

The Last White Christmas

by
Jason Pizzarello

Contact:

Jason Pizzarello
917-414-4837
jasonpizzarello@gmail.com

Represented by:

Leah Hamos
Gersh Agency
41 Madison Ave, 33rd Floor
New York, NY 10010
212.634.8153
lhamos@gershny.com

Characters

MARY “Ma” BAILEY, the matriarch, late 50s/early 60s.

UNCLE BILLY, her older brother, early/mid 60s.

“Tiny” TIM BAILEY, her son, early 30s.

SUSAN BAILEY, her daughter, late 20s.

DELLA DILLINGHAM, a town Sheriff, late 30s/early 40s.

Setting

A pub in Bedford, Pennsylvania. A sleepy town that used to be a winter destination, but hasn't seen snow in five years.

“I believe... I believe... Even though it's silly, I believe.”

— Susan Walker, *Miracle on 34th Street*

“Men's courses will foreshadow certain ends, to which, if persevered in, they must lead,” said Scrooge. “But if the courses be departed from, the ends will change.”

— Charles Dickens, *A Christmas Carol*

“We came up here for the snow. Where're you keepin' it?”

—Bob Wallace, *White Christmas*

THE LAST WHITE CHRISTMAS

ACT I

The pub. It was built in the 70s and hasn't been updated since. And it shouldn't be; it has character, holds the town's stories in its wood.

It's Christmas Eve morning. There are Christmas decorations up around the bar. Tinsel, wreaths and ornaments, all put up five years ago. There's a ratty plastic Christmas tree in the corner, although it's completely bare.

The bar itself is a mess. There was a rowdy party there last night that started out as a somber wake. A couple of small cocktail tables are askew and the chairs are overturned.

Stage-left: the front door next to a large bay window. Stage-right: a swinging door leads to small stock/wash room and a back entrance.

At Rise: MA, late 50s/early 60s, playing the part of the bar matron and looking rather exhausted, wipes down the bar, throws away trash, etc.

UNCLE BILLY, early/mid 60s, sits on a stool at the bar, scratching lotto tickets, and drinking a Bloody Mary (hair of the dog).

UNCLE BILLY

(holding up a ticket)

Another winner.

MA

Oh yeah?

UNCLE BILLY

Oh yeah.

He rips it up and throws the pieces in the air.

UNCLE BILLY

Merry Christmas to all and to all a good night.

He toasts to no one and drinks.

MA

Hey! I'm tryin to clean up here.

UNCLE BILLY

And I'm tryin to win a million bucks. Good luck to us both; we're gonna need it.

MA sweeps up the pieces into a dust pan leading her to sweep the rest of the bar.

MA

Did ya talk with your friend?

UNCLE BILLY

Which friend?

MA

You have more than one?

UNCLE BILLY

I have two. If you mean my lady friend--

MA

--I don't--

UNCLE BILLY

--She said she's closed for business on account of it bein' the holidays and all.

MA

I don't wanna know anythin about that. I wanna know about your other friend. The one with the snow machines.

UNCLE BILLY

Oh, that friend. Yeah, I saw him. He said he can rent 'em to ya. All six machines for twelve hours. Only thing is, he needs the money up front, in cash, and it's non-refundable.

MA

Non-refundable?

UNCLE BILLY

Yeah, well, you can't return weather.

MA

Alright, tell him I wanna do it.

UNCLE BILLY

You sure?

MA

I'm sure.

UNCLE BILLY

You don't wanna talk to Tim first? He might not be thrilled you're blowing his inheritance on some snow flakes.

MA

It's not his money; it's his fathers.

UNCLE BILLY

Not anymore it ain't.

MA

Besides he'll get some of the money from the bar after it's sold.

UNCLE BILLY

Yeah ya might want to tell him about that, too.

MA

Imagine all the children in this town wakin up tomorrow mornin and seein snow for the first time. Picture their little faces.

UNCLE BILLY

It's fifty degrees out. I'm picturing their little faces looking very confused.

Quietly from the back entrance, TIM drags himself in, early 30s, wearing a black suit with a loosened tie. He looks like he's been in it for days. And he has. DELLA, late 30s/early 40s, follows him in, giving him the little push he needs. She's in her Sheriff's uniform.

They talk quietly in the back room, in order to not be heard by Uncle Billy and Ma in the bar.

TIM

I'm fine. I'm fine.

He almost falls over and knocks into a stack of boxes. Della catches him.

DELLA
Shhh...

TIM
What are you doing in here?

DELLA
Tomorrow's Christmas.

TIM
You wanna open presents now? I think we should wait. Let's wait okay.

DELLA
I don't care about any presents. I hope you don't think I got you one.

TIM
Oh, no? Okay. I guess I'll return yours.

DELLA
You got me something? I thought we weren't--

TIM
Ya see, you do care.

Della turns to leave.

TIM
Hey, wait. Wait.

He grabs her. She stops.

TIM
I'm gonna tell her. I am.

DELLA
When?

TIM
Today.

DELLA
 Tomorrow's Christmas.

TIM
 I know.

DELLA
 I'm not going to sit at home like I did on Thanksgiving because I cancelled all my plans on the hope that you might have the guts to--

TIM
 Today. Today. I promise.

DELLA
 When? When today?

TIM
 I just.

DELLA
 What?

TIM
 I still need to talk to her about what's gonna happen with the bar.

DELLA
 You haven't?! What are you waitin for, Easter?

TIM
 There's a lot going on and I'm waitin for the right moment, alright. Hey we're still cleanin up from the funeral. And now my sister's in town. My ma's gonna... I don't. It's not gonna be good. And I know what you're thinkin, that I'm afraid of her or somethin but I'm not. Really. My head is pounding, and, and maybe it'd be a better thing for New Year's--
(Off her look, beat.)
 Or now. I could tell her about us right now.

DELLA
 You're going to walk through those doors, right now, and tell your mother. I'm coming to Christmas dinner tomorrow. At your house. As your girlfriend.

TIM
 Yes.

He tries to kiss her. She pulls back.

Yes. Del. I said yes.

TIM

She lets him kiss her.

And then brush your teeth.

DELLA

She leaves out the back door.

Tim takes a moment, smells his breath, collects himself before entering the bar. We notice now, that he walks with a slight limp.

Speak of the devil.

MA

Ma stops what she's doing and watches him, expecting some kind of greeting. He goes directly behind the bar pours himself a concoction. He toasts to Uncle Billy.

To the hair of the dog.

TIM

Tim throws it back.

And to the dog it belongs to.

UNCLE BILLY

He drinks.

Merry Christmas Eve, Tim.

MA

Tim looks around the bar. It's a wreck.

Mornin' Ma. What happened in here?

TIM

You tell me.

UNCLE BILLY

Wish I could.

TIM

UNCLE BILLY

Looks like the circus came to town. Did the circus come to town?

TIM

I don't think so. But that'd explain a few things. You'd think people at a funeral would have some manners.

UNCLE BILLY

Not if they're Irish.

MA

I said Merry Christmas Eve.

TIM

Yeah. Merry Christmas Eve, Ma. Sorry, I just--

MA

--Don't know what day it is?

UNCLE BILLY

That makes tomorrow Christmas, in case you're trying to figure it out.

TIM

So I heard, so I heard.

(to Ma)

Has Susan called?

Ma returns to cleaning, wiping down bottles. It's clearly some sort of therapy for her.

TIM

So... no?

MA

What'd she call for? To apologize? Ha!

TIM

I'm just wonderin.

MA

Just wonderin.

TIM

Well, yeah. Uncle Billy, did anyone call?

UNCLE BILLY

Not even lady luck, my boy.

He tears up another ticket and tosses it on the floor.

MA

Hey-- instead of decoratin the floor, why don't you focus on the tree.

UNCLE BILLY

Maybe I will.

He takes his discarded tickets and beer cans and starts decorating the Christmas tree. Maybe even pulls it out of the corner into a more prominent location in the bar.

TIM

(to Ma)

Where's your cell phone?

MA

Near the register I think.

Tim goes over to the register and finds the phone, flips it open.

TIM

Ma, it's not even on!

MA

So what.

Tim turns it on.

TIM

What's the point of having it if it's always off?

MA

I dunno. You're the one who made me get it. Who's calling me? No one.

TIM

Maybe I am.

MA

You never call.

TIM

(holding out the phone)

Ma! There's seventeen missed calls!

MA

Alright. Is that a lot? Am I popular now?

TIM

Someone was trying to call you. Many people. Many times. When was the last time you checked this?

MA

I don't know how to use it. It's confusing.

TIM

That's because the language is set to Chinese.

MA

See?

TIM

What do you mean 'see'? You didn't make a point. I made a point.

UNCLE BILLY

Let me take a look. I know exactly how to fix it.

Tim hands him the phone. Uncle Billy ties a string around it and hangs it on the tree.

UNCLE BILLY

It makes a beautiful ornament.

Tim gives up. He gets himself a glass of water. Then flips over one of the chairs and sits at a table in the corner.

TIM

Forget it. I was trying to be nice. I was trying to be a good son.

MA

You? A good son? You come barging in here. Don't even ask how I am--

TIM

--I'm sorry how are you--

MA

Ya run behind the bar, get your drink while I clean up this mess. Your mess. Bad enough I have to clean up after your Uncle over there who acts like he was kicked in the head by a donkey.

UNCLE BILLY

Musta escaped from the circus that was in town. Fa la la la la...

*He's now collecting cans from around the bar
and turning them into ornaments.*

MA

Why are you still wearin your suit from the funeral?

TIM

I didn't get a chance to change.

MA

From two days ago?

TIM

Two days ago? Wasn't it yesterday?

MA

No!

TIM

Are you sure?

MA

Of course I am.

TIM

Uncle Billy, was the funeral yesterday or the day before?

UNCLE BILLY

Yesterday, I think.

TIM

See.

MA

What are you asking him for? He's thinks it's 1978.

Ma starts scrubbing the bar again, this time furiously.

TIM

Yeah, I think it's clean, Ma.

MA

And why do you care if Susan called or not?

TIM

We have to talk about her.

MA

Well I don't wanna.

TIM

We gotta.

MA

Why?

TIM

'Cause.

MA

Why?

TIM

'Cause she's here.

MA

Here. What do you mean, here?

TIM

I mean here. In town. I saw her.

MA

Where?

TIM

This morning. On my way over.

MA
Where?

TIM
In a shop.

MA
What shop?

TIM
In Marcy's.

MA
In the salon? What's she doin there?

TIM
Yeah, I dunno, Ma. Probably gettin her hair done.

MA
I know that! ...Gettin her hair done. She hasn't been home in six months, she misses your father's funeral, and now she's gettin her hair done. What the heck for? She could shave it off and it wouldn't make a bit a difference.

TIM
Maybe she thought the funeral was today. She's trying to look nice.

MA
I hope she's doesn't think she's comin by here.

TIM
Probably is.

MA
She's not welcome. She can stay at Marcy's gettin her hair done. Can't be bothered to come to her own father's funeral then she can stay there. Can't even manage to call.

TIM
Maybe she did. Too bad we don't read Chinese.

The front door bell jingles.

UNCLE BILLY
Every time a bell rings--

DELLA enters.

UNCLE BILLY

--oh, it's the police.

Tim is thrown off, but tries to play it like this the first time he's seen her since the arrest. Della gives him a little wave.

DELLA

Hi, Mrs. Bailey. Billy.

MA

Morning. What brings you around?

DELLA

What brings me around?...

She looks at Tim, who hides his face. She realizes he hasn't told Ma yet.

DELLA

Just came to check on your boy.

TIM

Her boy?

MA

Whose else would you be?

TIM

I'm nobody's boy.

MA

You're a ragged, unkept boy with a bloody nose from the school yard.

Tim waves her off and goes to the bar to make himself a drink.

TIM

Well I'm gonna make myself a big-boy drink if that's alright with you.

DELLA

You could probably use a glass of water.

(out of earshot of Ma)

...Or courage. ...Unless you want to spend another night on a cot.

MA

Is that where you were, jail? You got yourself locked up?

TIM

I didn't lock myself up. Della locked me up.

MA

She did you a favor.

TIM

Some favor.

DELLA

I'm just glad you weren't the one that wrecked the manger.

MA

Wrecked the--?

DELLA

The manger. Down on the Commons.

MA

Oh no oh no. Father Patrick sets that up.

DELLA

I know. And he'll have to do it again.

MA

Why would someone wreck such a beautiful display?

DELLA

No idea. Whoever it was, they messed it up alright. We can't find one of the wise men. And then there's this.

Della reaches into a garbage bag she's been carrying, and pulls out three broken pieces of a plastic camel statue.

Ma yelps.

MA

Good heavens! Poor thing.

UNCLE BILLY

That's one sad ugly reindeer.

DELLA

It's a camel. Was a camel.

UNCLE BILLY

Let me see.

He takes the pieces and examines them closely.

UNCLE BILLY

It's missing a head. Poor Rudolph. You won't be shining bright this Christmas, will you?

DELLA

Right. But it's a camel. From the manger. Think you can fix it?

UNCLE BILLY

I can try. I'm no doctor. But this reindeer has a serious tumor on it's back.

DELLA

I think that's a hump.

UNCLE BILLY

Let me see if I can find some duct tape. And a saw.

Uncle Billy leaves to go rummage around in the stock room.

MA

You know what the teenagers did when I was little?

TIM

Fight Nazis?

MA

No! Sing Christmas carols. From door to door. And expect nothing in return except a warm smile. Now they're breaking mangers. Why? What's wrong with these kids -- there's no decency, no respect, no values for anything.

TIM

How do you know it was kids?

MA

Oh godforbid it was some adults. Even worse.

DELLA

We don't know who it was.

MA

I can't -- I just -- I know most of the people in this town and if that's true then the people have truly lost their way.

TIM

Poor little sheep have strayed.

MA

Their spirits have been broken -- that's what it is! You know what else we had on Christmas?

TIM

Snow?

MA

Yes, snow.

TIM

Kiss those days goodbye.

DELLA

Ya never know.

TIM

Give it up. It's not gonna snow.

MA

Maybe this year'll be different.

DELLA

Especially if you rent those machines.

TIM

What machines?

DELLA

The snow machines.

MA

Who told you that?

DELLA

Came through into the department. Permit requests and all. Ya know, I could help--

TIM

What are you talking about, snow machines?

DELLA

You haven't heard?

TIM

I guess word didn't travel to the jail cells yet.

DELLA

Sorry. Didn't realize it was a secret.

MA

Not anymore.

TIM

What's the not-anymore-secret about snow machines?

MA

I was looking into renting some snow machines. That's all.

TIM

Why?

MA

It's a machine that creates snow.

*Uncle Billy is returning from the stock room with
a roll of duct tape.*

TIM

I know what it is. How're ya gonna rent one of those?

UNCLE BILLY

She's not. I am.

TIM

You?

DELLA

Those are some big machines. And the ones you want require a special permit and some street access.

TIM

I still don't understand why you're renting snow machines.

UNCLE BILLY

To make snow, of course, my boy.

MA

For Christmas.

TIM

Who's gonna pay for it? Father Patrick?

MA

No, I am.

TIM

With what money?

MA

With money. That your father left. For it.

TIM

Really. He left money for snow. Specifically.

MA

Yes he did.

TIM

How much money?

MA

Enough to make it snow.

TIM

You didn't tell me Pop left us money.

MA

He didn't leave you money.

TIM

Or you money.

Or me money. MA

So whose is it? TIM

He left it for this. For the snow. MA

For the snow?! TIM

UNCLE BILLY
(sing songy)
Let it snow let it snow let snow.

*Uncle Billy starts to tape up the camel/deer.
Della helps him hold a piece here and there.*

Who leaves money for snow? TIM

Your father liked snow. Especially on Christmas. MA

I hate to break it to you, but he's not here anymore. TIM

I know, Tim. Thank you. MA

TIM
And it hasn't snowed in five years. Not on Christmas. Not anytime. It doesn't snow anymore. People have to accept that. This town has to realize it's not gonna be a winter wonderland anymore, and find a way to move forward, instead of clinging to the past. Some snow machines aren't gonna magically turn things around.

MA
That's not the point of it.

TIM
Why didn't you tell me he left money?

MA
Because I knew you'd react like you're reacting right now.

TIM

I'm just. I'm not even. I'm just-- who leaves money for snow? It snows on its own. Snow is free.

UNCLE BILLY

The snow is no more.

DELLA

Maybe it'll snow again. Real snow.

MA

It's gonna snow. From the snow makers. It's real snow.

DELLA

It doesn't last. It's not like--

MA

It'll last as long as it'll last and while it does, it'll be a beautiful, white Christmas.

UNCLE BILLY

(sing-songy)

Just like the ones we used to know.

MA

It's what he wanted.

DELLA

(joining Billy)

Where the treetops glistened.

TIM

I can't believe this.

UNCLE BILLY

And the children listened.

MA

Well I don't know if the children ever listened.

TIM

Out of all the idiotic, idealistic things--

MA

Your father was a complicated man. And a simple man.

TIM

Simple, yes. How about stubborn. Or backwards. Or stupid.

DELLA

That's not fair, Tim.

UNCLE BILLY

I've been dreaming of a white--

TIM

(to Billy)

And you've known about this, too.

UNCLE BILLY

(still singing)

Christmas....

DELLA

Most of the town will know about it soon enough.

MA

Good. That's good. It'll be a nice thing for everyone.

TIM

All it's gonna do is give people false hope. People are desperate for something, anything. Grasping, for, any sign that things might turn around.

MA

Which is all the more reason to do it. That's exactly what George wanted. One, last, white Christmas.

DELLA

And then the snow melts. And everything returns.

TIM

To mud. To reality.

MA

Then it will be cherished. And remembered.

TIM

How much money are we talking about here?

MA
That doesn't matter.

TIM
Of course it does. How much?

MA
I'm not saying.

TIM
How much? Uncle Billy, how much does it cost to rent those things. It's gotta be thousands.

UNCLE BILLY
It's not cheap.

TIM
Ma, how much?

MA
Eighteen thousand.

TIM
What?!

MA
Don't get any ideas, Tim. Get some more ice for your head and cool down.

TIM
You can use that money.

MA
No I can't.

TIM
For other things. For yourself. For the bar. Look at this place. It's a dump.

UNCLE BILLY
What are you talkin about -- look at my tree!

MA
There's nothin wrong with the bar.

TIM
There's everything wrong with the bar. The biggest thing bein there's no people in it!

MA

Some people think it has value.

TIM

Of course they do. I do. It's got heart, but it's just livin in the past, like the people at the bar.

UNCLE BILLY

Who me?

DELLA

Why don you tell her some of your ideas--

MA

Ideas?

TIM

Yeah. For the bar. I have some ideas about how it can be--

MA

I can't run this place anymore.

TIM

That's okay.

MA

I'm tired.

TIM

I'll help you--

MA

You have the garage.

TIM

I think this town will be fine with one less lousy mechanic.

MA

Don't say that. People rely on you.

TIM

To undercharge them maybe.

(to Uncle Billy)

You can help around here, too.

UNCLE BILLY

You're nuts. I'm finally unemployed. It's been my life long dream.

TIM

And Nick Cratchit. Where is Nick anyway?

MA

I gave him the night off.

TIM

For what?

MA

For Christmas.

UNCLE BILLY

Bah humbug to that. Call him in. I need a refill.

MA

What do you want with this old bar. You said yourself it's a dump.

TIM

Yeah but it's our dump. It's the town's dump. Right, Del?

DELLA

People in this town love this bar, Mrs. Bailey. You know that.

MA

They loved George. They loved your father. That's why they'd come here. Not for the decor. He's everywhere in this place and I. I don't want that for you. You know what? Forget it! I don't wanna talk about it.

TIM

You don't, huh?

MA

I don't wanna talk about it anymore I said!

TIM

You don't wanna talk about the bar, you don't wanna talk about Susan, you don't wanna talk about Pop, you don't wanna talk about anything that needs talkin about.

Ma heads to the back.

TIM

Where are you going? Where are you going?

Ma is trying not to cry. She's gone.

TIM

That went well.

DELLA

You want me to go check on her?

UNCLE BILLY

No, I'll go. I need more tape anyway.

By now, the deer/camel is almost a giant ball of tape with legs sticking out the bottom.

Uncle Billy leaves out the back.

TIM

See what happens when we try to talk. I mean really talk about something. I tried to tell you. She's not...available.

DELLA

You have a way with words, I'll give you that. Tim--

TIM

I know. Tomorrow's Christmas. I'm getting there. You know, I never really said thank you. For arresting me and everything. After Mancuso, it was only going to get worse.

DELLA

You are welcome. Just doing my job.

TIM

And sorry about the manger.

DELLA

You owe Father Patrick two hundred dollars. Three hundred if you don't want him to tell your mother.

TIM

Deal.

DELLA

And five Hail Marys.

TIM

Ugh. Okay, okay. Fine. Thank you. Can you do me a favor? Sorry, are you busy?

DELLA

The work of a deputy is never done.

TIM

So...no?

DELLA

I do have to investigate ‘The Case of the Missing Wisemen.’ But I suppose that can wait.

TIM

Can you find Susan?

DELLA

Where is she?

TIM

That’s what I’m asking you to find out. Why do people always say that? Have you seen my wallet? Where did you leave it? Have you seen my dog? Where did he go? Do you have a watch? Why, what time is it?

DELLA

Are you finished?

TIM

For now. She was over at Marcy’s about an hour ago.

DELLA

Marcy’s? Getting her hair done?

TIM

Della, I don’t know. You’re the detective. It’s a salon.

TIM

Can you try and find her, please. Bring her here if you can. She needs to put down the curlers and come home. She’s looks fine.

DELLA

All right.

Della heads for the front door.

Tim tries to catch her and sneak in a kiss.

Thanks. TIM

You got it. DELLA

No, I'm gonna tell her. I am. TIM

I believe you. DELLA

You said by Christmas. Christmas is tomorrow. TIM

She's gone.

Uncle Billy returns from the back. He's got more tape and an assortment of other supplies.

She's alright? TIM

She will be. Where's Della? UNCLE BILLY

Duty calls. TIM

I like her. UNCLE BILLY

Take it easy. TIM

That's the only way I take it. UNCLE BILLY

Tim starts fixing/rearranging the tables, chairs. Uncle Billy helps him.

Done with the shop. For good? UNCLE BILLY

That's it. Look at this place. You see the potential, don't you? TIM

UNCLE BILLY

I think it has potential to have potential.

TIM

Right. With the bit I scrapped together and the money that my father left, you could actually make that potential realized. You remember how it used to be.

UNCLE BILLY

When you get to my age, your memory fails you, you can't remember anything, and then your memory fails you.

TIM

You gotta help me convince Ma not to throw away this money.

UNCLE BILLY

She doesn't see it as throwin away.

TIM

But she is! She might as well shred the money and throw it in the air.

UNCLE BILLY

She's trying to honor your father.

TIM

She can honor him by not going broke.

UNCLE BILLY

Money doesn't fix everything.

TIM

It can fix this bar. Make it into something new. Different. Better. We gotta stop foolin ourselves that the winters are gonna be like they used to if we can just stick it out another year. They're warmer and shorter and the people in this town, in this family, have to realize that times have changed. There's no more busy season. There're barely seasons at all. We had a good run but the snow bunnies aren't going to vacation in a town without snow. And I mean real snow. A winter of snow. Those days they're, they're not comin back. You know it, I can tell. So instead of grasping blindly at the past, for the way things used to be, we need to adapt. We need to create our own future. It's not gonna come to us. Look at this place--

Tim tries to fix a broken chair. Uncle Billy hands him the duct tape.

TIM

We can't keep puttin a band-aid on things.

UNCLE BILLY

Sometimes that's all you can do. Look.

Uncle Billy holds up his reindeer/camel tape creature.

TIM

Is it a pinata?

UNCLE BILLY

It's Rudolph. A broken and mended Rudolph. He'll be all right.

Uncle Billy pets him.

TIM

Did you ever understand Pop's obsession with Christmas? Where'd it come from? Somethin he missed in childhood? Trying to recreate some Normal Rockwell painting that never existed? Or, or was he just a phoney? Covering up his lack of... success - I don't know... disguising a deep sadness with tinsel and ornaments and carols.

UNCLE BILLY

I knew your father a long time. Longer than you. And I can't say there were many days when I understood him or the reasons behind his professed merriment. I'll be honest with ya. I never liked your father.

TIM

You didn't?

UNCLE BILLY

But I'll always love him. Know what I mean?

TIM

I guess.

UNCLE BILLY

Know why? 'Cause he was always there for your mother and always there for you. And Susan, too, despite their differences. He tried, in his own way, to give you a better life. And at the end of the day, that's all that matters.

Tim takes the tape and tries to use it to fix the broken chair. Uncle Billy watches, pleased.

SUSAN, late 20s, has entered behind them. Although her hair has just been done (in a ridiculous 80s manner). She wears a large coat that struggles to cover her very pregnant belly. She carries a plastic bag with a box in it. She stands near the front door, looking around before she speaks. They don't see her at first.

SUSAN

Excuse me. Is there any room at the inn?

Tim and Uncle Billy turn around to see her.

UNCLE BILLY

Well I'll be. Little Suzie as big as a house.

TIM

What is that supposed to be?

SUSAN

A girl they say. Mind if I sit down?

They scramble to give her a chair that isn't broken. She waddles over to the one that clearly is very broken and in the process of being taped.

SUSAN

Thank you. You're ever so kind.

She quickly sits in the chair before Uncle Billy and Tim can stop her.

UNCLE BILLY AND TIM

No, no, no, no, no!

It immediately breaks under her and she topples over.

SUSAN

Whoa!!

Uncle Billy and Tim run to her side. She moans, etc. and they pull open her coat. She bursts into a fit of laughter as she pulls out big pillow she had stuffed up her shirt/dress.

SUSAN

Well look at that--it's a boy!

Tim grabs the pillow from her and begins hitting her with it.

UNCLE BILLY

Tryin to give an old man a heart attack?!

Susan leaps up and bows. Tim gives her one more whack before tossing the pillow.

TIM

You're lucky Ma wasn't here for that show.

Susan takes a good look around the bar.

SUSAN

Wow. I mean, wow. This place still looks exactly like... it smells. Some things never change.

TIM

Seems everything is, actually.

SUSAN

(holding up the plastic bag)

Oh, um. Hi, I brought donuts.

UNCLE BILLY

What kind?

SUSAN

The gas station kind.

She gives him the donuts.

UNCLE BILLY

You really are trying to kill me.

Susan goes to Uncle Billy and they embrace in a warm hug.

UNCLE BILLY

Welcome home, kid. You look like crap.

Better than you. SUSAN

Always. UNCLE BILLY

*Susan turns back to Tim. She approaches him
and they hug, not as warmly as Uncle Billy.*

You. SUSAN

You. TIM

Well? SUSAN

I don't know what you want me to say. TIM

Say something nice. SUSAN

Nice hair. TIM

I guess some things can change. SUSAN
(modeling her hair)

They do if you bend them in unnatural ways. You know ya missed the funeral. TIM

Yeah, I know. SUSAN

Where ya been? TIM

I just got into town. SUSAN

So? TIM

SUSAN

So how was I supposed to be in town for the funeral if I wasn't in town?

TIM

Where were ya?

SUSAN

Out of town.

TIM

You shoulda been here.

SUSAN

It's more complicated than that.

TIM

No it isn't.

SUSAN

You don't know what's going on in my life. I just got here--

TIM

--Yeah you just got here--

SUSAN

--So don't assume things about me.

TIM

--Right after gettin your hair done.

SUSAN

So you don't like it?

TIM

Let's just say you might wanna ask for a refund.

UNCLE BILLY

You can't get less hair cut. You can only get more hair cut. Hair cuts aren't permanent like memories. Hair grows. Can memory grow? Memories can grow old. Memories fade that's for sure.

*Susan takes the donuts out and opens them,
displaying them on the bar.*

SUSAN

I just thought. I don't know. Everyone loves donuts.

UNCLE BILLY

How's my ol' friend, Marcy?

SUSAN

She's the same. But older and fatter.

UNCLE BILLY

I saw her yesterday. She can't be that much older. Fatter, maybe.

TIM

Did she remember you?

SUSAN

She acted like she did.

UNCLE BILLY

Anyone in there?

SUSAN

Not really.

UNCLE BILLY

Shame.

*Uncle Billy takes a bite of one of the donuts.
Disgusting. He spits it out in a napkin.*

UNCLE BILLY

I have a more practical idea for these.

*He starts to decorate his tree with them. Maybe
he ties a string through them.*

SUSAN

I'm surprised she was still open. Half the shops in the town are boarded up. What happened around here? You been scarin the tourists away with that ugly beat-up mug of yours?

TIM

You don't think I'm pretty no more?

UNCLE BILLY

People been strugglin. Another coupla winters without snow and it'll be a ghost town. Christmas Eve this place should be buzzin.

TIM

What're ya gonna do. We're gettin by for now. We'll figure something out.

SUSAN

You been boxin on the side for extra money? Or Charlie Mancuso get you again?

UNCLE BILLY

Ding ding ding ding.

Tim waves them off and returns to his corner.

SUSAN

The champ has decided to take a rest.

Uncle Billy and Susan share a smile. Pause. A shift.

SUSAN

Where's Ma?

TIM

She went out back.

Susan moves to go that way.

TIM

I wouldn't.

SUSAN

Why not? I took the pillow out.

TIM

You can't think of a reason?

SUSAN

Is she alright?

TIM

All considered... she's doin alright. She, uh. I think she's findin her peace. In her own way. But that doesn't mean she wants to see you.

SUSAN

Maybe she does.

UNCLE BILLY

She'll be out. Help me decorate the Christmas tree.

SUSAN

Is that what that is? I thought it was a dying houseplant.

UNCLE BILLY

Envy doesn't suit you.

SUSAN

Where are decorations?

UNCLE BILLY

Just whatever you can find. Get creative.

Susan starts looking for something to add to the tree.

Susan--

SUSAN

Tiny Tim--

TIM

Don't call me that. No one calls me that.

SUSAN

You're right, things have changed.

TIM

Yeah, Pop died -- I don't know if you heard.

SUSAN

You think Pop cared if I was at his funeral or not.

TIM

I don't know. But Ma wanted you there. I wanted you there. People were asking for you. It was embarrassing.

SUSAN

Sorry if my absence embarrassed you but that's really the least of my concerns.

TIM

Thank you for understanding.

UNCLE BILLY
So apology accepted? Good.

Susan finds a roll of toilet paper.

SUSAN
How about this?

UNCLE BILLY
Looks like snow to me.

*Susan and Uncle Billy begin to wrap the
Christmas tree in toilet paper.*

UNCLE BILLY
(sing songy)
Oh, the weather outside is frightful
But the fire is so delightful..

SUSAN
And since we've no place to go
Let it snow, let it snow, let it snow...

*Susan and Uncle Billy really start to get into the
spirit of it.*

SUSAN
Turn on the radio, Tim. Let's get some music in here.

TIM
It's broken.

SUSAN
Well fix it, Mr. Handy Man.

UNCLE BILLY
Here.

*Uncle Billy tosses him the tape. Tim starts
fiddling with the old radio behind the bar. He
continues to throughout the play. He'll bring in a
tool here and there as he works...*

Susan wraps Uncle Billy in some of the toilet paper. Then her wraps her in it.

Ma enters from the back, with her arms full of cleaning supplies. She stops when she sees Susan.

SUSAN

Ma! Hi. Hi. I'm here. Before you say anything, let me just.

Susan unwraps herself.

MA

Glad to see you're all having fun. And making a mess.

UNCLE BILLY

We're grounded.

SUSAN

Okay, okay... I'm out.

Susan frees herself with Uncle Billy's help. She moves closer to Ma, hoping to be embraced her but Ma doesn't move. Susan tries to hug her anyway, but it's awkward with Ma holding all the cleaning supplies. Some drop.

SUSAN

Let me help you. Here.

MA

I'm fine.

Ma moves to put the stuff down on the bar. Susan tries desperately to help, but just makes it worse.

MA

I got it. I got it. I got it!

SUSAN

Okay. Sorry.

Susan moves behind the bar.

SUSAN
Let me make you a drink.

MA
I don't want a drink.

UNCLE BILLY
I'll take a drink.

SUSAN
Great. What'll you have?

UNCLE BILLY
A double.

SUSAN
Double of what?

UNCLE BILLY
Preferably liquor.

SUSAN
Comin' right up.

She makes his drink, as he takes a spot at the bar. Ma organizes her supplies. Tim fiddles with the radio.

SUSAN
Ma. I'm. I wanna say. I wanna apologize for not being at the funeral. I'm sorry. I'm sorry for dad. For your loss. I wanted to come but things aren't right back at the ol' homestead if ya know what I mean. And, well, I'll get into that. Later. But I'm sorry I wasn't there for you. Or if my absence embarrassed you, or whatever else. I know you wanted me there. Also, I brought donuts. They're not the good kind, but that's all they had, so we hung them on the tree. And well anyway, hi, I'm back. I've come home.

UNCLE BILLY
You've come to the bar.

SUSAN
Close enough.

UNCLE BILLY
The bar is my home. As they say, home is where the drink is.

MA

It's heart. Home is where the heart is.

UNCLE BILLY

You say tomato, I say bloody mary.

SUSAN

Home is home. This is home. I'm home.

MA

So you are.

SUSAN

So I am.

MA

So when are you leaving.

SUSAN

I just got here.

MA

And you never stay. You don't stay home, you leave home.

SUSAN

All chicks leave the roost. Except for Timmy.

UNCLE BILLY

Stay boy, stay.

SUSAN

Good boy. Wanna treat?

She offers him a left over donut. Uncle Billy and Susan share a laugh.

TIM

A dog wouldn't even eat those. They smell like gasoline.

She offers it to Uncle Billy who dunks it in his drink and eats it.

MA

What're ya doing here, Susan?

I came to apologize.

SUSAN

Okay. You did that.

MA

Do you accept my apology?

SUSAN

Yes.

MA

No you don't.

SUSAN

Sure I do. I just said I did. I accept it.

MA

Why don't you cross your heart? That always works.

UNCLE BILLY

You want me to cross my heart?

MA

No. I'm glad you accept it.

SUSAN

Now what?

MA

How was the funeral?

SUSAN

I don't wanna talk about it.

MA

Doesn't wanna talk about it, Susan, okay. Don't bring it up. Don't bring up topics. We don't wanna talk about topics or subjects or things right now. Conversations are also off the table.

TIM

Okay, so, then... how are you?

SUSAN

MA

You wanna talk about me?

SUSAN

Sure.

MA

Since when do you wanna talk about anybody but yourself?

TIM

C'mon, Ma, cheer up. It's Christmas Eve. Should we have some eggnog?

MA

Not yet.

UNCLE BILLY

How about a donut then? They don't all smell like gasoline.

(taking a bite of one)

This one's diesel.

SUSAN

You're mad at me. I understand. I don't know what else to say. I'm tryin to make things right-- Ma, I'm sorry alright! I messed up. I'm a mess up. I messed up my whole life. You gave me everything and I threw it away. You think I wanted things to work out like this? Huh? You think this is how I dreamed it goin? My life. Now Casey's life, too. Probably inherited my mess.

UNCLE BILLY

When are we gonna see lil' Casey?

SUSAN

Soon. I don't know.

MA

We're her family too, ya know.

SUSAN

Yeah I know. I just... wanted to leave her with Dave. She's clingy with him, ever since... the hospital.

MA

What're you talkin about?

SUSAN

Yeah, the hospital. Dave's been in and out of it. So...

UNCLE BILLY

What's wrong with Davey?

SUSAN

Nothing. I don't wanna talk about it.

TIM

Great! Add it to the list of things to not talk about.

SUSAN

Okay, then, I... He's been sick.

TIM

Since when?

SUSAN

Since recently.

UNCLE BILLY

How sick? What's wrong with him?

SUSAN

I dunno.

MA

What do ya mean ya dunno?

SUSAN

I mean I dunno.

MA

Have you taken him to the doctor?

SUSAN

Of course! I just said he was in the hospital. How do you think we managed that without seein a doctor?

TIM

And what do the doctors say's wrong?

SUSAN

The doctors don't know. Nobody knows. He's just sick. Sometimes. And they keep doin tests, blood tests, urine tests, probin and prickin and making it worse. And for nothin.

Everything's comin back negative. And the medical bills are -- I don't wanna get into it, it's--

UNCLE BILLY

Where is he now?

SUSAN

He's home. He was in the hospital but now he's home.

MA

Dear lord. Why didn't you tell us? We woulda come--

SUSAN

I was gonna. I really was. I wanted to. But then everything with Pop. And I just didn't wanna weigh any of ya down. And then I was gonna bring Casey, but it didn't seem right to leave him. I couldn't. Not like he was.

MA

You left them to come here. On Christmas Eve.

SUSAN

Well I came as soon as I could.

UNCLE BILLY

But he's gonna be alright?

SUSAN

What do I know? I-- here, wanna drink?

Susan pours a drink for herself and Uncle Billy.

SUSAN

You'll have a drink with me, won't you?

UNCLE BILLY

I got one in front of me. But yes.

They drink.

SUSAN

Merry Christmas.

MA

Eve.

SUSAN

Merry Christmas Eve.

MA

You sure you didn't wanna bring her here?

SUSAN

It didn't seem right. Under the circumstances.

MA

We woulda liked to see her. And Dave, for that matter. It's been so long.

SUSAN

Dave. Yeah, you don't really wanna see Dave.

MA

Why not?

SUSAN

You don't remember what he's like? Anyone who's ever met Dave would never say they wanna see Dave. He may be sick but he'll still steal your purse and lie like pig about it.

MA

I thought you said Casey is with him.

SUSAN

She is.

MA

He's a liar and a thief but you left Casey with him.

SUSAN

Well he's a good dad. Meaning, Casey loves him. 'Cause she's a kid. And kids can be dumb.

TIM

You two aren't together anymore?

SUSAN

Naw, we are. When we are. And we ain't, when we ain't.

TIM

Sounds kinda romantic when you put it like that.

SUSAN

On again off again seems to be a running theme in my relationships. My life is like a light switch.

UNCLE BILLY

You're a little young to be so bleak. Leave that to the ol' timers, will ya. Can't take everything away from us. Next you'll be comin for my booze.

SUSAN

Still got your charm.

UNCLE BILLY

Maybe an once or two. But that's dryin up.

MA

You sure you couldn't bring her?

SUSAN

No, Ma.

MA

Maybe you can get her tomorrow. For Christmas.

SUSAN

She's not gonna feel like it.

MA

You know how she's gonna feel tomorrow?

SUSAN

I know my daughter.

MA

Maybe Dave can bring her. If he's feelin--

SUSAN

I'm here! Alright, I'm here.

MA

Okay.

SUSAN

Okay?

Okay. Are you gonna stay? MA

I don't know. SUSAN

Stay. TIM

Do you want me to? SUSAN

Yes. TIM

Do you want me to stay? SUSAN
(to Ma)

Yes. MA

For how long? UNCLE BILLY

I don't know. SUSAN

You should stay for the snow. UNCLE BILLY

What snow? SUSAN

Your Uncle Billy has a big mouth. The only good thing about him drinkin is he can't talk while he's doin it. MA

What snow? SUSAN

It's gonna snow. TIM

SUSAN
No it's not.

TIM
Ma's gonna make it.

SUSAN
She's gonna pray for it, you mean.

MA
We have prayed for it.

TIM
And nothin happened.

UNCLE BILLY
God laughed. That's what happened. And the weatherman got fired.

SUSAN
So what're ya talkin about then?

TIM
Ma's rentin some big ol' snow machines.

UNCLE BILLY
Six of 'em, to be exact.

SUSAN
What, when?

UNCLE BILLY
Tomorrow mornin. Lights up. Snow's down.

SUSAN
I don't get it.

MA
It'll be a White Christmas.

SUSAN
Wait -- how are you doin this?

MA
You can rent 'em. These machines.

SUSAN
Rent 'em?

MA
Don't worry, it's all been figured out. Your Uncle Billy has a friend--

SUSAN
You do? Since when?

UNCLE BILLY
Since before your time, little girl.

MA
Call him again, will ya.

UNCLE BILLY
I just talked to him.

MA
What time?

UNCLE BILLY
I don't know, four drinks ago. That's how I tell time.

MA
I just wanna know we're set. Please.

UNCLE BILLY
Alright, alright. I'll call him again. But I'm takin one for the road. And one to keep me company.

Uncle Billy grabs two drinks and heads through the back. He uses a land line in the stock room.

SUSAN
It must cost a pretty penny. You can afford that?

TIM
Exactly.

MA
Don't worry. It's not my money.

TIM

I beg to differ.

MA

It's your father's. It's what he wanted.

SUSAN

For it to snow.

MA

Yes. One last time.

SUSAN

One. Last. White. Christmas. Wow.

MA

What do ya think?

SUSAN

I mean wow. That's... I think... making it snow for everyone is... the single most thoughtful, moving, sentimental gesture I've ever heard of.

MA

See, Tim. Someone gets it.

TIM

(to Susan)

Was that sarcasm? I can't tell.

SUSAN

No, I'm not being sarcastic. I think it's beautiful. It hasn't snowed in a long time. And maybe it'll lift people's spirits.

MA

Thank you.

TIM

You think that, until ya hear how much money it's gonna cost.

SUSAN

How much are we talking about?

MA

Never mind that.

MA

I'm not interested in investin in the bar! I'm interested in sellin it.

SUSAN

Sellin?

TIM

What do you mean, sellin it?

MA

I got some buyers that are interested. So we need to make sure this place is spic and span.

Ma starts to clean again.

TIM

You can't sell it. I got plans. I told you.

MA

Well now you can use some of the money from the sale to invest in your shop. Or for whatever you want! Buy a new suit!

SUSAN

Huh. Sellin the bar. Wow. I... I think that's great, Ma.

TIM

Don't you have a train to catch?

SUSAN

No.

TIM

Of course you don't care what happens with this bar. If some investors come in and tear it down.

SUSAN

It's not your bar, it's Ma's bar.

TIM

It's a family bar. It reminds you of Pop. That's why you don't--

SUSAN

Maybe it does. Of course it does. It reminds you of him, too. Which isn't a good reason to make Ma keep caring a burden.

TIM

Now you care about Ma's burdens.

SUSAN

Of course I do.

MA

Enough outta you two. No more fightin. It's Christmas Eve.

SUSAN

Yeah, don't ruin Christmas, Tiny Tim.

TIM

There isn't a Christmas to ruin anymore.

*Della comes in through the front door. She
doesn't see Susan behind the bar.*

DELLA

(to Tim)

I can't find her.

SUSAN

Find who?

DELLA

Find you.

(to Tim)

I found her.

TIM

Thanks.

SUSAN

Why are you trying to find me?

DELLA

So you can be... found.

SUSAN

I don't need findin.

DELLA

Okay.

SUSAN

Especially from you.

DELLA

Looks like you're found anyway.

SUSAN

You still think you're our baby-sitter. Treatin us like children.

DELLA

Children tend to be treated like children.

SUSAN

(to Tim)

You sent her to find me?

TIM

Maybe. I asked her to check on things.

SUSAN

To check on me? What'd I already tell you? I don't need checkin on. I'm clean, okay? I came home to be with my family. Ma, tell her. Tell her to go direct traffic or something.

Uncle Billy returns from the back with two empty glasses.

MA

She can come here if she wants. It's a bar.

UNCLE BILLY

It sure is.

SUSAN

Are you even open?

MA

I don't know.

(to Uncle Billy)

Are we open?

UNCLE BILLY

Open to what?

MA

Open for business.

UNCLE BILLY

I'm open for anything. Open minded. Open season. Open sesame.

MA

Are we set?

UNCLE BILLY

All set. Just need payment.

TIM

Della is welcome here anytime she wants. She's a friend of mine and she's a friend of this family. She looks out for us. Isn't that right, Ma?

UNCLE BILLY

Sheriff Dillingham is good people.

TIM

And she looks out for me.

SUSAN

What are you all sayin'? Do you not remember what she did? How could you be sayin' that?

TIM

Sayin' what?

DELLA

You've been gone a long time, Susan. Not everything is the way you remember it.

SUSAN

I remember. Has everyone else forgotten?

DELLA

It's Christmas Eve. Everyone's havin a nice time. We're glad you're home. Welcome back.

SUSAN

Everyone's havin a nice time?

DELLA

Yes.

TIM

Yes.

SUSAN

It's Christmas Eve.

UNCLE BILLY

Is it?

SUSAN

Why aren't you with your own family? I'm sorry, did I miss something? Is there something I'm not gettin. I haven't been home in awhile, so why don't you explain it to me like I'm child, since that what you think I am anyway: What-are-you-doin-here?

DELLA

I'm working. And I stopped by. I don't really understand your question. Tim.

TIM

What?

DELLA

Is there anything you want to say?

TIM

I, uh. Yeah, Susan, we don't understand your question.

SUSAN

Uncle Billy?

UNCLE BILLY

Yes?

SUSAN

What?

UNCLE BILLY

What?

SUSAN

Ya wanna level with me here.

UNCLE BILLY

It's Christmas Eve? It might snow tomorrow. Your father died. I need another drink. I'm sorry, what else do ya wanna know?

SUSAN

Ma, you're okay with this? With her being here?

MA

Susan, let sleepin dogs die.

SUSAN

What?

UNCLE BILLY

Never heard that before? It means lie on a dog 'til it stops movin.

TIM

Uncle Billy is right. You can kick a dog if it's dead, but don't.

SUSAN

(looking at Della)

What about 'beware of a wolf in sheep's clothing'? Ever heard of that one?

TIM

I know the one about cryin wolf. Is that what you're talkin about?

UNCLE BILLY

I've heard of bein sheepish about no clothing. But that doesn't bother me.

Susan retreats to the other end of the bar with her drink.

DELLA

Speaking of sheep...

Della steps out the front door and returns with a bunch of pieces to a plastic lamb statue from the manger. She hands them to Uncle Billy.

UNCLE BILLY

I'll work my magic.

DELLA

I'm sure you will. Are we set for the parade tomorrow?

UNCLE BILLY

The parade huh?

DELLA

Santa. You promised.

UNCLE BILLY

Yeah, yeah.

DELLA

You should try on the costume because...well George...was a healthier man than you.

UNCLE BILLY

You sayin I look sickly?

DELLA

I'm sayin you are perfect for the part.

She pats his belly.

UNCLE BILLY

Meaning?

DELLA

Meaning, you're the only one who can do it.

SUSAN

You're gonna be Santa in the parade?

UNCLE BILLY

Apparently I'm perfect for it.

MA

George would be very happy.

TIM

Are you kiddin me, he'd be rollin 'round in his grave. Dressin a Grinch like Santa's like a wolf in sheep's clothing.

MA

You seem like the Grinch around here to me. I think it'd be nice to have some Christmas spirt out there.

DELLA

And the kids are gonna love it. And just need a pillow or two.

UNCLE BILLY

Susan, where'd you put yours.

Uncle Billy finds it and stuffs it under his shirt.

DELLA

There ya go.

SUSAN

I remember when Pop was Santa.

An awkward pause.

TIM

Uh huh. Every year.

DELLA

The town really loved him.

UNCLE BILLY

Yeah except he had gas.

TIM

What?

Ma has a laugh.

MA

It's true. He did have the gas. He couldn't help it. May he rest in peace.

UNCLE BILLY

I'm wondering how bad that suit stinks. He ever wash the thing?

MA

George wash something? Oh, no. He didn't know how. Not his fault.

SUSAN

Not his fault. Nothing's ever his fault. He was a saint.

MA

He had his faults, that's not what I'm sayin. I'm sayin that wasn't his fault. His momma never taught him and he married me and I did the washin. He did other things. I did the washin. And other things. You know how it goes. You fall into patterns, and it's not like you were cut out to do particular things in a marriage, just that you start doin things and you don't need to talk about them after awhile. You just always do 'em. And after a long amount of time, I don't even think you could learn to do anything new. Old dogs die with the same old tricks. Besides I like washin and cleanin. It's therapeutic.

UNCLE BILLY

So then did you ever wash that Santa suit?

MA

Me? No. I tried to one year. But he didn't like other people touchin it. Something sacred about it for him. Dressin up like Santa become a ritual, a holy act.

UNCLE BILLY

Well it is a religious holiday. Supposed to be anyway.

MA

There's nothing in the Good Book about Christmas lights and mistle toe and all that. But to him, it all became sacred.

SUSAN

Della touched the suit, ya know.

MA

Huh?

TIM

Susan, just--

SUSAN

She did. You said he didn't like people touchin it, and Della touched it.

MA

Now why do ya have to go--

SUSAN

She did. She touched the suit. She touched him in the suit. I saw it.

MA

Is this what you came back here to do?

UNCLE BILLY

Why don't you make me another drink, Suzie-Q?

MA

I don't think anyone needs anymore drinks.

UNCLE BILLY

We're in a bar.

MA

We're closed.

UNCLE BILLY

Since when?

MA

Since now.

SUSAN

I remember walkin down the stairs--

TIM

Just shut up about it. No one wants to talk about some stupid memory of yours. Some cooked up--

SUSAN

I'm not cookin anythin or exaggerating, I'm just tellin it. I was walkin down the stairs and there they were! Just like the song. I saw Mommy Kissin Santa Claus. Except it wasn't mommy it was the baby-sitter. Why didn't anyone write a song about that?

DELLA

Maybe you should.

TIM

(to Della)

Don't pay any attention to her.

DELLA

No, I'm serious. You should write a song about it. About a stupid kid who was kissed by an older man. A confused, stupid nineteen year old who didn't know what was happening. I know ya think I'm some kinda home-wrecker, but the only thing that got wrecked was your idea of him. You were just a child, of course you thought your daddy was perfect. That's what all little girls think. But that's not the way things are. There are no good guys and bad guys. People aren't that simple. I know that better than anyone. And how do you think I felt? Ever think about that? You know I couldn't kiss a guy for five years? Huh? But you don't see me bad mouthin him around town. Never did. Never will. Wanna know why? Cause we're all messed up and we all make mistakes and do stupid things and live with regret and life goes on. You grow up and take responsibility for yourself. Somethin you're still figuring out obviously and that's okay. I'm not judging you 'cause I don't know you. I don't know what's goin on in your head.

SUSAN

You're right you don't.

DELLA

I don't pretend to know what your father was thinking when he--

MA

Alright enough! I don't know wanna hear about this. From any of you. He was a good man, a flawed man, now leave it alone. Let him rest in peace, will ya?

SUSAN

No, I think we should know who Pop was and who he wasn't. And who's wearin' a uniform that supposed to stand for integrity and pride when we all know that's she's a hypocrite and a whore.

Pause. Della gathers her hat.

DELLA

Suzie, I'm glad you've found your way home. Tim, if she decides to run away again, my advice would be to let her run. I'm done playin dog catcher.

Della tips her hat and leaves out the front door.

TIM

(to Susan)

Nice to have you back. And nice to see you haven't lost your charmin ways.

SUSAN

What? Was it something I said?

Tim leaves after Della.

MA

What's wrong with you? Leave your brother alone.

SUSAN

What does it have to do with him?

MA

Maybe you don't know everything under the sun.

SUSAN

What? Are you mad at me? It's her I thought you'd-- Okay. I'll go get him.

Susan starts for the door.

MA

Stop!

SUSAN

I'll go get him. I'll apologize. I'll make it right. I'll--

MA

Just stop! Will you just stop it now!

SUSAN
Okay, I--

MA
Sush! You sit down. Sit!

Susan sits at one of the tables. Pause.

SUSAN
I'll get him.

Susan runs out the front.

MA
Hey! Get back here! ...Damn kids always runnin off.

UNCLE BILLY
They're not kids any more.

MA
They'll always be kids.

*Ma starts cleaning up the mess on the bar.
Uncle Billy drinks.*

MA
...Good heavens. As if I'm not tired out enough.

*There's an awkward but calming silence
between them.*

*Uncle Billy holds up his glass and looks at the
light pass through it. It's half full.*

UNCLE BILLY
A lot of people think life is perspective, how ya see the world, ya know. Is the glass half empty? Or is it half full? I don't care about that. Perspective is a load of bull. Half full, half empty, what does that have to do with it? I wanna know what I'm drinkin. Would ya want a full glass of water instead of half a glass of fine single-malt scotch? Of course not. Ya gotta taste your drink. Is it good? Yes. Then who gives a crap if it's a full glass or not. Half a glass of the real good stuff is plenty, that's how I see it. I look at this bar and the folks that sit at it, and at this family and I say, well sure, we got half a glass...but it's the good stuff.

He finishes his drink.

UNCLE BILLY

I outta see about that suit.

Uncle Billy exits out the back.

Ma continues to clean. Stops. And swipes everything off the bar.

The old radio pops on. Maybe Elvis Presley's "Blue Christmas."

Lights fade.

End of ACT I.

An intermission can be taken here, if desired.

ACT II.SCENE 1

Later that day.

The bar is empty. The Christmas tree has some more beer cans on it. The camel/reindeer and the lamb are all taped up and placed around the tree. It's festive, in its own ugly way.

Tim comes in the front with a baseball cap pulled down over his face.

He immediately heads behind the bar and wraps some ice in a rag. When he takes his hat off to apply the ice, we see he's got a nasty bruise around his eye.

Ma enters from the back and Tim hides his face again. He sits down at the bar and nurses a drink.

MA

(to Tim)

Come over here.

TIM

Why?

MA

Because your mother wants a hug. Is that too much to ask?

TIM

I have a headache.

MA

You have three seconds to deliver a hug to your one and only mother.

TIM

Ma, c'mon--

MA

...Two...

TIM
Ma, I just sat down.

MA
...One...

Tim reluctantly gets up and quickly tries to hug her. She grabs his hat off his head and holds his face still.

MA
I knew it!

TIM
(pulling away)
Ma.

He grabs his hat back and retreats.

MA
I knew it!

TIM
Ma, it's nothin.

MA
Not nothin. It's a shiner! Who gave this to you?

TIM
I gave it to myself.

MA
Yeah right.

She keeps trying to see it and touch it while he ducks and moves.

TIM
I slipped and fell.

MA
Yeah, slipped and fell into a fist again.

It's nothin. TIM

Should I see the other guy? MA

Whattaya mean? TIM

You always say I should see the other guy but you didn't say that. Why didn't you say that? Shouldn't I see the other guy? Isn't he worse? MA

Do ya want him to be? TIM

That depends. Who is it? MA

Charlie Mancuso. TIM

Then, yes. MA

Then go see him. Tim

You two. You've been fighting since you were five years old. MA

It's like you always say, holiday traditions are important. TIM

I'll never understand why you went into business with him. MA

Because he's good at fixin cars, that's why. TIM

Do I need to call his mother? MA

If you want. Your phone's hangin on the tree. TIM

MA

Maybe I'll get in a fight of my own.

TIM

Everything's fine, Ma. It's over.

MA

Use the ice, Tim. It's swellin.

TIM

I don't need ice.

She takes the wrapped ice from him and holds it on his head.

TIM

I'm perfectly capable of holding my own ice.

MA

Yeah but you're not. I am.

He lets her hold the ice.

MA

What'd that Charlie call you anyway? Tiny Tim?

TIM

As a matter of fact, he didn't.

MA

'Cause all of the kids used to call you that.

TIM

Ma, I know; I was there.

MA

And you hated it.

TIM

I sold my half of the shop to Charlie.

MA

Why would you do a thing like that?

TIM

So I can work here at the bar. I'm gonna take care of everything. You'll see.

MA

You need to call that Charlie Mancuso and tell him you changed your mind.

TIM

I'm not doin that. And you're not callin his mother.

MA

What would he hit you for?

TIM

He didn't like my terms.

MA

What were they?

TIM

Immediate. The deal's done, alright. Done. With the bit money from the shop and the money from the snow machines we could fix up the place, attract new customers, really turn this bar into somethin special.

MA

It was never the bar that was special. It was the people in it.

TIM

I know. I know that.

MA

It was the man behind the bar.

TIM

Maybe that man can be me.

*Susan enters from the back, a little out of breath.
On seeing Tim, to Ma:*

SUSAN

Found him.

TIM

I. I gotta go.

MA

No you don't.

I gotta find Della.

TIM

Tim leaves out the front.

What happened to his face?

SUSAN

Ma doesn't answer. She throws the ice away behind the bar and then uses the wet rag to clean.

Do ya ever put the rag down, step back, and think this bar is clean - I'm done?

SUSAN

No.

MA

I didn't think so. Maybe the grub is just part of the charm. Like the grit is part of the history.

SUSAN

What about the cockroaches?

MA

They're the tiny historians.

SUSAN

Susan helps her pick up some of the cleaning supplies and other things that were knocked off the bar.

...So you sell it. And then what?

SUSAN

Then I stop cleaning it.

MA

You could travel.

SUSAN

Travel?

MA

SURE. SUSAN

Travel where? MA

I don't know. Anywhere. Everywhere. See the world. Go places you've never been. SUSAN

What for? MA

For the adventure of it. New experiences. To expand your horizons. SUSAN

My horizons are fine. MA

I'd love to travel the world. SUSAN

Oh yeah? MA

Sure. Italy, Ireland, Germany, China. I'd go anywhere. SUSAN

All the way to Timbuktu I bet. MA

Sure. We can go together. SUSAN

What about Casey? MA

Casey is with Dave. SUSAN

What about Dave? MA

Dave is with himself. SUSAN

MA

He's not with you?

SUSAN

Dave can't be with anyone that isn't exactly like him. And now he's turning Casey against me. So much negativity. And I can't be around that. I can't be around them anymore. I--

MA

I always liked Dave.

SUSAN

Oh. Well. He has his moments.

MA

Wish you two stayed around here.

SUSAN

Yeah we weren't exactly welcome, if you remember.

MA

You don't think we wanted to see you? To see Casey? You ran off and--

SUSAN

(overlapping)

--Ran off? I was kicked out!--

MA

That was for your own good. Your father--

SUSAN

(overlapping)

--'Cause I was ruining the family-- and the precious Christmas cards--

MA

--'Cause you were high--

SUSAN

I wasn't high, I--

MA

At least be honest with yourself. With me. After all these years. Don't come back here if you're just gonna lie, like I'm some old coot you can pull one over on! People don't think I know what's goin on around here. But let me tell you somethin-- I KNOW EVERYTHING.

SUSAN

Fine, Ma, fine. Fine.

MA

You can talk your way outta anything. That's what you think. You were always like that, ya know. You were so smart.

SUSAN

I'm still smart.

MA

Who knows what those drugs did to you. To Casey, God Forbid. I don't even want to talk about it. No wonder Dave is sick, the way you two abused yourselves--

SUSAN

Dave is fine.

MA

You said he was in the hospital.

SUSAN

You don't wanna know the truth. No one does.

MA

Of course I do.

SUSAN

Dave is fine. He's not sick.

MA

He isn't?

SUSAN

No.

MA

Why would you say that then? How could you lie about such a thing?

SUSAN

I don't know. I just. I... Dave is fine. That's the truth.

MA

Why wouldn't I wanna know that?

SUSAN
Dave is fine. Casey is fine.

MA
Okay. Good.

SUSAN
It's me, Ma. I'm the one who's messed up.

MA
What are you sayin? You're sick?

SUSAN
No.

MA
You're on the drugs again? Usin that junk?

SUSAN
No. No I'm not. Anymore. I stopped.

MA
When?

SUSAN
I stopped.

MA
You're clean?

SUSAN
Yeah. I. I am clean.

MA
You're clean but you drink.

SUSAN
I said I'm clean I didn't say I was sober.

MA
You sound like your father.

SUSAN
I'm sorry.

MA

And your brother. And Uncle Billy.

SUSAN

We were raised in a bar, what'd you expect?

MA

Not by my choosin. I did the best I could with you kids.

SUSAN

You did great.

MA

Yeah I guess the jury's still out.

SUSAN

Ma. It wasn't Dave that was in the hospital. It was me. I did some really messed up things. I realize that now. But I did my time and I got clean. I got out and I went home to see my baby and Dave wouldn't let me. He said I'm no good for them. How could I not be any good for my own daughter? I know I'm a mess, but I'm better than *no mother at all*, right? Right?

Susan breaks. She takes a walk around the bar until she stops crying.

She picks up the toilet paper and starts dressing the tree again.

SUSAN

I found out about Pop and I was leavin to come here, in time for the funeral and Dave told me not to come back. Can you believe that? I got clean for him and for Casey and I cleaned myself of everything bad. And then he turns me away. I told him, I told him I'm good now. I'm good. I can be good for them. But he had his mind made up and that's how he is, and now I don't know. I don't know if I'll ever see them again.

MA

You'll see 'em. Ya gotta give it time.

SUSAN

I gave 'em everything. I got nothin left. I feel like a shell of somethin. I don't even know who I am. I gotta start all over. That's what I gotta do. Start all over like a baby. Learnin everything anew.

MA

That's okay. That's alright. You need a fresh start. And that's what you got. God's givin you a second chance and a third. You're one of the lucky ones, don't you see?

SUSAN

I don't have anything.

MA

You have your family.

SUSAN

Do I?

MA

Yes.

SUSAN

Oh, Ma I'm sorry. For missin the funeral, for lyin, for bringin terrible donuts, for attackin Della, for talkin bad about Pop and drudging up all the garbage that shoulda stayed buried.

MA

Your father. He had his drinkin days and those aren't times any of us wanna remember. But after that night with Della, he realized he didn't have any control. And he never had a drop again. He struggled but he was always tryin. I'm sorry you had to see that side of your father and that you've been carrin it around. That was an ugly time.

SUSAN

What about you? I'm sorry for you -- you were the one married to him.

MA

When you're married to someone that long, you're bound to have bad times. Heck, you have bad *years*. But you gotta try and focus on the whole picture. Ya gotta see the forest for the trees.

SUSAN

I need to stay here, mamma.

MA

I know. I told ya, I know everything.

Susan hugs Ma.

SUSAN

Thank you, thank you. Thank you.

Ma pulls away.

MA

Alright.

SUSAN

I'm gonna be better. You'll see.

Susan hugs her again.

MA

No more lyin.

SUSAN

Promise.

Susan shakes her head. Ma takes some of the toilet paper from the Christmas tree and wipes Susan's tears.

MA

Okay, then.

SUSAN

Ma? You're really gonna make it snow?

MA

You'll just have to wake up tomorrow morning and see for yourself.

Tim enters from the front door. He holds a small stack of mail.

MA

There he is. My son. Merry Christmas Eve.

TIM

(to Susan)

You're still here, huh?

SUSAN

Yup. Disappointed?

TIM
Surprised.

(to Ma)
Here.

*Tim hands the stack of letters and cards to Ma.
She sorts through it.*

SUSAN
You mad?

TIM
About what?

SUSAN
About before.

TIM
(to Ma)
It's mostly condolences. And there's this.

*Tim hands her a letter and an envelope that he's
already opened (and read). She reads it.*

SUSAN
What's it say?

TIM
Looks like we'll be holdin on to this dump for a little longer.

Susan reads the letter over Ma's shoulder.

SUSAN
Oh. Sorry, Ma.

MA
Suppose I was foolin myself, thinkin anyone'd wanna buy it.

SUSAN
That's not true.

TIM
Someone would wanna buy it. But I wouldn't sell this place for a million dollars.

MA
You wouldn't?

TIM

No, I would. That's a lot of money.

MA

Oh. Yeah, well, it doesn't matter now anyhow.

SUSAN

I'd hate to think of someone else ownin this place. Cleanin it... Wouldn't seem right. Even with Pop gone, this is still home.

MA

Yeah?

TIM

Yeah. Of course. Always.

Pause. They take in the place.

SUSAN

I'm gonna get my things.

Susan exits out the front.

TIM

Things?

MA

I guess.

TIM

Like things to stay?

MA

Seems that way.

TIM

For how long?

MA

She's says for good.

TIM

Really.

MA

It's Suzie. We'll have to just see.

Right. TIM

Ya found Della? MA

Yeah. TIM

Is she upset? MA

She'll be fine. She's got elephant skin. TIM

MA
Suzie wasn't right in what she said, talkin to her like that, but she does come over here a lot. I mean doesn't she have anything better to do? Shouldn't she be patrollin, keep the streets safe and whatnot. I'll tell you what she can do, she can find those degenerate riff-raffs who destroyed the manger. Lock those little pot-heads up for good.

Forget about that ugly manger. TIM

Ugly?! MA

You know not everyone in this town is Christian, but that's beside the point. TIM

What's that supposed to mean? MA

I mean some people may be offended by a religious display on a public-- TIM

Who's offended by the manager? It's nice. It's baby Jesus. MA

Forget it. TIM

MA

Tell me who's offended by baby Jesus. He's a baby! Everyone loves babies. And you got the three wise men with gifts. Gifts for a baby. Whatever backwards religion is against presents for babies is probably worshipping Satan.

TIM

Nevermind. You're right. Everyone loves babies. I'm sorry I brought it up. That's not even what I wanted to say. There's somethin you outta know about. I mean--

MA

What are you babblin--

TIM

I'm tryin to tell ya! If you let me.

MA

You're the one spittin in baby Jesus' eye.

TIM

What? Let me--

MA

I'm not stoppin ya.

TIM

Alright! Okay, me and Della, see, Ma, we're a thing.

MA

A thing?

TIM

Yeah, well, there's a thing. Between us.

MA

Oh yeah?

TIM

Has been. For a while now.

MA

Uh huh.

TIM

Just wanted to tell you.

I know. MA

You know? TIM

You don't think I know about you two. MA

I know that. I just didn't know if you knew it. TIM

Of course I do. You're my son. I know everything about you. MA

So you're okay with it, then? TIM

Never try to hide anything from me. I'm your mother. MA

So you're okay with it, then? TIM

Of course not. MA

What? Ma, we're in love. She's comin over here. For Christmas dinner. TIM

Who says? MA

I do. TIM

Well, it's not up to you. MA

Then we'll go somewhere else for dinner. TIM

Where ya gonna go? MA

TIM

It doesn't matter. We'll go to her family.

MA

I thought they moved to Florida?

TIM

I don't mind a drive. Don't worry about where we're goin. Maybe we'll go to Mel's Diner. It doesn't matter. Just know we're not gonna be here. Is that what you want?

MA

Of course not. You belong here.

TIM

Then I'll stay!

MA

Good!

TIM

What are we fightin about?!

MA

I don't know!

TIM

Let's have some eggnog!

MA

Okay!

Ma gets out glasses. Tim sits at the bar. Ma takes some eggnog out and pours for them both. They drink. It's good?

TIM

Tis good.

MA

Hmmhmm.

TIM

You know Della's comin over here, right?

MA

Yeah, I know. When's she comin?

Now. Any minute. TIM

There's not enough eggnog. MA

Doesn't matter. TIM

Of course it does. MA

She hates eggnog. TIM

Hates eggnog? MA

Yeah. TIM

Who hates eggnog? That's almost as bad as hating babies. MA

Some people do. TIM

No one hates eggnog. MA

Lots of people hate eggnog. TIM

No they don't! MA

It's disgusting. TIM

I thought you liked eggnog! MA

I do. It's disgusting in a good way. TIM

MA

It's not disgusting. Your father loved it.

MA

With rum maybe.

MA

No never. Just eggnog. He always insisted.

TIM

Not everyone likes it.

MA

Everyone I know likes it.

TIM

Not anymore.

MA

I don't know if it's gonna work, Tim. This. With you. And her. The two of ya's.

TIM

Because of the eggnog.

MA

The eggnog. Everything that happened. It's Christmas. And your father, he just... he loved eggnog.

TIM

He loved it. He loved it for you maybe.

MA

He loved it period.

TIM

Okay.

Ma puts the eggnog away.

TIM

You're gonna like her.

MA

I already know her.

TIM

But not really. Not as good as me.

MA

Apparently not.

TIM

I know her in a different way.

MA

Apparently so.

TIM

Give her a chance.

MA

I am! I am already! Giving everyone a chance. That's all I do -- give people chances. Second chances, third chances, endless chances. I'm runnin outta chances.

TIM

Thank you, Ma.

Tim takes Ma's hand.

TIM

Thank you. Let's have some more eggnog.

MA

Alright but can we at least put some rum in it this time?

TIM

I think it's what Pop would have wanted.

MA

For all his spirited ideas, he could be pretty bland. And for all his enthusiasm, sometimes he would never shut up.

*Ma pours the eggnog and Tim pours the rum.
He raises his glass.*

TIM

To remembering the good in people. Or at least ignoring their flaws.

They toast and drink.

MA
He was so proud of you.

TIM
Ha, for what.

MA
For being you. For being a good man.

Tim drinks.

TIM
Some things haven't been decided yet.

Ma takes out a large envelope and holds it out for Tim.

TIM
What's this?

MA
Snow money.

TIM
Oh.

MA
Or bar money. Or whatever you decide. It's yours.

TIM
But you--

She puts it in his hand to makes him take it.

MA
It's up to you.

The front door opens and Della is there.

Ma goes to her, takes off Della's hat and kisses her forehead.

MA
You two have some more eggnog -- I'm going to bed.

DELLA
Okay, uh, Mrs. Bail--

MA
Mary.

Ma heads to the back.

MA
See you in the morning. Snow or shine.

TIM
Okay, goodnight, Ma.

Ma is gone. Della is still standing near the door, confused.

TIM
You alright?

DELLA
I dunno. I think I just had a vision of Christmas Future.

TIM
No, it was The Present.

DELLA
Ya told her, is that what that means?

TIM
Maybe I did.

Della hugs him.

TIM
I was under a strict deadline.

DELLA
Don't ruin it.

TIM
Sorry.

Uncle Billy enters from the back wearing a Santa hat and holding a large clear garbage bag away from his face. Inside, we can see a Santa suit.

UNCLE BILLY

Make way, make way.

He heads for the front door.

TIM

Uncle Billy, wait.

UNCLE BILLY

What is it? I'm on my way to the burn pit.

TIM

I, uh--

DELLA

He told her. About us.

UNCLE BILLY

Ya did, huh.

TIM

I did.

UNCLE BILLY

And the dragon didn't slay the shivering knight?

TIM

She did not.

UNCLE BILLY

Well, congratulations. That's a big step. In this place, it's the equivalent of getting engaged.

DELLA

Thank you.

(putting her arm around Tim)

My white knight.

Tim holds the envelope out to Uncle Billy.

TIM

Here.

UNCLE BILLY

What's this?

TIM

It's an envelope.

UNCLE BILLY

I see that. What's inside?

Uncle Billy takes the envelope, opens it up and looks in.

UNCLE BILLY

Ohhhh. The family jewels.

TIM

Ma gave me the money. And I'm giving it you.

UNCLE BILLY

Well, thanks. And I didn't bring you anything.

TIM

It's for the snow machines.

UNCLE BILLY

Oh. Right. I figured that might be the case.

DELLA

It's not too late, is it? I have the permits ready to go.

UNCLE BILLY

No. I can get 'em. Six snow machines. Comin right up. You're lucky I'm workin the night shift.

He slides the envelope inside a folded newspaper and tucks it under his arm.

UNCLE BILLY

Why the change of heart?

TIM

Not a change of heart really. I just realize it's not my money. It's not my mother's money either; it's his. And this is what he wanted. I can't rationalize this silly dream of his, can't get my fingers on it, but that doesn't mean it's not important.

He sang to a different tune and this, this is the final note of his song. ...Or maybe it was...seeing you comin through that door, with that Santa hat on and everything, I don't know...maybe ya just inspired me.

UNCLE BILLY

Or maybe you're getting high off its fumes.

TIM

Hard to tell.

UNCLE BILLY

I'm takin it outside to air out. Maybe I'll get lucky and a garbage truck will run us both over. Compared to now, this thing'll smell like daisies.

DELLA

What about you?

UNCLE BILLY

I'll be buried under some.

Uncle Billy heads to the door.

TIM

Uncle Billy.

UNCLE BILLY

Yeah, kid?

TIM

Thanks. And do me a favor... don't say anything.

As he's leaving...

UNCLE BILLY

Twass the night before Christmas, when all through the house
Not a creature was stirring, not even a louse.

He's gone.

Della hugs Tim, then pulls him in for kiss.

TIM

What was that for?

DELLA

Our engagement.

Oh. Well. You know that was--

TIM

She kisses him again. This time she points above them. Tim looks up to see mistletoe. He shakes his head. He pulls over a chair to reach it.

What are you doing?

DELLA

Tim takes the mistletoe down.

Bah humbug.

DELLA

Tim holds it above them and kisses Della.

Oh.

DELLA

Tim continues to hold it above them as he leads her off.

Ohhh...

DELLA

The lights dim. The Christmas lights stay on and we can still see the bar.

SCENE 2

Christmas morning. The lights come up.

The old radio plays a tune before flicking off.

Uncle Billy staggers through from the back door. He's wearing a full Santa Claus costume, beard and hat. He is merrily drunk and sings a carol, something like:

UNCLE BILLY

It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas, everywhere I go...

He tries to sit down at the bar, but fails.

UNCLE BILLY

Whoa.

*He sits down on the floor. He almost succeeds.
He lays down and promptly falls asleep.*

A few moments later, Tim comes in from the back. He's no longer wearing his suit from the previous scene. He passes by Uncle Billy without seeing him and grabs a glass from behind the bar. He pours himself from some eggnog and is about to add rum, but stops. He puts the rum away and drinks the eggnog plain. Still disgusting.

He makes his way around the bar and finds Uncle Billy passed out. Beat. He lifts his glass.

TIM

Merry Christmas, Uncle Billy.

No response. He drinks.

TIM

I guess I should make sure you're not dead.

Tim takes his pulse. He's not. He lifts his arm and lets go and it hits the floor: nothing.

Della comes in from the back. She's no longer wearing her Sheriff's uniform. Something casual, maybe a Christmas sweater. The point is, she's changed, in more ways than one.

DELLA

You comin'?

(seeing Uncle Billy)

Oh. Is he--?

TIM

Half way dead, all the way asleep.

DELLA

Crap. The parade. He promised.

TIM

He promised to put on the suit. And he did.

DELLA

The rest was implied.

TIM

Ah well. Maybe next year.

DELLA

What do you mean maybe next year? No, the parade is happening. Every year there's a Santa and every kid in this town looks for him. It's gonna break their hearts. What're we gonna do?

TIM

We can give him a pep talk.

DELLA

I'm being serious.

TIM

(doing a Coach's voice)

Okay, Uncle Billy, you gotta be serious now. It's Christmas. It's game day. All your fans are here. And you can't let him down. Ya hear me, champ?

Tim takes off the Santa hat and hits him with it: nothing. Then Tim puts it on.

TIM

Ya hear me? We're countin on you.

No reaction from Uncle Billy.

TIM

(to Della)

I think he just needs another minute.

Della sees Tim with the hat on and has a realization.

DELLA

That's it.

TIM
What?

DELLA
You're wearing this suit.

TIM
What're you talking about?

DELLA
You're wearing this suit. You're gonna be Santa.

TIM
How can I wear this suit when Uncle Billy is wearing this suit?

DELLA
He's not gonna be wearing it for long.

Della begins to strip the coat off of Uncle Billy.

TIM
No, I don't think that's such a good idea.

DELLA
Why not? Of course it is. Besides you have no choice.

Tim
Who says?

Della kisses him.

DELLA
Put on the suit.

TIM
I mean I'll think about it.

Della kisses him again.

DELLA
It's not tomorrow. It's today. Right now. It's Christmas.

TIM
Let's see if it fits. There's no harm in that.

Della and Tim strip the suit off of Uncle Billy and put in on Tim. It's loose but it'll work.

Della grabs the pillow still left over from Susan earlier in the day.

Here.

DELLA

She shoves it under his jacket/shirt and tucks it in his pants.

And this.

DELLA

She rips the beard off Uncle Billy and ties it on Tim. He looks a little ridiculous but also perfect.

Say ho ho ho.

DELLA

Del--

TIM

Do it.

DELLA

Ho ho ho.

TIM

Yeah, that'll do just fine.

DELLA

Ma has come in from the front door. She sees Santa and yelps. Tim turns and Ma stares at him in disbelief.

What's wrong, Ma?

TIM

I---

MA

You look like ya seen a ghost.

TIM

MA

My heavens. I thought I did...

DELLA

Doesn't he look good?

MA

He looks perfect. I thought for a second you were him and his leavin was just a dream. I was just... it felt so real and I was instantly washed over with a... with a warmth... I miss him. It's Christmas morning and I miss him. More than I ever thought I would...

Ma is shaking and starts to cry. Tim reaches out to her, but she embraces Della instead.

TIM

It's alright, Ma. I'll take it off.

MA

No don't!

TIM

Okay, I won't.

Ma stops crying now and is almost laughing.

MA

Seems silly now, doesn't it? Wishing for things that can never be.

DELLA

It's not silly.

MA

Why doesn't your Uncle have any clothes on?

TIM

Why are you surprised he doesn't?

MA

Give him a blanket at least. It's Christmas afterall.

TIM

That's true, it is. Here, Uncle Billy.

Tim takes his newspaper from the bar and spreads it out over Uncle Billy.

Susan runs in from the front like a little kid on, well, on Christmas morning.

SUSAN

Hey!

MA

Hey yourself!

SUSAN

Hey have you looked outside? What are you doing in here?

TIM

We're inside because it's winter.

SUSAN

Yeah it is. It's also Christmas. A white Christmas.

MA

Really?

SUSAN

Yeah it's really coming down now. And it's covering everything. Everyone is coming outside. It's beautiful.

MA

(to Tim)

So you decided to go through with it, huh.

TIM

It's what he wanted, right?

MA

Thank you.

TIM

I guess Uncle Billy celebrated early.

MA

You got me wellin up again.

TIM

Sorry.

MA

C'mere.

Ma pulls Tim in for a hug.

SUSAN

You should really come see it.

Ma reaches for something inside the Santa coat. She pulls out the envelope she gave Tim the night before. She looks inside then pulls out the money. It's all there.

MA

The money.

TIM

I gave it to Uncle Billy for the equipment. Last night. Della you were there.

DELLA

Right. He wasn't even that drunk.

MA

If he didn't rent the snow machines, then how's it--

SUSAN

I didn't see any machines. I just, I don't know-- it's just... snowing.

They all congregate at the window.

SUSAN

See.

DELLA

It's snowing alright.

It's snowing. And now it's snowing in the bar.

They look up and it falls all around them.

Ma pulls Tim and Della, and Susan in close. They're huddled together under the falling snow.

The old radio pops on and a soft Christmas melody plays, something like Cat Power's "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas."

Uncle Billy has risen and stumbles over to join them.

UNCLE BILLY

What'd I miss?

MA

Nothing. And everything.

TIM

Merry Christmas, Ma.

MA

Merry Christmas.

The snow keeps falling.

The old radio plays on.

THE END.