

A SILVER SCREEN CHRISTMAS

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INT. DONNA'S HOUSE (BATHROOM) - DAY

DONNA, 37, runs a caulking gun around a bathtub. Exposed boards and tools lay around. The bathroom is new and half finished.

Wearing jeans and a tool belt, she's in her comfort zone. She finishes and puts down the gun, satisfied.

INT. JAKE'S APARTMENT (BATHROOM) - DAY

JAKE, 40, moves around his bathroom, getting ready for the day. Paralyzed from the waist down, he moves in a WHEELCHAIR.

On the mirror are several MOTIVATIONAL phrases about success and being a winner.

INT. DONNA'S HOUSE (KITCHEN)- DAY

Still wearing her tool belt, Donna pours cereal and milk into a bowl. She begins a pot of coffee.

DONNA
Natalie, breakfast!

INT. JAKE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Jake pours cereal into a bowl and adds milk.

JAKE
Conner, breakfast!

INT. DONNA'S HOUSE (KITCHEN) - DAY

Donna pours herself a cup of coffee.

DONNA
Natalie, come eat, you're going to be late!

Donna hears rustling off screen and then some bells jingle.

INT. LIVING ROOM

Donna finds her daughter, NATALIE, 10, searching through a box. She pulls out Christmas lights, a nutcracker, and some tinsel.

She opens another box, full of nervous energy, searching frantically.

DONNA
Natalie? What are you doing?

NATALIE
Where is it? It's got to be here.

Natalie pulls out more bells and then finds reindeer antlers on a headband.

NATALIE (cont'd)
Got it! I need these for today.

DONNA
What for?

NATALIE
The school play. Auditions are today for the Story of Rudolph. I want to make sure I have an edge over the other kids.

Natalie puts on the antlers.

NATALIE (cont'd)
How do I look?

Natalie's face is full of fear and doubt.

DONNA
You look like the lead actress in a play about Rudolph.

Natalie's confidence boosts. She looks off in the distance and points.

NATALIE
I say, Santa, is that the North Star?
I think we're going to make it!

INT. JAKE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Jake finishes a cup of coffee. Conner finishes his breakfast.

JAKE
We better get a move on. The bus will be here soon.

CONNER
Do I have to go?

JAKE
Our greatest weakness lies in giving up. The most certain way to succeed is always to try just one more time.

Conner is not impressed. He puts on his jacket and grabs his backpack.

JAKE (cont'd)
Know who said that?

CONNER
You did.

JAKE
No. It was Tom-

CONNER
You said it yesterday. And last week. And like a thousand times before that.

JAKE
I did? Oh. Well it's still a good quote. And it's Thomas Edison.

EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY

Conner and Jake wait on the corner.

CONNER
My homework! I left it on the table. And here comes the bus. If I don't turn in my essay I'll get an F. I can't get an F. Dad, what do I do?

JAKE
Shoot. Okay... go grab it and I'll call an Uber. And hurry!

Conner runs back to the building as Jake takes out his phone.

EXT. HOUSE - DAY

Donna and Natalie exit. Natalie opens the car door and throws her backpack in.

NATALIE

The antlers! I left them in the kitchen.

DONNA

I got it.

Donna runs back in. A second later, she runs back out with the antlers in her purse. She throws her purse in the back.

EXT. BOSTON - DAY

Donna walks up the street toward a HARDWARE STORE. Poking out of her purse are the reindeer antlers.

She stops in front of the store. Large signs sit in the windows:

GOING OUT OF BUSINESS

EVERYTHING REDUCED!!!

PRICED TO SELL!!

A heaviness comes over her as she looks at them.

INT. SMALL HARDWARE STORE - DAY

ALAN, 60, looks up and smiles when she comes in. She puts her purse on the counter. The antlers poke up.

DONNA

Hey Dad.

Alan sees the antlers and pulls them out.

ALAN

What's this?

DONNA

Oh crap, I thought I gave those to Natalie. They're for her school play.

Donna looks at a popcorn machine in the corner. It has a price tag on it. She goes to it, clearly fond of it.

DONNA (cont'd)

You're selling grandma's popcorn machine?

ALAN
Everything must go. That means
everything.

DONNA
I'm going to put out the last boxes
of nails. Who knows? Maybe we'll get
lucky and sell them all.

ALAN
Hold on.

Alan puts the antlers on Donna's head.

ALAN (cont'd)
That's better.

Donna disappears into the back.

The door opens. RYAN, 38, enters. He's a handsome, down to
earth guy with a warm vibe.

Donna comes back out with the boxes of nails.

RYAN
Hey Donna.

DONNA
Ryan!

Donna sees Ryan, gets flustered, and trips on a box in the
aisle. The nails fly all over the ground.

RYAN
Whoa. Careful. Looks like you're
still learning to fly.

DONNA
What?

Ryan motions to the reindeer antlers. Donna takes them off,
embarrassed. She stoops down and scoops up nails.

Alan comes over with a broom.

ALAN
I got it.

RYAN
You got any sandpaper left?

DONNA

Piles of it. We're selling them two for one.

Donna walks with him to another aisle. He grabs a dozen boxes of sandpaper.

RYAN

You know I love a good discount.
(then)
How's Alan doing?

DONNA

He keeps saying he's fine, but you know how he is.

RYAN

He won't say when he's upset. He'll just go find something to work on. I'm surprised he hasn't built a new bathroom by now!

DONNA

Haha, yeah, that'd be pretty dramatic.

RYAN

I still can't believe this place is closing. It's been like my second home since I was 16.

DONNA

I keep thinking it's not real, and it's all going to turn around, but we just can't compete with Mega Tools.

Alan comes around the aisle and hears the tail end of the conversation.

ALAN

Forget about Mega Tools. We have something they'll never have. We have family. And until someone buys the machine, we've got Alan's famous coffee.

Ryan and Donna follow Alan over to the coffee machine. He serves everyone a mug of coffee.

Donna's phone dings with a text from JUNE.

TEXT MESSAGE JUNE

Can you come by? I need to show you something.

ALAN

Everything okay?

DONNA

Yeah. I think so. It's June. She says she wants to show me something. I should go now so I can drop off the antlers for Natalie.

Donna reaches out to put her mug down. She leans in to kiss Ryan on the cheek. He's caught off guard and ends up spilling his coffee.

DONNA (cont'd)

Sorry. I'm so sorry. That was so weird. It's like a reflex - I'm so used to - sorry. Sorry.

Donna keeps apologizing as she walks out.

EXT. HARDWARE STORE

Ryan follows Donna out.

RYAN

Donna, hold on.

DONNA

I'm sor-

RYAN

You don't have to apologize. I know this whole being friends and divorced thing is weird. It's going to take some getting used to. But I'm glad we're doing it.

DONNA

You are?

RYAN

It means so much to Natalie to see us getting along.

DONNA

Right. Okay. Well, bye.

Donna turns and walks into a light pole.

DONNA (cont'd)

I'm fine.

EXT. BOSTON - DAY

Jake rolls down the sidewalk. He comes by an abandoned movie theater. The letters on the marquee are falling off, some light bulbs are broken, and the windows are dirty.

Jake stops and looks up. He looks in the window. He takes out his phone and takes a few pictures.

INT. JUNE'S HOUSE

Donna and JUNE sit together on the couch. June, 35, is nearly eight months pregnant and huge. June holds a letter. She hands it to Donna.

DONNA

What's this?

JUNE

The old theater grandma left to us,
it's behind on its property taxes.

Donna reads the letter.

JUNE (cont'd)

If we don't pay up by the 1st of the
year, the city is going to foreclose
on us.

DONNA

We owe over a thousand dollars! How
did this happen?

JUNE

I just found out all the letters have
been going to Grandma's old PO Box.

DONNA

I thought we closed that.

JUNE

So did I. The phone number was wrong
too. If I hadn't checked on it we
would've lost it without even
knowing.

DONNA

Who else knows about this?

JUNE

No one. I wanted to talk to you first.

DONNA

Where are we going to get a thousand dollars?

JUNE

That's what I wanted to talk to you about... Maybe it's time we sold it.

DONNA

Sell the theater? But it's a part of our family, and with the store closing, we're already losing so much. We can't lose that too.

JUNE

It's been closed for five years. We're just losing money on it. We need to think about what's best for everyone. That money could go towards acting classes for Natalie, a retirement fund for mom and dad, and a college fund for Junior.

DONNA

Junior?

June rubs her belly.

JUNE

That's what we're calling him until he arrives.

DONNA

You really think we should sell the theater?

INT. RALPH'S OFFICE - DAY

RALPH, 60, sits at a large desk. He's the CEO of Two Beans in a Pod coffee company. He has a Two Beans coffee mug on his desk, as well as posters on the wall of espresso, beans and their logo.

Jake enters as Ralph finishes a call. Jake holds out his phone. Ralph glances up at it.

RALPH
Alright Daryl, that sounds great.
I'll be in touch again soon.

Ralph hangs up.

JAKE
I found it.

RALPH
You found your phone.
Congratulations.

Jake looks at his phone. It's not on.

JAKE
I thought that was on. Okay, look
now.

Jake holds out a photo of the old theater.

RALPH
What am I looking at?

JAKE
Remember that old movie theater
downtown? It was called The Roosevelt
and it'd been there for like a 100
years.

RALPH
The Roosevelt... oh wait, yeah. Is
that it? It looks terrible.

JAKE
It closed. Looks like it's been
closed for awhile.

Jake waits, excited, but Ralph isn't getting it.

JAKE (cont'd)
This is it! This is what we've been
looking for! You want to open our
biggest franchise location yet? Well
here it is. Centrally located. Big,
open floor plan. And apparently up
for grabs.

RALPH
Apparently?

JAKE

I haven't been able to reach the owners - yet. But I will! And then we can finally move forward with the flagship mega-store you've been wanting to do. There's plenty of room here for a cafe, lobby and bookstore.

Ralph is unsure, thinking, and then grins big.

RALPH

I like it. But let's not count our victories yet. Find out who owns it and how much they want.

JAKE

I'm on it.

Jake heads for the door.

RALPH

Jake?
(then)
Good work.

Jake can't help grinning from ear to ear.

JAKE

Thanks Dad.

INT. JAKE'S OFFICE - DAY

Jake sits before a big desk in a big, corner office. He picks up his phone and dials a number. The line continues to ring.

His secretary SARA, 40, enters. She puts down a mug of hot coffee.

Jake hangs up, annoyed.

JAKE

Why don't these people answer their phone? Are they in hiding?

SARA

Is this about that movie theater?

Jake rolls around the desk.

JAKE

I'm going to go over there. Maybe I can catch someone there.

Jake puts on his jacket and moves to the door.

SARA

Here, take this.

Sara hands him a candy cane.

SARA (cont'd)

It's for good luck.

JAKE

That's so weird. I suddenly feel like this is my lucky day.

Jake exits.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Donna and Natalie walk up a busy downtown street.

NATALIE

I can't believe Aunt June wants to sell the theater.

DONNA

She thinks we could use the money. And she's right.

(then)

Do you remember when we had your birthday party in the theater, and everyone watched A Christmas Story?

DONNA & NATALIE

You'll shoot your eye out!

Donna and Natalie laugh as they relive the movie. When they arrive at the theater they see a man (Jake) leaning in, looking through the windows.

They stop laughing as they tentatively approach.

DONNA

Can I help you?

JAKE

I'm just trying to see inside. I've been calling the owner for a week but he never answers.

NATALIE

You mean she.

JAKE

I'm sorry?

NATALIE

She never answers. And she's right here.

JAKE

Are you the owner?

DONNA

One of them, yes.

NATALIE

She also owns a hardware store, but it's closing.

DONNA

That's enough, Natalie.

JAKE

I'm Jake.

He extends his hand for a handshake. Donna reluctantly accepts.

DONNA

And you're here because...?

JAKE

I've got a proposal to write up for the owner. Well for you, actually. I just need to see inside first so I can get the specs right.

NATALIE

It's your lucky day! We're going in right now.

JAKE

Great! I'm going to need to go over several things, including any damage. Have you had a caretaker in here since it's been closed?

DONNA

I can't believe this. I just saw the letter TODAY and you people are all over me.

JAKE
Letter? What letter?

Donna unlocks the door. She ushers Natalie in. Jake tries to follow. She quickly pulls the door closed and Jake crashes into it.

JAKE (cont'd)
Hey, excuse me. I just want to talk.
Miss? Miss? Could you open the door?

INT. MOVIE THEATER, LOBBY - DAY

Donna locks the door. Jake knocks on the window. He speaks through the glass.

JAKE
Is there a reason you won't talk to me?

DONNA
We'll pay our taxes, okay? And I really don't think you're allowed to do this. This is harassment.

JAKE
Harassment? What, no. I have no idea what you're talking about.

NATALIE
What are you talking about?

DONNA
He's with the IRS. They're trying to scare us but it won't work!

JAKE
IRS? What in the heck gave you that idea? I'm here on business.

NATALIE
He's here on business.

DONNA
What kind of business?

NATALIE
Yeah! What kind of business?

JAKE

I'm the vice president of development at my company. Could you let me in? It's really cold out here.

NATALIE

I think you should let him in.

DONNA

Maybe he's lying. This might be a ruse. He might want to kidnap us.

JAKE

Just out of curiosity, how would I go about kidnapping you?

NATALIE

He has a point.

DONNA

(to Jake)

I'm sorry you wasted your time coming down here, but you can't come in. I have a lot to do and this is a private matter.

JAKE

Could I at least come inside and look around? It would mean a lot to me. I haven't been inside since I saw a Christmas Story here when I was a kid.

NATALIE

We love that movie!

JAKE

I saw that movie with my Dad. He traveled a lot for his work. It was one of the few movies we saw together. I still remember how hard he laughed when the Dad opened the prize and it was a lamp shaped like a leg.

NATALIE

Mom, seriously. He's a fan of the theater. You need to let him in. You're just being rude now.

DONNA

Okay, fine. I'm opening the door.

Donna turns back to the door. She reaches for the lock and hesitates. Jake looks in, waiting.

She unlocks it.

DONNA (cont'd)
You can come in for a quick look.
Then be on your way.

JAKE
Thank you. I really appreciate this.

Jake comes in and looks around with Donna and Natalie. He spins in a circle, taking it all in.

Natalie runs behind the counter and pretends to work there.

NATALIE
Would you like butter on your
popcorn?

JAKE
Absolutely.

Natalie giggles as she plays behind the counter, pretending to serve popcorn and drinks.

NATALIE
This is so cool! Mom, you cannot sell
this place!

JAKE
So you are selling. Do you already
have an offer? Whatever it is, we can
beat it.

DONNA
We're not selling. We're just
considering our options.

Jake takes a card out of his wallet. Donna reads it.

DONNA (cont'd)
You work for Two Beans?

NATALIE
What's that?

JAKE
It's short for Two Beans in a Pod,
and it just happens to be the fastest
growing coffee chain in America.

NATALIE

What does it mean?

JAKE

It's partly a play on words, like the expression two peas in a pod, but it also refers to -

DONNA

What does Two Beans have to do with the theater?

JAKE

We would love for this to be the next location of our franchise. I can already see it. We'll take out that counter - the coffee bar will most likely be over there. And this wallpaper will be stripped. These light fixtures will all have to be updated.

Jake heads for the theater doors.

JAKE (cont'd)

I wonder how long it'll take to rip out all the chairs? The bookstore will have to go where they are. And the screen will -

DONNA

Stop!

JAKE

What?

DONNA

No. Absolutely not. There's no way you're gutting this theater to make some corporate clone. You're just like Mega Tools.

JAKE

Mega Tools? We sell coffee, not -

DONNA

It's not about the coffee. It's about the corporate machine taking over the soul of this city.

JAKE

Now hold on -

DONNA

You come in and you tear down memories and history and character. You want to strip this place of its heart, just so you can make a few extra dollars selling burned coffee.

JAKE

Our coffee is never burned. We have extremely high standards for -

DONNA

Those light fixtures, those were handpicked by my grandmother. And that wallpaper was put up by my grandfather.

Donna goes over to the counter.

DONNA (cont'd)

And you can't just tear out this counter. I had my first kiss here.

NATALIE

You did? Who was it? Was it Dad?

JAKE

You have a lot of memories here. I get that. And I don't want to take that away from you.

DONNA

I think it's time for you to -

JAKE

At least hear my offer before you say no.

DONNA

No.

JAKE

I promise, we'll pay well above market value. Plus, you'll get free coffee for life.

Jake grins. Donna is not charmed.

DONNA

I don't drink coffee.

NATALIE

Yes you do. You have like six cups a day.

DONNA

It's time for you to go Mr... Mr...

JAKE

Jake.

NATALIE

Your name is Jake Jake?

JAKE

It's Jake Anderson. I didn't catch your names.

Donna ignores the request.

NATALIE

I'm Natalie, and she's Donna.

Donna opens the door and holds it open. She holds his business card out to him.

JAKE

Keep it. Think it over, discuss this with your family and then give me a call. Goodbye ladies!

NATALIE

Bye, Jake!

Jake exits.

DONNA

I can't believe that guy. Is there anything those corporate greedy goons won't try and take?

NATALIE

You seem stressed. Here, have some popcorn, on the house.

Natalie serves Donna an imaginary bag of popcorn. Donna relaxes and plays along.

DONNA

Mmmmm. That's good. What's your secret?

NATALIE

I make sure to serve it as fresh as possible.

INT. SCREENING ROOM - DAY

Natalie runs down the aisle in awe of the big, empty theater. She feels the soft velvet of the chairs. She sits down in one.

NATALIE

Mom, turn on the projector! Light this baby up.

DONNA

We don't have time to watch a movie.

NATALIE

But it still works, right?

DONNA

I think so. I hope so.

Donna sits down beside Natalie.

NATALIE

Then what are you waiting for? Go dust it off and find out. You've got a movie theater to open.

DONNA

Natalie...

NATALIE

Isn't that what you want?

DONNA

Well...

NATALIE

Mom, open your eyes. Look around you. This place is amazing!

DONNA

I can't argue with that. And I have so many memories here. But with the store closing I need to focus on finding another job.

NATALIE

Or... this could be your job.

DONNA

It needs too much work. Everything needs to be cleaned and fixed up and updated.

NATALIE

Gee, if only you knew someone who was good with tools and liked to fix stuff up.

Donna looks around. She gets a sparkle in her eyes and smiles, knowing she would LOVE to fix this place up.

Donna takes out her phone and calls someone.

DONNA

Dad? Are you still in the store?

(pause)

You didn't sell the popcorn machine, did you?

(pause)

Great! Take the tag off of it. We're going to need it.

(pause)

I'm reopening the theater!

NATALIE

Awesome!

INT. DONNA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Natalie decorates the house for Christmas. Christmas music plays in the background.

KNOCK KNOCK

Natalie puts down a string of tinsel and opens the door to Ryan.

NATALIE

Hey Dad!

Ryan scoops Natalie up in a big hug.

RYAN

Hey. Where's your Mom? There's someone I want her to meet.

HILLARY, 35, walks in. She's a real girly girl - curled hair, a nice dress, full makeup.

HILLARY
Hi. I'm Hillary.

INT. BATHROOM UNDER CONSTRUCTION - NIGHT

Donna, in her overalls and scrubby work clothes, sits on the side of the tub, putting up a line of tiles.

Ryan comes in, followed by Hillary.

RYAN
Donna?

Donna looks up, sees Ryan, and falls into the bathtub.

DONNA
Ow!

RYAN
You okay?

DONNA
Fine.

Donna notices Hillary behind Ryan.

HILLARY
Hi there!

RYAN
Donna, this is my girlfriend Hillary.
I wanted you two to meet.

Donna looks at them in confusion.

RYAN (cont'd)
We agreed that if we were getting serious with anyone we'd introduce them to each other.

DONNA
Who's serious?

RYAN
Me and Hillary.

DONNA
I didn't even realize you were dating.

HILLARY

We met at back to school night. I have a ten year old also. Trevor. He's in Natalie's class actually.

DONNA

Back to school night. Wow. Okay.
(then)
Could we not have this conversation while I'm in a bathtub?

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Ryan, Hillary and Donna stand around the kitchen counter. Donna has put out some cookies and peppermint candies.

DONNA

So what do you do Hillary?

HILLARY

I work at the Boston Globe. I write for the lifestyle section.

DONNA

You're a writer? Wow. I thought you might be a hairstylist or something. You just look so put together.

HILLARY

Oh my gosh, no. I'm terrible at that kind of stuff. I'm always on a deadline and I never have time to do my makeup. I must look awful right now.

DONNA

Here, put this over your head.

Donna hands Hillary a paper bag. No one laughs.

DONNA (cont'd)

Sorry. That was a joke. Maybe I should wear the bag.

Natalie comes in.

NATALIE

Mom, you okay?

DONNA

Fine.

NATALIE
You're all sweaty.

DONNA
I'm fine. It's just hot in here. Did you turn up the heater?

RYAN
We should get going. You ready, Natalie?

NATALIE
Yep. Bye Mom.

Donna gives Natalie a really big hug.

DONNA
Bye sweetie. I'll see you Sunday.

HILLARY
It was nice meeting you.

DONNA
You too.

Hillary, Ryan and Natalie turn to go. As they do, Donna grab's Ryan's arm.

DONNA (cont'd)
(whispering)
You couldn't have given me a little warning?

RYAN
What do you mean?

DONNA
(strained whisper)
Hillary!

Hillary comes back in.

HILLARY
Yes?
(then)
I thought I heard my name.

Natalie comes in.

NATALIE
I thought we were leaving. Now we're all back in the kitchen.

RYAN
We're leaving.
(then)
We'll see you Sunday.

DONNA
Yep. See ya Sunday.

Ryan, Hillary and Natalie exit.

DONNA (cont'd)
I'm Hillary. I smell amazing and I
have perfect hair. Bleh! Whatever
Hillary. I bet you don't even know
what a jigsaw is!

Donna catches her reflection in the window. Her hair is messy. She has no makeup on and bags under her eyes. A sadness comes over her.

INT. JAKE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Jake is at his computer, searching online. Conner comes in wearing pajamas.

CONNER
Dad? I thought you were getting me
chocolate milk.

JAKE
Just one more second. I'm trying to
find a store.

CONNER
What kind of store?

JAKE
A hardware store. The owner's name is
Donna. And it's closing. That's all I
know.

Jake enters a few different search terms. He comes across an article about a CLOSING family owned hardware store. He sees Donna's picture.

JAKE (cont'd)
Found it! Alan's Supply Shop. Alan
must be her dad.

CONNER
Who is she?

JAKE

She's the woman that's going to sell me her theater. She just doesn't know it yet.

Jake opens the article. He looks at the store name. He looks up the address. His phone rings with Ralph.

JAKE (cont'd)

Hey Dad.

RALPH (O.S.)

I've been thinking about the theater.

JAKE

Me too. And guess what?

RALPH (O.S.)

I want to take you off the project.

JAKE

What? Why?

RALPH (O.S.)

I'm just not sure you're up for this. I need a real leader on this one.

JAKE

I know I haven't led anything this big before, but I can do this. I know I can.

RALPH (O.S.)

I'm ready to move on this. I need you to be sure you can do this and do it right.

JAKE

I can do it. I've never been more sure of anything.

RALPH (O.S.)

Well... alright. I'll give you... let's say two weeks.

JAKE

Two weeks? But that's hardly -

RALPH (O.S.)

Don't make me regret this.

Ralph hangs up. Jake returns to his computer. He writes down the address of the store.

CONNER

Don't worry, Dad. You can do it. I know you can. You can do anything.

JAKE

Thanks champ. Let's get you that chocolate milk.

INT. ALAN'S TOOLS - DAY

Donna drinks coffee. She looks out the window, hoping someone will come in.

The door opens. She doesn't see anyone. She's confused and then realizes Jake is wheeling in.

JAKE

Hello. I'm looking for - oh, hey! Is this your store?

DONNA

What are you doing here?

JAKE

I saw this project online. It's a desk for a kid. I thought, you know, I should try and make that for my son. He'd love it.

DONNA

A desk? Really?

JAKE

What?

DONNA

You're going to build a desk?

JAKE

I sure am. That is, if you'll help me find what I need.

DONNA

And how will you do that?

JAKE

With these instructions, some tools, and some wood. How else would I do it?

DONNA

You can't just build a desk.

JAKE
Why not? Because I'm in a wheelchair?

Donna shrugs and won't look him in the eye.

JAKE (cont'd)
Last time I checked you used tools
with your hands, not your legs.

DONNA
Do you even have a son?

JAKE
His name's Conner.

DONNA
You need to leave.

Alan comes out from the back.

ALAN
Donna! We don't treat customers that
way.
(to Jake)
How can I help you?

Jake takes some papers out of his pocket.

JAKE
I printed this project out. I thought
I'd try and make it.

DONNA
It's for "his son".

JAKE
You don't have to use air quotes. He
is real. Here, I'll show you a
picture.

Jake pulls up a photo and shows Donna.

DONNA
That's obviously photoshopped.

Jake is about to respond but Alan jumps in.

ALAN
She's kidding. Let's talk tools. What
do you need?

JAKE
Everything.

DONNA
Dad, can I talk to you for a second?

Alan goes behind the counter with Donna.

DONNA (cont'd)
You cannot help him. He needs to
leave.

ALAN
I don't know what's gotten into you,
but I don't like it. If he says he
can do it then he can do it. It's not
our place to judge.

DONNA
You don't understand. He came by the
theater yesterday. He's some kind of
corporate developer. He's up to
something. I just don't know what.

JAKE
Is there a problem?

ALAN
(to Donna)
We need every dollar we can get. If
he wants to spend money, let's help
him do that. And if he's any trouble,
we'll ask him to leave.
(to Jake)
Right this way.

Alan leads Jake to another aisle. Donna glares after.

LATER:

Donna rings Jake up.

JAKE
Funny running into you like this.

DONNA
Yeah, hilarious.

Donna hands Jake his bag of supplies. Alan is holding some
pieces of wood.

JAKE
Thanks for cutting those for me,
Alan.

ALAN
No trouble. Where should I...?

Alan isn't sure if he should hold the wood or give it to Jake.

JAKE
I've called an Uber. Would you mind putting it in the car when it arrives?

ALAN
You got it. And remember, we're open until the end of the month. Be sure and come and see us again before we close.

JAKE
I'll do that.

A car honks outside.

JAKE (cont'd)
That's my ride. And Donna, here's my card. I hope you'll keep this one.

Donna takes the card and holds open the door. Jake and Alan exit.

Alan comes back in.

DONNA
Don't.

ALAN
Don't what?

DONNA
Fall for his charms. He's just another corporate conman. If he got his way, every store in this city would be one of his coffee shops.

ALAN
Huh. He seemed nice to me.

DONNA
It doesn't matter. There's no way we're selling to them. That theater is ours, and it's going to stay that way.

(MORE)

DONNA (cont'd)

(then)

In fact, I'm going to start now! The sooner I renovate the sooner we can open.

ALAN

That's my girl! Go get em!

INT. THEATER - DAY

Donna puts a fresh coat of paint on one wall. She's listening to a rock-style Christmas song. She's energized and lost in the music and the work.

Behind her on the counter her phone rings with June's name. It stops. A text message comes in.

TEXT MESSAGE JUNE

Dad said you want to keep the theater?? I thought we agreed to sell. I'm still in favor of selling.
CALL ME.

INT. JAKE'S OFFICE - DAY

Jake works at his desk. Ralph enters.

RALPH

What's the status on the old theater?

JAKE

We're right on track. I found the owner, touched base, and am going to follow up tomorrow.

RALPH

Keep on it.

(then)

I couldn't stop thinking about it last night. You were right. This is it. The location is perfect. The building is interesting. And it's just the right size. It's like it's been waiting for us.

Jake grins, loving that his father approves.

INT. DONNA'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Donna takes a hot green bean casserole out of the oven.

The doorbell rings. She puts down the casserole and exits.

EXT. DONNA'S HOUSE

Donna watches as Natalie walks to the car with Ryan. In the front seat is Hillary. She smiles and waves. Donna smiles back HUGE, waves enthusiastically, and closes the door.

INT. DONNA'S HOUSE

Donna's smile dissolves.

INT. DONNA'S CAR - NIGHT

Donna sits in the driver's seat. The casserole is on the seat beside her. Tears run down her cheeks.

A loud THUD hits her car. Then another. And another.

DONNA

What the - ?

She rolls down her window to look. A snowball hits her face.

Two KIDS run away shrieking with laughter.

Donna opens the visor mirror. Mascara is smeared all over. Her nose and cheeks are red from the snow.

She starts laughing. She turns on the car. She half laughs and half cries as she drives away.

INT. JAKE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Jake attempts to put together the desk. All of the pieces fall down.

He pauses, takes a breath, and then starts again.

LATER:

Jake has put together the frame. This is working! He begins assembling the drawers. He's beyond happy with himself and the work.

INT. SHERRY & ALAN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Donna's FAMILY MEMBERS mingle and drink wine with SHERRY, 60, Donna's mom and Alan's wife, as well as Alan's brother, UNCLE STEVE, 58.

The door opens. Donna enters with her casserole.

DONNA
Happy Thanksgiving!

Sherry takes the casserole. Donna goes over to June.

DONNA (cont'd)
I got your message.

JUNE
Oh good. I was talking to my friend Maggie, the one in real estate, and she thinks -

DONNA
I don't want to sell the theater. I want to reopen it. But I'll only do it if you're 100% okay with it.

JUNE
I don't understand. We agreed this was best for everyone.

DONNA
I know, but when Jake was in there -

JUNE
Who's Jake?

Alan overhears and comes over.

ALAN
Is this about the guy in the hardware store?

JUNE
What guy in the store? I'm so confused right now.

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

The family eats food and passes around dishes. Everyone is happy and full of warmth.

DONNA

After I said no he came by the hardware store. I'm sure he'll be back again. He's really intent on buying us out.

SHERRY

How much is he offering?

DONNA

I don't know.

JUNE

That's a huge company. They might offer us a lot of money. You should find out how much they're willing to pay.

DONNA

If Dad helps with the renovations we could have that place fixed up in a week. That would get us open by December 1st.

SHERRY

You could show all the Christmas classics!

DONNA

Yes! And that will help us to build a loyal following.

JUNE

But how much money would we actually make? This could end up costing us money, and then what?

DONNA

I know losing the store has shaken us all. We're scared. But that doesn't mean we should just give up. We have to move on. We have to forget about the Jakes and the Hillarys and -

JUNE

Hillary? Who's Hillary.

DONNA

No one. Ryan's new wife. I mean girlfriend.

JUNE

He has a girlfriend? Since when?

DONNA

I really believe this will work.

JUNE

And if it doesn't?

DONNA

How about this: if I'm wrong, and we're not profitable by the end of Christmas, we'll sell.

Uncle Steve, who's been lost in thought, blows his nose.

DONNA (cont'd)

Uncle Steve? Are you okay?

STEVE

I was just thinking about when I came back from Vietnam. I was walking around, in a real dark place. My head was full of all kinds of terrible things. I would walk and walk and walk. One night I found myself in front of the theater. It was showing White Christmas and I thought, what the hell? I like Bing Crosby. I'll tell you, that movie was the first thing that made me smile in a long time. It reminded me there's good stuff in the world, and not to give up. I saw it three more times.

DONNA

You see? Just imagine if Uncle Steve had come back, and all he found instead was a Two Beans coffee shop that made him feel more alone.

JUNE

Okay, okay. I'm open to trying. But only until Christmas.

Alan lifts his glass.

ALAN

To the theater!

Everyone raises their glasses in a toast. Donna beams with joy. June is reluctant.

INT. JAKE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Jake and Conner finish eating.

JAKE
I've got a surprise. Close your eyes.

Conner closes his eyes.

JAKE (cont'd)
Now follow me.

CONNER
Dad, I can't see.

JAKE
Oh, right. Grab the back of my chair
and close your eyes.

Conner holds onto the chair. Jake guides them into the
bedroom.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

By the wall, the desk is covered with wrapping paper.

JAKE
Okay... and... open them!

CONNER
What's that?

JAKE
Christmas came a little early around
here. Open it up!

Conner tears off the paper. Underneath is a kid's desk. Pots
of paint sit on top.

CONNER
Is this for me?

JAKE
It sure is. I made it myself. What do
you think?

CONNER
You made this!? It's so cool! Thanks
Dad!

Conner gives Jake a huge hug. He then picks up a pot of
paint.

CONNER (cont'd)
What's this for?

JAKE
I thought we could decorate it
together. I got these stencils with
dinosaurs.

Jake opens a drawer and pulls out stencils.

CONNER
Awesome!

LATER:

Jake and Conner are painting on t-rex, stegosaurus, and
more. They're having a blast.

INT. JAKE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Jake sits at the table, working on his computer. He's
looking up plans for another wood working project.

He prints them out.

He pulls up his calendar app. He looks at the date
highlighted in one week. It says: DEADLINE TO SECURE
THEATER.

INT. JAKE'S OFFICE - MORNING

Jake sits at his desk, typing. Ralph enters.

RALPH
I spoke to our board members. They
loved the idea of converting the old
theater into a Two Beans.

JAKE
You already spoke to them?

RALPH
Of course. You promised you'd have it
secured by next Friday. I want to get
an early jump on our next steps.

JAKE
I... um...

RALPH

You aren't going to miss the deadline are you? Because if you are, Sharon is fully ready to take over.

JAKE

No! Don't say anything to Sharon. I'm in negotiations. We've just got a few sticking points.

Ralph eyes him more closely. He closes the door.

RALPH

Talk to me. What's going on?

JAKE

Nothing. The owner just needs a little more convincing. But I can take care of it. It's not a problem.

RALPH

That's good. I can't have people thinking you're getting off easy because you're my son.

JAKE

I won't let them down. Or you. And after it's done, I'd like to talk about moving out of development and into a senior position.

RALPH

One step at a time. First the theater, then we'll talk promotions.

JAKE

If - no, when - when I do this, you'd really consider it?

RALPH

That's a big if. As I said, one step at a time.

INT. ROOSEVELT THEATER - DAY

Donna and her family members work together to clean and update the theater.

Alan sands the counter. Sherry cleans the glass and windows. June and Donna change light bulbs and dust off cobwebs.

Jake enters with two coffee cups. He looks around.

DONNA
Oh no. He's back.

JUNE
Who is that?

DONNA
Two Beans.

Donna walks over to Jake. He hands her a cup of Two Beans coffee.

JAKE
I'm glad you're here. I brought you some coffee.

Donna looks at the Two Beans logo.

DONNA
Seriously?

JAKE
Just try it.

Donna takes a sip.

DONNA
It's coffee.

JAKE
It's more than coffee.

DONNA
What do you mean? Is this spiked? Are you trying to get me drunk?

JAKE
No, nothing like that.

Alan looks up and sees Jake is talking to Donna.

ALAN
Everything okay?

JAKE
All I'm asking is that you hear me out. If you're still not interested, I'll never bother you again.

ALAN
Donna?

JAKE
Just five minutes.

DONNA
(to Alan)
We're fine, Dad.

Donna motions to the door.

DONNA (cont'd)
Five minutes.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Donna and Jake go up the street. Donna takes another sip of her coffee.

JAKE
It's good, right?
(then)
When I say it's more than coffee,
what I mean is, it's jobs and
community -

DONNA
Community?

JAKE
That's what the name means. It's a
reference to people coming together.

DONNA
I just don't see how you can claim a
busy coffee shop full of people on
their phones is a place of community.

They stop in front of a warm, little cafe. Donna sits down on a bench.

JAKE
Our cafes offer people a place where
they can feel connected in a
disconnected world. We get a lot of
regulars, people who see our coffee
shops as a friendly, familiar place
in a big city.

DONNA
What I see when I go in Two Beans is
people rushing in and out. Do you
know what I see in our theater?
(MORE)

DONNA (cont'd)

I see people coming together to share in an experience. It's a place to sit down, put your phone away, and be with people you love. It's a place to see something new, and to connect with others over what you saw and felt.

JAKE

But you're just sitting there, side by side, in silence. We offer people a place to connect, to open their hearts and sit face to face, really being with each other.

DONNA

You don't get it.

(then)

When we reopen, we're going to show It's a Wonderful Life. Do you know why?

JAKE

No. I've never seen it.

DONNA

The movie reminds people that if they didn't exist, the world would be missing something. It's about how every person is important, and every life is so valuable all the stars in the sky watch over each one.

JAKE

Sounds like a good movie.

Donna gets a text message from June.

JUNE TEXT MESSAGE

Where are you? We're trying to decide where to put the popcorn machine.

DONNA

I need to get back.

JAKE

That wasn't five minutes.

Donna turns and walks back. Jake hustles up to her.

JAKE (cont'd)

At least hear what we're offering.

DONNA
It won't make a difference.

JAKE
It might. Can we stop? I want you
to -- okay fine, we're offering 1.2
million.

Donna is in shock.

DONNA
Did you say one point - one mill - a
million? Really? That's... more
than... I mean... I need to... Are
you sure?

Jake takes his card out of his wallet.

JAKE
I'm pretty sure you didn't keep the
last two. Think it over.

Jake and Donna return to the theater. Donna is in a daze.

JAKE (cont'd)
Call me. You won't regret it.

Jake turns to go.

INT. MOVIE THEATER, LOBBY - DAY

Donna walks back in. June comes over.

JUNE
What happened? What did he say?

DONNA
He...

Donna is still in shock, trying to catch her breath.

JUNE
Are you okay? I think you should sit
down.

Alan comes over with a box. Donna sits down.

ALAN
What happened?

DONNA
He said - he -

ALAN

Did he threaten you? Because if he did, I've got a wrench with his name on it.

JUNE

Dad!

ALAN

I wasn't going to hit him. I just meant I'd sell him one with a ridiculous markup.

DONNA

They're offering to buy us out for 1.2 million.

JUNE

Holy popcorn. That's a lot of money.

Natalie yells from the concession stand.

NATALIE

Grandpa, get over here, we're going to plug it in!

ALAN

I'll be right back.

Alan goes to the concession stand. The popcorn machine is plugged in and they all cheer when it lights up.

DONNA

You want to sell, don't you?

JUNE

I did... but I can't get over how Dad changed after we walked in. It's like someone put fresh batteries in him.

Natalie comes running over.

NATALIE

Mom, guess what!?

DONNA

What?

NATALIE

We plugged in the popcorn machine and it still had kernels in it! We have popcorn! You should've seen grandpa's face. He was so happy.

(MORE)

NATALIE (cont'd)

He said it felt like Great-Grandma was here with us. He loved it! I'm so glad you're not selling. This place is the best!

Donna and June look over to see Alan grab a handful of popcorn and joyfully throw it in the air.

DONNA

That's the happiest I've seen him in years.

JUNE

But still, a million dollars...

EXT. HARDWARE STORE - DAY

Donna walks up to the store. Along with the going out of business signs a new poster has been added - a poster for IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE!

Donna stops and looks at the poster, along with the notice that the theater is reopening. Her shoulders pull back. She stands up straighter and smiles.

INT. HARDWARE STORE - DAY

About half the merchandise from before remains. Donna comes in, her hair messy, looking like she had a stressful morning.

DONNA

'Morning Dad.

Ryan comes around the corner holding a basket full of tools. Donna sees him and tries to smooth out her messy pony tail. She also tucks in her shirt and puts on chapstick.

She approaches him. He lifts a screwdriver.

RYAN

Lost my Philips head, so I came to get a new one, and then I saw a few other things I need.

DONNA

Ryan, come on.

RYAN

What?

DONNA

I know what you're doing.

(then)

You're trying to make Dad feel better, but you don't have to do this. It's not like you can buy everything in here.

RYAN

I want to do something. Your Dad gave me my first job. I wouldn't even be an electrician if it wasn't for him.

The door opens. Jake comes in.

ALAN

Hey, back again? Jack, right?

JAKE

Jake. Good to see you again, Alan.

DONNA

Excuse me.

Donna approaches Jake.

DONNA (cont'd)

You cannot keep showing up like this.

ALAN

As long as he buys something, he can show up as much as he likes.

Jake takes his latest project out of his pocket.

JAKE

Thank you, Alan. I'd like to make this bookshelf for my home office.

Donna is annoyed. She turns away and walks down the aisle. She pauses to look back at Jake.

DONNA

Are you coming?

Jake realizes she means him and catches up to her.

DONNA (cont'd)

You'll need a level. And a tape measure. And some paint. Do you want it exactly like the picture?

JAKE

I was actually thinking of staining
it instead of painting it.

Ryan has finished shopping and been rung up by Alan. He
comes down the aisle.

RYAN

Donna, I'm taking off. I'll see you
Friday!

DONNA

For what?

RYAN

I'm coming to your premiere! Me and
Hill.

DONNA

Hill?

RYAN

Hillary. Have a good day.

Ryan leaves.

JAKE

You okay? You seem a little shaken.

DONNA

That's my ex-husband.

(then)

He's dating someone.

JAKE

Hillary.

DONNA

Yeah. And the thing is... never mind.

JAKE

You're comparing yourself to her.
You're wondering why *her*.

DONNA

Yeah. How'd you know that?

JAKE

I do the same thing. But not with my
ex. With my dad. Every time he
promotes someone instead of me, I
think, why them? But it's pointless
to ask. I know why.

DONNA

The way he introduced her to me, it was so awful. I felt ambushed, because she was all perfect, she knew this was happening, and it was -

(she's flustered)

I wanted to yell at them both. And instead I gave them cookies. I just wanted her to like me. Isn't that ridiculous?

JAKE

Not at all.

DONNA

Really?

Donna grabs a stool and sits down.

JAKE

My dad comes from a long line of men who show no emotion. Strong men. A man's man, you know what I mean?

DONNA

You just described every man I've ever dated.

JAKE

And then I came along, and this, all of this -

Jake looks down and motions to his legs.

JAKE (cont'd)

- scared him to death. He couldn't handle it. So he pushed me away.

DONNA

That's terrible. If my dad wasn't there for me, I don't know what I would do.

JAKE

At work, he's always raising the stakes. He sets up these impossible tasks and demands I do it in no time at all. It's like he's waiting for me to fail so he can feel validated.

DONNA

Validated in what?

JAKE

His general lack of interest in me or my value as a person. And if you're going to tell me I don't need his approval, my therapist would agree with you.

DONNA

At least you didn't suggest he put a bag over his head.

JAKE

You didn't.

DONNA

And then I offered to put it on my own head.

JAKE

Was she that bad?

DONNA

She's the worst. She's so perfect. I hate her.

JAKE

Forget about Hillary. She's got nothing on you.

DONNA

You're just saying that because you want to buy the theater.

JAKE

I'm saying this as a friend.

DONNA

Well then as a friend, I'm going to have insist you come to the theater's opening.

JAKE

I'd love to.

DONNA

Let's get you that level. You've got a bookshelf to build.

Donna picks up some tools and hands them to Jake. There's a warmth between them now. Something has shifted.

INT. DONNA'S HOUSE, BATHROOM - NIGHT

Donna puts on lipstick. She's her casual self - jeans, a nice sweater and straight, un-styled hair.

Natalie comes in.

NATALIE
I'm so excited! I can't believe this
is happening! How do I look?

Natalie twirls around.

DONNA
Fabulous.

NATALIE
Thank you.

DONNA
Do you think we bought enough
popcorn? What if the projector
breaks? It's like a 100 years old!

NATALIE
Mom, relax. Everything's going to go
perfect. And if it doesn't, I'll
entertain them with my moves.

Natalie does a little dance.

NATALIE (cont'd)
Cha cha cha! Cha cha cha! Bam!

Donna does the same dance. They laugh.

DONNA
What would I do without you?

INT. MOVIE THEATER, LOBBY - NIGHT

The lobby is full of PATRONS, all smiling and talking,
excited for the movie.

Natalie is behind the counter, serving popcorn with June.

Sherry is selling tickets. Alan is excitedly serving drinks.

Donna is talking with Ryan and Hillary. Once again, Hillary
looks radiantly feminine.

RYAN
We're gonna get some popcorn.

DONNA
Thanks for coming. Enjoy the show.

Ryan and Hillary get in line for popcorn. Donna watches them. She suddenly seems alone in a room full of couples and people together.

Jake comes in and approaches Donna.

JAKE
Hey! Wow, what a turn out! This is amazing.

DONNA
Yeah. Everyone came...

Donna is distractedly watching Ryan and Hillary. Jake follows her gaze.

JAKE
Is that Hillary? Did she say something to you?

Donna shakes her head.

JAKE (cont'd)
Just say the word and I'll roll over her toe.

DONNA
It's okay. She's been really nice actually.

JAKE
What is it?

DONNA
Do you think I'm feminine?

Hillary tosses her gorgeous, shiny hair over her shoulder.

JAKE
That's not the right question.

DONNA
What do you mean?

JAKE
The question you want to ask is, how amazing am I that I made this happen?

Donna smiles and stands up straighter.

JAKE (cont'd)

And I'm not just saying that. It's not everyday you find a beautiful woman that's also a master carpenter. Not to mention you stand up for what you believe in. Anyone else would've taken the money and run, but not you. That's very admirable.

Donna is a little thrown off by his compliment.

DONNA

Oh - uh - thank you. Hey, let me get you your ticket.

Donna grabs his ticket and hands it to him. He puts his arm out.

JAKE

Shall we?

DONNA

I've got to start the projector in a minute. But I'll walk in with you.

Donna and Jake walk in together. Ryan watches them.

INT. SCREENING ROOM - NIGHT

The lights go dark. The screen lights up as It's a Wonderful Life begins. Jake finds an empty space in one of the spaces reserved for wheelchairs.

Natalie comes running in with popcorn and grabs the empty seat beside Jake. She offers him some popcorn.

INT. LOBBY - NIGHT

Donna waits in the back as the credits role. She wipes tears from her eyes.

The people come out. Everyone loved it!

Donna thanks people as they go.

DONNA

Thank you so much for coming. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you, come again. Thank you.

June comes over with Alan. She has tears in her eyes.

JUNE

That was so good. I forgot what a beautiful story that is.

ALAN

I'm not saying I cried, but there was definitely some eye mist going on.

Most of the people clear out. Jake is one of the last people out.

DONNA

What'd you think?

JAKE

I LOVED it!

DONNA

Really?

JAKE

You were right, the story really is powerful. And Jimmy Stewart was the perfect person to play George.

DONNA

I totally agree. I love Jimmy Stewart.

JAKE

I can't believe I never saw that before. I totally get it now.

DONNA

It's a classic for a reason.

JAKE

Not the movie. I get why you refused to sell the theater.

DONNA

Unfortunately, it's not my decision alone. I still need to convince my sister we're doing the right thing.

JAKE

She'll come around.

DONNA

It'd be a lot easier if you hadn't made such a good offer.

JAKE

Next time I'll be sure and low ball you. For your own sake, of course.

DONNA

Here, let me give you a schedule. You're definitely going to want to come to Miracle on 34th Street.

Donna hands him a schedule.

Jake and Donna both hold the paper for a moment, looking into each others' eyes.

Jake's phone dings with a NOTIFICATION. Jake looks at it. It says: REMINDER: DEADLINE IN FIVE DAYS.

Donna sees the notice.

DONNA (cont'd)

Everything okay?

JAKE

Yeah, just a work thing.

Jake's energy drops. He's worried.

NATALIE

That was the best movie EVER!

JAKE

I should get going.

NATALIE

Bye Jake!

Jake exits. Donna watches him leave.

INT. DONNA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Natalie is in her pajamas, animated, performing by the Christmas tree. Donna sits on the couch, watching.

NATALIE

What is it you want Mary? Do you want the moon? Just say the word and I'll throw a lasso around it and pull it down.

(to Donna)

Now you say, I'll take it.

DONNA

I'll take it!

NATALIE

And then you'll eat it, and... I forgot the rest.

DONNA

And then George says, and it'll all dissolve, and the moonbeams will shoot of your fingers and your toes and the ends of your hair.

NATALIE

That's right! And then he says -

DONNA

He says, it's time for little girls to go to bed.

NATALIE

Aw. But Mom, we're having fun.

DONNA

It's way past your bedtime. Mine too. I've got to get some rest. There's two showings tomorrow.

NATALIE

Can I come?

DONNA

You want to see it again? I thought you'd want to stay with grandma and grandpa.

NATALIE

Please Mom. I loved everything about it. And you can't sell popcorn without me. I'm the popcorn girl.

DONNA

Okay, but only if you go to bed right now.

Natalie runs as fast as she can out of the room.

INT. MOVIE THEATER, LOBBY - NIGHT

Natalie waits behind the popcorn counter. Donna is ready to sell tickets.

But no one is there.

Donna looks over at Natalie.

DONNA
Light crowd tonight.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Jake and Ralph come up the street toward the theater.

RALPH
I understand you found the theater charming, but our investors are already on board. Do you know how it'll look if we suddenly change course?

JAKE
It looks bad, I know. But you just have to see what I saw last night. Then you'll understand why I'm moving on and scouting other locations.

RALPH
Moving on?

Ralph stops.

RALPH (cont'd)
We never discussed that. You can't just change -

Jake spins and points.

JAKE
We're here.

Ralph looks up at the marquee.

RALPH
The old Roosevelt.

A smile comes across Ralph's face.

RALPH (cont'd)
Remember that movie we saw here when you were a kid? The one with the lamp for a leg.

Ralph laughs. He enters, and Jake follows, looking more optimistic.

INT. MOVIE THEATER, LOBBY - NIGHT

Donna heads for the projector and stops as the men come in. Ralph looks around, his face warm with nostalgia.

DONNA
Hey Jake. Did you forget something?

JAKE
Nope. I'm here to see the movie again. This is my dad, Ralph.

RALPH
I wonder if it's still there?

JAKE
What?

Ralph enters the theater, almost giddy with wonder.

Donna sells Jake two tickets. Natalie watches, uncertain.

DONNA
Enjoy the show.

INT. SCREENING ROOM - NIGHT

Ralph runs down the aisle. He goes over to a certain chair. He looks down at the wooden armrest. In the wood is carved RP + JL.

Ralph laughs and sits down, feeling it.

RALPH
I did this when I was dating your Mom! I can't believe it's still here.

Jake rolls in beside Ralph.

JAKE
See? This place is special.

Donna watches from the back. Natalie runs in with a bag of popcorn and sits down, just as the movie starts. She says the lines with the actors, loving it.

INT. MOVIE THEATER, LOBBY - NIGHT

The few patrons who came file out. Donna waits by the concessions.

Ralph and Jake come out.

DONNA
How'd you like the movie, Ralph?

RALPH
Loved it.

Ralph looks around.

RALPH (cont'd)
I gotta get my wife down here before
you close.

DONNA
Close? We're not -

RALPH
Exactly how old is this place?

Ralph looks at aging boards and such with disdain.

RALPH (cont'd)
It needs more work than I realized.
Have you had a termite inspection?
And what about the wiring? I'm sure
the fire inspector would have a field
day in here. We're going to have to
reconsider our offer. It will be
lower, but you'll still come out
ahead, considering you're not making
any money right now.

DONNA
Tonight was a bad night. But we're
just getting started. We're -

Ralph puts his hand up.

RALPH
Debra, please. I know every
negotiation trick in the book. Let's
end this horseplay. You can't afford
to keep this place open. We want to
buy it. It's a win-win for everyone.

DONNA
It's Donna, and I wasn't -

Ralph ignores her and steps aside with Jake.

RALPH

No more pussyfooting around. You've got four days left.

Ralph's phone rings. He answers it and walks out. Donna is distraught.

JAKE

I am so sorry about that.

DONNA

What did he mean by four days left?

The popcorn machine suddenly turns on and pops kernels. Donna jumps and runs over and unplugs it. Jake quietly exits while she's looking away.

INT. DONNA'S HOUSE - MORNING

Donna sits with the receipts from the theater so far. She adds them up, and then looks again at the property tax bill.

Her profit margin is abysmal. She slumps forward and lays on it all.

Natalie comes in, dressed for school. Donna doesn't sit up.

NATALIE

Mom?

DONNA

Oh, hey sweetie. I'll get you some cereal.

NATALIE

What's that? Is it for the theater?

DONNA

The good news is we can pay the taxes we owe. The bad news is there's nothing left after. Which means Aunt June is going to want to sell.

(then)

Maybe Ralph was right. I should sell now and cut my losses.

NATALIE

Mom, no! You're just like George in *It's a Wonderful Life*. He was scared, just like you, but he didn't give up, and neither can you.

Donna thinks for a minute.

DONNA

You're right. And the thing that saved George wasn't George. It was all the people who loved him and cared about him. And that's what I need! So many people care about The Roosevelt Theater, and if they knew we were in trouble, they'd be there.

Donna thinks.

She looks up a local radio station on her computer. She takes out her phone and calls them.

While holding the phone, she gets Natalie cereal and pours in the milk.

DONNA (cont'd)

Yes, hi, can I speak to your programming manager? Thank you.

Natalie gives a double thumbs up.

INT. ALAN'S TOOLS - DAY

Donna looks out the window, waiting for a customer.

Jake comes in holding a box. He opens it, it's full of doughnuts.

JAKE

Apology doughnuts.

Donna takes a doughnut.

JAKE (cont'd)

I'm sorry about my dad. I tried to tell him we can't buy the theater, but once he gets an idea in his head, he won't let it go. If I'd known he would be that rude I never would've brought him.

DONNA

I understand. It's not your fault.
(then)
He mentioned something about four days. What did that mean?

JAKE

It's three days now. If I haven't bought the theater by then I get pulled from the project.

DONNA

Will you get put on another one?

JAKE

Yeah. Eventually. But it won't matter.

DONNA

Why not?

JAKE

If I land this deal, I'll finally get promoted out of development. I've been trying to move on for years. If I don't, my dad will forever use it as an excuse to hold me back.

DONNA

Can he do that?

(eats doughnut)

This is really good. Did you try these?

JAKE

It's going to be fine. I've already scouted two other quality locations. I stayed up all night preparing my proposals. In fact, I could use a cup of coffee if you don't mind.

Donna looks back at the coffee machine.

DONNA

I made that. You don't want that.

JAKE

Actually, yes I do. I can barely keep my eyes open.

DONNA

You don't understand. My dad always makes the coffee. The last time I made it someone had a heart attack. It was probably a coincidence, the man was 90, but still.

JAKE

I'm sure it's not that bad.

Donna pours Jake a cup. He takes a sip. His eyes nearly bug out.

JAKE (cont'd)

Wow!

DONNA

I did warn you.

Jake takes another sip. He coughs.

JAKE

This should be a classified drug.

Jake and Donna laugh. He checks his watch.

JAKE (cont'd)

I should get going. I'll see you tonight.

DONNA

What for?

JAKE

Miracle on 34th Street. Another classic I never saw.

DONNA

Wait! Be sure and listen to the radio at 9AM to 102.3.

JAKE

Will do. Bye Donna.

DONNA

Bye.

Jake leaves and Donna looks elated - she's really starting to like him.

The MAILMAN comes by and drops off the mail. Donna flips through the envelopes. They're all PAST DUES notices. Her energy drops and she loses all her joy.

INT. RADIO STATION - DAY

Donna sits in a small booth with the RADIO DJ. They both wear headphones and sit before microphones.

A Christmas song ends playing.

RADIO DJ

Welcome back everyone. I've got a special guest in the studio today. I'm sitting here with Donna Stewart, the owner of The Roosevelt theater.

DONNA

Hi Jim. Thanks for having me on the show.

RADIO DJ

You recently reopened one of the city's oldest theaters.

DONNA

That's right. All this week you can catch Miracle on 34th Street.

RADIO DJ

I love that movie. It made me believe in Santa Clause a little longer than I should have. In fact, I've almost finished my letter to him for this year.

Donna laughs.

INT. JAKE'S OFFICE - DAY

Jake types on his computer. He looks at the time.

He goes to a webpage broadcasting the radio station. He turns up his speakers.

DONNA (O.S.)

I'm here today to ask for some help from the community. If you visited The Roosevelt Theater when you were younger, or you know someone who loved it, please come on down and give us some support. We can only stay open with the help of the community.

RADIO DJ (O.S.)

You know Donna, one of the things I love about this city is how supportive the citizens are of each other. I would not be surprised if you had a packed house tomorrow. And I'll be in it!

DONNA (O.S.)

Thank you. That means so much to me
and everyone working hard to make
this work.

Jake smiles. Ralph enters and Jake nearly jumps and turns
off his speaker.

RALPH

I had our designer workup some plans
for the theater.

Ralph lays out some design plans.

JAKE

Dad, we talked about this. The
theater's no longer on the table.
I've already got some other proposals
ready right here.

Jake picks up some folders. Ralph shakes his head.

RALPH

You promised you were the right man
for the job. I trusted you.

JAKE

If you'd just have a look -

RALPH

I'm a man of my word. I'll give you 3
more days to turn this around before
I put Sharon on it.

JAKE

Can you at least look at these?

Jake holds out the folders. Ralph exits.

Jake turns the radio back on. Donna is off - it's playing a
Christmas song.

INT. SCREENING ROOM - NIGHT

Donna walks into the screening room. A LOT MORE people have
come - 1/3 of the seats are full.

Alan walks in holding hands with Natalie.

ALAN

Great job, kiddo. I'm so proud of
you.

DONNA
Thanks Dad. Not quite a full house,
but it's a start.

Alan and Natalie sit down. The room goes dark. The movie begins. Donna returns to the lobby.

INT. MOVIE THEATER, LOBBY - NIGHT

Jake comes in, his hat covered in snow. Donna brightens.

JAKE
I heard you on the radio. You sounded
great!

DONNA
Thank you. It seemed to help. I
doubled my ticket sales tonight.

Donna sells him a ticket.

JAKE
And a bag of popcorn.

Donna gets him a bag of popcorn.

DONNA
On the house.

JAKE
Thank you.

Jake takes his popcorn and goes in to take his seat.

Donna gets a text from June.

TEXT MESSAGE JUNE
How's the theater? Are we profitable
yet?

Donna considers how to reply. She types:

TEXT MESSAGE DONNA
I need a little more time.

Donna deletes the message. She tries again:

TEXT MESSAGE DONNA (cont'd)
We have a great crowd tonight!

Donna deletes the message.

She considers what to write, changes her mind and goes to call someone.

She dials her ex-husband Ryan, then hangs up. She dials again, and again hangs up.

DONNA
Come on, Donna. For the theater.

She dials again and lets it ring. Ryan answers.

RYAN (O.S.)
Hey Donna. I thought I was picking
Natalie up tomorrow.

DONNA
You are. I'm actually calling because
I have a question for Hillary. Is she
there?

RYAN (O.S.)
Hillary? Yeah... she's here. What's
going on?

DONNA
It's about the theater.

RYAN (O.S.)
(louder)
Hillary, get in here.

Donna paces as she waits.

HILLARY (O.S.)
Donna? What's going on?

Donna tries to compose herself and not seem awkward.

DONNA
Hi, yes, it's me. Donna. Which you
know.
(then)
I know you write for the Boston
Globe, and I was wondering, could you
write something about The Roosevelt
reopening? I'm trying to get the word
out.

HILLARY (O.S.)
That's a great idea! I'm sure our
readers would love that.

DONNA

Really? Thank you so much. It'd really help us out.

HILLARY (O.S.)

Of course. My family loves that theater.

DONNA

I'm so glad, thank you!

HILLARY (O.S.)

I'll call you soon for an interview.

DONNA

Perfect! Talk soon. I love you. I mean, oh my god, I didn't mean to say that. Not that you're not lovable. I just - okay, gotta go! Bye!

Donna ends the call. Jake comes back into the lobby.

DONNA (cont'd)

Hey. Everything okay?

JAKE

No, it's not.

DONNA

Please don't tell me it's the sound. Is it the sound? It's the sound. I don't even know how to begin fixing that.

JAKE

The sound is fine.

DONNA

Is the popcorn stale?

JAKE

It tastes great.

DONNA

Is it the floor? I know some of the boards are loose. It's on my list of things to do.

JAKE

No, well yes, the floor does creak in places but it's fine. Everything with the theater is fine. It's you I need to talk about.

DONNA

Me?

JAKE

I first came by for the building. And then I kept coming for the movies. And now...

(then)

Now it's because I look forward to seeing you. And I'd like to see you more. Would you be interested in having dinner with me?

DONNA

You're asking me on a date?

JAKE

How about this weekend?

DONNA

I'd love to. No, wait, I can't. I have to show movies.

JAKE

How about lunch tomorrow? There's a cafe around the corner from your hardware store.

DONNA

Perfect.

Jake and Donna linger awkwardly.

JAKE

I should probably get back to the movie. I'll see you in a bit.

Jake returns to the theater. After he goes, the popcorn machine randomly pops some kernels on its own and Donna jumps in surprise.

INT. DONNA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Donna wears a Santa beard and Santa hat.

Natalie is dressed up, her feet stuffed in her mother's shoes, and wearing her mother's pearls.

NATALIE

I'm sorry, uh, Mr...

DONNA

Kringle.

NATALIE

I'm sorry, but we're going to have to make a change. The Santa Clause we had two years ago is back in town.

DONNA

Have I done something wrong?

NATALIE

Oh no, you see -

Donna's phone rings. Jake is calling.

DONNA

Just a second, sweetie.

Donna answers.

DONNA (cont'd)

Kris Kringle.

JAKE (O.S.)

Donna?

DONNA

It's me. Natalie and I were just re-enacting some scenes from Miracle on 34th Street.

JAKE (O.S.)

Gotcha. Quick question. How would you like some free publicity for the theater?

DONNA

I'd love some!

JAKE (O.S.)

I was hoping you'd say that. My ex-wife runs the tree lighting ceremony downtown. She said she'd love to have you as the honorary guest this year.

DONNA

Your ex-wife? Won't that be weird for you?

JAKE (O.S.)

Not at all. We've been on good terms for years.

DONNA

Oh, well in that case, I'd love to!

JAKE (O.S.)

There's going to be a little festival down there, and the actual tree lighting will be on the news.

DONNA

That's perfect! Will she give me a few minutes to talk about the theater?

JAKE (O.S.)

Absolutely!

DONNA

I can't wait! When is this?

JAKE (O.S.)

It's this Friday. Can you do it?

DONNA

Friday? That's in two days... but I'll make it work. Tell her yes! And thank you!

Donna hangs up.

DONNA (cont'd)

For the first time, I feel like this is actually going to work out.

NATALIE

It's like you have moonbeams shooting out of your hands and your feet and your hair!

Donna and Natalie laugh. Donna then sees she has a text from June.

NATALIE (cont'd)

Be right back!

Natalie runs out.

JUNE TEXT MESSAGE

Did you get my message? How are ticket sales?

Donna starts to write back, and then she gets a text about the tree lighting ceremony. She writes a quick confirmation back.

Natalie returns with a notebook.

NATALIE

Can we go over my lines for the school play? I still can't believe I got the lead role!

DONNA

I never doubted you would.

Donna forgets about the text from June as she looks over Natalie's lines.

INT. DINER - DAY

Jake sits in a cozy diner with Donna.

DONNA

There's one thing I don't get.

JAKE

What's that?

DONNA

Why is your dad making it so hard for you to get ahead at your company? Usually it's the opposite. Usually people fast track their own family up the chain of command.

JAKE

You want to know the truth?

DONNA

I do.

JAKE

The truth is, he's embarrassed of me. He won't say it, but I know. I've always known.

DONNA

Embarrassed? Why?

JAKE

He doesn't think powerful people have disabilities. In his mind, you have to look a certain way to be a CEO. When he looks at me he doesn't see strength. He doesn't see a leader. He sees someone that should be in the background.

DONNA

That makes no sense. Leaders come in all shapes and sizes. What's on the outside doesn't matter. What matters is what's in here.

Donna points to her head.

DONNA (cont'd)

And also here.

(points to heart)

The world has too many people in power who have no heart. We need more people like you in charge.

JAKE

Thank you. But I think it's also because he doesn't believe anyone will think I earned it. To him, everyone thinks I am where I am because people feel sorry for me. He's incapable of seeing I'm actually good at what I do.

DONNA

Is it his decision? Isn't there a whole board that votes on this kind of stuff?

JAKE

The board is useless. They just do whatever he says.

DONNA

So that's why you were so intent on getting the theater.

JAKE

He gave me two weeks to sign a deal with you. Which basically means he was setting me up to fail. It was his way of pretending to give me a chance so he could shut me down for good.

DONNA

Is this a good time to tell you the theater is actually profitable and we won't be selling?

JAKE

You're kidding! That's great news. You should feel really proud, you worked hard to make that happen.

DONNA

I'm just worried people are only coming for our holiday films. What if no one comes after the New Year?

JAKE

Do you know what I loved about Miracle on 34th street?

DONNA

What?

JAKE

It reminded me how important it is to believe in things you can't see. Nobody could see Kris Kringle's home on the North Pole. Nobody had any real proof of who he was, but they believed because they felt something in their hearts. It's the same for you and your theater. You can't yet see it's going to be successful, but you have to believe. If you stop believing then you'll give up before you see the miracle.

DONNA

Here's hoping we're going to have our own miracle.

(then)

I told you my grandmother picked the light fixtures, didn't I?

JAKE

You did.

DONNA

Turns out she had great taste. I saw them recently in an antique catalog, and for way more than I could afford to pay for them. They're my favorite thing in the whole theater. In some ways the whole theater is an antique.

JAKE

It's beautiful and full of character. Just like you.

DONNA

Thank you.

(then)

I just worry sometimes if all that old stuff is running correctly.

(MORE)

DONNA (cont'd)
I need to get it all checked out, but between the theater and my Dad's store closing and Natalie I'm running around Boston like a mad woman.

EXT. DINER - DAY

Donna and Jake come out. They stop on the sidewalk face to face. They look into each others' eyes.

JAKE
I had a really nice time.

DONNA
Me too.

JAKE
Would it be alright if I kissed you?

DONNA
It would.

Donna leans down. They kiss.

JAKE
I'd like to see you again.

DONNA
I'd like that also.

EXT. TREE LIGHTING - NIGHT

A crowd of people has gathered for the tree lighting ceremony. The facilitator, RONALD, steps up to the microphone.

RONALD
Hi everyone, and welcome to our 25th annual tree lighting ceremony!

The crowd erupts in applause.

RONALD (cont'd)
This year's special guest is Donna Stewart. She's going to say a few words, and then we'll light this tree up!

The crowd applauds again. Donna steps up to the microphone.

In the crowd are Jake and Conner.

DONNA

Thank you all so much. One of the things I love about this city is it's rich traditions and history. I own The Roosevelt theater which, like the tree lighting ceremony, has been a part of this city's culture for many years.

Donna catches Jake's eye. She pauses for a moment and Jake smiles at her. She grins back.

DONNA (cont'd)

Our theater was built as a church in 1906, and then turned into a movie theater in 1933. It's been in my family since 1940, and we've recently reopened it. So if you all love the holidays, love tradition and love supporting family opened places, come on by. We'd love to have you!

The crowd applauds. News cameras record everything.

DONNA (cont'd)

And now, what you've all been waiting for.

Donna steps up and plugs in the lights. The tree lights up and illuminates the area with its beauty.

Everyone ahhhhhs. Conner smiles and so does Jake.

CONNER

Dad, look, there's a horse ornament. And a nutcracker. And a baseball player, just like me!

Jake admires the tree and then looks down at Conner, enjoying this heart warming moment.

Donna walks off the stage. Jake comes forward and catches her eye.

JAKE

Donna, this is my son, Conner.

DONNA

Hi Conner. I'm Donna.

CONNER

Hi. My Dad says he's going to buy your theater. You just don't know it yet.

Jake tries to awkwardly laugh this off.

JAKE

I didn't, I mean, I may have said that, but it was before, and it's - hey is that a churro cart?

Jake, Donna and Conner go over to a churro cart. Jake buys three churros from the VENDOR. He gives one to Donna and one to Conner.

DONNA

Thank you.

CONNER

Dad! Dad! Can we do that?

Conner points to a photo prop booth. They have Santa hats to put on, mustaches to hold, and so on.

JAKE

What do you say? You in?

DONNA

Let's do it.

Jake, Donna and Conner head over to the booth. Jake gives the PHOTOGRAPHER a few dollars.

The photographer snaps picks and Donna, Jake and Conner pass around hats and props. They laugh and get playful with each other.

In one pick Jake puts his arm around Donna. In the last picture, they kiss each other without Conner seeing.

Afterwards, Jake collects the strip of photos.

PHOTOGRAPHER

Thanks for stopping by. You're a great family.

Jake and Donna look at each other and laugh.

Jake tears the photos in half, keeping two and giving Donna two.

From the crowd June approaches.

DONNA

June! Hey! I didn't know you were coming.

JUNE

That's probably because you don't respond to your messages.

DONNA

I'm so sorry. I've just been so busy.

JUNE

I see that.

June eyes Jake.

JUNE (cont'd)

Can I talk to you for a minute?

June and Donna walk away.

JUNE (cont'd)

What are you doing with him? I thought he was trying to get the theater and you hated him.

DONNA

He was. But now he's helping me to keep it. It's complicated.

JUNE

What is this? Are you avoiding me on purpose so you can just do whatever you want with Mr. Two Beans?

DONNA

What is it you think I'm doing?

JUNE

I have no idea, because I never see you. But apparently he does.

DONNA

This was a one time thing, and it was for the theater.

JUNE

You still haven't told me how ticket sales are.

DONNA

They're okay. Not great. But they keep getting better.

(MORE)

DONNA (cont'd)
I just need a little more time, and
then you'll see this is worth it.

Jake gets a text message from Ralph.

TEXT MESSAGE RALPH
Deadline was TODAY. I need an update
ASAP. CALL ME!

JAKE
Hey Donna? Conner and I are going to
take off.

DONNA
Okay, I'll see ya later. Thanks again
for everything.

JUNE
I'm going to go too.

DONNA
June wait -

June walks off. Jake rolls off.

Donna stands alone, holding her half of the photos.

INT. DONNA'S HOUSE, KITCHEN - NIGHT

Donna opens the newspaper. She sees the article Hillary
wrote in the Lifestyle section about the theater.

She sits down and reads it, so happy to see the glowing
recommendation.

INT. SCREENING ROOM - NIGHT

Jake enters an almost full theater. Most of the empty places
for wheelchairs are already taken. Only one is free. Natalie
waves from the seat next to it.

NATALIE
Jake! Jake! Over here! I saved you a
place.

Donna comes in. She hands him a bag of popcorn.

JAKE
This is a huge turn around.

DONNA
Apparently word is out. Enjoy the
movie.

Jake moves to his place. He holds the popcorn out to
Natalie. She takes a few pieces. As before, Natalie quotes
the movie as she watches, entranced with it.

INT. MOVIE THEATER, LOBBY - NIGHT

The PATRONS leave and the lobby clears out.

Jake comes out with Natalie.

JAKE
Natalie was just telling me about her
school play. I can't believe you
didn't tell me you had a star right
here, in the theater.

NATALIE
I'm not a star.

JAKE
That's good. Stay humble. You don't
want to forget where you came from.

NATALIE
Do you think you can come to the
play?

JAKE
I don't think I can, I know I can.

Jake heads for the door. Donna follows.

JAKE (cont'd)
Goodnight ladies. And Natalie, you
best not forget me when it's you
we're watching up on that screen.

DONNA
Goodnight Jake.

Jake gives Donna a kiss and then exits.

NATALIE
I like him.

DONNA
Me too.

Donna gets a text from June.

TEXT MESSAGE JUNE
How were ticket sales tonight?

Donna starts to reply, and then suddenly the popcorn machine begins popping on its own. Popcorn floods out and onto the floor.

DONNA
No no no no.

Donna runs to it and unplugs it as Natalie laughs.

INT. JAKE'S OFFICE - DAY

Jake moves around the room, animated and talking to himself.

JAKE
You're going to go in there, and you're going to demand he listen to your ideas! You're going to demand a fair chance! You're going to say, listen dad, this is bull-

Ralph enters.

RALPH
Who are you talking to?

JAKE
You. Fake you. I mean I'm pretending it's you. Never mind. Listen here Dad, I've got something to say and you're -

RALPH
Shhhh! Not so loud.

Ralph closes the door.

RALPH (cont'd)
Do you want everyone to hear?

JAKE
Hear what?

RALPH
The deadline. You missed it. I knew I should've put Sharon on this. Do you have any idea how this makes me look?

JAKE

That's what I want to talk about.
This is ridiculous. Why are you doing
this to me?

RALPH

Why am I - are you serious? You're
the one who put me in a bad position.
Now I have to tell our investors
we're behind schedule. They're going
to be furious with me.

JAKE

I've found several locations that are
better. Just look at this list.

Jake picks up the folder with available locations and real
estate listings. Ralph won't touch it.

JAKE (cont'd)

Look at this one. Ben Franklin used
to print newspapers there! Tell me
the investors won't love that.

RALPH

I'm sorry, but you've backed me into
a corner. I can't have the team
thinking I'm giving you favors
because you're my son.

JAKE

You mean because I'm in a wheelchair.
(then)
Just say it. You think they look down
on me. But you're wrong. They don't
see this
(motions to chair)
as a problem. They just see it as a
part of who I am. Why can't you?

RALPH

Tell you what. It's the holidays, so
I'll give you an extension. You've
got 24 hours to make this right.

Ralph exits.

Jake thinks. He picks up his phone and calls an unknown
number.

INT. HARDWARE STORE - DAY

Donna looks out the window. All quiet in the store. Alan approaches.

DONNA
I can't believe this is the last day.

Alan gets tears in his eyes. He turns away.

DONNA (cont'd)
Dad?

Donna's phone rings.

DONNA (cont'd)
Hello?
(then)
This is Donna Stewart.
(then)
You want to do a building inspection?
(then)
Tomorrow? I'm showing movies from 4
o'clock on. Can you come before that?
(then)
3 o'clock? It'll be a little close
but - oh - okay - okay then.

ALAN
What was that?

DONNA
That was the Fire Inspector. He heard
we're open again and he wants to make
sure the building's up to code. I
knew I should've gotten that all
checked out.

INT. HARDWARE STORE - NIGHT

Everything that was left is boxed up. Outside, Alan's trunk is open and full of boxes. Alan carries a box to the door.

Donna sweeps around the empty store. She looks around and ensures they didn't miss anything.

Jake comes in with a paper bag.

DONNA
Jake - what are you doing here?

JAKE

I know this is a hard day for you so
I got you these.

Jake takes a bundle of flowers out of the bag.

JAKE (cont'd)

And now that I'm holding them I feel
stupid. Maybe flowers weren't the
right thing.

DONNA

I love it. They're perfect. Thank
you.

Jake then takes a coffee mug out of the bag. On it is BEST
COFFEE IN TOWN. He hands it to Alan.

JAKE

And Alan, I was going to get you
flowers also, but I thought this was
more your style.

Alan takes it.

ALAN

Thank you. Shall we have one last
one?

DONNA

Only if Jake makes it. Otherwise I
won't sleep until Tuesday.

LATER:

The three share coffee together, finishing the pot.

ALAN

I guess I better pack it up.

Alan unplugs the machine. He walks toward the door.

DONNA

Dad, wait. Do you mind if I keep it?

ALAN

What for?

DONNA

I just want to keep something from
here. A reminder of what we had.

Alan hands the machine over.

ALAN
It's yours.

DONNA
Thanks.

Donna heads for the door.

JAKE
Let me get that.

Jake pushes open the door.

EXT. HARDWARE STORE - NIGHT

Donna puts the coffee machine in the trunk of her car.

DONNA
Thank you for coming tonight. You
didn't have to do that.

JAKE
I wanted to.

DONNA
I'm gonna go in and finish up with my
Dad. Can I call you later?

JAKE
Of course. Tell Alan I said good
night.

DONNA
I will. Good night.

Jake and Donna kiss. She returns to the store.

INT. HARDWARE STORE - NIGHT

Donna gives her Dad a hug.

DONNA
You did good.

ALAN
We did good.

DONNA
You wanna come over? I've got a
bottle of wine we could open.

ALAN
You go on. I'll be alright.

DONNA
You sure?

Alan nods.

DONNA (cont'd)
I love you.

ALAN
I love you too. Good night.

Donna exits.

Alan looks around. He runs his hand over the counter. He looks around, remembering the good times.

He heads for the door. He takes one last look, turns off the lights and walks out for the last time.

INT. MOVIE THEATER, LOBBY - DAY

Donna nervously paces the floor as she waits. The clock shows one minute to 3.

Right at 3PM at the nose, the FIRE INSPECTOR walks in. Donna, compensating for her nerves, walks stiffly at him with her eyes wide and a grin plastered on her face.

She shoves her hand at him.

DONNA
Hi! Donna.

FIRE INSPECTOR
I'm Harold. I'll be doing your fire inspection today Donna.

The Fire Inspector looks over his forms.

FIRE INSPECTOR (cont'd)
If you don't mind, I'd just like to get started.

DONNA
Of course. Can I get you anything? Soda? Candy?

FIRE INSPECTOR
I don't take bribes.

DONNA
I wasn't trying to....

He turns away and looks over the lights, electrical sockets, plugs, etc.

Donna hovers over him. He clears his throat. Donna backs away.

DONNA (cont'd)
I'll just be over there.

Donna heads behind the counter. She opens a box of candy and pours it in her mouth.

INT. MOVIE THEATER, LOBBY - DAY

Donna straightens items on the counter, waiting for the Fire Inspector to come back. She continually walks out, looks around, and then walks back behind the counter.

Still waiting, she tries to open another box of candy. The box rips in her hands, sending chocolate pieces flying everywhere.

The Fire Inspector comes back out as the candy flies to the ground. Donna tries to clean up.

DONNA
All finished?

FIRE INSPECTOR
Yep.

DONNA
How'd we do?

The Fire Inspector sets the report down. His face is heavy. Donna grows even more agitated.

FIRE INSPECTOR
Well, you failed.

DONNA
Failed? What does that mean?

FIRE INSPECTOR
It means you didn't pass.

DONNA
Do we have to close?

FIRE INSPECTOR

Yes.

DONNA

No! We can't! I have a movie to show in twenty minutes.

FIRE INSPECTOR

You can reopen when you get your wiring up to speed. You've got some old, faulty wires. You're lucky you haven't had a fire yet.

Donna looks down at the report, with the word FAIL written across it.

FIRE INSPECTOR (cont'd)

Once you do that, and pay the fine -

DONNA

How much is the fine?

FIRE INSPECTOR

Seventy five dollars.

DONNA

Seventy five? But I can't spare a single penny. You don't understand, I -

FIRE INSPECTOR

You also have to pay a \$50 application fee, get some new smoke detectors, get a fire extinguisher for the lobby, ensure those doors have proper safety latches and put EXIT signs above all exit doors. It's going to be about two hundred dollars, plus labor.

Donna gasps.

FIRE INSPECTOR (cont'd)

Plus updated wiring. You've got about five hundred dollars worth of work you need.

DONNA

We can't afford that!

FIRE INSPECTOR

If you can't do it you can't reopen.

DONNA

But we have to. People are counting on us. Two of my Polar Express showings are already sold out.

FIRE INSPECTOR

My card is stapled to the papers. Call me if you have any questions.

The Fire Inspector collects his briefcase. He exits.

Donna walks over to the door. She flips the sign from OPEN to CLOSED. She locks the door.

June calls on Facetime. Donna answers.

JUNE VIDEO CHAT

Hey! I'm glad you answered.

DONNA

We just failed a fire inspection. The theater's closed. And please, don't say anything about selling. I just need a moment.

JUNE VIDEO CHAT

Why don't you come over? I can see you're upset.

DONNA

I think -

Just then the popcorn machine goes crazy again. Popcorn spews out.

DONNA (cont'd)

Ahhh! Not again!

Donna runs over and unplugs it.

DONNA (cont'd)

Our popcorn machine has a mind of it's own.

JUNE VIDEO CHAT

Maybe I should -

Some PATRONS try to open the door. They knock and look in. June stops at the noise.

DONNA

Some people are trying to come in. I should tell them we're closed.

JUNE VIDEO CHAT

Go ahead. Just be sure and call me
after.

EXT. MOVIE THEATER - NIGHT

Jake comes up to the movie theater. He tries to open the door. It's locked and won't open.

He sees the sign taped to the door:

SIGN

The Roosevelt Theater will be closed temporarily while we update our wiring. We apologize for the inconvenience.

INT. MOVIE THEATER - NIGHT

Donna sees someone looking in through the window. She recognizes Jake.

She opens the door. Jake enters. She's about to cry. He grabs her hand.

JAKE

What happened?

DONNA

It's over. We're done.

LATER:

Jake looks over the failed fire inspection report.

JAKE

But you can reopen, right?

DONNA

Sure, just as soon as I find a bundle of money I don't have. June was right. We should've got out before we lost money. I just hope your dad will still be fair in his offer.

Jake's phone buzzes with a message from a FRIEND. He looks at it and then puts it on the counter.

JAKE
I need to use the bathroom, then
we're going to figure out a plan.

Jake heads for the bathroom.

As Donna waits, Jake gets a text on his phone from Ralph.
Donna looks at it and sees the word THEATER.

TEXT MESSAGE RALPH
WE DID IT. The theater's closed and
slammed with expensive fire code
violations. Now get back in there and
BUY IT!!! You've got TWO HOURS left.
Don't let me down.

Donna's eyes go wide with shock and anger.

Jake returns to find Donna holding his phone and in shock.

DONNA
It was you!

JAKE
It was me what?

DONNA
You called him!

JAKE
Who?

DONNA
Harold.
(then)
The Fire Inspector.

JAKE
What are you talking about?

DONNA
I saw your message.

Jake takes his phone and looks at the text message.

JAKE
I don't know anything about this.

DONNA
All this time, you've been feeding me
this story about how awful your dad
is, and it was a setup. You just
wanted me to let my guard down.
(MORE)

DONNA (cont'd)
I can't believe I trusted you. I'm so stupid.

JAKE
Donna, I would never -

DONNA
So it's a coincidence I mention we have old lights and wires, and then the Fire Inspector comes? And it's also a coincidence that right after he closes us your dad texts you to make sure you're going to close the deal? It says it right there, "We did it!". We! As in you and him.

JAKE
I would never do something like this. I can't believe you would even suggest it.

Donna walks to the door and holds it open.

Jake is about to say something but then leaves. Donna turns away and faces the soda machine.

The door opens again. She doesn't turn around.

DONNA
You've done enough. Go home.

ALAN
I'm not going anywhere.

SHERRY
Me neither.

Donna turns around to her parents.

ALAN
June called us. She said you were upset. What happened, kiddo?

LATER:

Donna walks her parents through the theater.

DONNA
And these doors have to be changed. They need to be fireproof and to have secure hinges.

Alan looks over the doors, taking it all in.

DONNA (cont'd)

This is such a busy time of year. What if I can't find someone to come and do the work? We could be closed through January.

ALAN

Steve will know what to do about the exit signs and lights. And Ryan can handle the wiring. And you and I will change the doors.

DONNA

I don't want to ask Ryan. I already asked his new girlfriend to help me out. And Uncle Steve has already done so much for me.

ALAN

When you were 18 you had a big trip to Europe planned. And then my store flooded and who gave up her trip and her money to save it? And who was there when Steve hurt his back? Who made him frozen meals every week for three months? And who gave up her honeymoon so she could help her future ex-husband start his own business? You never once complained about all you done for us. It's time you let us do something for you.

Alan stands up. He takes out his phone and calls Uncle Steve.

ALAN (cont'd)

Steve? Whatever you're doing tomorrow, cancel it. Donna needs our help.

INT. MOVIE THEATER, LOBBY - DAY

Ryan screws a wall plate back into place. Uncle Steve and Alan work on installing the EXIT signs.

Donna installs new door hinges. Natalie assists everyone, getting tools and bringing people popcorn and drinks. Donna looks upset.

NATALIE

Don't look so worried. Everything will get done.

DONNA

It's not that... it's just... we still don't have the money to pay back the fines. And since we're closed, no money is coming in.

NATALIE

I took care of that.

DONNA

What? How?

Natalie opens her phone. She's created a GoFundMe type page.

NATALIE

People have been making donations all day. There's enough here to pay your fines and the taxes!

Donna nearly cries she's so happy. She hugs Natalie.

DONNA

I can't believe you did this!

NATALIE

You said yourself, if people knew the theater was in trouble they'd help. Turns out you were right.

The door opens and Jake comes in. He's holding a fire extinguisher and lifts it up in surrender.

JAKE

I come in peace.

Donna glares at him.

JAKE (cont'd)

Can we talk?

Jake hands her the fire extinguisher. Donna refuses to take it.

ALAN

Donna?

DONNA

I'm not taking that.

ALAN

We do need one. It's on the list.

DONNA
And we'll get one.

JAKE
It's fine. I'll go. I'm sorry about
all this.

Jake exits. They return to working.

A beat.

June comes in, holding the fire extinguisher.

JUNE
Which one of you left this outside?

Everyone looks at June.

JUNE (cont'd)
What?

INT. MOVIE THEATER, LOBBY - NIGHT

The theater is dark and everyone has stopped working.

Donna stands by a light switch.

DONNA
Three... two... one...

Donna flips the switch. Everything lights up, and it's
brighter than it was before.

Everyone cheers except for Natalie, who's curled up and
sleeping by the ticket counter.

INT. RALPH'S OFFICE - DAY

Jake sits across from Ralph.

RALPH
How soon can we get the papers?

Jake looks down.

RALPH (cont'd)
What? Don't tell me she wants more
money.

JAKE
No, it's not that.

RALPH

Dang it, Jake. I can't save your butt again. You want to be taken serious? Then start acting like someone I should take serious.

JAKE

Save my butt?

Ralph gives him a knowing look.

JAKE (cont'd)

No, Dad. Please, tell me you didn't.

(then)

You called the fire inspector.

(then)

I thought she was being paranoid. How could you do that?

RALPH

How could I do that? You practically begged me to. You should be thanking me.

JAKE

Thank you for what? Sabotaging a family that's already struggling? Or for trying to turn a historical treasure into a corporate owned coffee shop?

(then)

Donna was right. You don't care about the soul of this city. You just care about your profit margin.

Jake heads for the door.

RALPH

We're not finished here. You leave now and you're done. You hear me? Done!

Jake exits.

INT. THEATER LOBBY - NIGHT

Donna sells some PATRONS tickets and they enter the theater.

Jake comes in. She gives him a cross look.

JAKE

I know you don't want to see me, but there's something you need to know.

Donna's about to protest.

JAKE (cont'd)

Please, hear me out.

(then)

You were right about the fire inspector. Or at least sort of right.

DONNA

So it was you?

JAKE

No. It wasn't. But someone did call him in. It was my dad.

DONNA

Your dad?

JAKE

I told him he was way out of line, and if I have to get fired over this, then so be it. I won't be part of a company that hurts people for its own gain.

Donna fills a bag with popcorn.

DONNA

A peace offering.

(then)

I'm sorry I accused you of sabotaging me. I should've listened to you.

Jake notices the old coffee machine from Alan's store behind the counter.

JAKE

You been serving Donna's famous coffee?

DONNA

That's a definite no. I don't want people to think I'm trying to kill them.

JAKE

May I?

DONNA
It's all yours.

Jake grabs the pot and fills it with water.

LATER:

Jake and Donna sip coffee.

JAKE
That's it! It's so obvious. I can't believe I didn't see it before.

DONNA
What?

JAKE
I think there's a way we can both come out on top.

DONNA
I'm still not selling.

JAKE
I don't want you to.

DONNA
Okay...

JAKE
Look over there. Now imagine a Two Beans in a Pod coffee bar. There's plenty of room.

DONNA
There is room...

JAKE
Think about it. We could combine what we love most. You give people a chance to see something beautiful. And then afterwards, they can grab coffee and connect and talk.

DONNA
I don't know...

JAKE
Do you see all that snow out there? There's nothing better than a hot latte on a cold, snowy night.

(MORE)

JAKE (cont'd)

They could even get coffee before a movie, and warm up as they settle in for the show.

DONNA

And in the summer we could have iced coffee and those lemonade tea drinks.

JAKE

You could keep, say, 20 percent of the profit. That's easy money, right in your pocket. Or your sister's pocket, I should say. She'll never doubt this place's value again.

DONNA

What's in it for you?

JAKE

People love Boston for its rich history, and we'll be an official sponsor of one of the city's heritage sites. People will realize we're not trying to change the city, we're here to support it.

DONNA

So you get free PR and publicity.

JAKE

Exactly. And hopefully some new customers too. You see? It's just like Wallace and Davis in White Christmas! Putting on a show at the lodge was a crazy idea, but if they hadn't taken the risk they would've lost out on so much.

DONNA

You can't leave everything up to fate.

JAKE

Exactly.

DONNA

It's a line in the movie.

JAKE

And it's true. If you're always waiting for some divine intervention you might miss out on the miracle that's right in front of you.

DONNA

Hot chocolate would be great for when we show The Polar Express.

(then)

This might actually be a good idea.

JAKE

I have to go. I'm going to write up a proposal tonight!

Jake heads for the door.

DONNA

Jake?

Jake stops. Donna walks over to him.

DONNA (cont'd)

Maybe we could have that second date sometime.

Jake pretends to think it over. He comes closer to Donna.

JAKE

How's this Saturday?

DONNA

Perfect.

Donna leans in and they share a kiss.

INT. CORPORATE MEETING OFFICE - DAY

Jake sits before Ralph, the COO and top managers of his company. Beside him is a mock-up of the theater with a Two Beans coffee bar inside.

JAKE

This could be the beginning of a whole new venture for us. We could have bars and kiosks inside airports, train stations, stores. It's a market we haven't yet broken into, and this would be a great way to open the door and get our investors excited.

RALPH

Jake, you've given a great presentation. But I was clear with you. We want the theater.

JAKE

I know. And I have one question for everyone - are we a company that cares about people? Or are we a company that puts its own needs first, no matter how much it hurts the community?

RALPH

Jake -

JAKE

Two Beans was built on the idea that the customer deserves a first rate experience. We wanted to put people first. But somehow, we lost sight of that. We're trying to take something away from the community that the community wants. Do you have any idea how important that theater is?

INT. ROOSEVELT THEATER - DAY

Donna is inside the theater, selling tickets.

JAKE (V.O.)

There's people who met the love of their life there. People whose lives were changed by a movie.

Alan and Sherry come in, smiling and holding hands. Donna serves Alan a cup of coffee in the mug Jake bought him.

She looks hesitant. Alan sips it - his face brightens like it's delicious. Donna beams with joy.

JAKE (V.O.) (cont'd)

Even I've been changed by it. Have you seen It's a Wonderful Life? It's about how money isn't what makes us rich. It's family and friends and being surrounded by people who love you.

Donna and Natalie laugh as they throw popcorn into each others' mouths.

June and her HUSBAND come in, she's as pregnant as ever, and joins in the fun.

JAKE (V.O.) (cont'd)

And what I think is, we, as a company, should consider all factors before buying a location. We shouldn't just consider our profit margins, but how will we affect the community? Will we be improving the neighborhood? Are we supporting what the locals want?

More PATRONS come in, smiling, laughing, happy to be in the theater.

INT. TWO BEANS OFFICE - DAY

Jake finishes. The room goes quiet. Jake makes one last appeal to Ralph.

JAKE

I saw your face when you saw your initials were still carved into the armrest. And how can you forget seeing A Christmas Story with me there? Do you have any idea how important that was to me? I never got you alone to myself. And we laughed so hard.

Ralph thinks about that.

JAKE (cont'd)

If you don't think that's important, and you're just going to rip those chairs out to make some corporate clone, well then fine. I quit!

Jake heads for the door. A BOARD MEMBER speaks.

BOARD MEMBER

Wait, you're not really quitting are you?

Jake stops.

JAKE

If that's what you all want.

RALPH

We accept your resignation.

BOARD MEMBER #2

No we don't.

RALPH

What?

BOARD MEMBER #2

Jake, we need you. Ever since you've taken over development every opening we've had has been better than the last.

RALPH

It has?

BOARD MEMBER #3

Don't you read the briefings?

RALPH

Well... I... I'm incredibly busy. I don't have time to read every paper put on my desk. And this is about more than that. This is about the right person for the job, and I think it's clear Jake's not up to it.

BOARD MEMBER

Says who?

Silence.

JAKE

Do you all really want me here?

BOARD MEMBER #3

Of course we do. You're this company's future.

BOARD MEMBER

Let's vote on Jake's proposal. All in favor?

Everyone says "aye" except for Ralph. Everyone looks at him. He then says it.

INT. JAKE'S OFFICE - DAY

Jake comes in and pumps his fist in excitement. His secretary Sara sees him and he calms down, embarrassed.

She holds out a candy cane.

SARA

I'm not saying this is why you're here, but it worked once.

Jake takes the candy cane.

JAKE
Thanks Sara.

He picks up the phone and calls someone.

JAKE (cont'd)
Donna? It's Jake. You're not going to believe this - they loved it! And guess what else? The board is completely behind me! From now on, I'm going directly to them.

A knock on Jake's door. He looks up to see Ralph.

JAKE (cont'd)
I'll have to call you back.

Ralph comes in.

RALPH
I just want to ask you for one thing.

JAKE
What's that?

RALPH
When you're CEO, don't be like me. Don't lose sight of what matters. Stay true to yourself. It's what this company needs.

JAKE
Dad...

RALPH
You're my son, and yet you're the one teaching me how to be a man.

Jake comes around his desk. He hugs Ralph as Ralph wipes away some tears.

RALPH (cont'd)
Come on.

Ralph throws Jake his coat.

JAKE
Where we going?

RALPH
You said you found some other
locations. I want to see the one
where Ben Franklin worked.

INT. TWO BEANS IN A POD OFFICE - DAY

Donna sits a table with Jake, Ralph and other senior staff.
Donna signs a completed contract. Everyone applauds.

EXT. OFFICE BUILDING - DAY

Donna and Jake go out.

DONNA
I can't believe they're giving me
25%!

JAKE
You drive a hard bargain.

DONNA
You mean you do. You did everything.
I can't thank you enough.

JAKE
I should be thanking you. Not only
did you save my job, you got me a
promotion.
(then)
But what I really want to thank you
for is showing me I can change things
for the better, I just have to stand
up for what I believe in.

Jake grabs Donna's hand and she leans down for a kiss.

DONNA
I always knew I'd get a miracle this
Christmas. I just didn't expect it to
be you.
(then)
I better go. June is waiting for me.

INT. JUNE'S HOUSE - DAY

June looks over the contract.

JUNE
Hmmm.

DONNA
What do you think?

JUNE
I think I should've never doubted
you.

DONNA
Really? I'm so happy to hear that.

JUNE
I also think I was too hard on you.
I'm sorry about the tree lighting
ceremony. I was stressed out. I
shouldn't have taken it out on you.

DONNA
It's okay. You weren't totally wrong.
I may have been avoiding you so I
could buy myself some time.

JUNE
I love you.

DONNA
I love you too.

INT. THEATER - NIGHT

The theater is filled with CHILDREN in pajamas. Their
parents laugh and smile as they feel the kids' excitement.

Many of the kids are in line at a TEMPORARY Two Beans kiosk.
Without the full one built yet, there's a small cart selling
hot chocolate. There's a banner over the cart: COMING SOON:
TWO BEANS IN A POD!

Natalie is behind the counter, also in her pajamas, helping
to serve popcorn.

Donna is dressed as a conductor. She's tearing tickets and
chatting with the families as they come through.

Alan and Sherry enter. They're decked out in festive pajamas
and even slippers! Donna laughs when she sees them.

SHERRY
It was Alan's idea to dress up.

ALAN
I say if you're a kid at heart, then
that still counts.

DONNA

Absolutely.

Donna reaches into her pocket. She takes out two bells.

DONNA (cont'd)

And here's your bells. You'll need them for the end of the movie, when all the kids rings theirs.

SHERRY

How fun! I can't wait. Come on, Alan, let's get some hot chocolate before the show starts.

Alan and Sherry get in line for hot chocolate.

Jake comes in with Conner, who's also in pajamas. Conner hands their tickets to Donna.

DONNA

Hello there. Welcome to the Polar Express! Is this your first time seeing it?

JAKE

Are you kidding? He hasn't stopped quoting it all week.

Natalie spots Jake and heads over to say hi. Donna tears the tickets and hands them to Conner. She then reaches into her pocket.

DONNA

And this is for you.

Donna takes a bell out of her pocket and hands it to him.

CONNER

Thank you. This bell is a wonderful symbol of the spirit of Christmas.

Natalie knows he's quoting The Polar Express and chimes in to say it with him.

CONNER & NATALIE

Just remember, the true spirit of Christmas lies in your heart.

Conner and Natalie giggle.

JAKE

Natalie, this is my son Conner.

NATALIE

Hi. I'm Natalie.

CONNER

Hi.

JAKE

Looks like the Two Beans cart is a hit.

DONNA

I know, isn't it great!? I can't wait to see what happens when we have the full coffee bar in here.

JAKE

This is only the beginning of great things.

Jake leans in and gives Donna a kiss. Natalie and Conner look at each other and then giggle.

JAKE (cont'd)

We better get inside and get some seats.

CONNER

Dad, can I sit in the front row?

JAKE

You want to sit up there? You'll get a neck cramp.

NATALIE

No he won't! Come on, I'll sit with you!

Conner and Natalie run in.

JAKE

I guess they're sitting in the front.

DONNA

Good. Now you can keep me company.

INT. LOBBY - NIGHT

The lobby appears empty of people. Behind the popcorn counter we find Donna and Jake snuggled up and kissing.

The popcorn machine bursts to life.