

A SILVER SCREEN CHRISTMAS

Written by  
Melissa Field

Copyright (c) 2017

melissafeld01@gmail.com  
209.480.8347

3517 Darlington Ct.  
Modesto, CA 95356

INT. DONNA'S HOUSE (BATHROOM) - MORNING

DONNA, 37, runs a caulking gun around a new bathtub. The bathroom is in the process of being built and half finished.

Donna is comfortable in her jeans and with tools. She's not all elbow grease though - she still enjoys her femininity and has on soft makeup as well as manicured nails.

She finishes and puts down the gun, satisfied.

She looks at her watch and gasps and rushes out of the room.

INT. DONNA'S HOUSE (KITCHEN)

Donna pours cereal into a bowl. Some toast pops up. She puts it on a plate and puts it on the table.

DONNA  
Natalie, breakfast is ready!

Donna hears rustling off screen.

DONNA (cont'd)  
Come on Natalie!

More rustling, and then some bells jingling.

INT. LIVING ROOM

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

NATALIE  
Where is it?

Natalie opens another box.

NATALIE (cont'd)  
It's got to be here.

DONNA  
Natalie? What are you doing.

Natalie pulls out more bells and throws them on the floor. She pulls out some reindeer antlers to be worn as a festive headband.

NATALIE

I'm looking for our stockings. I want to hang them over the fireplace.

DONNA

But it's not even December yet.

NATALIE

I know, but we seriously need some Christmas cheer around here.

DONNA

This will have to wait. You need to eat breakfast and get going to school.

NATALIE

This isn't for me. It's for you.

DONNA

For me?

NATALIE

Whenever you're upset about something you find something to work on.

Donna comes and sits beside Natalie.

NATALIE (cont'd)

Since you and Grandpa decided to close the store you've installed a new radiator, re-tiled the kitchen and built a new bathroom.

DONNA

I'm not upset. I'm just... processing.

Natalie takes out a large candy cane and hands it to Donna.

NATALIE

Christmas always makes you happy, so we need Christmas around here.

Donna puts on the reindeer antlers. She smiles.

NATALIE (cont'd)

See? Better already.

Donna and Natalie laugh.

EXT. BOSTON - DAY

Donna walks up the street toward a HARDWARE STORE. She's still wearing 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!!

Donna sighs as she opens the door and goes in.

INT. SMALL HARDWARE STORE - DAY

Donna's father PETER, 70, looks up and smiles when she comes in.

DONNA

Hey Dad.

PETER

Hey, there's my girl.

Peter looks at the reindeer antlers.

PETER (cont'd)

Are you going to be driving Santa's sleigh this year?

Donna reaches up, remembering the antlers.

DONNA

I forgot I put those on. No wonder the other parents were staring at me when I dropped Natalie off.

Donna starts to take them off.

PETER

No, wait.

Peter goes behind the counter. He pulls out a Santa hat. He puts it on.

PETER (cont'd)

Let's keep them on. It makes it feel more cheerful in here.

Donna looks at a popcorn machine in the corner. It has a price tag on it.

DONNA  
You're not selling the popcorn machine, are you?

PETER  
Everything must go. That means everything.

The door opens. UNCLE STEVE, 65, enters.

DONNA  
Hey Uncle Steve.

UNCLE STEVE  
Hey. What's going on? Are you already having your Christmas party?

DONNA  
We're just being festive.

Peter goes back behind the counter. He gets an elf hat for Uncle Steve.

PETER  
Here. I know you hate to be left out.

Uncle Steve puts it on. They all laugh.

DONNA  
I just keep thinking something will happen and this will all turn around.

UNCLE STEVE  
This neighborhood won't be right without good ole Pete's Tools.

PETER  
Tell that to Mega Tools.

UNCLE STEVE  
These dang corporations. They open up wherever they want, without any concern for the families that have been in business longer than they can imagine. I still remember when Dad opened this place. I was 8. I got my first hammer then.

PETER

Come on, let's have some coffee. We should enjoy it before someone buys the machine.

Peter leads Uncle Steve over to a coffee machine behind the counter. The coffee machine also has a price tag on it.

The phone rings. Donna answers.

DONNA

Pete's Tools. This is Donna, how can I help you?

INT. JUNE'S HOUSE

JUNE (35) holds the phone as she looks down at a letter. A kindergarten teacher, June generally wears cardigans and jeans.

JUNE

Donna? It's June.

DONNA (O.S.)

Hey June. What's going on?

JUNE

I just got back from the post office and I need to talk to you about something. Are you busy?

DONNA (O.S.)

Not at all. What's up? Everything okay?

JUNE

Yeah, yeah. It's just...

June's eyes go down to the letter.

JUNE (cont'd)

I'd rather talk in person. Can you come by?

INT. HARDWARE STORE

Donna looks over at Peter.

PETER

Who is that?

DONNA  
It's June. She wants to know if I can  
come over.

PETER  
Sure. Go on.

DONNA  
You sure?

PETER  
I'm pretty sure I can handle the  
customers. Plus I've got a little elf  
to help me out.

Uncle Steve taps the bell on his hat.

DONNA  
Thanks Dad.  
(into phone)  
I'll be right there.

INT. JUNE'S HOUSE - LATER

June sits with the letter on the couch. Her face is worried.

There's a knock at the door.

She opens the door to Donna.

DONNA  
Hey sis!

JUNE  
Hey. Come in.

DONNA  
What is it you wanted to tell me - oh  
wait - oh my god - are you - ?

June shakes her head.

DONNA (cont'd)  
I'm so sorry. I thought you were  
going to tell me...

JUNE  
Ryan thinks we need to start  
considering other options.

DONNA  
Like adopting?

June nods.

JUNE

I'm open to it. I just want to give it a little longer.

DONNA

Whatever you want, I support it. And if I can do anything to help, you let me know.

JUNE

Thank you.

DONNA

What was it you wanted to talk about?

JUNE

You know the old theater grandma left to us?

DONNA

Yeah.

JUNE

We're behind on our property taxes. If we don't pay up by the 1st of the year, the city is going to foreclose on us.

Donna looks at the letter.

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

I guess we never got around to it. And 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.

(then)

Maybe it's time we sold it.

DONNA

Sell the theater? But it's been in our family for three generations.

JUNE

And it's also been closed for five years. We're just losing money on it. With the store closing I think we need to think about what's best for everyone. That money would help you and Dad out a lot.

DONNA

Now you sound like Natalie.

June is surprised by this.

DONNA (cont'd)

She's worried about me, but I'm fine. It's just... it feels like we're losing more than a store.

JUNE

Like you're losing a part of the family too.

DONNA

Exactly. I can't take the theater away also.

JUNE

I want to do something, but I don't know how. School will be out soon, but then Ryan and I are going to visit his family, and then after we'll see my family, and at some point we need to sit down and have a long talk about what we want to do.

DONNA

I know it's a lot to take on, but I'm not ready to give up on it. At least not yet. I just need some time to think.

INT. JAKE'S OFFICE - DAY

JAKE, 44, dials a number. A handsome business man, Jake sits in a cramped, windowless office.

He backs up his chair and bumps into a lamp, knocking it over and breaking it. No one answers his call. He hangs up, frustrated.

His secretary, SARA, 55, enters. She picks up the broken lamp.

SARA

You okay?

Jake hangs up.

JAKE

Nobody ever answers at The Common Theater property. The line just keeps ringing.

Jake stands up.

JAKE (cont'd)

I'm going to go over there. Maybe it's my lucky day and I'll catch someone there.

Jake puts on his jacket and heads to the door.

SARA

Here, take this. Maybe it'll help with the luck.

Sara hands him a candy cane.

SARA (cont'd)

I like to get into the holiday spirit a little early.

Jake tucks it into his breast pocket.

JAKE

I'll take all the luck I can get. Thank you!

INT. CAR - DAY

Donna drives down the street to the movie theater.

NATALIE  
Where are we going?

DONNA  
To check on a movie theater we own.

NATALIE  
We own a movie theater!?

DONNA  
The Common Theater. Your Aunt June and I inherited it from our grandmother. It was named after the Boston Common Park, which is the oldest city park in the US. It's one of the first movie theaters Boston had. It had so many traditions.

NATALIE  
Like what?

DONNA  
Every year around this time they'd show "A Christmas Story".

NATALIE  
You'll shoot your eye out!

DONNA  
Who will?

NATALIE  
It's from the movie. How come you aren't showing the movie?

DONNA  
We wanted to, but neither of us had time to reopen and plan everything. As the years went on it kept getting pushed aside for something else.

Donna parks.

NATALIE  
What else do you own that I don't know about? Are we secretly rich? Are we royalty?

DONNA  
Sadly, no. This is it. But you're  
still my little princess.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Donna and Natalie approach the theater. They are surprised to see a MAN standing outside, looking in through the window.

Jake looks up when they walk up to the doors.

JAKE  
Hello.

DONNA  
Hi... can I help you?

JAKE  
I'm just trying to see inside. I've  
been calling the owner for weeks, 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.

JAKE  
I'm Jake.

He extends his hand for a handshake.

DONNA  
Donna. And this is my daughter,  
Natalie.

NATALIE  
Nice to meet you.

JAKE

Likewise.

DONNA

So, what are you doing here?

JAKE

I've been hoping to see inside. I've got a proposal to write up and it's really hard to do without being in there.

NATALIE

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

Donna tries to give Natalie a "stop talking" look.

JAKE

Great! We have so much to talk about.

DONNA

Whatever it is you're selling, I'm not interested.

JAKE

I'm not selling anything. In fact -

Donna unlocks the door. She ushers Natalie in, and then follows.

INT. MOVIE THEATER, LOBBY

Donna closes the door and locks it, leaving Jake outside. Jake knocks on the window.

JAKE

Donna, I just want to talk.

NATALIE

Why'd you do that?

DONNA

We don't know him.

JAKE

I was going to say I'm not selling, I'm buying. Don't you want to hear my offer?

Donna and Natalie look at each other.

JAKE (cont'd)  
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.

Donna turns away from Jake.

JAKE (cont'd)  
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.

Donna stops. She turns back to the door. She reaches for the lock but hesitates. She unlocks it.

DONNA  
You can come in for a quick look. Then be on your way.

JAKE  
Thank you. I really appreciate this.

Jake comes in.

INT. OLD MOVIE THEATER - DAY

Jake, Donna and Natalie walk in and look around. Jake spins in a circle, taking it all in.

Natalie runs behind the counter.

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

You're selling? Do you already have an offer? Whatever it is, I 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 Coffee Time?

NATALIE

What's Coffee Time?

JAKE

Only the fastest growing coffee chain in America.

DONNA

What does Coffee Time 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. Plus we'll-

DONNA

No.

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

I understand this place is important to you. But you should at least hear my offer before you say no.

DONNA

No.

JAKE

Then you should hear my offer after you say no. 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 drink tea.



JAKE  
 What kind? We have herbal, chai,  
 black, green -

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

JAKE  
 Jake.

DONNA  
 Your name is Jake Jake?

JAKE  
 It's Jake Duncan.

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

JAKE (cont'd)  
 Keep it. Think it over, discuss this  
 with your family, then give me a  
 call. Goodbye Natalie!

NATALIE  
 Bye, Jake!

Jake exits.

DONNA  
 Can you believe that guy?

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.

DONNA  
 Come on, you still haven't seen the  
 big screen.

INT. SCREENING ROOM - DAY

Natalie runs down the aisle, in awe of the big, empty theater. She runs back up to Donna.

Natalie feels the soft velvet of the chairs. She sits down in one.

NATALIE  
Mom, turn on the projector!

DONNA  
We don't have time to watch a movie.

NATALIE  
But it works, right?

DONNA  
Yeah. 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, I know you, and I know when something makes you happy. You love this theater.

DONNA  
You're right, I do. 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. I'd have to sand and paint and all kinds of stuff.

NATALIE

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

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

NATALIE (cont'd)

Do you want to keep this theater or do you want someone like Coffee Time to end up with it?

Donna thinks it over. She takes out her phone and dials.

NATALIE (cont'd)

Who you calling?

DONNA

Grandpa.

Peter answers.

DONNA (cont'd)

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

Donna and Natalie decorate the house for Christmas. Christmas music plays in the background.

KNOCK KNOCK

Donna opens the door to MATT, 45. He's a blue collar, handsome guy with down to earth appeal. He's currently in blue jeans and his work shirt - MATT M. MARCUS, ELECTRICIAN

Natalie puts down the string of tinsel and runs to him.

NATALIE

Dad!

Matt scoops Natalie up in a big hug.

DONNA

Hey Matt. Let me grab her backpack.

Donna exits.

MATT

What's going on here?

NATALIE

We're making it festive.

MATT

Okay. But aren't you skipping something?

NATALIE

What do you mean?

MATT

Thanksgiving isn't until Thursday.

NATALIE

Mom needs cheering up so we're speeding things up a little.

Donna comes back in with Natalie's backpack and jacket.

MATT

You're still picking her up Friday, right?

DONNA

I thought it was Saturday.

MATT

No, didn't I tell you? I'm going out of town Saturday.

DONNA

Where to?

MATT

Me and Hilary are going up to New York.

DONNA

Who's Hilary?

MATT

It's someone I've been seeing.

DONNA

I didn't realize you were dating. Has she met Natalie?

MATT

She will on Thursday.

DONNA

Wow. Okay. You're dating Hilary. And bringing her to family holidays. And taking weekend trips together. Wow.... wow.

NATALIE

Wow.

MATT

Can we talk about this later?

(then)

You ready kiddo?

NATALIE

Yep.

MATT

I'll see you Friday.

NATALIE

Bye Mom. I love you.

Matt and Natalie exit.

Donna, previously smiling, now melts into her true feelings - a bit overwhelmed and worried.

She sits down on the couch and picks up her phone. She calls her sister June. She gets no answer.

DONNA

(leaving message)

Hey, it's me. Natalie just left with her dad. I need to talk to you about something. I saw someone today.

(MORE)

DONNA (cont'd)

I mean I met a guy. Not like that. He made us an offer. On the theater. Call me back, okay?

Donna looks at a framed photograph on the end table. In it is her, Matt and Natalie as one happy family (pre-divorce).

She picks the photo up and looks at it. She puts it back on the table, face down.

INT. JUNE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

RYAN, 35, June's husband, sits with student papers that he's grading. He's a sixth grade teacher.

By the wall, June is doing a headstand. June's phone rings with Donna's name.

RYAN

It's Donna.

JUNE

I'll call her back when I'm done.

RYAN

Are you sure that's supposed to help with getting pregnant?

JUNE

I read it on the website of a woman who tried for five years.

June puts her feet down and comes over to the couch. She sits beside Ryan.

JUNE (cont'd)

Sometimes, when I close my eyes, I can see it. I see our little babies, and it feels so real. How can it seem so real and still not be happening?

June looks down. Ryan lifts her chin up and looks at her.

RYAN

I see it too. There's little Maggie over there, running around in pink pajamas. And Steven right there, reading a book. And we'll be here, knowing it all happened exactly how it was meant to. We'll have our family. We just can't give up.

Ryan gives June a kiss.

RYAN (cont'd)  
By the way, aren't we making a  
casserole with gingerbread snaps for  
Thanksgiving?

JUNE  
Oh my gosh, that's tomorrow isn't it?  
I completely forgot.

Ryan stands up and puts his hand out.

RYAN  
You cook the potatoes and I'll start  
on the topping.

June grabs his hand. They head into the kitchen together.

INT. DONNA'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Donna takes a hot green bean casserole out of the oven. She  
lifts it up and smells it.

She checks the time.

DONNA  
How is it 5 o'clock already?

Donna exits.

EXT. DONNA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Donna comes out, freshly changed, hair and makeup done,  
carrying the casserole.

INT. SHERRY & PETER'S HOUSE - NIGHT

June, Ryan and a few other family members mingle and drink  
wine with SHERRY, 65, Donna's mom and Peter's wife.

The door opens. Donna enters with her casserole.

DONNA  
Happy Thanksgiving!

PETER  
There's my girl!

SHERY  
Hey sweetheart.

JUNE  
Happy Thanksgiving.

Sherry takes the casserole. Donna hugs her family members.

JUNE (cont'd)  
I just remembered I missed a call  
from you.

DONNA  
Can we talk later?

JUNE  
What's up?

DONNA  
Someone wants to buy the theater.

JUNE  
Wow, you are fast. Last week you  
aren't ready to sell and now you  
already have a buyer.

Peter overhears and comes over.

PETER  
What's this I hear about a buyer?

DONNA  
It's.. it's for... it might be  
nothing.

Peter looks to June for help.

JUNE  
It's for The Common Theater.

PETER  
You're selling?

JUNE  
We know how much it meant to grandma,  
and to you.

PETER  
But Donna just called me and told me  
she was reopening it.

JUNE  
You said what? I am so confused.



DONNA

Let's sit down. We can discuss over dinner.

INT. DINING ROOM

The family has plates full of delicious food, most of them half eaten. Everyone is happy and full of warmth from the food and good company.

DONNA

And then he gave me his card and left.

SHERRY

How much is he offering?

DONNA

I don't know. I don't want to sell it to him.

JUNE

Why not?

DONNA

He's just like Mega Tools. He doesn't care about the people or the history, all he cares about is his profit margin.

Peter sits quietly, listening.

DONNA (cont'd)

What do you think Dad? You haven't said anything at all.

Peter, his face heavy with thought, takes a long breath.

PETER

I think I raised two intelligent and capable daughters, and whatever they decide, that's what I want.

SHERRY

When are you planning to open?

DONNA

If Dad and Uncle Steve help with the renovations we could have that place fixed up in a week, which would have it done by December 1st.

PETER

Just in time to show It's a Wonderful  
Life. Just like Mom did.

Peter gets a soft, distant look in his eyes as he remembers.

JUNE

I guess it's settled then. We're  
reopening the theater.

RYAN

To the reopening of a wonderful  
family tradition. And also, to my  
beautiful wife, who is so strong no  
matter what obstacles she faces.

Everyone raises their glasses. June gets tears in her eyes.  
She leans over and gives Ryan a kiss.

INT. KITCHEN - LATER

Sherry loads dishes into the dishwasher. Donna comes in with  
a few empty platters of food.

She puts them down. She goes to her purse. She takes out the  
card from Jake.

DONNA

Looks like I don't need this anymore.

Donna throws Jake's card in the trash.

SHERRY

I'm so proud of you. It'd be easy to  
take that money, especially after all  
we've been through.

DONNA

You really think I'm doing the right  
thing?

SHERRY

I don't think so, I know so.

DONNA

Thanks Mom.

INT. JAKE'S OFFICE - MORNING

Jake types on his computer. His boss RALPH, 55, comes in.  
Ralph is in an expensive suit, he's no rookie like Jake.

RALPH

Hey Jake, how we doing on securing that downtown location?

JAKE

I was finally able to speak to the owner.

RALPH

What'd he say?

JAKE

She said no. But it's because it's sentimental to her. I just need to talk to her again.

RALPH

Great. Make it happen. Corporate wants that open by January 15th.

JAKE

You know I'll do the best I can.

RALPH

Listen, Jake, you know I like you, and that's why I'm going to tell you this. If you don't make this happen, corporate has said they're going to let you go. So if I were you, I'd do more than my best. I'd do whatever it took to make this deal land.

Ralph exits. Jake grabs his coat.

INT. COMMON THEATER - DAY

Donna, Natalie, June, Ryan, Peter, Sherry and Uncle Steve are hard at work repairing the theater.

Peter sands the counter. Sherry cleans the glass and windows.

June and Donna change light bulbs and clean the lighting fixtures.

DONNA

Any updates on the baby situation?

June shakes her head.

DONNA (cont'd)

I'm sorry.

JUNE

Ryan is ready to fill out the adoption application, but I just need a little longer.

DONNA

I totally understand.

June looks up when Jake walks in. Donna looks over.

DONNA (cont'd)

Oh no. Not him again.

JUNE

Who is that?

DONNA

Coffee Time.

Donna walks over to Jake. He hands her a cup of Coffee Time coffee.

JAKE

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

Donna looks at the Coffee Time 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?

JAKE

No, nothing like that.

June walks over to Peter and says something. Peter looks over.

PETER

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.

PETER  
Donna?

JAKE  
Just five minutes.

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

Donna motions to the door.

DONNA (cont'd)  
Five minutes.

EXT. STREET

Donna and Jake talk as they walk 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  
Yes, community.

They stop in front of a warm, little cafe and look in.

JAKE (cont'd)  
Our cafes offer people a place to  
come together. A place where people  
can feel connected in a disconnected  
world. And we get a lot of regulars  
too, people who see our coffee shops  
as a friendly, familiar place in a  
big city.

DONNA  
What I see when I go in Coffee Time  
is people rushing in and out.

(MORE)

DONNA (cont'd)

Our theater is the opposite of that. It's a place people come to share in an experience together. It's a place to sit down and be with people you love and see things that move you and make you think.

JAKE

Yeah but you're just sitting there, not talking. We offer people a place to connect after they see the thing that moves them.

DONNA

You don't get it.

(pause)

Okay, what's your favorite Christmas movie?

JAKE

Die Hard.

DONNA

I'm serious.

JAKE

I'm serious! Have you seen it? It is a Christmas movie.

DONNA

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

JAKE

No. Why?

DONNA

Because it 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

You've never seen it?

Jake shakes his head. 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 runs back up to her.

JAKE (cont'd)

At least hear what we're offering.

Donna sips her coffee.

JAKE (cont'd)

Can we at least stop? I want you to -- okay fine, we're offering \$500k.

Donna's eyes go wide. She nearly spits out her coffee.

DONNA

Five hundred thousand -- that's... more than... I mean... I need to... Five hundred thousand?

Jake takes his card out of his wallet.

JAKE

I'm pretty sure you didn't keep the first one, so here's my card. Think it over.

Jake stops.

Donna takes a few more steps and realizes he stopped.

JAKE (cont'd)

This is my car. I hope to hear from you soon.

INT. MOVIE THEATER, LOBBY

Donna walks back in. June comes over.

JUNE

What happened? What did he say?

DONNA

What would you do with 250 thousand dollars?

JUNE

Two hundred and fifty thousand?

DONNA

Coffee Time is offering to buy us out for \$500k.

JUNE

That's a lot of money.

DONNA

Are we really making the right choice?

JUNE

I think we need a sign. Got any angels around that can tell us what to do?

Natalie comes running in.

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

JUNE

If that's not a sign, I don't know what is!

INT. MOVIE THEATER - LATER

The theater is looking fantastic. Clean, shiny and polished. Everyone eats popcorn, which Natalie is serving.



DONNA

Hi everyone. June and I want to thank you all for your hard work this weekend. I can't believe how much we got done. There's a few things left, which I'll be doing this week. So if all goes to plan, we'll have our official reopening this Friday. And of course you all get free tickets.

Everyone claps.

Donna goes over to Natalie. She gets a bag of popcorn. June tosses popcorn at Natalie, trying to get it in her mouth.

Uncle Steve comes over.

UNCLE STEVE

I've got to get going.

DONNA

Thank you so much for your help, Uncle Steve.

JUNE

We couldn't have done it without you.

UNCLE STEVE

It was my pleasure. I've missed this place. And it means so much to me. I remember coming back from Vietnam and seeing White Christmas here. It was the first thing that had made me smile in a long time. It just reminded me there's good stuff in the world, and not to give up on it.

Uncle Steve's wife BRENDA, 60, comes over. A portly woman with a warm face that radiates love and warmth, Uncle Steve is clearly still smitten with her. He puts his arm around her.

BRENDA

And thank goodness he didn't. He proposed to me right after!

NATALIE

In the theater?

BRENDA

Just outside. He got down on one knee and gave me his old class ring.

UNCLE STEVE

It slipped right off her finger and into the snow!

BRENDA

We never did find it. But I said yes and that's what mattered. We laughed the whole way home, wondering who would find it when the snow melted.

DONNA

I'll be sure and let you know when we show White Christmas. I've got it on the schedule after Miracle on 34th Street.

UNCLE STEVE

If we can help with anything else, you give us a call.

DONNA

Thank you. We will.

Uncle Steve and Brenda exit. Donna turns back to June.

DONNA (cont'd)

I don't know how we're going to make it, but I only know we have to. I've heard so many stories like that. This place, it's more than a movie theater. It's just so full of love and laughter and all the happiness people have felt here.

JUNE

I should get going too. I'll see you Friday for the premier.

Donna and June hug.

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, feeling happier at seeing this.

INT. HARDWARE STORE - DAY

About half the merchandise from before remains. Peter sees Donna and smiles.

Matt comes around the corner holding a few tools. Donna is instantly flustered - she still gets caught off guard by her ex-husband.

DONNA

Matt! What are you doing here?

MATT

I wanted to say hi to your dad before the store closes. Then I saw something I needed. And then several other things.

DONNA

I see that. Don't forget we have our grand reopening of the theater this Friday. We'd love to have you there.

MATT

I wouldn't miss it. Hilary can't wait to see the theater.

Donna's face drops a little.

DONNA

Hilary?

MATT

My girlfriend. I heard you were seeing someone else also.

DONNA

I...

MATT

Natalie kept talking about some guy named Jake that came to the theater. I'm glad you're moving on also. I guess it's about time, right? It really makes this easier. I feel like we can be friends now and it won't be so weird.

DONNA

Yeah... of course. Moving on. Good stuff.. I should get the phone.

MATT  
It's not ringing.

DONNA  
I meant I have to call someone. My  
date in fact.

Donna takes out her phone. She dials someone.

INT. JAKE'S OFFICE

Jake searches for COMMON THEATER and BOSTON on his computer.

His phone rings. He answers.

JAKE  
Jake Duncan.

DONNA (O.S.)  
Hi, Jake? It's Donna.

JAKE  
Hey! How are you?

DONNA (O.S.)  
Great.

INT. HARDWARE STORE

Matt watches Donna. She turns away and slips into a different aisle.

DONNA  
We're having our grand reopening this  
Friday. I thought you might want to  
come.

JAKE (O.S.)  
You're inviting me?

DONNA  
Yeah. I think you should see why this  
is so important to me.

JAKE (O.S.)  
You know what? I'd love to come.

DONNA  
Great. I'll hold a ticket for you at  
the box office.

JAKE (O.S.)  
Thank you.

DONNA  
See you Friday.

Donna hangs up. She turns around. Matt is RIGHT THERE and she bumps into him.

DONNA (cont'd)  
Matt!

MATT  
I'm all set.

DONNA  
I'll ring you up.

INT. DONNA'S HOUSE, BATHROOM - NIGHT

Donna puts on lipstick. Natalie comes in.

DONNA  
How do I look?

NATALIE  
Beautiful.

DONNA  
Thank you. And you do too.

Natalie twirls and giggles. Donna is still stone faced.

DONNA (cont'd)  
I may have done something stupid.

NATALIE  
What?

DONNA  
I invited Jake to come tonight.

NATALIE  
As in Coffee Time Jake?

DONNA  
That's the one.

NATALIE  
Don't worry Mom, I can handle Jake.  
Just put him next to me and Grandpa.  
We'll make sure he stays in line.

Donna relaxes and even smiles a little.

DONNA  
We better get going.

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. Peter is serving drinks. Donna is talking with people.

Matt comes in with his GIRLFRIEND - HILARY (35), a pretty woman, sophisticated and fancy, not casual like Donna. Donna sees them and excuses herself to go say hello.

DONNA  
You made it!

MATT  
Donna, this is Hilary. Hilary, this is Donna.

HILARY  
I'm so happy you reopened this theater. I came here all the time when I was a kid. I loved seeing movies here. I'm kind of a movie buff.

MATT  
Hilary runs a blog about movies. It's one of the biggest blogs in Boston. You should check it out.

DONNA  
I'll do that.

MATT  
Is your date here somewhere?

DONNA  
He's... on his way.

MATT  
We're gonna get some popcorn.

DONNA  
Okay. Nice to meet you.

HILARY

You too.

Matt and Hilary get in line for popcorn. Donna watches them, forlorn, as she suddenly seems alone in a room full of couples and people together.

She checks her phone. No missed calls.

INT. SCREENING ROOM - NIGHT

The lights go dark. The screen lights up as *It's a Wonderful Life* begins.

Donna watches from the back. Jake comes in next to her.

JAKE

(whispering)

Hey. I'm so sorry I'm late.

Donna lights up, happier to see him than she thought she'd be.

DONNA

Hey, you made it!

Some people turn to look as Donna was too loud.

DONNA (cont'd)

(whispering)

We saved you a seat by Natalie and my Dad.

JAKE

What about you?

DONNA

I'll be at the concession stand. Just incase anyone needs a refill or some more gummy bears.

Donna guides him down. She points to his seat. He slides into a seat on the end, beside Peter.

Jake smiles. Donna does too, and then she returns to the back of the theater.

INT. LOBBY - NIGHT

The people come out, some with tears in their eyes. Some smiling. 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. She has tears in her eyes.

JUNE  
That was so good. I forgot what a  
beautiful story that is. I'm so glad  
you did this.

DONNA  
We did this.

JUNE  
It was mostly you.

Ryan comes over and June and Ryan leave.

Jake comes out. He's about to talk to Donna, but Matt  
(alone) walks up. They hug and talk close.

Jake watches for a moment, and then quietly walks out. Just  
after he does, Hilary comes over from the bathroom. Matt  
puts his arm around her and they leave.

Donna looks around, hoping to see Jake. She doesn't and  
someone else comes up to talk to her.

INT. DONNA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Natalie is in her pajamas. Donna is on the couch, relaxing  
with a cup of tea after her incredible night.

Natalie, animated, stands by their Christmas tree.

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 he 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!

DONNA

Did you really like the movie?

NATALIE

I loved it!

DONNA

I love it too. But now, it's time for 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 go stay with grandma and grandpa.

NATALIE

Please Mom.

DONNA

If you really want. 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 at the counter, ready to sell tickets.

But no one is there.

Donna looks over at Natalie.

DONNA  
I don't think anyone else is coming.  
I'm going to go start the movie.

Donna turns to go, and then Jake comes in with his boss, Ralph.

JAKE  
Hey Donna!

DONNA  
Hey... are you seeing the movie  
again?

JAKE  
Yeah. This is my boss, Ralph.

They shake hands.

DONNA  
Hi - Donna.

JAKE  
I just wanted him to see what I saw  
last night so he could understand why  
I'm no longer pursuing this location  
for Coffee Time.

DONNA  
Oh - well - welcome! Come on in.

INT. SCREENING ROOM

Jake and Ralph come in. There are only a handful of people in the theater.

They find a few seats.

RALPH  
I thought you said it was going to be  
packed.

JAKE  
It was. I don't know what happened.

Donna watches, concerned, from the back. Natalie runs in with a big bag of popcorn and sits down, just as the movie starts.

Natalie turns around and gives Donna a thumbs up. Donna smiles back and waves.

INT. MOVIE THEATER, LOBBY

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

Ralph and Jake come out.

DONNA  
How'd you like the movie Ralph?

Ralph shrugs and looks around, as if he can't understand what anyone sees in this place.

RALPH  
I have to say I am glad I came.

Donna is more pleased by this statement.

RALPH (cont'd)  
If I hadn't I wouldn't have realized we were way over evaluating the place. We're going to have reconsider our offer. It will be lower, but I'm sure you expected that. And Donna, let's not drag this out. The sooner you sell to us the better for everyone.

Ralph walks out. Donna is distraught.

JAKE  
Donna, I'm so sorry. I had no idea -

Ralph pokes his head back in.

RALPH  
Jake? A word please.

Jake looks at her with apologetic eyes and then runs out.

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 deficit is astounding. 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 wrong?

DONNA

I was just calculating how much money I'd make if things continue as they are.

NATALIE

And?

DONNA

The good news is we can pay the taxes we owe. The bad news is there's nothing left after.

(then)

Maybe Ralph was right. I'm going to have to sell eventually. Why not do it now, before I lose more money?

NATALIE

Mom, no! You're just like George. 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! Except not for me, for the theater. So many people care about The Common Theater. If they knew we were open and in trouble, they'd be there. I just need to find a way to get the word out.

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. 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. That was 'White Christmas', one of the all time classics. I've got a special guest in the studio today. I'm sitting here with Donna Stewart, the new owner of The Common theater.

DONNA  
Thanks Jim. It's good to be here.

RADIO DJ  
I love that you show all the Christmas classics. I can't wait to get down there and catch one. What's going on this week?

DONNA  
Miracle on 34th Street.

RADIO DJ  
I love that movie. It made me believe in Santa Clause a little longer than I should have.

Donna laughs.

INT. JAKE'S HOUSE - MORNING

Jake eats some toast and sips on coffee. He turns on the radio. He hears Donna's voice and he perks up and turns up the volume louder.

DONNA (O.S.)

You should come on down to the theater and see it with us. Right now I'm just trying to get the word out that the old Common theater is back open. In fact, I'm here today to ask for some help from the community. If you visited The Common 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 I agree, we really do live in one of the best cities. And for those looking for show times and more info, be sure and visit our website. It's [BostonCommonMovies.com](http://BostonCommonMovies.com).

Jake types this address into his laptop. The website pops up. He's impressed.

RADIO DJ (O.S.)

Well folks, there you go. [BostonCommonMovies.Com](http://BostonCommonMovies.Com). Tell your friends. And tell your friends to tell their friends. This theater is one of Boston's many treasures, so let's help it out.

DONNA (O.S.)

Thank you so much. I can't wait to see you all there!

Jake turns off the radio and finishes his coffee.

INT. SCREENING ROOM - NIGHT

Donna walks into the screening room. About twice as many people have come - 1/4 of the seats are full.

Peter walks in holding hands with Natalie.

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

DONNA  
Not quiet a full house, but it's a  
start. I better go start the movie.

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

INT. MOVIE THEATER, LOBBY

Jake walks in, his hat covered in snow. She glares at him.

DONNA  
You again. Now what?

JAKE  
I'm just here to see a classic movie.

DONNA  
More like here to spy on me.

JAKE  
It's not like that. I heard you on  
the radio. I'm here to show support,  
that's all.

DONNA  
I don't know what you're up to, but  
whatever it is, it won't work.

Donna sells him a ticket. He goes in to take his seat.

Donna calls June.

JUNE  
(through video chat)  
Hey Donna! I was just about to call  
you. Can you come by tonight?

DONNA  
Tonight's not good. I've gotten a  
bunch of emails from people who want  
to know about the theater. I should  
get back to them so they'll come on  
down. Actually, that's why I'm  
calling.

JUNE VIDEO CHAT

What's going on? You okay?

DONNA

I need help getting the word out we're open. Do you think you could share with your friends about our theater?

JUNE VIDEO CHAT

Of course! I'll put something on Facebook.

DONNA

Thank you so much. I've got a few more people to call.

JUNE VIDEO CHAT

Good luck!

DONNA

Thank you!

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

DONNA (cont'd)

Come on, Donna. For the theater.

She dials again and lets it ring. Matt answers.

MATT

(through video chat)

Hey Donna. I thought I was picking Natalie up tomorrow.

DONNA

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

MATT VIDEO CHAT

Hilary? Yeah... she's here. What's going on?

DONNA

It's about her blog.

MATT VIDEO CHAT

(to off screen)

Hilary, get in here.

Hilary comes in and sees Matt is on a video call.



HILARY VIDEO CHAT

Donna? What's going on?

Donna tries to compose herself and not seem awkward.

DONNA

Hi, yes, it's me. Donna. Which you can see. Are you still running that blog about movies?

HILARY VIDEO CHAT

I sure am.

DONNA

Could you write something on it about The Common Theater? I'm trying to get the word out we're open.

HILARY VIDEO CHAT

That's a great idea! I would love to help.

DONNA

Thank you so much. I think it'd really help us out. And if you know anyone else that might be able to help, please let me know.

HILARY VIDEO CHAT

Absolutely. I'll tell all my friends.

MATT VIDEO CHAT

Me too.

DONNA

Thank you, I'm so glad I could ask you. The next movie you two see is on me. I've got more people to call, so I better go.

MATT VIDEO CHAT

Bye Donna.

Donna dials more people. The screen then splits to show all the people she's calling, one after another.

INT. JUNE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

In the living room, June sits snuggled up on the couch with her computer. Ryan comes in.

June is typing away on her computer.

RYAN

What are you typing so furiously  
about over there?

JUNE

Donna needs help. The Common Theater  
is struggling, and she wants me to  
tell people it's open again. I'm  
writing a status update. You should  
do one too.

RYAN

What should I write?

JUNE

Tell everyone The Common is open  
again and put the website address.

Ryan sits down and gives June a kiss. He types on his phone,  
making a status update. He finishes and puts his phone  
aside.

RYAN

How'd she take our big news?

JUNE

I haven't told her yet.

RYAN

What? Why not?

JUNE

She's been so busy and I want to do  
it in person, when we can both sit  
and talk for awhile.

RYAN

I understand. Just don't wait too  
long, it'd be terrible if she  
accidentally found out from someone  
else.

June types out a text to Donna:

TEXT MESSAGE JUNE

I need to talk soon. When can I come  
by?

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. She answers on video chat to see her mother, Sherry.

DONNA  
Hey Mom.

SHERRY  
(through video chat)  
Hi sweetie. What are you wearing?

Donna takes off the beard and hat.

DONNA  
We were acting out a scene from Miracle on 34th Street. I was Kris Kringle.

NATALIE  
And I'm the mom!

SHERRY  
What fun!

DONNA  
I think we've got a budding actress here.

SHERRY  
She is very talented. Maybe we'll see her on our big screen one day.

NATALIE

Me? You think so?

SHERRY

Why not? But I'm actually calling about the theater.

DONNA

What's going on?

SHERRY

Your father called some people, and he got in touch with a man that runs the tree lighting ceremony downtown.

Peter jumps in the screen.

PETER

Did you tell her?

SHERRY

I was just about to.

PETER

He wants you to light the tree!

DONNA

Me? Really?

PETER

He says The Common theater was his dad's favorite place. He went there every week before he passed away. He even knew Mom.

DONNA

He was friends with Grandma?

PETER

Yeah! He says you can tell everyone about the theater.

DONNA

Dad, that's fantastic! Maybe they'll show it on the news!

PETER

Between you and June I'm the happiest guy on the planet.

DONNA

What's going on with June?

SHERRY  
She hasn't told you?

DONNA  
Told me what?

SHERRY  
I don't want to ruin it. I'm sure  
she'll be calling you soon.

Donna hangs up. She hugs Natalie.

DONNA  
I am so happy right now. I feel like  
the luckiest person in the world.

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. Donna writes back:

TEXT MESSAGE DONNA  
I have showings all week and I'm  
helping Dad pack up the rest of the  
store. How about next week?

EXT. TREE LIGHTING - NIGHT

A small 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 is Jake along with his son CONNER. Jake's eyes  
go wide with surprise as he recognizes Donna.

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 Common 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.

DONNA (cont'd)

In fact, it's even older than this ceremony. It 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.

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 yard with its beauty.

Everyone ahhhhhs. Conner smiles and so does Jake.

CONNER

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

JAKE

When I was a kid I came here with my Dad. He loved this kind of stuff. I wish you could've known him.

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

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

DONNA

Jake? What are you doing here?

JAKE

I brought my son Conner to see the tree lighting ceremony. Had I known the famous owner of the Common theater was here I might've brought my autograph book.

DONNA

Hi Conner. I'm Donna.

CONNER

Hi. Are you really famous?

DONNA

Sadly, no. But I do show movies with famous people in them. In fact, I think we've got one you'd like in a few weeks. It's called The Polar Express.

CONNER

I love that movie!

JAKE

Conner and I were about to get some churros.

CONNER

We should get her one too.

JAKE

I guess it's decided. Churros for everyone.

Jake, Donna and Conner walk 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

Hey Dad look! Can I get one?

Conner points a BALLOON VENDOR selling balloons.

JAKE

Sure. And get Donna one too.

Jake gives Conner a few dollars. He runs off in excitement.

DONNA

I didn't know you had kids.

JAKE

Just the one. His mom and I split up years ago.

(then)

What about you? Is Natalie your only daughter?

DONNA

Yeah. I'm divorced also. It's been almost a year, but it still feels like it just happened.

JAKE

It'll get better. I know everyone says that, but what can I say, it's true.

DONNA

It seems like it's easier for Mark than me. He's dating and going on weekends away and - and -

JAKE

Moving on without you?

DONNA

Yeah. It feels like it's too easy for him. How can he have forgotten me so fast?

JAKE

Moving on doesn't mean you're erasing the past like it never happened. It just means you're making space for something new.

DONNA

Making space for something new. I like that.

Conner runs back over with two balloons. He hands one to Donna.

DONNA (cont'd)

Thank you Conner. This is the exact one I wanted.

(then)

I should get going. I have to pickup Natalie from her Dad's. Thanks for the churro and balloon.



JAKE

You're welcome. I'll see you tomorrow night.

DONNA

What for?

JAKE

Miracle on 34th Street. It's your last showing. I don't want to miss it.

DONNA

I guess I'll see you tomorrow then.

INT. SCREENING ROOM - NIGHT

Jake enters an almost full theater. He looks around for a seat.

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

DONNA

On the house.

JAKE

Thank you. This is a huge turn around.

DONNA

It's been like this all week. Apparently word is out.

JAKE

I don't even see - oh, wait there.

Jake spies an empty seat.

JAKE (cont'd)

I better make my way over.

Jake attempts to step around knees and feet as he makes his way down the aisle. He nearly falls a few times and spills his popcorn.

He makes it to his seat. He turns around to Donna and gives her a grin.

INT. MOVIE THEATER, LOBBY - NIGHT

The crowd of people leaves the screening room and clears out.

Jake comes out towards the back. He heads over to Donna.

JAKE

Thanks for the popcorn. Next time it's on me.

DONNA

You don't have to buy me popcorn.

JAKE

Okay. Then how about dinner?

DONNA

Dinner?

JAKE

Yeah. You know. Food. Forks. Knives. A table.

DONNA

I get it. I just don't want anymore schmoozing.

JAKE

Schmoozing? What, you think this is a work thing?

DONNA

We both know you still want to buy this place.

JAKE

You still don't trust me, do you?

DONNA

I don't even know you. For all I know, this is all part of your master plan.

JAKE

I'm flattered I look like someone that makes master plans, but I assure you, I'm not capable.

DONNA

Then why would you take me out?

JAKE

Well, call me old fashioned, but I still believe a first date should be in person. We can get to texting and not actually talking later on.

DONNA

I think... I... don't know.

JAKE

I'll tell you what. Tomorrow night, at 7PM I'll be at the Le Chez restaurant. If you want to come, I'll be there waiting.

DONNA

I'll be showing movies then.

JAKE

What time is your first showing?

DONNA

We have a matinee at 4.

JAKE

Then we'll do lunch. High noon at Lez Chez.

Jake heads for the door.

JAKE (cont'd)

Goodnight Donna. I hope to see you tomorrow.

DONNA

Goodnight Jake.

Donna gets a text from June.

TEXT MESSAGE JUNE

It's important. Maybe you can come by before you go to the store?

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. She sweeps up popcorn, having forgotten about the message.

INT. JAKE'S OFFICE - MORNING

Jake types at his computer. Someone has put a bunch of boxes in his office - smushing him in an already small space. His boss Ralph comes in.

RALPH

Hey, sorry about the boxes. I'll have them out of here as soon as I can.

JAKE

It's fine, I understand.

(then)

Do you have a minute to talk about the downtown location?

RALPH

The movie theater? You finally got it! Alright! I knew you could do it.

Ralph raises his hand for a high-five. Jake doesn't reciprocate.

RALPH (cont'd)

Come on, don't leave me hanging.

JAKE

I didn't get it.

Ralph lowers his hand.

RALPH

What?

JAKE

It's over. She has zero interest in selling.

RALPH

Then get back in there. Do your thing.

Jake searches for the right words.

RALPH (cont'd)

Jake, you cannot let me down. I personally trained you. Whatever you do reflects on me.

JAKE

That theater means a lot to a lot of people. We'd be doing this city a disservice by getting rid of it.

RALPH

We're not getting rid of it. We're transforming it into something new. Something better, where people can make new memories.

JAKE

I'm sorry, it's over. She's not selling. I've already started scouting other locations.

RALPH

Don't bother.

JAKE

Excuse me?

RALPH

I told you corporate said it had to be that location or else.

JAKE

Yeah, but, I thought that was just trying to motivate me. They aren't really going to fire me are they? After all I've done for them?

RALPH

If you haven't secured it by Friday then don't bother coming in Monday.

JAKE

But sir, I've found several other excellent locations. If you'd just have a look I know you'd -

RALPH

Your level of commitment to this company is abysmal. Whatever it is I saw in you, I don't see it now. Get it together, would you?

Ralph exits. Jake slumps back, dispirited over the news.

INT. RALPH'S OFFICE

Ralph paces around as he's on the phone. He has plenty of room for the boxes!

RALPH

Hey Mark, sorry to bother you, but I need a huge favor.

(MORE)

RALPH (cont'd)  
There's a theater downtown that  
recently reopened. I need you to go  
by there.  
(then)  
As soon as possible.

INT. RESTAURANT - DAY

Jake sits at a table in a nice restaurant. He sips his  
water.

The WAITER comes and refills it.

JAKE  
Thank you.

Jake looks at his watch, his face tense with nerves. It's  
five minutes after 12.

Jake's eyes light up with surprise. Donna walks in, smiling  
at him.

DONNA  
Sorry I'm late. I hit some traffic  
coming over.

Jake stands up. He pulls Donna's chair out for her, and then  
pushes it in as she sits.

DONNA (cont'd)  
Thank you.

JAKE  
I didn't think you were coming.

DONNA  
A little elf convinced me I should.

Jake looks at her quizzically.

DONNA (cont'd)  
Natalie told me to come.

JAKE  
Ah. I knew I liked that kid.

Donna looks at the menu. The waiter comes over.

WAITER  
Good afternoon, and welcome to Le  
Chez. What can I get you today?

DONNA  
I'll have the butternut squash soup.

JAKE  
And I'll do the same.

WAITER  
Wonderful. I'll have that right out  
for you both.

JAKE  
How are you?

DONNA  
I'm -

Jake looks down as his phone vibrates and flashes with a message from Ralph. He turns the phone over.

JAKE  
I'm sorry, you were saying?

Donna's phone then flashes with a text from June. She flips her phone over also.

DONNA  
I'm pretty sure life was more simple  
before technology simplified our  
lives.

JAKE  
I know what you mean. Let's try  
again. How are you? How's the theater  
doing?

Donna takes a breath, trying to calm herself.

DONNA  
To be honest, I'm a little nervous.

JAKE  
About what?

DONNA  
If we'll make it. We're doing great  
right now, but what if people are  
only coming for our holiday films?  
What if they want to go to the big,  
fancy theaters 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 a miracle on 4th Avenue.

JAKE

Don't hope for it. Believe it.

The waiter brings their soup.

JAKE (cont'd)

Thank you.

DONNA

Thank you.

WAITER

You're welcome. Can I get you anything else?

DONNA

No, I think we're good.

WAITER

Enjoy.

DONNA

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

JAKE

You did.

DONNA

They're actually antiques. They're my favorite thing in the whole theater.

(MORE)



DONNA (cont'd)

We haven't changed much over the years. In some ways the whole theater is an antique.

JAKE

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

DONNA

Thank you. I just worry sometimes if all that old stuff is running correctly. I need to get it all checked out, but between the theater and my Dad's store closing I'm running around Boston like a mad woman.

JAKE

What's going on with your Dad's store?

DONNA

It's a long story.

JAKE

I've got time. 43 minutes to be exact.

EXT. RESTAURANT - DAY

Donna and Jake walk out, laughing.

JAKE

The crazy thing is, that wasn't the only year we almost burned the house down at Christmas.

DONNA

I had a really nice time. Thank you.

JAKE

Me too.

Jake steps forward. He touches her arm. He leans in closer - closer - and then leans in for a kiss.

They kiss! Just as snowfall begins, making their perfect city a little more perfect.

JAKE (cont'd)

I'd like to see you again.

DONNA  
I'd like that also.

INT. HARDWARE STORE - MORNING

Donna walks in. Peter looks up, delighted to see her.

PETER  
Hey!

DONNA  
Hey Dad. I can't believe this is the last day. How are you doing?

PETER  
Better. Seeing what you've done with the theater has really lifted my spirits. It's like that saying. One door closes, and another one opens.

Donna's phone rings.

DONNA  
Hello?  
(then)  
This is Donna Stewart.  
(then)  
You want to do a building inspection?  
(then)  
I'm showing movies from 4 o'clock on.  
Can you come before that?  
(then)  
11AM? Yep... Okay... see you then.

PETER  
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 hope it goes okay.

PETER  
I'm sure it'll be fine.

Donna tries to smile, but she's worried and distracted.

INT. HARDWARE STORE - LATER

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

Donna sweeps and ensures they didn't miss anything. Peter comes back in and grabs the last box.

DONNA

Wait. Do you mind if I take that one?

PETER

What for?

DONNA

I just want to have a piece of it with me. Something to hold in my hands and know this was ours.

Peter hands the box over.

PETER

It's yours.

DONNA

Thanks. I should probably get going. Are you coming?

PETER

You go on ahead. I just want to stay a little longer.

Donna looks around.

DONNA

I wish it wasn't over, but at the same time, if this wasn't closing I wouldn't have reopened the theater.

PETER

The Lord works in mysterious ways.

Donna nods.

PETER (cont'd)

You talk to your sister yet?

DONNA

Oh shoot, no. I'll have to call her tomorrow. Good night Dad. I love you.

PETER

I love you too.

Donna exits.

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

He goes behind the counter and finds the elf hat. He puts it on and catches his reflection in the window. He laughs.

He heads for the door. He turns the lights off. He takes one last look, and then 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 11.

Right on 11 at the nose, the FIRE INSPECTOR walks in. Donna, compensating for her nerves, walks 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 Mark. I'll be doing your fire inspection today Rhonda.

DONNA

Donna.

The Fire Inspector looks over his forms.

FIRE INSPECTOR

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 popcorn 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 some up, embarrassed.

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! We just reopened!

FIRE INSPECTOR

You only have to close until you get all 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? I don't really have it but I'll have to make it work.

FIRE INSPECTOR

You also have to pay a \$50 application fee, get some new smoke detectors, 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 fifteen 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

I'm sorry, ma'am, but rules are rules. To be frank, I think it's more work than it's worth.

(MORE)

FIRE INSPECTOR (cont'd)  
This place should be gutted and  
turned into something else.

Donna's eyes narrow.

DONNA  
Like what, a Coffee Time?

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.

She dials June.

JUNE VIDEO CHAT  
Hey! I finally get to talk to you.

DONNA  
I'm so sorry. Things have been crazy.  
What was it you wanted to talk about?

JUNE VIDEO CHAT  
Are you okay? You look upset.

DONNA  
I just failed a fire inspection. The  
theater's closed. And I'm pretty sure  
Jake had something to do with it.

JUNE VIDEO CHAT  
Oh no!

DONNA  
Enough about me. I want to hear your  
news. What's going on?

JUNE VIDEO CHAT  
It's okay. It can wait. I can see  
it's not a good time.

DONNA  
No, please, tell me, I want to hear  
it.

JUNE VIDEO CHAT  
Guess what? We're -

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

DONNA  
Ahhh! Not again!

Donna runs over and unplugs it. She looks at the phone. June is still there.

DONNA (cont'd)  
Sorry about that. Our popcorn machine has a mind of it's own. What were you saying?

JUNE VIDEO CHAT  
We'll talk about it later. You've got a theater to reopen!

DONNA  
Thanks sis. I'll call you soon.

EXT. MOVIE THEATER - NIGHT

Jake walks 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 Common Theater will be closed for the next few days while we update our wiring. We apologize for the inconvenience.

Jake walks away.

EXT. STREET

Jake walks down the street.

He passes by a cozy pub. Through the window he sees Donna sitting inside alone. She has a beer in front of her but she hasn't taken a sip.

INT. PUB

Jake enters. He heads for Donna. She looks up when he arrives at her table.



JAKE

Hi there.

Donna is surprised to see him.

JAKE (cont'd)

Mind if I join you?

Donna shrugs forlornly. Jake sits down. He puts his cellphone on the table.

JAKE (cont'd)

I went by the theater. It says you're closed.

DONNA

The Fire Inspector came today. He said we're not up to code and it presents a fire risk.

JAKE

I'm going to grab a drink. You want anything?

DONNA

No, I'm good with the beer I've been staring into for an hour.

Jake heads for the bar.

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. Now get back in there and BUY IT!

Donna's eyes go wide with shock and anger. Another text comes in from Ralph.

TEXT MESSAGE

Call me as soon as you close the deal.

Jake returns with a beer. He sits down.

DONNA

It was you!

JAKE

It was me what?

DONNA  
You called him!

JAKE  
Who?

DONNA  
The Fire Inspector.

JAKE  
I have no idea what you're talking  
about.

DONNA  
I saw your messages.

Jake looks at his phone. He sees the texts.

JAKE  
I have no idea what this is about.

DONNA  
I knew I shouldn't have trusted you.  
That's why you took me out to lunch.  
So you could find a way to close me.

JAKE  
I would never sabotage you.

DONNA  
So it's a coincidence I mention we  
have old lights and wires, and the  
next day the Fire Inspector comes?

JAKE  
Yeah.

DONNA  
And it's also a coincidence that  
right after he closes us your boss  
texts you to make sure you're going  
to close the deal?

JAKE  
I told you, I have no idea what  
that's about. I told my boss I was  
done. I tried scouting other  
locations, he was even threatening to  
fi-

DONNA  
I can't believe it. I genuinely  
thought you were interested in me.  
I'm so stupid.

JAKE  
I can't believe you're saying this.  
You're being paranoid.

DONNA  
I knew from the moment we met not to  
trust you.

Donna stands up and heads for the exit.

JAKE  
You know not everyone that works for  
a corporation is bad. Some of us are  
decent people trying to get by in a  
city we love.

Donna leaves. Jake looks at the texts again.

INT. DONNA'S HOUSE

Donna sits at her table. She picks up her phone and then  
puts it down. She looks at the time.

9PM. She picks up her phone again.

She calls her Mom on video chat.

SHERRY VIDEO CHAT  
Hey! I was just thinking about you.

Donna bursts into tears.

DONNA  
Oh Mom.

SHERRY VIDEO CHAT  
Sweetie? What's wrong?

DONNA  
I had to close the theater and it's  
going to be expensive to reopen it  
and it's all because of Jake. Why did  
I trust him?

SHERRY VIDEO CHAT  
Whoa, slow down. Catch your breath.  
Did you say the theater closed?

Donna nods.

SHERRY VIDEO CHAT (cont'd)  
I'm coming over.

DONNA  
You don't have to do that.

Peter pops into the screen.

PETER VIDEO CHAT  
What's going on? Is she crying? Are you crying?

DONNA  
I'm okay. Just a really bad day.

SHERRY VIDEO CHAT  
I told her I'd come over.

PETER VIDEO CHAT  
Me too. Where's my coat?

Peter disappears from the screen.

DONNA  
You really don't have to -

PETER (O.S.)  
Sherry, where's my coat?

SHERRY VIDEO CHAT  
It's by the fireplace! We'll be right there. Sit tight.

Donna hangs up, her face lighter as she knows she has love and support coming.

INT. DONNA'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Donna sits across from her parents.

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

PETER  
Nonsense. We'll call up Matt. He's the best electrician in the city.  
(MORE)

PETER (cont'd)

He'll have that work done lickity split.

DONNA

I feel weird asking Matt. I already asked his new girlfriend to help me out. And besides, it's more than wiring. I need to install exit lights, smoke detectors and fix the doors.

PETER

You get Matt over there. And if I know Matt, he'll be glad to help you. I'll take care of the rest.

DONNA

But Dad -

PETER

No buts. When you were 18 you had a big trip to Europe planned. And then my store flooded and guess who gave up her trip and her money to save it? And guess who was there when I strained my back and was out for a whole year? And guess 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. So let us do this for you.

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

PETER (cont'd)

Steve? Whatever you're doing tomorrow, cancel it. Donna needs our help. Yes... yes... we're going to need exit signs for doors... okay, call him.

Donna smiles, happy that this could come together.

DONNA

Now I know how George felt when the whole town rallied around to save him.

INT. MOVIE THEATER, LOBBY - DAY

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

Donna installs new door hinges that will let people out but keep a fire (and smoke in). Natalie assists everyone, getting tools and bringing people popcorn and drinks.

Donna's phone rings with June's name.

DONNA

Hey June!

JUNE VIDEO CHAT

How's the repair work coming?

DONNA

We should have it all done today. I already called the fire inspector and arranged for him to come tomorrow.

JUNE VIDEO CHAT

That's great! Do you think you could come by when you're done?

DONNA

I have Natalie with me.

JUNE VIDEO CHAT

That's okay.

DONNA

Great. We'll see you tonight.

INT. JAKE'S OFFICE - DAY

Jake, forlorn over Donna and the theater, sits staring at the wall.

Ralph enters.

RALPH

Knock knock.

Jake sits up straight.

RALPH (cont'd)

What, no thank you?

JAKE

For what?

RALPH  
For my quick thinking.

JAKE  
I'm sorry?

RALPH  
I just made a little phone call to an old friend, who happens to be the chief fire inspector.

JAKE  
What did you do?

Ralph grins, proud of himself.

JAKE (cont'd)  
You knew he'd make her close, didn't you?

RALPH  
You're welcome.

JAKE  
I can't believe that was you. I thought she was being paranoid.

Jake stands up. He grabs his coat.

JAKE (cont'd)  
I have to go.

RALPH  
Wait, you still haven't bought it? You should've closed that deal the moment her doors closed! What's wrong with you?

Jake walks for the door.

RALPH (cont'd)  
If you walk out that door then you're not welcome back here.

Jake looks at the door, then back at Ralph.

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.

INT. JUNE'S HOUSE

June and Ryan decorate their Christmas tree.

KNOCK KNOCK.

June opens the door to Donna and Natalie. Donna hugs June.

DONNA

I'm so sorry it's taken me so long,  
but I'm here.

Natalie hugs June.

RYAN

Hey Natalie, I could use a hand over  
here. How are your decorating skills?

NATALIE

Top notch.

Natalie helps Ryan decorate the tree. Donna and June disappear into the kitchen.

INT. KITCHEN

June pours a glass of wine. She sits down with Donna and hands her the wine.

DONNA

Thank you. I need this. What a day.  
What a week. What a month!

Donna and June laugh.

DONNA (cont'd)

Wait, where's yours?

JUNE

I'm not having any.

(then)

At least not for another eight  
months.



Donna nearly chokes on her wine, realizing what she's saying.

DONNA

June! Are you -

JUNE

Pregnant!

DONNA

Oh my god! Congratulations! I'm so happy for you.

JUNE

Thank you. I've been dying to tell you, but you've been so busy...

Donna looks down.

DONNA

I haven't been there for you, have I?

JUNE

You're the first person I wanted to tell. But I don't want you to feel bad. Sometimes life gets crazy all at once.

DONNA

No more excuses. From now on, when you call, I'll be here.

JUNE

I hope so, because I really need my big sister right now!

INT. THEATER LOBBY - NIGHT

Patrons file out as Donna thanks them.

The last person out is Jake. 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

Jake, I just -

JAKE

Please, hear me out.

(MORE)

JAKE (cont'd)

(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 boss.

DONNA

Your boss set me up?

JAKE

I swear, I had nothing to do with it. I would never do something like that to you.

DONNA

Why would your boss do something like that?

JAKE

All he cares about is making corporate happy.

DONNA

He sounds terrible.

JAKE

Yeah. He is.

DONNA

Do you think he'll try something else?

JAKE

I don't know. But I have an idea myself. I think we can find a way that we both get what we want.

DONNA

I'm still not selling.

JAKE

I don't want you to.

DONNA

Okay...

JAKE

You're finished for tonight, right?

DONNA  
I should clean up... but I can do  
that before tomorrow's show.

JAKE  
How about we go grab some coffee?

Donna gives him a look.

JAKE (cont'd)  
It doesn't have to be Coffee Time.

DONNA  
I know just the place.

EXT. DOWNTOWN - NIGHT

Donna and Jake walk through downtown.

DONNA  
This place makes the best gingerbread  
lattes.

JAKE  
Gingerbread lattes, huh? I thought  
you were a tea gal.

DONNA  
Sometimes I make an exception.

They arrive at a small coffee shop.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - NIGHT

Donna and Jake sit across from each other with lattes.

Jake takes a sip of his. He gets milk foam on his lip. He  
wipes it off and Donna tries not to laugh.

DONNA  
What do you think?

JAKE  
I think...

Jake takes another sip.

JAKE (cont'd)  
It's delicious!

DONNA

So what's your idea for the theater?

JAKE

It's a little crazy, but I think it'll work.

DONNA

Okay...

JAKE

A Coffee Time kiosk, in the theater.

DONNA

What do you mean in the theater?

JAKE

I mean in the lobby. It'll be separate from where you sell drinks and food. There's plenty of room by the bathrooms. Nothing too big. It's like a mini coffee shop.

DONNA

But why?

JAKE

First of all, everyone loves coffee. Just look around.

The cafe is full of people, and a continuous line of people comes and goes.

JAKE (cont'd)

You could keep, say, 20 percent of the profit. That's easy money, right in your pocket.

DONNA

What's in it for you?

JAKE

Coffee Time will be able to show its support for Boston's heritage. We'll be seen by all the people who come in, and we'll also donate money to the theater. We'll be like a sponsor.

DONNA

So you get free PR and publicity.

JAKE

Exactly. And hopefully some new customers too. You see? It's a win-win for everyone.

DONNA

I don't know... coffee and movies don't usually go together.

JAKE

But that doesn't mean they can't. I'll admit, it's a bit outside the box, but that's what makes it exciting. 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 still true. If you're always waiting for some divine intervention you might miss out on the miracle that's right in front of you. The one that takes a little work, and a lot of trust, but that's just what you need.

DONNA

What if no one wants to drink coffee before a movie?

JAKE

Your theater is the kind of place artsy people like. It attracts people who love museums and history and culture.

DONNA

Yeah, I suppose so.

JAKE

And those are the exact kind of people in here. Those are your coffee drinkers. And we won't just sell coffee. We'll also have scones, pastries, hot chocolate.

DONNA

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

(then)

This might actually be a good idea.

JAKE

I knew you'd love it! I need to call Mr. Morrison.

DONNA

Who's that?

JAKE

My boss' boss.

DONNA

Oh. Is that a good idea?

JAKE

At this point, I have nothing to lose.

Jake stands up and puts on his coat.

DONNA

Where are you going?

JAKE

To put a proposal together. That is, if you're in. Are you in?

Donna thinks for a moment. She stands up and puts out her hand.

DONNA

I'm in.

They shake hands and grin.

INT. DONNA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Donna sits on the couch. She slumps back into the couch, feeling the weight of everything that's happened the last few months.

She writes a text message to June:

TEXT MESSAGE

I just had a meeting with Jake. He had a crazy idea that just might save us both.

INT. JAKE'S OFFICE - DAY

Jake stands before the CEO, COO and top managers of his company.

Beside him is a presentation he's just completed. There's a mock-up of the theater with a Coffee Time kiosk inside.

JAKE

In conclusion, putting a kiosk inside the theater would show that one, Coffee Time is committed to supporting the Boston community and all its historical treasures. Two, coffee isn't just something you have after a movie. It's something that awakens your senses and enhances the movie experience. And three, this could be the beginning of a whole new venture for Coffee Time. We could have 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.

CEO

But our investors will only be excited if this succeeds.

JAKE

And it will.

CEO

How can you be so sure?

JAKE

The theater is already a city favorite. And the woman who runs it does tons of community outreach to ensure it stays busy. The fact is, if we don't do this, someone else will. Let's not let this opportunity slip by.

COO

Jake, you've given a great presentation.

JAKE

Thank you.

COO

But we made it clear we wanted the whole location. Are you doing this just to save your boss' job?

JAKE

I'm sorry, I don't understand.

COO

I'm sure he must've told you. If that location wasn't secured, we were going to have let him go. It's the third one he's let us down on.

JAKE

But I thought... wait. I thought you were going to fire me, not him.

COO

You? We have no reason to fire you. You're one of our rising stars! That's why we were so surprised you came to us with this.

CEO

It seemed like a big risk on your part.

JAKE

I'll be the first to admit this is a risk, but no matter who's getting fired over this, I fully believe in this idea. I'm not doing it for my boss or even for me.

CEO

Who are you doing it for?

JAKE

For all the people who love The Common Theater. There's people who met the love of their life there. People who's lives were changed by a movie. Heck, even I've been changed by it. Have you seen It's a Wonderful Life?



CEO

I have. It's a beautiful story.

JAKE

It really is! And I learned that because of The Common Theater. 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?

CEO

So you're saying our profits aren't important?

JAKE

No, they are. I know we have to make money. But you saw the movie. Money isn't what makes us rich. It's family and friends and being surrounded by people who love you. And to be honest, I do think we've lost sight of that.

COO

We're a business, Jake, not a charity.

JAKE

But can't we be a business with heart?

The room goes quiet.

MANAGER #1

A business with heart. Wow! That's a terrific slogan.

MANAGER #2

You know, I think he's right. We could absolutely spin this in our favor. We'll put in the kiosk, donate to the theater, and then do a campaign based on how much we care. "A business with heart". I can already see it!

JAKE

That's not exactly what I meant. I had meant for our intentions to be sincere.

CEO

He's right.

The room goes quiet again.

MANAGER #2

Who is? Him or me?

CEO

Jake. We either do this right or we don't do it all. And frankly, I want to do it right. I've been leading this company for ten years, and I've never had someone stand before me and say people should come before profit. That took a lot of guts, and I like guts.

The CEO stands up and walks over to Jake. He shakes his hand.

CEO (cont'd)

I'm putting you in charge of the whole thing. You'll run our new outreach program. I want you to find more locations that we can sponsor, and you'll report directly to me.

Jake is at first dumbfounded. He then reaches out and hugs the CEO. The CEO hesitates and then hugs him back.

INT. JAKE'S OFFICE - DAY

Ralph comes in with his boxed up belongings.

RALPH

I heard you'll be moving into my old office.

Ralph puts down the box. Jake looks at him, apprehensive.

JAKE

I'm sorry -

Ralph puts his hand up.

RALPH  
You were right. I lost sight of what  
was important. I should've listened  
to you.

(then)  
Good luck, Jake.

JAKE  
Thank you.

INT. RALPH'S FORMER OFFICE - DAY

Jake comes into the empty office. He sits down in his new  
chair. Now this is the life!

Jake leans back, enjoying the spaciousness and the  
incredible view out the WINDOW.

His secretary Sara enters. 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.

SARA  
Is there anything I can help you  
with?

JAKE  
No... not right now. Thank you.

SARA  
Absolutely Mr. Duncan.

JAKE  
I'm still Jake.

SARA  
Absolutely Jake.

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

Jake takes out his cellphone. He dials Donna.

JAKE  
Donna? Guess what?

DONNA (O.S.)

What?

JAKE

They loved the idea!

DONNA (O.S.)

That's great!

JAKE

We're setting up a meeting right now to plan the installation of the kiosk. We'll go over all the details, and I promise you won't sign a thing unless you're happy with the whole deal.

DONNA (O.S.)

If you're on the team, I'm sure I'll be happy.

Jake's secretary steps back in.

SARA

Sorry to interrupt, but the board would like to have the meeting as soon as possible. Can Donna be here today at 2?

JAKE

Donna? They want you to come in today at 2. Can you do that?

DONNA (O.S.)

I have a show then. Oh but wait, my father's no longer at the hardware store. I'm sure he could handle one showing. I think he might actually like doing it.

JAKE

So you'll be here?

DONNA (O.S.)

With bells on.

JAKE

Great! I can't wait to see you!

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Donna signs a completed contract. Everyone applauds.

She passes it over to Jake.

CEO

Thank you, Donna. We're very excited to begin this new venture.

DONNA

You really have Jake to thank. If it wasn't for him, I wouldn't have considered working with you at all.

COO

We'd like to begin construction on January 1st.

DONNA

No problem. But we'll have to finalize the details later. I need to get down to the theater and make sure it's going okay.

JAKE

I'll walk Donna out.

EXT. OFFICE BUILDING - DAY

Donna and Jake walk 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 take risks and listen to my heart.

Donna stares at him.

DONNA

I'm sorry, I thought you were going to compare that to a movie. You always connect everything back to the movies.

JAKE

I think this one is all ours. But you know, if this were a movie, we'd have to kiss right about now.

Jake comes forward. He leans in and kisses Donna.

INT. THEATER - DAY

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 Coffee Time kiosk. Without the full one built yet, there's a small cart selling hot chocolate.

There's a banner over the cart: COMING SOON: COFFEE TIME!

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.

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

DONNA

Hello there.

JAKE

Hey Donna.

DONNA

I'm glad you could make it.

JAKE

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

DONNA

He sounds like Natalie.

Donna tears the tickets and hands them to Conner. She then reaches into her pocket.

DONNA (cont'd)  
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 comes over and hears what he's saying. She 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.

He puts his hand out.

CONNER  
Hi.

JAKE  
Looks like the Coffee Time cart is a  
hit.

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

JAKE  
This is only the beginning of great  
things.

Conner rings his bell.

JAKE (cont'd)  
You know what they say when a bell  
rings.

DONNA  
An angel just got their wings.

JAKE

Somewhere out there is an angel I  
need to thank for bringing you to me.

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.

NATALIE

Way ahead of you. I saved three seats  
for us, front and center.

JAKE

You don't mean all the way in the  
front, do you?

CONNER

I love sitting in front! Let's go!

Conner and Natalie run in. Donna laughs.

Jake gives Donna one last, small kiss.

JAKE

See you after the movie.

DONNA

Have fun.

Jake goes in.

Donna's parents, Peter and Sherry, enter. They're decked out  
in festive pajamas and even slippers!

Donna laughs when she sees them.

DONNA (cont'd)

I didn't know you two were coming.

PETER

Your Mom loves this movie.

SHERRY

We wanted to surprise you. It was  
Peter's idea to dress up.

PETER

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,  
Peter, let's get some hot chocolate  
before the show starts.

Peter and Sherry get in line for hot chocolate.

Donna looks around, happy at all the blessings in her life.  
Her theater is full of happy families. She's created a  
successful business, and she saved the theater.

INT. ICE CREAM PARLOR - NIGHT

The ice cream parlor is fully decked out for Christmas.  
Snowflakes are drawn on the windows. A Christmas tree  
twinkles in the corner.

Donna, Jake, Conner, Natalie, June, Ryan, Peter and Sherry  
sit together around a table. June touches her stomach and  
smiles big.

They all have ice cream sundaes and big smiles. Natalie,  
Peter and Sherry take out their bells and ring them.  
Everyone laughs.

Jake leans in and gives Donna a kiss.

THE END