## Tears for Christmas

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FADE IN:

INT. ENTRY WAY - DAY

Chubby eleven year old, BENNY SUGARMAN, kneels on one knee, like a plastic toy soldier, hunting rifle dug in against his shoulder.

Remnants of Christmas ribbon hang from the butt of the rifle. An index finger stretched around the trigger.

Tears roll down Benny's puffy cheeks. He brushes tears away with his left sleeve.

A mirror on the wall reflects a modestly decorated Christmas tree -- remnants of Christmas morning with boxes and wrapping paper strewn about.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY - FLASHBACK

Christmas music plays.

A few wrapped packages around the Christmas tree. One long narrow box rests against the wall behind the tree.

Planted around the tree are an obese DOUG HUGGINS, mid-forties and a plump MISTY HUGGINS, late thirties. Worry lines on Misty's face suggest she is older than her birth certificate.

Eight year old JESSICA SUGARMAN sits between Benny's legs on an old 70's style couch. Both arms wrapped around her. She clings to a ratty old teddy bear.

Doug grabs at Misty's hand, she pulls it away.

MISTY You take your pills this morning?

DOUG Just like every morning.

Misty reluctantly takes his hand.

Doug grabs a Christmas package, flips up the tag.

DOUG To Jessica from Santa.

He pushes out the package toward Jessica. Jessica clamps tight to the teddy bear, withdraws tighter against Benny, and shakes her head indicating no. BENNY (whispering to Jessica) It's okay Jess.

She won't budge. Keeps shaking no.

DOUG

(Smile into a scowl) Take it... Take it!... It's from Santa.

MISTY (grabbing the package) Stop, you're scaring her.

Misty walks over to Jessica, gently hands her the package. Jessica accepts and slowly tears the paper away.

Doug dashes over, tongue curled under his top teeth, and rips the package away from Jessica.

DOUG You little pain in the asses better start respecting me. I'm you're daddy now.

Jessica scrunches her face and cries.

BENNY You're not my daddy. You're a crazy man.

Doug rips Benny off the couch by the nape of his hair. Throws him into the Christmas tree.

MISTY Stop it! You're gonna hurt him!

Jessica hides behind the couch with her teddy bear in arm.

Doug has lost control. He lunges at Benny. Misty pulls at Doug with both arms to keep him away from Benny.

MISTY Oh yeah, you're a big man picking on an eleven year old boy. You wanna hit someone? Hit me!

Doug lands a round house punch to the side of Misty's head. She crashes to the floor in pain pressing the palm of her hand over her ear. DOUG

(to Benny) All I wanted to do was have a peaceful Christmas. Look what you made me do you little fatherless bastard.

Benny comes to his mom's aid.

## BENNY

Get out!

DOUG You better believe I'll be back.

Doug heads out the door. The door slams shut.

FLASHBACK ENDS

INT. ENTRY WAY - DAY

In the distance, Misty wails out in pain. Benny trembles.

BENNY Another Christmas ruined. It's always the same thing. Broken promises. (screaming at the door) No more!

Something large crashes against a wall in the distance.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

A black and blue Misty lets out a guttural yell and launches a lamp at the wall. Blood trickles out of her ear. Mascara smudged all over her face.

More emotionally out of control with each object. Misty races around the bed, grabs the other table lamp, slams it against the floor.

Misty hefts up a small table at the end of her bed, a revolver falls out of a drawer. She drops the table and snatches up the revolver, releases the tumbler -- no bullets.

MISTY Bullets. (eyes scan the room) I need bullets.

CLOSET

Misty frantically searches through shoe boxes, tossing each aside. Bingo -- she finds the bullets. Hands shake as she loads the revolver.

MISTY Oh you're gonna wish you never hit us.

Slams the tumbler closed. Stares at the revolver.

BEAT

Tear stream down her face.

MISTY No. No. We won't ruin our lives for you. A divorce. We'll just divorce and be done with you.

Misty picks up the end table, sets it in place next to the bed and slide the revolver back into the drawer.

INT. ENTRY WAY - DAY

Misty kneels down, puts an arm around Benny.

MISTY Benny what are you doing? Lay that down.

Benny digs the butt of the rifle firmly into his shoulder showing his determination.

MISTY Please Benny. It's not worth it. I promise we'll leave today. Right now. We'll leave right now and never come back... I promise.

BENNY You always promise and then here we are again.

Misty wraps a hand around the rifle and helps Benny to lower his aim.

Benny crumples to the floor in a ball. Hysterical crying. Misty hugs Benny tight.

MISTY Come on lets get our things and get out of here before that beast comes back. Benny gathers himself.

BENNY We'll leave for good? Just the three of us? You promise?

MISTY

I promise.

He opens a hall closet door and tosses the rifle in the closet, shuts the door.

Misty holds his hand.

The front door creaks open. It's Doug.

DOUG Babe you're bleeding.

Benny rushes over and grabs the closet door knob. Misty take his wrist gently and pulls him away.

MISTY Go check on your sister... It'll be okay.

BENNY

Promise?

DOUG Run along Ben. We need some adult time.

MISTY I promise Benny. Now hurry up and check on Jessie.

Benny shoots Doug a nasty look then runs off down a hallway.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - DAY

Doug tries to hug Misty. She pulls away like a scared dog.

DOUG

I'm sorry. I'm so sorry. I didn't mean to hurt you or Ben. I just don't know what comes over me. It's like a demon lives in my head. And those pills the doctor gave me for my condition... They ain't working.

Misty moves to the window and stares outside.

MISTY

It's over Doug.

DOUG No. What are you saying? I can change. I'll go see the doctor again on Tuesday.

MISTY I hope you are hearing me Doug. We are over.

She turns to face Doug.

MISTY I am asking you nicely for a divorce.

Doug moves toward Misty. She scoots past him toward the bedroom door.

DOUG You are all I have Misty. We'll get past this. We'll work it out. Please.

Doug gets on his knees and begins to cry.

MISTY Doug I want a divorce.

Pleading is not working. He stands, snatches the jewelry box off the dresser.

DOUG

Great, you file for divorce. I'm taking all this jewelry I bought you. Maybe, I'll give it to my next girlfriend.

MISTY Good. You should do that. Maybe as a nice Christmas gift.

He pitches the box at Misty. She ducks. It slams into the door.

A race to the end table for the revolver. Misty wins. She points it at him.

MISTY It's time for you to go. Get out.

Doug smiles, looks down, then grabs the revolver out of Misty's hand like lightning.

## INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Benny and Jessica sit on the edge of her bed. A loud crash is heard. Jessica starts crying.

BENNY Jess. Jess. Look at me... Remeber that game we like to play? Remember?

JESSICA Five little monkeys?

BENNY

Yes. Five little monkeys.

Benny hops up on the bed, Jessica follows. They face each other.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - DAY

Doug spins the revolver tumbler and places the barrel against his head.

Misty cringes, both hands over her mouth.

DOUG If you leave me, I have nothing to live for. Stay with me Misty. I need you. I love you.

Misty shakes her head indicating no.

DOUG

(waving the gun) Christ. There's no bullets in this thing anyway. You want a divorce, you got it baby. You and your satanic children are worthless anyway.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Benny and Jessica jump up and down on the bed. Jessica smiles.

BENNY AND JESSICA Three little monkeys jumping on the bed. One fell off and bumped his head. Called the doctor and the doctor said, "No more monkeys jumping on the bed. "No more monkeys jumping on the bed... INT. MASTER BEDROOM - DAY

Misty steps closer to Doug. She turns her head so he can see her damaged ear.

MISTY Why do you have to punch me? Am I that much of threat to you?

DOUG

I'm sorry babe. Like I said I feel like I got this demon in my head.

MISTY Right a demon... Why do you have to torture Benny and Jessica. They are good kids.

Doug lets the revolver hang at his side, finger still on the trigger.

MISTY I don't know Doug. I can't live with that abuse anymore.

DOUG

Yeah. Yeah. You're right. My temper keeps getting away from me. Maybe we should get a divorce?

Misty kisses Doug on the lips.

MISTY I might be able to give you one more chance to change. Are you willing to do something for me?

DOUG I would do anything to make things right and get another chance to stay with you Misty.

Misty steps back two steps.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Benny and Jessica are lost in jumping. Both smile.

BENNY AND JESSICA Two little monkeys jumping on the bed. One fell off and bumped his head.

(MORE)

BENNY AND JESSICA (CONT'D) Called the doctor and the doctor said, "No more monkeys jumping on the bed. One little monkey jumping on the bed...

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - DAY

Misty rolls her eyes to the gun in Doug's hand, then stares back into his eyes.

MISTY Okay Doug. I don't know why but I'm willing to give you one more shot.

Doug smiles.

Misty holds up her index finger.

MISTY Under one condition.

DOUG Anything. What?

MISTY You show me your commitment to our marriage and family. Show me you love me.

DOUG

How?

MISTY Put that gun to your head and pull the trigger.

Doug hesitates. A big smile plasters his face ear to ear.

DOUG What the hell, it's empty anyway.

Playfully pushes the barrel of the revolver to his temple.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Benny and Jessica still jump on the bed.

BENNY AND JESSICA One little monkey jumping on the bed. He fell off and bumped his head. Called the doctor and the doctor said... BAM!

A gunshot.

Both lunge off the bed, dash toward the door.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - DAY

The door swings open. Benny and Jessica dash into the room. Misty smiles and jumps on the bed. She waves them over. They climb up.

> MISTY And the doctor said...

MISTY, BENNY, AND JESSICA "No more monkeys jumping on the bed. "No more monkeys jumping on the bed. Now there's no little monkeys jumping on the bed. None fell off and bumped their heads. I called the doctor and the doctor said "No more monkeys jumping on the bed."

A river of dark blood runs out from behind the bed, staining the carpeting.

The three hug tight.

MISTY I love you two. Merry Christmas.

FADE OUT:

THE END