreath on our door?  
 (caroler shakes head no)  
 How about a tree in the window with  
 a lousy star on top?  
 (caroler shakes head no)  
 Do you know what that means?

Caroler shakes head "no", then Ed leans in to his ear.

ED (CONT'D)  
 It means, move along buddy!

Caroler shakes head "yes", and turns to face his choir.

LEAD CAROLER  
 On to the next house!

Carolers meanders away. Ed waves goodbye. He locks eyes with Sarah, she gives him a forced wave, he doesn't reciprocate. He turns and marches toward front door.

## INT. SARAH'S HOUSE/LIVING ROOM - DAY

Sarah, Ashley and Faith with a half dozen members of the worship team sit around the room.

SARAH  
 I apologize if you hear any yelling  
 coming from the back deck. The boys  
 are watching the Army/Navy game.

Chance and Juke acknowledge the worship team as they stroll to the back deck with the boys.

SARAH (CONT'D)  
 Ok team. Let's tackle the Christmas  
 concert.

## INT. SARAH'S HOUSE/BACK DECK - DAY

Boys step into the back deck, setup - side couches, two Lazy boys, grill, fireplace with TV sitting above.



JUKE  
I'm likin da spread Chance.

Reveal: coffee table loaded with pizza, wings and nachos.

CHANCE  
Hmm hmm, and did'ya see the TV?

Turkey Bowl belt sits above TV.

JUKE  
Nice touch. I'm gonna enjoy watchin  
yer Midshipmen sink on it.

Chance tilts head, smirks.

INT. SARAH'S HOUSE/LIVING ROOM - DAY

Sarah and worship team still sit around the room.

SARAH  
We need a better opening song.

FAITH  
How bout, I want a hippopotamus for  
Christmas?

Sarah drops head to the side, irked.

FAITH (CONT'D)  
What? It's an underrated song.

SARAH  
True... but I ain't singin about  
hippos in church. Ash, any ideas?

ASHLEY9  
Mmm. How about...

FAITH (O.S.)  
OH MY GOSH, ASHLEY!

Ashley turns to Faith.

FAITH (CONT'D)  
Sorry, but Juke, never seen him...

CUT TO: Juke standing on the deck, hat over his heart.

FAITH (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
He's got luxurious locks.

ASHLEY

Yes he do. Must be the Anthem,  
cause he'll only remove that hat  
for bed, and to honor the flag.

INT. SARAH'S HOUSE/BACK DECK - DAY

End of National Anthem plays - "the land of the free and the  
home of the brave". Juke puts his hat back on.

JUKE

It's game time!

CHANCE

Yes sir.

INT. SARAH'S HOUSE/LIVING ROOM - DAY

We jump back into the worship team conversation. Ashley has  
just recommended a song.

SARAH

I love it Ash, that'll fire up the  
congregation.

Ashley smiles. Sarah looks down at her paper.

SARAH (CONT'D)

This looks good. Should we run  
through it one last time.

She eyes the team. They look wearied and over it. Ashley  
recognizes it as well.

ASHLEY

Or, since we're all kid free, we  
can jump into games.

Team members perk up and completely agree with Ashley.

INT. SARAH'S HOUSE/BACK DECK - DAY

Games on. The boys sit around eating and watching.

CAMERON

Pop, can the cousins and I go play  
in the backyard? I'm not hungry.

CHANCE

Well ain't that clear.

Chance holds up Cameron's plate of half eaten chicken wings.

CHANCE (CONT'D)

I could feed the five thousand with  
this son!

JUKE (O.S.)

Boom! Touchdown Army! Let's go.

CHANCE

No big, we're a second half team.

CAMERON

Is that a yes on going outside?

CHANCE

Yes, but we're gonna work on this.  
Gotta gimme better effort.

CAMERON

Ok.

Cameron, in Tebow jersey, runs to backyard with his cousins.

JUKE

Ya think he'll ever grow outta that  
Tebow obsession?

CHANCE

Jury still out. Hey, question for  
ya. How y'all like your minivan?

JUKE

Umm, Love It. The SOUND of those  
sliding doors... is like top 40's  
Country to any parent.

CHANCE

Don't I know it, thinking about  
gettin one next year.

JUKE

Sarah's all in?

CHANCE

Gonna take some convincin.

JUKE

Good luck brotha. If it works out,  
you'll have to share your secret.

CHANCE

Well, the happier we keep'em the  
better our odds.

INT. - SARAH'S HOUSE/KITCHEN - LATER THAT DAY

Sarah pops out of the pantry with a box of oreo cookies. She shows them to Ashley standing close by.

SARAH  
Will these work?

ASHLEY  
Perfect.

Sarah then notices some red bumps on Ashley's cheek.

SARAH  
Ash your face... it's broken out.

Ashley touches her cheek. Thinks of an excuse quick.

ASHLEY  
Oh... oh yeah, must be sweat bumps.  
Doubled up my Peloton workouts.  
(holds up cookies)  
Gotta fight against these sweets!

Ashley turns, scurries toward the team as Sarah analyzes her.

ASHLEY (CONT'D)  
Got the cookies y'all!

INT. SARAH'S HOUSE/BACK DECK - DAY

Football games down to the last play. Chance and Juke stand watching, palpable anxiety.

JUKE  
Waited three hundred sixty four  
days, twenty three hours and fifty  
nine minutes for this moment, and  
it all comes down to this guy.

On TV: TODD FINKLE, stoner look, Navy's kicker player profile. His favorite food - Buttermilk Pancakes.

CHANCE  
Let's go Todd! He makes this kick,  
and it's a lifetim-a, Aunt Jemima!

JUKE  
One stop boys, and we sang second.

Play runs (2017 Army Navy game footage), he misses kick.

JUKE (CONT'D)  
Wide left. WIIIIIDE LEFT!

Chance drops down on the couch, dejected. Juke steps over, pats him on the back.

JUKE (CONT'D)  
Hope ya got some cornbread brotha.

INT. SARAH'S HOUSE/KITCHEN - DAY

Ashley and Faith compete in "Minute to Win it, Face the Cookie" with the oreos. Sarah's phone rings on the island.

SARAH  
Excuse me y'all.  
(she picks up)  
Hi Maria.

She slips away. As she moves to the next room, she stops in her tracks as her mouth agapes and eyes light up with HOPE!

She pulls the phone from her ear, holding back tears. She looks to the back deck, smiles, staring at Chance who sits dejected.

MOMENTS LATER

Sarah strides to the back deck. Juke crosses her path, raises his hand, she gives him an aggressive high five. She enters deck while Chance picks up plates from the table.

SARAH  
I'm sorry about the loss honey.

CHANCE  
We'll get'em next year.

Sarah sees Cameron's plate of chicken wings, picks it up.

SARAH  
Who did this?

CHANCE  
That'd be your son!

SARAH  
Gotta train him up.

Chance nods in agreement.

SARAH (CONT'D)  
Anyways, I've got some news that'll cheer you up.

CHANCE  
You made cornbread?

SARAH  
You wish. Maria just called. She wants us... to adopt her baby. What do you think?

Chance's eyes widen, he cracks a smile.

CHANCE  
I don't have to think. Without question, Yes!

Sarah dives into him with excitement. He drops the plates.

INT. STORE/PRODUCE SECTION - DAY

Ed's on the phone, checking ripeness of tomatoes, on hold. He's wearing an LA Galaxy hat and Girl Dad shirt.

ED  
Yes, I'm still here.  
(listens in)  
What, October? But we've been on the calendar for two months.

Ed helplessly listens to response.

ED (CONT'D)  
SORRY'S NOT GOOD ENOUGH CAROL! We need answers.

Ed's yelling startles other customers. They turn and stare.

MOS. Time seems to slow down, Ed rubs his head, frustrated. He hangs up the phone, drops his head, depressed.

INT. STORE/CHECKOUT - DAY

Ed loads conveyor belt. Once he's done, he moves up to the cashier, Nandi, scanning items.

NANDI  
Happy Sunday sir. How's your day?

ED  
Had better ones.

NANDI

Doing some shopping after church?

ED

We don't do church.

NANDI

Got it. So, you're a Galaxy fan. My daughters soccer team is the Galaxy. Does your daughter,  
(ref: shirt)  
Play sports?

ED

She despises sports!

NANDI

Sorry if I'm bothering you. Upper Management has asked me to engage in more friendly conversations.

ED

You want to talk about something, I see you're wearing a cross, I assume you believe in God?

NANDI

Yes I do and that'll be seventy-seven, forty-nine sir.

Ed hands over his credit card.

ED

Well, let me ask, why would God allow my little girl, my pride and joy, to be in so much pain that she's forced to getting around in a wheelchair?

NANDI

Goodness, didn't expect such a heavy conversation. Just wanted to chat about youth sports. Now, I can't answer why God would allow that. But, I will say the trials that we face are for a reason, and we oftentimes don't understand the reason until days, months or even years later. There is one thing I do know for sure though. In the midst of our trials, we can always lean on God to see us through it and hopefully our relationship with Him has grown in the end.

ED

I'll pass. Rather lean on myself,  
because in the end, if somethings  
going to change for my daughter,  
it's going to be me that does it.

Nandi hands him the receipt.

NANDI

Hmm. You know, I could tell you a  
story about God's love for you, but  
it's much more impactful for you to  
witness it yourself, and you will  
if you're paying attention. You  
have a Merry Christmas.

ED

I won't be celebrating.

Ed lumbers to the exit. A Christmas Tree partially blocks  
door, he knocks it down before leaving. Nandi's annoyed.

EXT. STORE/PARKING LOT - DAY

Ed loads groceries in his trunk. A familiar voice calls out.

SARAH (O.S.)

Ed.

Ed pops head up from trunk, turns to see Sarah standing next  
to her cart smiling.

ED

Sarah.

SARAH

The shopping never stops this time  
of year, am I right?

Ed dismisses her and turns back to keep loading.

SARAH (CONT'D)

You know, I wanted to invite your  
family to our church on Sunday.

Ed shakes head, irritated, turns and faces Sarah.

ED

You and your husband are nice and  
all, but we're just neighbors,  
nothing more. We're not interested  
in a friendship. Understand!



He SLAMS trunk closed. Marches around driver side, gets in his car and drives off. Sarah watches, dismayed.

INT. CHURCH OFFICE - DAY

Mrs. Looney-Byrd sits behind desk, frantically flipping through stacks of paperwork. Scotty waltzes in.

SCOTTY

Excuse me, Mrs. Looney-Byrd.

She looks up, sees Scotty, continues with paperwork.

MRS. LOONEY-BYRD

How can I help you Scotty?

SCOTTY

Are you finalizing the roles today?

MRS. LOONEY-BYRD

Sure am. As soon as I find...

Katy edges by the office, stops to hear their discussion.

SCOTTY

You know, I really have my heart set on playing Joseph.

MRS. LOONEY-BYRD

Cameron did have a better audition.

SCOTTY

He did. But you know Cameron was Joseph the last two years, and I'm only getting older. Playing Joseph won't be cool soon. This might be my last year to realize this dream.

She stops with the paperwork, looks up at Scotty.

MRS. LOONEY-BYRD

Oh. For Heaven's sake, I definitely don't want denying a kid his dream on my final account.

Scotty smiles, slyly, nods "no you don't". Katy frowns.

INT. CHANCE'S SCHOOL/GYMNASIUM - NIGHT

Banner hangs on ceiling, reads: Liberty Lions 12th Annual Christmas Soiree! On the dance floor, Sarah and Chance slow dance in ugly sweaters amongst other couples.

CHANCE

Why does it feel like a junior high dance in here every year?

SARAH

Because your coaches believe the teachers have cooties.

Coaches and teachers stand on opposite sides of the room.

CHANCE

No, I think it's the Boyz 2 Men.

Volume increases on "Water Runs Dry by Boyz 2 Men".

CHANCE (CONT'D)

(singing)

*Let's don't wait till the water runs dry.*

SARAH

Maybe we let them sing it.

Chance stops singing, tilts head and smirks.

SARAH (CONT'D)

(singing)

*Don't do it baby.*

(smiles, after a beat)

So, feel good about your speech?

CHANCE

I'm happy with it.

SARAH

Good. Has becoming AD made you miss anything about coaching?

CHANCE

The amount of young men I was able to inspire. Opportunities ain't the same from the desk as they are on the field.

SARAH

Definitely your strong suit honey.

CHANCE

Thank you. After this 90's hit, I should go talk with my coaches, and I'm sure Principal Shelley is itching for some time with you.

Sarah looks over at SHELLEY, 40s, eccentric, who waves from the refreshments table. She points to the similarity in their sweaters. Sarah waves back.

SARAH

You owe me for enduring this.

INT. CHURCH AUDITORIUM/STAGE - NIGHT

Mrs. Looney-Byrd stands on stage, easel behind her, paper hanging on it. Kids stand in front of her.

MRS. LOONEY-BYRD

I want y'all to know how proud I am of every one of you. Takes a lot of courage to step on stage and give your best. The roles have been finalized, and the list of names for each role is behind me. Once you find your name, please head backstage and pick up your costumes. Any questions?

Kids silent.

MRS. LOONEY-BYRD (CONT'D)

Ok, find your names.

She steps aside. Kids run up to easel. Scotty pans list.

SCOTTY

Boom! Joseph. Take that Cameron.

MRS. LOONEY-BYRD

(scolds him)

SCOTTY!

SCOTTY

Sorry Cam. Better luck next year.

Cameron, peeved, begins scanning down the list.

CAMERON (V.O.)

Well, maybe I'm a Wiseman, I'll be happy to be a Wiseman.

(can't find name)

Not a Wiseman. Well then what am I?

Did Looney-Byrd forget about me?

Reveal: Bottom of list, Cameron's name next to the Sheep.

CAMERON

I'm a sheep! A stinky sheep. You've gotta be kidding me.

KYLE

Hey look, you're also Joseph alternate.

CAMERON

Oh great!

INT. CHANCE'S SCHOOL/GYMNASIUM - NIGHT

Sarah and Shelley talk next to the refreshments table.

SHELLEY

It's so good to see you Sarah. You're glowing. What's new?

SARAH

You too Shelley. Not much, just managing the rollercoaster that this time of year can be.

SHELLEY

I hear that girlfriend.

SARAH

Is Gary here with you?

SHELLEY

No, sent him on a fishing trip. He's been so stressed with work and I'm about one Gary induced headache away from using my maiden name. He's lucky Kriswicki doesn't roll off the tongue.

Sarah processes her familiar last name... Shelley continues to talk. It hits Sarah.

SARAH

Wait, your maiden name's Kriswicki?

SHELLEY

Yes it is, why?

SARAH

Are you related to Dr. Walter Kriswicki?

SHELLEY

He's my brother. How you know Walt?

SARAH

Actually I don't, but my neighbors are desperate to meet with him for their daughter, seems he's booked out until summer.

SHELLEY

Walt is a busy man. We barely see him ourselves.

SARAH

Could you do me a huge favor and see if he can fit them in sooner?

SHELLEY

Of course. I'll text him right now. Hey, looks like Chance is up.

INT. CHANCE'S SCHOOL/GYMNASIUM STAGE - NIGHT

Chance stands in front of a podium.

CHANCE

I'mma keep this brief. Starting next year our athletics program is headed in a new direction.

Coaches bite their nails.

CHANCE (O.S.) (CONT'D)

We are moving up a division.

Coaches relieved. BACK TO: Chance.

CHANCE (CONT'D)

Applications have been through the roof, and this move allows us to accept more students. I want to thank all of our educators for their hard work because this wouldn't be possible without it.

Teachers nod "you're welcome".

CHANCE (CONT'D)

We will also see added funds which we plan on using to upgrade our sports equipment and facilities.

Coaches hi five. Teachers groan.

CHANCE (CONT'D)

And, and our classroom technology.

Teachers groans turn to smiles.

CHANCE (CONT'D)  
 Before I let y'all get back to the party, let's bow our heads.

Everyone in the room bows heads and takes their hats off.

CHANCE (CONT'D)  
 Lord, I pray that you continue to use everyone in this room to train up and educate the kingdom builders of the future. In Jesus name. Amen.

BACK TO: SARAH AND SHELLEY

Still standing together at the refreshments table.

SHELLEY  
 Amen! Good news Sar. Walt responded, he's had some holiday cancellations. He can fit them in next week.

SARAH  
 Really? You're a God send Shelley.

Sarah smiles. Shelley returns a smile back.

EXT/INT. SARAH'S HOUSE/DRIVEWAY - NIGHT

Chance pulls car into driveway, parks. He turns engine off, Sarah looks over at him, beaming ear to ear.

CHANCE  
 What is it?

SARAH  
 The neighborhood lights, they never disappoint.

Chance smirks. They both step out of the car. They move to the front door, a voice calls out.

JOSIAH (O.S.)  
 Hi Mrs. Laroux. Sorry to bother you so late, but could we speak coach?

Chance eyes Sarah, she smirks and nods. He turns to Josiah.

CHANCE  
 Absolutely Josiah.

INT. SARAH'S HOUSE/GARAGE - NIGHT

Chance and Josiah sit in chairs facing each other.

CHANCE

It's been years Josiah. How's your mom? She still living downtown?

JOSIAH

Yeah, she's still there, in the same house. She's doing good, working hard at the restaurant.

CHANCE

Good to hear. Will you tell her I said hi when you see her.

JOSIAH

Of course. You should go see her sometime. That would make her day. She still loves talking football.

CHANCE

You know, I should do that. I do miss her cooking. So, what did you want to speak to me about?

JOSIAH

Well, the reason I'm coming to you is because you are the best man I know, and I need some sound advice.

CHANCE

Ok.

JOSIAH

So, I've got a kid and another on the way, and the mother and I, well, we're not on the same page. She's got all these expectations, constantly nagging me about hanging with my son. I'm not ready for that lifestyle, man. I mean I'm twenty six, I still want to enjoy my life.

CHANCE

So, you're looking for direction?

JOSIAH

I am.

CHANCE

Ok, first off, I'm honored that you would come to me for advice on such an important decision in your life. Takes a lot of courage to ask for help. Your circumstances remind me of a story a pastor once told me about when he was a young man. All he wanted to do was hang with his boys, he'd barely make time for his son. Then one day, while he was with his son, he was up to no good and was apprehended by an officer he had dealt with before, and the officer asked him an eye opening question. Are you gonna keep up with this image as some kind of Bad Boy, or are you gonna grow up and become a Good Man? The choice is on you, but the burden of that decision, is on the kid. That moment changed that young man's life. He married the mother of his son and played a pivotal role in his life. You want to know which path to take, I'd start by answering that question.

JOSIAH

Ok, Ok.

CHANCE

I know your father wasn't involved in your life, do you know if your dad had his father in his life?

JOSIAH

He did not.

CHANCE

Hmm. One of the great privileges of my life and why I am the man I am today, is because I had my father in the home.

Josiah nods in thought. Chance leans forward in his seat.

CHANCE (CONT'D)

You know, being a father isn't easy. Isn't always fun either. But it's the most important, rewarding job you'll ever do. Take football.



You attend practice three hours a day, five days a week. It's oftentimes not fun or easy, right?

Josiah shakes head "no".

CHANCE (CONT'D)

Exactly. But you do it because you know the reward is great. You got one goal, and you're willing to put in the work to reach it. Fatherhood's similar, the goal is to raise children with goodness and strength, that takes work. You work to be involved in their lives to instill these values, and that son, is how you leave a legacy and you've also done your small part in moving this fallen world to a better place. What greater reward is there than that? I'll tell you, at the end of the day, no father has ever, ever regretted being involved in their child's life. That's my two cents.

JOSIAH

Wow coach. You uh, you gave me a lot to chew on coach.

Chance stands up, proud. Josiah moves up, sticks out hand for a shake. Chance meets his hand, pulls him in for a hug.

JOSIAH (CONT'D)

Thanks for taking the time coach.

CHANCE

Anytime, good to see you. And don't forget to tell your mom hello.

JOSIAH

I won't, goodnight.

Josiah strides out of the garage.

CHANCE

Josiah!

Josiah turns around.

CHANCE (CONT'D)

You know that young father in the story I told you about?

Josiah nods.

CHANCE (CONT'D)  
That was my dad!

Josiah's eyes widen and mouth cracks in shock.

CHANCE (CONT'D)  
Have a good night young man.

EXT. SARAH'S HOUSE/STREET CURB - NIGHT

Josiah steps up to drivers side of his door. He grabs the keys from his pocket while staring back at the Laroux's home. His mind races as he studies the Nativity scene.

INT. SARAH'S HOUSE/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Sarah turns on the Christmas tree. Chance enters from garage.

SARAH  
What did he want to talk about?

Chance strolls to fridge, opens it and pulls out egg nog.

CHANCE  
He just needed some advice...

AT THE FRONT DOOR

Cameron arrives, shoulders slouched, treks in the house.

SARAH  
How was the audition?

CAMERON  
I don't want to talk about it.

SARAH  
Well, did you get a part?

CAMERON  
Yes.

SARAH  
Ok, what part?

CAMERON  
I'm the sheep.

SARAH  
What?

CAMERON  
Exactly, Looney-Byrd's a quack!

Chance spits out a sip of eggnog.

SARAH  
(mutters to the sky)  
Only the Lord knows why that woman  
won't drop her maiden name.

Sarah drops head back down.

SARAH (CONT'D)  
Look at it this way son. We're all  
sheep and Christ is our shepherd.

CAMERON  
Now is not the time to go biblical  
mom. You know I coveted Joseph, but  
she picked Potty Scotty.

SARAH  
Wait, the boy's name is Potty?

CAMERON  
No, that's his nickname.

SARAH  
Doesn't sound nice. What's Mama  
Roux always say, God don't like...

CAMERON  
Ugly! I know, but It's just so  
frustrating. What more can I do? I  
was giving her Brando.

SARAH  
There's always next year.

CAMERON  
No there's not. I'm hanging up my  
staff. It was this year or bust. My  
career ends as a sheep and  
alternate Joseph.

SARAH  
Alternate. Well, there's a bright  
side. You came in second out of how  
many boys who must have auditioned?

CAMERON  
There was three mom.

SARAH

Oh, well either way, I'm proud of you son.

CAMERON

Thanks. I'm gonna go try this on.

Cameron strides to the stairs, accidently drops the costume on first step. He kicks it up the stairs and continues up.

INT. SARAH'S HOUSE/CAMERON'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Sarah knocks on Cameron's door.

CAMERON (O.S.)

Come in.

Sarah moves in. Cameron, dispirited, on bed in his costume.

CAMERON (CONT'D)

Whatta ya think?

He puppy dog eyes her, hoping for the positive motherly spin.

SARAH

Well...

CAMERON

Gimmie the gospel!

SARAH

Ok, truth is, it's not good.

Cameron drops his head, dejected. Sarah picks up his chin.

SARAH (CONT'D)

But, only my handsome boy could pull it off.

Cameron smiles, that's what he needed.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Listen, that talk about hanging it up, that's not how we raised you. In this family, we don't give up, we give it up...

(points to heavens)

Right.

(they both nod)

The good news is, challenging times present the perfect opportunity for your true character to shine.

CAMERON

That's a lesson I need to learn.

SARAH

Honestly. It's a lesson we continue to learn.

INT. SARAH'S HOUSE/HALLWAY - DAY

Sarah strolls thru hallway, stops at the babies nursery. She flips the light switch, the mobile above the crib spins and plays music. She watches in ecstasy.

INT. SARAH'S HOUSE/LIVING ROOM - DAY

Chance plays Mario Kart. Sarah saunters in, surprising him.

He quickly turns it off, not wanting to be caught practicing. She flashes a curious look, fully aware of what he's doing. He knows he's caught, tries to stay cool.

CHANCE

You're up early this morning.

SARAH

I'm chauffeuring Maria to her doctors appointment.

Sarah grabs car keys off the counter, turns to Chance.

SARAH (CONT'D)

The servin don't stop, right?

CHANCE

No, it sure don't! I love that!

SARAH

Uh huh. You oughta give Yoshi a go.

Sarah leaves. Chance smirks, turns and grabs controllers. Cameron comes near him, toothbrush in hand.

CAMERON (O.S.)

(re: the baby music)

Pop, you hear an ice cream truck?

CHANCE

In mid-December son?

CAMERON

True dat, true dat.

Chance smirks at the toothpaste on the side of his mouth.

INT. HOSPITAL/FRONT DESK - DAY

An ELDERLY NURSE sits, festive attire. Her work pace makes her better suited for the DMV, as she maneuvers her mouse.

ELDERLY NURSE  
Where did the darn thing go?... Oh  
there it is. What was her first  
name again, suga?

On the other side of the desk is Ed, impatient.

ED  
REBECCA!

His shout stuns the Nurse.

NEARBY-- Sits Sarah, playing a crossword. She looks up at Ed after overhearing his shout.

ELDERLY NURSE  
No need to shout, honey.  
(grabs earlobes)  
These flappers are still top notch.

Sarah views her phone as she jots something down on paper.

ED  
I'm just in a hurry. Thankfully  
she's not on her deathbed.

His comment distracts her as she removes her hands from the computer.

ELDERLY NURSE  
Praise the Lord for that. You know,  
when he calls us home...

On her statement, Ed becomes mystified. Before he loses it, Cathy interrupts...

CATHY (O.S.)  
Edison!

Ed turns to see her.

CATHY (CONT'D)  
She's this way, up the elevators.

Ed is relieved to see her and runs over to hug her.

ED  
Is she okay?

Cathy shakes head "yes" while hugging. Just then, Sarah has made her way close to them.

SARAH  
Everything okay y'all?

Their hug ends as they both eye Sarah.

CATHY  
Sarah... Yes, all good. Becca took a spill, but thankfully she's fine.

Sarah nods in understanding.

ED  
Let's go up.

SARAH  
Hold on.  
(hands Cathy the paper)  
Been meaning to give you this.

ED  
What's this... a bible verse?

SARAH  
No, more of a Christmas miracle...  
Ok, go, go see your little girl.

Ed and Cathy nod, and quickly turn to head down the hall.

At the elevator, Cathy unfolds the paper for them to see. IT READS: *He can fit you in next week, call him. Dr. Kriswicki's cell* They lock eyes, full of happy, hopeful emotions.

EXT. ICE SKATING RINK/BENCH - NIGHT

Chance puts on skates, methodically. Once done, he takes a deep breath as if he's about to lead a game winning drive.

EXT. ICE SKATE RINK - NIGHT

Show families and couples ice skating around the rink - "A Winter Wonderland". Sarah skates with Theresa.

SARAH  
This tradition is my fave.

THERESA

Mine too.

SARAH

Great memories skating with dad.

Theresa smiles. She then notices something off to the side.

THERESA

Look, more memories to be made as  
someone has finally graced the ice.

EXT. ICE SKATE RINK - NIGHT

The backside of what looks like Chance skating. As soon as man turns, reveal: Chance struggles to skate then falls down. While down, he investigates his skates as Juke skates by.

JUKE

It ain't da skates' fault.

Chance tries to trip him, misses. Juke finger wags.

JUKE (CONT'D)

Ah, ah. Betta check yer heart.

Juke gracefully skates off, lifts one leg up in the air.

INTERCUT -- SARAH AND THERESA, CHANCE GETTING UP

Sarah and Theresa endearingly stare at Chance.

SARAH

I think I've found my joy this  
season.

Chance is helped up by a YOUNG GIRL, 10. Almost to his feet before he falls back down.

THERESA

God love your husband for being  
such a good sport.

Young girl helps Chance up to his feet, again, assists him to the wall. He finally makes it in one piece.

CHANCE

Thanks for the help. You must have  
years of experience on the ice?



YOUNG GIRL  
 It's actually my first time.  
 (skillfully skates off)  
 Merry Christmas!

CHANCE  
 (watches in amazement)  
 Merry Christmas.

Chance's phone RINGS in his pocket.

CHANCE (CONT'D)  
 Thank, God! Don't care who it is,  
 I'm exitin this frozen booby trap.

He takes call, steps off the ice.

CHANCE (CONT'D)  
 Hello. Yes this is him... Really...  
 Ok... Thank you for calling. Have a  
 great night.

He hangs up the phone. Sarah calls out from the rink wall.

SARAH  
 Who was that Chance?

CHANCE  
 Hope Grows... And so has ours.

SARAH  
 Really?! It's official?

Chance nods "yes", smiling. Sarah smiles, waves.

SARAH (CONT'D)  
 Get over here.

He walks over gingerly, stumbles once, but eventually makes it to Sarah, and they embrace, overjoyed.

INT. CHURCH AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

It's noisy, full of families. Sarah sits next to Ashley.

SARAH  
 How long is this intermission?

Ashley, face full of makeup to cover "sweat bumps", looks past Sarah toward the end of aisle.

ASHLEY

Who knows, I'm just looking forward to this.

Juke moves past folks standing, to reach Ashley.

JUKE

Excuse me, pardon me, sorry, not sure why these aisles are so tight.

He bumps into MS. FRYE, 60s, curvy.

JUKE (CONT'D)

Wow Ms. Frye, dem hips don't lie.

She smiles. Juke reaches next woman, trips into her.

JUKE (CONT'D)

Sorry, Ooop. I'm so sorry.

He's on top of her. Her face buried in his chest. She flails, knocks his hat.

JUKE (CONT'D)

Careful ma'am.

He adjusts his hat, keeps moving, reaches his seat, relieved.

ASHLEY

Hi hon. Gotta be honest, we didn't think you'd make it that far.

He looks down the aisle, locks eyes with the woman who knocked his hat, waves.

JUKE

She didn't either.

She remains unsettled, but blushes at him.

INT. CHURCH AUDITORIUM/BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

Kids wait backstage. Sheep snout sits on the ground. Scotty, in costume holding water bottle, picks it up next to Cameron.

SCOTTY

You dropped your muzzle Cameron.

Cameron yanks the snout from his hand.

CAMERON

It's a snout! Thank you very much!

SCOTTY

Pecon, Pecan. Anyway, I gotta say,  
that sheep costume suits you.

Scotty takes a sip of water after a sly smile.

SCOTTY (CONT'D)

It's as if you were born to play  
that role. How's my Joseph look?

CAMERON

You look... great Scotty. Glad I  
get to share the stage with you.

Scotty's, confused, continues to take sips of water.

CAMERON (CONT'D)

Why are you drinking so much water?

SCOTTY

Katy said, since we'll be standing  
for a long time, it's good to drink  
water to keep from passing out.

Cameron looks over at Katy, she flashes a mischievous smile.  
He understands what's happening, but before he can alert  
Scotty, Mrs. Looney-Byrd arrives in a flash backstage.

MRS. LOONEY-BYRD

Ok, we're back out in five so do  
whatever you need to, so that  
you're prepared to "paform".

SCOTTY

Oh man, this water ran right  
through me. Cameron, to help you  
prepare, you mind telling Looney-  
Byrd that I'll be right baaaaack.

Cameron shakes head, irritated.

#### MOMENTS LATER

Scotty at the bathroom, it's occupied. He knocks on the door.

SCOTTY

Excuse me. How much longer?

No answer. He begins to panic. Returns to where Cameron and  
the rest of the characters are.

SCOTTY (CONT'D)

I'll be back guys, heading inside.

INT. CHURCH/HALLWAYS - NIGHT

Scotty runs full speed through the halls, cutting corners like Barry Sanders. He makes it to the bathroom door, breathless. He pushes it with his shoulder, locked.

SCOTTY  
SERIOUSLY!

INT. CHURCH AUDITORIUM/BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

Harper, angel costume, sneaks out of bathroom, gives thumbs up to Cameron. Kyle pulls indoor bathroom key from pocket. Mrs. Looney-Byrd approaches kids.

MRS. LOONEY-BYRD  
We're going on now. Where's Scotty?

KATY  
No idea. I think he got cold feet.

KYLE  
More like warm leg!

INT. CHURCH/BATHROOM - NIGHT

Scotty, redfaced, stands outside the bathroom on the brink. Eyes darting, he closes them, takes a deep breath.

SCOTTY  
Philippians 4:13!

His adrenaline kicks in. He kicks the bathroom door open.

SCOTTY (CONT'D)  
That's right!

He rushes inside the stall, and closes and locks the door.

SCOTTY (CONT'D)  
Sweet Jesus, we made it.

INT. CHURCH AUDITORIUM/BACKSTAGE- NIGHT

Mrs. Looney-Byrd realizes Scotty will need to be replaced.

MRS. LOONEY-BYRD  
Well, Cameron you're up. Get ready.

Cameron throws his sheep hood off.

CAMERON  
Born Ready!

He rips off the sheep costume to reveal his Joseph costume, pulls out staff from underneath shirt.

CAMERON (CONT'D)  
It's Joe time baby!

Off to the side, Katy flashes an adoring smile.

INT. CHURCH/BATHROOM - NIGHT

Toilet flushes.

SCOTTY  
Whew. I still got time.

He turns in a haste, yanks the lock too hard, it breaks.

SCOTTY (CONT'D)  
What!

He attempts to put it back, no luck.

SCOTTY (CONT'D)  
No, no, no. Come on.

He tries to go underneath, the doors too tight to the ground to slide under. He surveys, bewildered.

INT. CHURCH AUDITORIUM/STAGE - NIGHT

Cameron (Joseph), Katy (Mary) staring at baby Jesus.

KATY  
Oh Joseph, isn't He just precious?

CAMERON  
Yes He is Mary. Every child is a gift to its Mother.

Sarah, in the audience, warm smirk, internalizes this truth.

CAMERON (CONT'D)  
But this child is also a gift to the world.

INT. CHURCH/BATHROOM - NIGHT

Scotty's fingers peek over the top edge of stalls wall. He pulls himself up, gathers himself and jumps over. Lands on his feet, but injures his ankle.

SCOTTY

Oooouch! Ahh... That's gonna hamper my New Year's cupid shuffle.

He begins limping. Makes it all the way backstage where Looney-Byrd watches the performance in a trance.

SCOTTY (CONT'D)

Ok, I'm good to get back in there.

MRS. LOONEY-BYRD

You got to live your dream, now stand back and witness greatness.

CUT TO: Cameron as he delivers last remarks to close play.

CAMERON

Today a baby is born, who is Christ the Lord. Spread the good news this day and every day, the Savior is born!

Crowd gives standing ovation, curtains close.

INT. CHURCH AUDITORIUM/BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

Cameron approaches a downhearted Scotty.

CAMERON

What happened Scotty, are you okay?

SCOTTY

Just a broken ankle, no biggie.

CAMERON

You should get to the hospital.

SCOTTY

Probably, but curtain call first.

CAMERON

Ok? Hey, let's do it together?

SCOTTY

You want to go out there with moi?

Cameron chuckles and nods "yes". Scotty reciprocates his nod.

INT. CHURCH AUDITORIUM/STAGE - NIGHT

Characters all on stage. The announcer calls.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)  
Playing Joseph, Cameron and Scotty.

Both boys stride out onstage, stand side by side, put arms around each other and take a bow to an ovation.

ANNOUNCER  
And last, certainly not least, our  
faithful leader, Mrs. Looney Byrd.

Mrs. Looney-Byrd stands ready for her moment. She marches triumphantly across stage, stack of papers in hand. She reaches centerstage, soaking in applause.

A piece of paper drops, she goes to grab, thinks better and flings the entire stack, then bows.

INT. CHURCH AUDITORIUM/BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

Parents are meeting with their kids. Cameron approaches Katy.

CAMERON  
Hey Katy, why did you do that?

KATY  
Because you deserved it.  
(she kisses his cheek)  
Merry Christmas Cam.

Cameron's face glows. Katy struts away, turns back to him and smiles. Sarah comes up and puts her arm around him.

SARAH  
You did awesome Cam.

CAMERON  
Christmas, truly is about love mom.  
And you know, I took your advice  
and learned a valuable lesson.

SARAH  
Oh yeah, what's that sweetie?

CAMERON  
No matter what happens, be  
grateful!

Sarah smiles, proud Mama.

INT/EXT. THERESA'S CAR/LIGHT SHOW - NIGHT

Theresa's at a ticket booth entrance. She hands attendant her tickets, and drives in.

THERESA  
It's showtime kiddos.

Cam, Kyle, Lucas, David and Harper all sit up to face out windows. Lights dance to the music, kids faces in awe. Theresa gazes at them with a proud grandmotherly smile.

INT. ASHLEY'S HOUSE/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Chance wraps a gift, humming "Silver Bells". He's cut the paper too close, it doesn't wrap around, he's frustrated. Sarah hands him a smaller gift that will work. He grins, she picks up on humming "Silver Bells".

She's done wrapping her gift and moves to put it under the tree near Ashley. She sits beside her, and eyes her belly.

SARAH  
Ash, you've got a little pooch.

ASHLEY  
Oh that, yeah that's, you know our Peleton stopped working, so I replaced the rides with pumpkin pie... It's that time of year.

SARAH  
Hmm. Still got the sweat bumps?

Ashley hesitates, stumped. Juke's overheard the exchange. He sets down a dollhouse he's built and saves his wife.

JUKE  
Anythang left for me to build Ash?

ASHLEY  
Umm. The two desks in the garage for the twins room would be great.

JUKE  
On it.

SARAH  
Chance, maybe you could build one.



JUKE

No thanks, we don't have all night  
ya know. Da kids'll be back in a  
couple hours.

Chance ignores the dig, sees a competitive opportunity.

CHANCE

Where did you get the desks Ash?

ASHLEY

IKEA.

CHANCE

Perfect. Been building IKEA  
furniture since I was three.

(to Juke)

You fancy a little building battle?

JUKE

I'm yer Huckleberry.

MOMENTS LATER

Ashley and Sarah stand in front of Juke and Chance. Men sit  
on couch, all the pieces for the desks at their front.

SARAH

Moment of truth. We'll hand you the  
instructions and y'all can begin.

ASHLEY

You know, we really should name  
this battle.

SARAH

Agreed... Ooh, ooh, how about the  
Creole versus the Country.

ASHLEY

That's good, but I'll do you one  
better. Beignets versus Biscuits.

SARAH

Yes!

Men lock eyes, shake heads, unfazed. Chance turns to girls.

CHANCE

Can we just get started?

ASHLEY

Ok, ok. Let the battle begin.

Ashley hands Juke instructions.

JUKE

No thanks, that's fer amateurs.

Sarah hands instructions to Chance, he quickly grabs them and begins feverishly reading.

MOMENTS LATER

The men are building their desks. Chance screws in lock.

CHANCE

Don't you do it. And there it is,  
(lock gets stuck)  
Because of course you did, can't  
stand these little cam locks.

Chance takes board, holds it upside down, knocks lock loose.

JUKE

Havin some trouble over there?

CHANCE

I'm doing just fine, thank ya.  
Looks like I'm way ahead of you.

JUKE

Ain't about speed my brotha, it's  
about precision. Da fat lady...  
(Ash clears throat at him)  
Da plus size lady, ain't singin til  
you demonstrate, it's functionin.

MOMENTS LATER

Chance tightens his last piece in.

CHANCE

We're all done here folks.

JUKE

Betta check it. Put somethin with  
weight on it.

Sarah slides over, puts a gift on top. Desk remains upright.

CHANCE

Boom!

JUKE

Brang that gift over here.

Sarah takes gift over, plops on Juke's desk, remains standing. Juke opens both his drawers, turns to Chance.

JUKE (CONT'D)

Now you.

Chance pulls on both drawers, one sticks.

CHANCE

Hmm. Must need to be broken in.  
Just gotta put a little cayenne  
into... COME ON!

Chance FORCEFULLY yanks the drawer, the entire desk collapses, BANG! He's left just holding the drawer.

CHANCE (CONT'D)

How good are the twins at sharing?

INT. CHURCH AUDITORIUM/BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

Sarah and Ashley stand together. Ashley holds a guitar, face is clear. Sarah brushes her shoulder.

SARAH

You're gonna do great out there  
Ash. Love this dress by the way.

Ashley smiles in her bump concealing dress she's wearing. Sarah's phone DINGS, she pulls it out, reads text.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Oh, My, Gosh!

ASHLEY

What is it?

SARAH

Maria... my babies coming.

ASHLEY

Right now?

SARAH

Right now... I gotta alert  
Chance... but how?

EXT. CHURCH AUDITORIUM/FRONT ROW - NIGHT

Chance sits in front row, focused on the pastors message.

SARAH (O.S.)  
 (coughs)  
 CUORN BUREAD!

Chance snaps out of focus, searches for sound, spots Sarah.

INTERCUT-- Chance and Sarah/Ashley

ASHLEY  
 Told you it'd work.

Ashley smiles. Sarah tries to tell him their baby is coming, gestures to belly. Chance is confused. Sarah turns to Ashley.

SARAH  
 We're gonna have to charades this thing. I'll need your help.

Ashley nods "ok". Sarah turns, grabs stack of collection plates. She puts them under her shirt to mimic pregnancy. She turns back to Chance, taps her forearm with two fingers.

Chance focuses on her, Juke, seated next to him, leans in to get a better view of Sarah.

JUKE  
 Church charades... Let's Go!

Sarah imitates giving birth. She waddles, squats down. Slowly pushes plates down her shirt, squeezing Ashley's hand, biting her teeth, face grimacing.

JUKE (CONT'D)  
 Ahh, I know what's goin on.

CHANCE  
 What?

JUKE  
 I think I'm gonna let it play out.

Ashley catches the plates as they drop. She looks them over and mouths "it's a girl", hands them to Sarah.

Sarah holds them close to her chest, elated. Ashley grabs mic cord, puts it next to the plates and finger cuts the cord.

JUKE (CONT'D)  
 Yer babies comin, boom, yer welcome.

Juke removes mouth guard. Chance eyes widen, looks at Sarah, mouths "really"? Sarah nods "yes", mouths "meet you at the car", turns to Ashley.

SARAH  
 Ok, I gotta run. You'll have to  
 lead the team.

Ashley smiles and nods "yes". Sarah hugs her.

SARAH (CONT'D)  
 Can you believe it, I'm gonna have  
 a bundle of joy on Christmas!

EXT. HOSPITAL/CURB - NIGHT

Sarah steps out of the car, closes the door. She turns back  
 and taps the window. Chance rolls it down.

SARAH  
 Can you grab her blanket.

Chance hands her the blanket through the window.

SARAH (CONT'D)  
 Thank you, good luck with parking.  
 I'll text you the room.

INT. HOSPITAL/NURSE DESK - NIGHT

Elderly Nurse takes a bite of tomato from her salad as she  
 stares at her computer. On the other side stands Sarah, in  
 too good of a mood to be annoyed at the time she takes.

ELDERLY NURSE  
 (to Sarah)  
 She's in 143, suga. Only family at  
 this time, but there's a waiting  
 room outside, just down that hall.

INT. HOSPITAL/WAITING ROOM - NIGHT

Sarah sits down, texts Chance-- "Room 143". She looks up from  
 phone to the heavens and flashes a hopeful smile. Just then,  
 Josiah STORMS down the hall, Sarah recognizes him.

SARAH  
 Josiah... everything ok?

He stops, turns to see Sarah. As he pants...

JOSIAH

Hi. Everything's great. Have to thank coach for inspiring me to step up and become responsible to the family I created. I gotta run.

Sarah watches Josiah enter room 143. She puts the pieces together. Sorrow builds. Chance arrives, sits next to her.

CHANCE

How she doing honey?

SARAH

(straightforward)

Tell me, you didn't know?

CHANCE

Know what?

Josiah POPS out of the room as a Nurse walks by. Chance sees him.

JOSIAH

(to Nurse)

Can we get some ice chips, quick?

CHANCE

Josiah? Wait... he's the...

Sarah nods "yes", melancholy.

CHANCE (CONT'D)

I... I had no idea.

Sarah grabs his hand, desperate for comfort. They both stare off stunned. Sarah fights to keep it together, processing. After a moment that felt like a lifetime.

CHANCE (CONT'D)

I'll do, whatever you want.

Sarah pauses, then a nurse and doctor come out of the room.

DOCTOR

(to nurse)

Great job in there... What a beautiful family.

Chance and Sarah hear their exchange as they stride by.

SARAH

Take me home.

INT. HOSPITAL/HALLWAY - NIGHT

Chance and Sarah amble by the nurse station. Same nurse from Maria's room is talking to the Elderly Nurse.

NURSE

You gotta see the baby in 143,  
absolutely precious.

Sarah stops on a dime. She turns and faces nurses, poised.

SARAH

Excuse me! Maria from 143. What did  
she name her baby?

NURSE

They... named her... Laroux!

Sarah's face melts as she looks up at Chance.

INT. HOSPITAL/PARKING GARAGE - NIGHT

Chance and Sarah stagger to their car, as she leans on him holding herself together.

At the car. Sarah peeks thru the back window. She then falls to the ground, sobbing and clutching the baby blanket. Chance meets her, full of tears. Reveal: carseat in the back seat.

INT. CHANCE'S CAR - NIGHT

Chance drives, Sarah in passenger, stares out window, face sunken. He grabs her hand, she cracks a half hearted smile. He's desperate to find a way to lift her spirits.

CHANCE

I'm gonna circle before home.

INT/EXT. CHANCE'S CAR/NEIGHBORHOOD LIGHTS - NIGHT

Chance drives neighborhood. Unique Christmas Light displays don each house. One neighbor has Romans 15:13 - This Christmas "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him." Sarah consumes this verse.

EXT. SARAH'S HOUSE/DRIVEWAY - NIGHT

Chance opens Sarah's door, she steps out. Ed, has just pulled into his driveway, exits his car.

ED (O.S.)  
Hey guys, just had our third  
appointment with the doctor.

CHANCE  
How's Rebecca doing?

Rebecca steps out of the car with a cane. No more wheelchair!

ED  
She took bee stings, we're hopeful.

CHANCE  
An answer to our prayers.

ED  
(astonished)  
You, prayed for her?

CHANCE  
Our entire church was.

ED  
Thank you.

CHANCE  
You're welcome. Have a nice night.

Chance and Sarah head to their front door with Sarah's head leaning on his shoulder, Ed flashes the smallest of smiles.

INT. SARAH'S HOUSE/LIVING ROOM - DAY

Chance straightens star on the tree. He comes down, sees an ornament from "Cam's 1st Christmas" on the ground.

He picks it up, hangs it low, admires. He then grabs some needles off the ground and takes them to the trash.

He opens the trash, pauses before tossing in needles. A stack of pregnancy tests sit on top. He's saddened by the sight.

INT. SARAH'S HOUSE/KITCHEN - - DAY

Two festive sugar cookies pop out of the toaster. Chance grabs them, turns to island, and sets them on plates.

Sarah enters from the hall, big yawn, moves toward island.

Chance slides a cookie plate over to her next to a glass of milk. She sees the cookie, smiles softly, picks it up.



SARAH

So, I know we're supposed to head to your parents today, but after last night, I'm just not...

CHANCE

I understand, and I'm good with it.

Sarah dunks her cookie in milk.

SARAH

Please bring leftovers though, hate to miss out on Mama Roux's gumbo.

CHANCE

Might not survive the car ride.

SARAH

You better not.

EXT. ED'S HOUSE/FRONT DOOR - DUSK

Front porch light flickers then turns off. After a moment, a hand taps it and it turns on. It's a DELIVERY DRIVER, 50s, "Jesus" look. He rings doorbell. Ed answers on the phone.

DELIVERY DRIVER

Merry Christmas Eve sir. I've got some packages.

ED

Ok, just leave them by the door.

EXT. ED'S HOUSE FRONT DOOR - DUSK

Ed comes out, sees about 30 gifts sitting on his doorsteps, shocked. Delivery Driver in his truck, ready to leave.

ED

Hey, you sure this is all for us?

DELIVERY DRIVER

Y'all the McKees?

ED

Yes.

DELIVERY DRIVER

That's all y'all. Merry Christmas!

He drives off. Ed grabs a card on top of the gifts, opens it. It reads - *Just being neighborly. Love the Laroux's!*

Ed cracks a smile. Rebecca comes to the door, sees the gifts, and her face lights up.

REBECCA

Dad, are these all for us?

ED

Yes, yes they are Becca.

REBECCA

Oh my gosh! Who would be so kind?

Ed puts his arm around her, she eyes the gifts. He kisses her head, peers over at the Laroux's home, still smiling.

INT. SARAH'S HOUSE/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

There is a peace in the moment as Sarah sits on the couch, in deep prayer.

SARAH

You know... You know. And I give it  
all to You! In Jesus name, Amen.

She opens her eyes, pauses, then grabs her phone, texts her cousin Faith - "Excited to see the family for Christmas!"

She closes out of text, sees a picture of Cameron and Scotty's curtain call. Cameron's comment "No matter what happens..." sounds in her head.

She grins, puts her phone down, and leans over to grab a book off the coffee table. She pauses her hand on *Wanting Another Child*, then decides to grab the book *Choosing Gratitude*.

INT. SARAH'S HOUSE/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

While she reads the doorbell rings.

MOMENTS LATER

Sarah opens the door to Ashley and Theresa.

ASHLEY

Chance told us you were home alone.  
And it's Die Hard night for Juke.

THERESA

We brought Mr. Bailey and brittle.

Theresa holds up movie - "It's a Wonderful Life" and candy. Sarah gives a warm hearted smile, happy to have her family.

INT. SARAH'S HOUSE/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Girls watch the film, eating popcorn and brittle. A scene has Theresa and Sarah teary eyed while Ashley balls her eyes out.

Theresa decides to turn off the TV, and puts the remote down.

THERESA

We didn't come here for a sofa sob session, there's Hallmark for that. Alexa, play "The Git Up"... Let's see if you girls still got it.

Theresa slides in front of Sarah, puts her hand out and picks her up off the couch. Girls dance, Sarah beams with joy.

EXT. CHANCE'S DRIVEWAY - NIGHT

Chance and Cameron step out of the car. Chance holds flowers.

CHANCE

Did you grab the leftovers?

Cameron holds up the bag, turns to the house.

CAMERON

Pop, you hear that music?

INT. SARAH'S HOUSE/FRONT DOOR/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Chance and Cameron come through the door. They see the ladies dancing and join in. Sarah shares a sweet Mother/Son dance with Cameron, as they all GET DOWN!

INT. SARAH'S HOUSE/KITCHEN - LATER THAT NIGHT

Chance comes downstairs in Christmas PJ's, heads for the fridge. Sarah's eating a bowl of cornbread at the island.

CHANCE

He went down like the devil to Georgia. No betta feeling, as a kid than goin to bed on Christmas Eve.

Chance opens the fridge, covered in Christmas cards.

SARAH

No there's not, but watching your kids open presents Christmas morning is pretty special too.

Chance pulls out eggnog, sets it on the counter.

CHANCE

Glad to see you're feeling better.

SARAH

Yes. Although, I'm feeling a little off right now, hence the...

She lifts up spoon full of cornbread from her bowl, takes a bite, enjoying its goodness. Chance at the cabinets.

CHANCE

With milk, you can't beat it.

SARAH

Actually... I went eggnog!

Chance turns, looks at her as if he's never seen or heard anything more beautiful.

SARAH (CONT'D)

You love me... I know!

She takes another bite. Chance slides up next to her, she's spot on.

CHANCE

So, what am I architecting tonight?

SARAH

Just Cam's bike. It's by the tree, and I double checked, no cam locks.

Chance smirks. Sarah drops bowl in sink, kisses his cheek.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Thankful for our little family.  
Goodnight honey.

Chance smiles, recognizes that his wife has found her shine.

INT. FAMILIES BEDROOMS - LATE NIGHT

"Silent Night" plays, MONTAGE:

- Cameron asleep in bed.

- Ashley's entire house asleep in bed, except Juke who's in the bathroom doing his hair.

- Chance stands back and admires the bike he built.

INT. SARAH'S HOUSE/BEDROOM - MORNING

Sarah shakes Chance, asleep in bed, one arm behind her.

SARAH  
Chance, Chance wake up.

CHANCE  
What, what time is it?

SARAH  
Five thirty.

CHANCE  
Why you up so early? Did I forget  
to put the trash on the curb?

SARAH  
Not this time... What's the one  
gift you wanted this Christmas?

CHANCE  
What?

SARAH  
What's the one gift you wanted?

CHANCE  
Isn't it a little late to be askin'?

SARAH  
Just answer please.

CHANCE  
Ok, Ok. I know it sounds cheesy,  
but I already have the greatest  
gifts in you and Cam.

SARAH  
I knew you would say that. Now you  
can add another gift to that list.

Sarah reveals positive pregnancy test she's holding behind  
back. Chance's eyes widen, he springs up to grab the test.

CHANCE  
Are you serious?

Sarah nods, smiles on the brink of tears.

CHANCE (CONT'D)  
COME ON NOW, COME ON! HE'S SO GOOD!

Chance falls back onto his pillow, Sarah joins him. They look up, overjoyed, at the test he's holding in the air.

Then Chance eyes his bride, with that look that every spouse knows, and they share an intimate moment.

INT. SARAH'S HOUSE/STAIRCASE - DAY

Chance and Sarah creep downstairs with Cameron, covering his eyes, in matching PJ's. At the bottom of the stairs they remove their hands. Cameron sees his new bike, lights up and runs over to check it out as Chance and Sarah watch proudly.

INT. SARAH'S HOUSE/KITCHEN - DAY

Sarah turns up Christmas music on Alexa. She then walks by Chance at the island laying bacon down on a baking sheet, toward Cameron, on the couch opening a stocking.

CHANCE

Sar, what's up with the tree?

The Christmas tree is full and bright. Sarah's nonchalant.

SARAH

Just sweetened her up a bit!

CAMERON

Can I start opening presents?

CHANCE

Gotta wait for ya cousins, but you see that box over there.

Chance points to a box beside the tree. Cameron nods "yes".

CHANCE (CONT'D)

That's from Mama Roux and Pa Pa,  
and it's fair game.

Cameron bounces off the couch to grab it. Sarah stands and stares out the front window.

SARAH

My sister's crew is here.

Out the window - Ashley's family unloads minivan. Juke struts around the front bumper, in his Christmas PJ's and cowbugg (cowboy/ugg) boots, no hat.

SARAH (CONT'D)

I'm digging Juke's new look.

Juke halts, turns, grabs his hat from the van and pops it on.

SARAH (CONT'D)  
Never mind.

Chance meets Sarah, hands her a cup of tea and looks out.

CHANCE  
Ooh, he's rockin the cowbugg boots!  
And they got a new minivan... see!

SARAH  
That's not theirs!

Chance is confused. Sarah flashes a lip-biting, loving grin. His eyes widen, and face lights up as he gets it.

CAMERON (O.S.)  
Wow. Pop look.  
(holds up football)  
Signed by Tebow. I'mma take it up.  
(poses excited)  
Heisman Baby!

He runs to the stairs, grabs the newel post, it falls off and he trips, but doesn't drop the ball.

CAMERON (CONT'D)  
We're okay. Gotta get that fixed.

He continues up the stairs. Chance shakes head, turns back to look out the window, puts arm around Sarah.

CHANCE  
By the way, Ash is...

SARAH  
Pregnant!  
(eyes him and smiles)  
I knew all along.

CHANCE  
You know honey, it's family,  
festivities... food that make His  
season bright, but even all those  
compiled, couldn't match the light  
shined when you smile. I thank God  
each and every day for you.

SARAH  
And I You. You helped me regain the  
joy of Christmas, and He... He  
restored the hope.

She leans her head on Chance's shoulder. After a moment.

CHANCE  
I'mma checkout the road warrior.

Chance starts to slide away.

SARAH  
Wait a minute.

Sarah's intrigued by something out the window. Chance halts.

SARAH (CONT'D)  
Come and see what else He did.

We follow their view, across street into Ed's window. Ed lifts up Rebecca, she puts a star on their Christmas tree. He brings her down, turns her around and they embrace.

**SUPER: MERRY CHRISTMAS EVERYONE**

INT. CHANCE'S CAR - DAY - **BONUS SCENE**

Chance drives, Sarah, visibly pregnant, in passenger looking at the navigation on her phone. Cameron in the back.

SARAH  
Gosh, they're so far out... That's it, 1776. Park next to Ash.

Chance parks the car in the driveway of a farmhouse.

SARAH (CONT'D)  
We're finally here.

Cameron opens door. Reveal: sliding doors open on minivan, hit country song plays to Chance and Sarah's delight.

CHANCE  
That sound never gets old.

INT. ASHLEY'S NEW HOUSE/KITCHEN - DAY

Familiar faces (Juke, Ashley, Ed, Cathy, Theresa...) mingle at the party. The doorbell rings.

ASHLEY  
(hands covered in flour)  
Mind getting that Sarah?

SARAH  
I've seen this movie before.



MOMENTS LATER

Sarah opens the door. It's Maria's family, Josiah wears Laroux in a carrier in matching football shirts with Miles.

MARIA

Hi. I'm so sorry we're late.

SARAH

No worries. We haven't revealed anything yet. Glad y'all made it.

Sarah bends down to Miles.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Hi Miles. Cam's out back playing football, he's excited to see you.

MILES

Can I go play mom?

Maria nods "yes" and Miles runs off. As Sarah watches him, Maria steps inside, Josiah follows.

JOSIAH

Thank you for having us.

SARAH

Of course, and how is little Ms. Laroux doing?

JOSIAH

Doing great, healthy and happy.

SARAH

Ahh, love it. So, I also hear there's a congratulations in order.

Maria grins, holds out her hand, reveals they're engaged.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Yes! Congratulations.

(looking at ring)

Nice job Josiah. Come on Maria. You don't mind if we go show this off?

Josiah shakes head "no". Girls mosey off. Chance approaches.

CHANCE

Man, you look better in that carrier than you ever did in pads.

JOSIAH

Thanks coach. You know, in pads I would sometimes, very rarely now, but I would sometimes fumble. I'm never gonna drop this little mama.

CHANCE

(smiles, proud)

Don't I know it. Come on let me get you something to drink.

EXT. ASHLEY'S HOUSE/BACKYARD - DAY

Boys play football. Cathy and Ed talk with Theresa, Malcolm and Mama Roux. Sarah and Ashley sit in chairs beside each other, Sweet Tea between them (similar to beach scene).

ASHLEY

We're gonna be surprised. But honestly, I'm hoping for a girl. Harper would love a sister.

SARAH

Don't tell Chance, but I'm right there with you.

Sisters exchange smiles.

SARAH (CONT'D)

House really looks great Ash. It couldn't be a more perfect day too.

ASHLEY

I know, it's so nice out.

SARAH

By the way,  
(points to Ash's forehead)  
you're getting a little red...

Ashley eyes widen, she starts digging into her pockets.

ASHLEY

Seriously? Where's my spf 300?

SARAH

Got you.

Ashley stops searching, glares at Sarah. Chance calls over.

CHANCE

Sar, we're ready to get started.

EXT. ASHLEY'S HOUSE/BACKYARD - DAY

Chance and Sarah stand side by side facing the partygoers, holding poppers. Everybody quiets down.

CHANCE  
Ok, ok, so Juke's not confused,  
pink is girl, and blue is boy.

Juke shakes his head, irked.

SARAH  
Mom, you ready?

Theresa gives thumbs up from behind the camera.

SARAH (CONT'D)  
Everyone on three. One, two, three.

They pop poppers. Sarah's confetti's pink, Chance's blue.

SARAH (CONT'D)  
Oh my gosh, it's a...  
(sees blue confetti)  
Wait, what?

CHANCE  
Hold on, there's a note in mine.

While Chance reads the note.

JUKE  
Well, what does it say, or do ya  
need help readin it?

CHANCE  
It says... we're having twins!

Sarah eyes widened, shocked, while everyone celebrates.

JUKE  
Minivans bout to become da MVP.

THERESA  
I can dig that!

EXT/INT. THERESA DRIVING MINIVAN - DAY - FLASHBACK

Theresa pulls into soccer complex BUMPING gospel music. She weaves through parking lot, families look over in disbelief. She parks next to a convertible. Nandi's in driver seat. Theresa smiles at her. Nandi goes from grumpy to smiling.

**IT'S FINISHED**