

Christmas Mrs.

by

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FADE IN:

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

The room is decorated for Christmas. 5-year-old MAEGAN MILLER sits with her mother DORIS. Doris holds a pad of paper and a pen and writes as her daughter talks.

MAEGAN

...and a doll and a computer game and roller blades.

DORIS

That's quite a list. Well, we'll send it off to Santa Claus and maybe he'll bring you some of these things.

MAEGAN

No, mommy, I want to send it to Mrs. Santa Claus.

DORIS

Mrs. Claus? But Santa is the one who brings the presents.

MAEGAN

But Santa gets all the letters. I want Mrs. Claus to get one.

DORIS

That's awfully sweet of you. I'm sure Mrs. Claus will appreciate it.

INT. GIRLS BEDROOM - NIGHT - 5 YEARS LATER

10-year-old Maegan lays on her bed writing a letter. There is a knock on the door.

DORIS (O.S.)

Maegan? Dinner's ready.

MAEGAN

OK, mom, be there in a minute.

MAEGAN (V.O.)

Dear Mrs. Claus, what's it like to be you? I think it would be wonderful to have Christmas all year long. What do you do all year at the north pole?

INT. TEENS BEDROOM - DAY - 5 YEARS LATER

15-year-old Maegan sits at a desk typing on a PC.

MAEGAN (V.O.)

Mrs. Claus, I'm not sure why I keep writing these letters every year, but I hope this one finds you well. Like you're really there. Where do these letters go, I wonder?

EXT. COLLEGE CAMPUS - DAY - 6 YEARS LATER

A cool but pleasant day in New England in mid October. 21-year-old Maegan sits under a tree typing in a notebook computer. Students are walking by, including JEFF FREEMAN.

JEFF

Hey, Maegan!

Maegan waves and continues typing as Jeff walks over.

MAEGAN (V.O.)

Dear Mrs. Claus, these yearly letters have become a catharsis for me. I wonder if they get read, or just wind up in a pile of unopened envelopes. Anyway, I've selected a major - archaeology. I know I've said I've selected a major six times now, but this time I mean it. I'm going to travel the world and maybe I'll make the next big discovery. We're heading to a site near Topalli, Turkey next week...

Jeff reaches Maegan and sits beside her.

JEFF

What you workin' on?

MAEGAN

Well... promise not to tell anyone?

JEFF

Scout's honor.

MAEGAN

When were you a scout?

JEFF

Never. I just figured I'd use some of their honor. So, what's that?

MAEGAN

It's my annual letter to Mrs. Claus.

JEFF

Who's that?

MAEGAN

Santa's wife, dummy.

JEFF

Mrs. Santa Claus? I hate to be the one to break this to you, but Santa Claus is just a fairy tale.

MAEGAN

Says you. These letters let me review what's been happening in my life, sort of like a journal. I've been writing them as long as I can remember.

JEFF

OK, but why are you writing it in October? Last I looked, Christmas was at the end of December.

MAEGAN

Helloooo. Archaeology. We're heading to Turkey for ten weeks. Out in the boonies. No post office.

JEFF

So you actually mail these letters?

MAEGAN

That's part of the mystery of the whole thing. Where does it go? The post office is supposed to deliver letters or return them, and none of my letters to Mrs. Claus has ever been returned. So they must get delivered. So I guess that proves there really is a Mrs. Claus. So there.

Maegan sticks her tongue out at Jeff.

JEFF

Eeeeww, if I had that nasty thing in my mouth I'd want to get it out too. Look, I'm sure the post office is prepared for letters to Santa or his Mrs. at Christmas, but what are they going to do with a Christmas letter in October?

MAEGAN

Hmmm. Never thought of that. Well, I'm sure they'll take care of it appropriately.

JEFF
 (looks at watch)
 Hey, speaking of Archaeology, five
 minutes to class. We'd better get
 going.

Maegan gathers her things and the two head off.

INT. COLLEGE CLASSROOM - DAY

Maegan and Jeff enter and sit. They are the last two students
 to arrive. PROFESSOR HUMPHRIES stands at the front of the
 room.

PROFESSOR HUMPHRIES
 If the rest of you will allow me a
 few minutes, I need to speak to those
 who will be going on our field trip.
 First, has everyone gotten the shots
 listed on the medical form?

Four students indicate yes: Jeff, Maegan, DEBBIE, and LARRY.

PROFESSOR HUMPHRIES
 Has everyone signed and turned in
 all of the release forms?

JEFF
 Yep.

DEBBIE
 Yes sir.

LARRY
 Last week.

MAEGAN
 I have them here somewhere.

Maegan starts going through her stuff.

PROFESSOR HUMPHRIES
 (sighs)
 Ms. Miller, I have extra copies in
 my office if you need them. Please
 make sure you get them to me today.
 Have you all gotten your passports?

All four students nod yes. Jeff pulls his from his pocket.

JEFF
 Well, I have a passport, but I don't
 know who the guy in the photo is.

Jeff hands the passport to Larry, who snickers and passes it
 on to Debbie.

LARRY

Last time I saw something like that was in "Attack of the Mutant Zombies".

DEBBIE

Actually, I think the mutant zombies looked better.

JEFF

Sweet. Any more comments like that and I'll eat your brains.

Debbie hands the passport back to Jeff.

PROFESSOR HUMPHRIES

Don't worry Mr. Freeman, after a couple of weeks working the excavation site I'm sure you will resemble your passport photo much more than you would like. I'm sure everyone has their schedule, but let's review the departure information one more time. Where will you all be Monday at 7 am sharp?

JEFF, DEBBIE, LARRY, AND MAEGAN

In front of the library.

PROFESSOR HUMPHRIES

There are eleven of us going, including me. Everyone make sure everyone is there. Be sure you pack only allowable items. I don't want a scene at customs when one of you has to leave something behind.

(beat)

In the time we have left today, let's complete our discussion of the Sumerian and Akkadian languages.

INT. COLLEGE BUILDING HALLWAY - DAY

A classroom door opens, and the students in professor Humphries class exit. Jeff, Maegan, Larry, and Debbie exit as a group and walk down the hall. Jeff is taking care to walk next to Maegan.

LARRY

OK, boys and girls, this is our last weekend in civilization for awhile. I'm thinking we should do research into how group theory, chemical imbalances in the cerebellum, and temporal theory lead to the enhanced appreciation of cinematic productions.

DEBBIE

Huh?

LARRY

When you're with friends and you have beer, movies get better and better as it gets later and later.

EXT. COLLEGE CAMPUS - DAY

The four exit from the building and head across campus to the dorms.

JEFF

The Cavern is showing "Young Frankenstein" tonight at ten. Should be a good test of your hypothesis. There's also plenty of time for dinner beforehand, which will let us test one of my theories.

LARRY

Which is?

JEFF

Pizza is nature's perfect food.

They pause at a split in the path.

LARRY

Let's meet at Antonio's at seven and go from there.

JEFF

Excellent. What about it, ladies?

MAEGAN

Can't. I'm heading home to spend the weekend with my folks before we go off to Turkey.

DEBBIE

I'll be there.

JEFF

Mae, don't forget to get those forms in to Humphries before you leave.

MAEGAN

Oh...right. Thanks.

LARRY

See you at seven, Deb.

Maegan and Debbie start down the path toward the women's dorms. Larry starts down the other path toward the men's dorms, then realizes Jeff isn't with him.

He turns, and sees Jeff watching the girls walk off.

LARRY

Yo, Jeff!

Jeff looks at Larry, then back toward the girls, then walks over to Larry.

LARRY

You know, Jeff, one of these days you're going to have to start driving or get out from behind the wheel.

JEFF

Just waiting for the right time.

LARRY

Right. You've been waiting since your junior year of high school. How many years are you planning to wait?

JEFF

You can't rush these things. At least I know who I want to be with, while you haven't had more than a passing interest in anyone.

LARRY

That's right. No relationships for me until after I've made my fortune. But you, me bucko, are playing this way too cool. He who hesitates loses the girl, or however that goes.

JEFF

Just drop it, okay? We've discussed it. I'll just keep hanging around until she realizes the inevitability of it.

LARRY

All right. But I'm keeping a case of beer in my fridge for when you need it.

JEFF

You always keep a case of beer in your fridge.

LARRY

Oh. You noticed that, did you?

INT. MAEGAN AND DEBBIE'S DORM ROOM - DAY

The door opens and Maegan and Debbie enter.

DEBBIE

This trip is going to be a blast.
Have you ever visited another country?

Maegan sits at a desk and starts her laptop.

MAEGAN

Mexico and Canada. It'll be fun to see a whole different continent. Let's see, I need to finish writing a letter. And I think there was something else.

DEBBIE

The forms for Humphries.

MAEGAN

Oh. Right.

Maegan sits at her desk, looks through some papers and pulls out the forms, and continues writing the letter while Debbie begins brushing her hair.

DEBBIE

I don't know how you survive. Forgetting work, changing your major every other month, and you still make the Dean's list every semester.

MAEGAN

(still writing)

There's just so much to see and do. How do you keep it all organized?

DEBBIE

I guess it's because I know what I want to do. Even before starting college I knew I wanted to be a teacher. It's kept me focused. But you still don't know what you want from life. Otherwise you'd be engaged to Jeff by now.

MAEGAN

Poor Jeff. He's the most patient man I've ever met. I've told him over and over that I don't want a serious relationship until I've figured out my future.

She prints the letter.

DEBBIE

Well, you should figure it out soon. Jeff is a great guy, you don't want to lose him.

Maegan slips the letter into an envelope, seals it, and starts addressing it.

MAEGAN

I don't want to commit myself until I've experienced a lot more.

DEBBIE

You should go into child care. I haven't seen the kid yet that didn't love you.

MAEGAN

Kids are great. But I don't know if I want to make them my profession.

Maegan finishes addressing the letter and stamps it.

MAEGAN

Ok, I'm ready. See you Monday!

Maegan exits. (Beat) The door opens, she rushes back in, grabs the letter and papers, and runs back out.

INT. WOMENS DORM LOBBY - DAY

Maegan steps off the elevator, walks over to a mail slot, and pushes the envelope in.

INT. WOMENS DORM OFFICE - DAY

The envelope comes through the slot and begins falling toward a box below. Midway there the envelope vanishes.

INT. CHRISTMAS VILLAGE POST OFFICE - DAY

At the rear of the post office there is a huge bin with a sign above it that says "Christmas Lists", and a small basket sitting on a small table with a sign above it labeled "Other Mail". POK THE POSTMASTER is there.

An envelope appears above the small basket and drops in. Pok walks over and picks it up.

POK

What do we have here?

As he reads the envelope he get a puzzled expression.

POK

In October? Hmmm.

He walks to the door and hangs a sign that says "Back in 30 Minutes", then exits the post office.

EXT. CHRISTMAS VILLAGE - DAY

Pok walks across the village, past the reindeer stable, the school, and the Toy Works to Santa's house. He knocks, and MRS. CLAUS answers the door.

MRS. CLAUS
Why hello, Pok. What brings you here?

POK
You have a letter from you know who.

MRS. CLAUS
In October? Let's have a look at it.

Pok hands the letter to Mrs. Claus and enters the house.

INT. SANTA'S HOUSE - DAY

The interior is decorated in mid 1700's European style. They walk to the kitchen and sit at a large table, which is dominated by a huge platter of cookies.

MRS. CLAUS
Would you like a cookie dear?

POK
I thought you'd never ask.

He puts cookies in his pockets, then starts eating one while Mrs. Claus opens the letter and begins reading.

MRS. CLAUS
Oh, she's going on a trip. How fun.

POK
Fun? What if you need to...you know.

MRS. CLAUS
Oh, Pok, you worry too much. We still have a couple of years left. And if necessary, Dasher can get me anywhere I need to go.

POK
What if she refuses? You know how indecisive she is about her future.

MRS. CLAUS
It's true that she's not ready. But it will all work out.

POK
Still, if I were you I'd find some other candidates. You did last time.

MRS. CLAUS
I don't think that will be necessary.
Trust the magic.

POK
Hmmmf. That's what you always say.

MRS. CLAUS
And I've always been right.

The oven dings.

MRS. CLAUS
Oh, the cookies.

Mrs. Claus sets down the letter, walks to the oven and removes a tray of cookies. While she does this, Pok picks up the letter and scans it. His eyes widen in surprise and recognition, and he places the letter back on the table. Mrs. Claus returns to the table.

MRS. CLAUS
Here Pok - have another cookie for
the walk back.

Mrs. Claus takes a cookie from the platter and hands it to Pok, then escorts him out.

EXT. CHRISTMAS VILLAGE - DAY

As Pok walks, a group of young elves and their teacher (JODE) walk by.

POK
Hi sis.

JODE
Hi.

Jode and the elflings walk into the Elven schoolroom.

INT. ELVEN SCHOOLROOM - DAY

Jode walks to the front of the room while the elflings sit. On the blackboard is written the question "How does Santa's sack hold millions of toys?"

JODE
Let's continue our discussion from yesterday. Santa's sack has it's own Christmas magic -- the magic to create a doorway between Christmas Village and anywhere else in the world.

JODE (V.O.)

So when it looks like Santa is reaching into the sack, he's really reaching through the sack and into our toy warehouse, where the elf in charge of distribution places the next gift into Santa's hand.

INT. GENERIC LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The living room is decorated for Christmas. Santa stands by the tree, holding his bag. He reaches into it.

INT. TOY WORKS - NIGHT

Santa's arm and hand appear in mid air. An elf places a gift in the hand.

INT. GENERIC LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Santa pulls the gift from the bag and places it underneath the tree.

Elflings PENDIN and KIPPLE look at each other in amazement.

PENDIN

That is so cool!

There's a knock on the door and SANTA enters. The elflings whisper "Santa" to each other.

JODE

And now, elflings, we have a special treat. Santa is going to take us on a tour of the toy works.

ELFLINGS

(cheer)

JODE

I want all of you to pay attention and be on your best behavior. Santa?

SANTA

Ho! Ho! Ho! Who's ready to take a tour?

ELFLINGS

Me! Me!

JODE

Everyone form a single line behind Santa.

The elflings rush over and crowd around Santa, not at all in a single line. Jode just shrugs her shoulders and moves to Santa's side.

JODE

I want everyone to stay together.
ALISSA and JARAH, it's your job to
make sure no one wanders off.

ALISSA AND JARAH

Yes, teacher.

SANTA

All right, then, let's go!

He opens the door and they all file out.

EXT. CHRISTMAS VILLAGE - DAY

The group walks across the village to the toy works.

KIPPLE

Santa, can we ride on a reindeer?

SANTA

Ho ho! Maybe someday one of the
reindeer will let you ride, but that
offer isn't given often. There have
been a few emergencies where Comet
and Blitzen allowed an elf to ride,
and Dasher always allows Mrs. Claus
to ride, but usually they stick to
pulling the sleigh. Now, if you all
study hard and make good grades, I
might be able to arrange a sleigh
ride for you.

ELFLINGS

Yes!

PENDIN

Santa, can we make toys at the toy
works?

SANTA

Well, now, that will be decided by
Heydel, the foreman. But since
there's still more than two months
until Christmas, they may have the
time to let you try your hands at
making a toy or two.

JARAH

Santa, why don't human children ever
visit us?

This question stops Santa in his tracks. He stands a moment,
remembering.

SANTA

We used to spend time with humans, a long time ago.

(beat)

But unfortunately not all humans are nice - there are some naughty ones too, and they would try to stop Christmas if they could. So we use the Christmas magic to keep Christmas Village hidden, and hidden it stays. Even though the humans have gotten very good at looking.

Santa glances toward the sky.

EXT. OUTER SPACE

A reconnaissance satellite passes over the arctic with a click-click-click of its camera.

INT. AIR FORCE BASE - DAY

In a control room where photos from reconnaissance satellites are received and evaluated, several lieutenants sit at computers watching images arrive from all over the world. CAPTAIN GARETT makes the rounds of each station, checking with the lieutenants. He reaches LIEUTENANT CALLOWAY, who is watching pictures of the arctic.

CAPTAIN GARETT

Anything interesting, lieutenant?

LIEUTENANT CALLOWAY

Nothing but ice, Captain.

EXT. CHRISTMAS VILLAGE - DAY

Back at Christmas Village, the group walks the last few steps to the toy works. Santa pauses outside the door to address the elflings.

SANTA

Inside this building are all the secrets of toymaking that we elves have discovered over the centuries. Many of you will become toymakers yourselves and learn these secrets.

INT. TOY WORKS - DAY (ESTABLISHING)

The toy works is divided into work areas, including a research area, an assembly area, and a wrapping area with huge spools of paper and ribbon. At the back of the room are three doors, labeled "Raw Material", "Coal" and "Storage". There's an office with "Santa" on the door.

Near the front door there's a large gauge labeled "Christmas Magic". It is labeled 100% at the top, 0% at the bottom. At the 5% level the gauge is labeled "Visibility" and at the 2% level it's labeled "Critical". The gauge currently shows a level of 15%.

Next to the gauge is a hot chocolate station.

Elves are working unhurriedly throughout the toy works. An elf on a tower oversees the action.

INT. TOY WORKS - DAY

The front door opens and Santa, Jode, and the elflings file in. Santa walks his group over to the elf on the tower, who slides down to greet them.

SANTA
Elflings, this is...

HEYDEL
Heydel! Hellooooo, youngsters!

SANTA
...Heydel.

HEYDEL
Welcome to my toy works! I'm going to show you wonders beyond imagining! This is where we make toys for all the children of the world, and we do it in less than a year! And then we do it all again! Come with me, elflings!

He leads the elflings toward the manufacturing section. Santa and Jode follow. Santa has a bemused expression.

SANTA
(to Jode, with a smile)
There's only one Heydel.

JODE
Thank goodness.

HEYDEL
I coordinate everything here, from manufacturing to assembly to purchasing to warehousing. This area here is where we take wood and metal and plastic and rubber and all types of materials and turn them into parts for the best toys in the world!

Elves are placing raw materials onto a conveyor belt, which carries them into a machine.

An elf uses magic on the machine, and toy parts come out the other end. On this side of the machine the conveyor splits into several conveyors, and the parts magically move to the correct one. The parts ride the conveyors to the ends where they fall into wheeled bins.

Heydel leads the group over to an area where elves are working on computers and playing computer games.

HEYDEL

Here's our computer game division.
How's it going, elves?

COMPUTER ELF

Great! *Santa's Race Around the World* is ready, and *Reindeer Games* is in final testing.

HEYDEL

Excellent! It's going to be a great Christmas this year!

Heydel leads the elflings to the assembly section. Elves are seated at long tables with parts bins behind them. As a toy moves from one end of the table to the other, elves add components until the toy is complete.

PENDIN

Wow! We must make every toy in the world!

HEYDEL

We do, we do! With my leadership, elves are the premiere toy makers in all the world! And speaking of making toys, which of you would like to give it a try?

ELFLINGS

Me! Me!

HEYDEL

(to one of the assembly tables)

Table 2, take ten. We're going to let our young friends here give it a go.

The elves at the assembly table get up and move away.

HEYDEL

All right, children, everyone take a seat.

The elflings rush to the table in a group and fall over one another to claim seats.

HEYDEL

You in the first chair, what's your name?

PENDIN

Pendin, sir.

HEYDEL

OK, Pendin, there are two bins behind you. Take a part from each bin, fit them together, and pass it on to the next elf. The rest of you take a part from your bin and add it as the toy moves down the line.

The elflings attach the components all the way down the table to the end, where Heydel takes the final assembly and examines it. It looks nothing like a finished toy, instead it looks like a haphazard assemblage of parts. While they are doing this, Santa walks into his office and returns carrying a large sack.

SANTA

Ho ho! Interesting first try, elflings. A little more experience and I'm sure you'll get it perfect. But now we are due at my house where Mrs. Claus has cookies and punch.

HEYDEL

(to Santa)

Are you sure you can't stay longer? I was looking forward to telling the elflings about how I saved Christmas during the toy crisis of 1612.

SANTA

There will be other opportunities, Heydel. But now we must be going.

HEYDEL

(to elflings)

As you can see, elflings, I have the most important job in Christmas village. Overseeing the toy works can only be done by someone who is overflowing with Christmas spirit! And I mean it! All of us Christmas elves have Christmas spirit, but I'm full of it!

JODE

(to Santa)

He's got that right.

SANTA

Come along, elflings.

JODE

This way, class.

The elflings gather around Santa and the teacher, and they walk over to the toy works door. Kipple notices the Christmas Magic gauge.

KIPPLE

What's that?

Santa looks at the gauge. There is a hint of concern in his face before he smiles and addresses the elflings.

SANTA

That's the Christmas Magic gauge. Every Christmas season, the hopes and dreams of children all over the world generate enormous amounts of Christmas magic. And it's the Christmas magic that runs Christmas Village, and gives us the ability to make millions of toys and deliver them all over the world. But the Christmas Magic is created during the Christmas season, and we need that magic all year long. So we store some away and use it the rest of the year. As you can see, we still have fifteen percent of our stored magic remaining, with about eight weeks until the start of this year's Christmas season. Come along, now, everyone gather behind me and I'll show you one of the things Santa's sack can do.

Santa holds out the sack in both hands, toward the toy works door. Magic forms around the sack and then shoots forward and hits the door.

SANTA

Jode, if you would lead the elflings through please.

JODE

Certainly Santa.

She opens the door, but instead of leading back outside, it opens into Santa's house.

ELFLINGS

Ooooooooooh.

Jode leads the elflings through, and Santa follows.

INT. SANTA'S HOUSE - DAY

SANTA

Welcome, welcome to my home! Ho ho ho! Take a good look around, you may not see it like this again. Mrs. Claus is always redecorating. It seems like every few hundred years she goes through and changes everything!

They move into the kitchen. Mrs. Claus is there, removing a baking sheet full of cookies from the oven. She sets them on the counter and turns to the group with a smile.

MRS. CLAUS

Welcome, welcome all! I have fresh-baked cookies for all of you.

JODE

One each, elflings.

ELFLINGS

Awwwwwww.

Jode and the elflings sit at the table and get their cookies and punch. While this is happening, Santa pulls Mrs. Claus aside.

SANTA

The gauge is at fifteen percent. That's a little low for mid October.

MRS. CLAUS

Don't worry, dear, it's enough. Soon enough this year's supply of magic will come pouring in.

SANTA

Are you sure?

MRS. CLAUS

Yes, dear. Go get a cookie and join your group.

Santa turns back to the class.

SANTA

Are there any other questions?

KIPPLE

Where do we store the Christmas magic?

SANTA

Why, right here at my house.

SANTA

The magic radiates out and covers every building and fills each and every one of us.

PENDIN

Do we ever run out?

There is the same brief look of concern on Santa's face that we saw at the toy works.

SANTA

Ho ho! Never! Ever since Christmas village was built - and it was built a very long time ago - we've always had Christmas magic all year, every year.

JODE

All right, elflings, time to head back to the school.

ELFLINGS

Awwwwwwwwww.

JODE

And don't forget to thank Mrs. Claus for the punch and cookies.

ELFLINGS

Thank you, Mrs. Claus.

MRS. CLAUS

You are all welcome. Come back anytime.

SANTA

(to Mrs. Claus)

I'll be at the toy works.

Santa, Jode, and the elflings exit the house.

EXT. MAEGAN'S PARENTS HOUSE - DAY

Maegan drives up and pulls into the driveway. She gets out of the car and starts walking toward the front door, which opens. A young boy (STEPHEN) and girl (KATHY) come running out toward her.

STEPHEN AND KATHY

Maegan! Maegan!

Maegan kneels and gives them hugs, then takes their hands and walks on into the house.

INT. MAEGAN'S PARENTS LIVING ROOM - DAY

Maegan's mother Doris and father ROBERT are standing there along with Maegan's aunt OLIVE. Stephen and Kathy are holding on to Maegan.

ROBERT

Welcome home. I see you haven't lost your touch with kids.

MAEGAN

Hi Dad. Hi Mom. Hi aunt Olive. How's uncle Dave?

OLIVE

Getting better, thanks. He sends his love.

DORIS

Sit down, everybody. Mae, how are things at school?

Everyone sits. The kids sit on the floor at Maegan's feet.

MAEGAN

Busy. I've had to reschedule a lot of coursework into the summer semester to be able to take this archaeology trip.

DORIS

Are you sure you want to do this? It can be dangerous going outside the country.

MAEGAN

Mom, we'll be fine. There will be over a hundred students and teachers from ten universities, there's a town 20 miles from the site, and there's farms all around. We've been through this a dozen times.

DORIS

That part of the world can be, well, unstable. Who knows what could happen while you're there. I'm going to be worried until you're safely home. And we won't have any contact with you.

MAEGAN

I know. I'll be ok. I'll name one of my discoveries after you.

ROBERT

An ancient Turkish skeleton named Doris?

MAEGAN

Hittite, dad. Way before the Turks. One of the earliest civilizations in the world.

STEPHEN

(to Maegan)

Let's do something.

MAEGAN

All right, you two. Why don't we go into the kitchen and make some sugar cookies.

STEPHEN AND KATHY

Yay!

Maegan and the kids get up and exit to the kitchen.

OLIVE

I'm not sure I could let my daughter go on something like that.

ROBERT

She's twenty-one. The decision is hers.

DORIS

I could stop her.

ROBERT

You probably could, but you're not going to, right?

DORIS

No, I guess not. But I wish she wasn't going.

ROBERT

Jeff will be with her. He's pretty good at staying aware of what's going on. And you know he'll protect her.

DORIS

A lot of good that will do if they both get shot.

ROBERT

You're worrying yourself sick, you know.

DORIS

I know. It's my job.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Maegan, Stephen, and Kathy are mixing cookie dough.

KATHY

Are you going to see lots of turkeys
in Turkey?

MAEGAN

Do you mean the birds or the people?

KATHY

The people.

MAEGAN

They're called Turks, not turkeys.
I'm going to be out in the country
digging at an archeological site. I
won't be near any of the cities, so
I probably won't see many Turks except
at the airport.

STEPHEN

Why did they name their country after
a bird?

MAEGAN

Other way around. The bird is named
after the country. Get out a couple
of cookie sheets. They're in the
bottom drawer over there.

KATHY

Mom says you're going to dig up old
people.

MAEGAN

Well, I don't know about that. We're
going to dig where some people lived
a very long time ago. I don't know
if we'll find any people, though.

STEPHEN

What will you find?

MAEGAN

I won't know until I go dig, silly.
Maybe I'll find some pottery. Maybe
I'll find a statue. Maybe I'll find
some sugar cookies.

Maegan grabs both kids and hugs them.

MAEGAN

But whatever I find, I'll be sure to
bring gifts back for you.

EXT. MAEGAN'S PARENTS HOUSE - DAY

Maegan is leaving to head back to school. Maegan and her parents are standing next to Maegan's car.

DORIS

(hugs Maegan)

Be safe, dear. Call us as soon as you can.

MAEGAN

I will, mom.

Robert hands Maegan a credit card.

ROBERT

You may need some extra cash.

MAEGAN

(hugs Robert)

Thanks, dad.

ROBERT

Be glad you're worth it.

MAEGAN

You've been telling me that as long as I can remember.

ROBERT

And it's been true as long as I can remember.

Robert opens the car door and Maegan gets in, starts the engine, and backs out. Maegan, Doris, and Robert all wave as Maegan pulls away.

DORIS

Please come back safe.

Robert puts his arm around Doris and they walk back toward the house.

EXT. COLLEGE LIBRARY - MORNING

A bus is parked in front of the library. Ten students (including Jeff, Debbie, and Larry), the BUS DRIVER, and Professor Humphries are there. The bus driver is putting suitcases into the bus' cargo bin. Maegan arrives around a corner of the building, wearing her backpack and carrying a suitcase.

PROFESSOR HUMPHRIES

Good morning, Miss Miller. Glad you could join us.

MAEGAN

Am I late?

PROFESSOR HUMPHRIES

Only by a few minutes. That's better than normal.

(to students)

Now that we're all here, everyone on the bus.

The students begin to file into the bus.

MAEGAN

(to Jeff)

I'm really proud of you for going on this trip.

JEFF

What do you mean?

MAEGAN

This is the most adventurous thing you've done in your life.

JEFF

That's not fair.

MAEGAN

Really? Name one adventurous thing you've done.

JEFF

Well, I...

MAEGAN

Yes?

JEFF

Once, when I was a kid, I went up the down escalator.

MAEGAN

I think you just proved my point.

JEFF

Hey, life is precious. There's no point in putting yourself in harm's way.

MAEGAN

There's a difference between "experiencing new things" and "putting yourself in harm's way".

JEFF

But new things are unknown. Unknown things could be hazardous. Like traveling to a part of the world that can be... unstable at times.

MAEGAN

You've been talking to mom, haven't you? But here you are. It's gonna be fun.

Maegan boards the bus.

JEFF

(muttering)

Your mom would have killed me if I hadn't agreed to go and watch over you.

Jeff boards the bus. The bus driver closes the cargo hatch and boards. The bus drives off.

EXT. U.S. AIRPORT - MORNING

A plane takes off.

EXT. ADANA (TURKEY) AIRPORT - EVENING

A plane lands and taxis to a stop.

INT. ADANA (TURKEY) AIRPORT - EVENING

A large waiting area is full of students and professors from multiple universities. Professor Humphries and his student arrive and everyone applauds. The professors all confer for a minute, then PROFESSOR DINCER claps his hands for attention.

PROFESSOR DINCER

Welcome, everyone! I am professor Dincer from Cukurova University here in Adana. Welcome to my country. Now that we all are here, we will be moving out to the busses that will take us to our hotel for tonight. Does everyone have their luggage? Nothing missing? Wonderful. Follow me, and stay together.

As the group heads out they are secretly watched by an unidentifiable Christmas elf.

INT. HOTEL LOBBY - MORNING

The students and professors are gathering.

PROFESSOR DINCER

(to the group)

Attention, attention please! We will be leaving shortly. I will be your guide to and from Topalli. We have busses outside that will take you to first to Imamoglu, where we will eat lunch.

PROFESSOR HUMPHRIES

(to his students)

OK everyone. Grab your bags and follow me to the busses.

They file out.

EXT. HWY D815 - AFTERNOON

The convoy of busses is rolling toward Imamoglu.

INT. BUS - AFTERNOON

Maegan and Jeff are sharing a seat and Jeff is talking. Debbie walks up from a few seats back and speaks to Maegan.

DEBBIE

Hi Mae, come join Kim and Lauren and me.

MAEGAN

Sure!

Maegan gets up and heads back a few rows and joins the other girls.

DEBBIE

So how was it going with Jeff up there?

MAEGAN

Oh, ok, but I'm glad to be back here for awhile. Jeff is nice but sometimes he won't give me any space.

DEBBIE

I would love to have that kind of attention.

The girls continue chatting, and look up as the bus comes to a stop. The driver opens the door and steps out.

EXT. HWY D815 - AFTERNOON

All of the busses are stopped. The drivers, professors, and a few students are exiting the busses and looking forward, where an enormous pile of coal sits on the roadway, blocking both directions.

PROFESSOR DINCER

(to the professors)

I do not understand how this could have happened. I do not see where this coal could have come from.

PROFESSOR HUMPHRIES

Well, one thing is for sure. It happened recently, or there would be more vehicles stopped here. Can we drive around it?

BUS DRIVER 1

I think so. I will walk around and see if we can take the busses off the road and past this.

He walks off.

Jeff and Larry exit their bus and look at the coal.

LARRY

Now there's something you don't see every day.

JEFF

Nope. Look at the size of that pile. I bet it took more than one person to put this here -- it probably took an entire coal-ition.

LARRY

I'd love to have a bottle of starter fluid and a pack of hot dogs right now.

The drivers return from their walk around the pile.

BUS DRIVER 1

(to professor Dincer)

We can drive around.

PROFESSOR DINCER

Everyone, back on the busses please! We are going to drive around.

They all return to the busses, which carefully drive off the road and around the coal, resuming the journey.

INT. RESTAURANT (IMAMOGLU) - AFTERNOON

The professors and students are eating. Jeff is sitting next to Maegan. The professors are all at one table. Professor Dincer walks up to the professors' table and sits.

PROFESSOR DINCER

I spoke to the authorities.

PROFESSOR DINCER

They are clearing the coal off the road, but no one has any idea where it came from.

PROFESSOR HUMPHRIES

Well, at least we'll have an interesting story to tell our classes when we get home. I...

DEBBIE

(rushing in from outside)

Professors... I think you should come see this.

Professors Dincer, Humphries, and a couple other professors follow Debbie to the restaurant door.

DEBBIE

I went out to get my backpack, and...

They walk outside. Each bus is completely and tightly wrapped in ribbon.

PROFESSOR HUMPHRIES

(laughing)

That's amazing.

Some students start exiting the restaurant, including Jeff and Larry.

JEFF

Now there's something you don't see every day.

LARRY

If we were in a movie, I'd say "it's a wrap".

JEFF

(singing like Elvis to "All Shook Up")

It's my bus / It's all wrapped up / uh-huh, yeaaaaah.

A couple of bus drivers exit the restaurant and stare at the busses. One of the drivers walks over to the nearest bus, pulls out a pocketknife, and starts cutting through the ribbon.

PROFESSOR DINCER

Ok, everyone, back inside. Give the drivers a few minutes to take care of this.

Everyone except the drivers goes back into the restaurant.

EXT. TOPALLI - EARLY EVENING

The busses pull into a dirt and grass parking area. Nearby are several portable toilets. The professors and students exit from the busses.

PROFESSOR DINCER

Over here, everyone.

(The crowd gathers
around.)

This will be your home for the next ten weeks. Your professors will find a spot for you to pitch your tents. Please get settled in as quickly as possible so that we are not trying to set up in the dark. We will begin our archaeology in the morning.

PROFESSOR HUMPHRIES

(To his students)

Quickly, folks, grab your bags and follow me. Driver? Can I have your assistance for a minute?

Professor Humphries and the driver pull a huge rolling trunk from the bus's cargo bay and roll it out to a spot in the field. The students follow, Jeff next to Maegan.

JEFF

(To Maegan)

There's a good spot over there to pitch our tents.

MAEGAN

Jeff, you don't need to be next to me 24 hours a day. Just go pitch a tent.

The professor unlocks and opens the trunk which contains several folded tents in packages. He pulls out the first one.

PROFESSOR HUMPHRIES

Two to a tent. Who's first?

JEFF

(peevy)

Right here. C'mon Larry, let's find a picturesque hillside location, perhaps with a clear blue stream and a nearby pizzeria.

EXT. TOPALLI CAMPSITE - MORNING

A field surrounded by trees. Each university has staked out a section of the site and put up their tents. Some of the groups have put up signs showing what university they're from.

INT. MAEGAN'S TENT - MORNING

DEBBIE

Mae, wake up! Time to go dig up some nice Hittite jewelry. I'm shopping for a necklace with matching earrings.

MAEGAN

Urrrrrgh. I'll be there in a minute.

Debbie leaves. Maegan sits up and yawns. Then she steps out of the tent.

INT. COAL STOREHOUSE - DAY

When Maegan steps from the tent, she steps into a two-story storehouse. There is a large floor-to-ceiling open area in the center of the storehouse, and around both the upper and ground floors there are large piles of coal. There are chutes on the upper floor, presumably to move coal down to the ground floor. Maegan is rubbing her eyes when she first steps into the storehouse and doesn't immediately notice this. Then she opens her eyes and stares around in surprise. She looks behind her and sees that the tent entrance is still there.

POK (O.S.)

(disguising his voice
to sound ominous)

Do not go.

MAEGAN

What?

POK (O.S.)

(ominous voice)

Stay at the campsite.

MAEGAN

Who are you? Where is this? It's chilly.

POK (O.S.)

(ominous voice)

You have been warned. Return to your tent.

MAEGAN

(looking around)

Hey, are you the one who dropped all the coal on the road?

POK (O.S.)

(regular voice)

Look, just get back in your tent, ok?

(ominous voice)

Um, I mean - don't go digging around.

(regular voice)

Please.

Maegan stands there a moment considering, rubs her eyes, shakes her head, then goes back into the tent. The flap closes and the tent entrance disappears from the storehouse. Pok steps out from behind a pile of coal, holding Santa's sack.

INT. MAEGAN'S TENT - MORNING

Maegan spends a moment composing herself.

MAEGAN

Ok, that was strange. Just open the flap, look out, and everything's going to be normal.

Maegan cautiously opens the tent flap and looks out.

EXT. TOPALLI CAMPSITE - MORNING

The professors and students are in various stages of getting ready to head over to the dig. Maegan turns her head and sees Jeff standing in front of his tent, backpack on the ground beside him, looking her way. As soon as he sees her looking at him, he immediately turns his back and pretends to be adjusting something on his backpack. Maegan sighs and exits the tent to join the preparations.

EXT. TOPALLI CAMPSITE - LATER

The students have finished getting ready and are gathering around their respective professors. Maegan walks over to Jeff, who is standing in the group around professor Humphries.

MAEGAN

Jeff, I'm sorry I snapped at you. But you've got to admit you tend to monopolize my time.

JEFF

I like spending time with you. Look, I'm sorry if I was smothering. I did promise your mom that I'd watch out for you on this trip though.

MAEGAN

(snorts)

I bet mom made half the students out here -- and all the professors -- promise to watch out for me. I wouldn't be surprised if she has helicopters on standby just in case.

JEFF

You know about the helicopters? Well, I bet you don't know about the...

PROFESSOR HUMPHRIES

Ok, everyone, listen up. In a few minutes we'll all head over to the site. If you'll look on your maps, we'll be working on section A3. The other professors and myself will be available to answer any questions and to help identify anything you find. Remember, if you find anything - and I mean anything - stop and ask. Any questions?

(beat)

Ok, everyone grab your gear, remember your training, and let's go.

The students pick up their packs and tools. The professors herd them off into the trees, where a path leads to the excavation site.

EXT. TOPALLI EXCAVATION SITE - MORNING

A large field. Stakes and ropes have been placed throughout the field to divide it into sections. Each stake has a letter and a number written on it. The sections have previously been dug down to various depths.

The professors and students enter the site. The professors lead their teams to the sections they'll be working. The students are bright-eyed and enthusiastic.

MAEGAN

Isn't this great? Who knows what we'll discover?

JEFF

And just think, we'll be the first people in thousands of years to see the things we find.

Professor Humphries' students enter section A3 of the field, which has already been dug down about four feet, and begin their work.

INT. TOY WORKS - NIGHT

The toy works is empty. The door labeled "Coal" is cracked open.

INT. COAL STOREHOUSE - NIGHT

The coal storehouse is the same one Maegan saw. Pok and an OTHER ELF are whispering. We cannot see the other elf's face.

POK

A group of human teachers and students are excavating Peri-ev.

OTHER ELF

So?

POK

It's been three thousand years!
Don't you think it's time to get over it?

OTHER ELF

It is a monument for all eternity.

POK

No. It's not. Most of us have let it go. That's why I tried to stop them.

OTHER ELF

You tried to stop them?

POK

Of course I tried! But I wasn't very effective at it. They have no idea what they are headed into.

OTHER ELF

They deserve what they get.

POK

No they don't. And you don't know what's at stake. We've got to stop them.

OTHER ELF

No. I will not. And you won't either.

POK

You don't understand. She...

OTHER ELF

You will NOT! You know what will happen to me if the others find out.

Pok slumps.

POK

Santa help me. Santa help us all.

EXT. TURKISH EXCAVATION SITE - DAY - TWO WEEKS LATER

The groups of students are working in various parts of the field. They are tired and sweaty, no longer the enthusiastic bunch that arrived. Professor Humphries' students have dug their section down about another foot. Jeff, Larry, and Debbie are talking.

JEFF

They never said this was gonna be work.

LARRY

(Imitating Marty
Feldman from "Young
Frankenstein")

Could be worse. Could be raining.

Jeff and Larry both look skyward.

JEFF

I hope we find something soon. Two weeks and nothing.

DEBBIE

At this point, I'd settle for a flake of pottery. At least we get to go into Adana this weekend. Good food, dancing...

JEFF

I want to walk through the American bazaar and see what the locals are buying. Maybe a business opportunity, eh?

LARRY

Since when have you cared about business opportunities, mister history major?

JEFF

Ever since Maegan starting talking to that BRETT dude -- or should I say dud -- from Rutgers who is planning to get an MBA.

LARRY

I've been telling you, you better get moving or someone's going to take her away.

DEBBIE

(hopefully)

Jeff, maybe you should stop pining and date other girls while you're waiting on Maegan.

JEFF

I'll be fine. She'll see the light sooner or later.

There is an excited commotion in the adjoining section, and the professor in that section (PROFESSOR THIGPEN) looks around.

PROFESSOR THIGPEN

May I have your attention please! Everyone, Brett has discovered what appears to be a bronze scale from a warrior's armor.

The professor holds the scale up in the air while the students cheer.

MAEGAN

Brett, congratulations! That's so exciting!

JEFF

(mocking)

"Brett, that's so exciting." Great, the MBA makes the first find. Larry, did you know that MBA stands for Malfunctioning Brain Activity?

LARRY

Hey, I was thinking about getting an MBA.

JEFF

Oh, we need to get you into a 12-step program fast. At least you've admitted your problem.

LARRY

You realize you're never going to make more than minimum wage, don't you?

While Jeff and Larry are talking the professors get together, then professor Dincer addresses the crowd.

PROFESSOR DINCER

Attention everyone! This find calls for a celebration. Put up your tools and enjoy the rest of the day.

The students cheer and start packing up their equipment.

EXT. TURKISH FOREST CAMPSITE - NIGHT

Several campfires are burning. Students and professors sit around them, eating and talking. Larry and Debbie are talking.

DEBBIE

Larry, how long have you known Jeff?

LARRY

We started hanging out together in junior high. That was, what, 8 or 9 years ago.

DEBBIE

So maybe you can tell me why Jeff is so obsessed with Maegan.

LARRY

Your guess is as good as mine. He was dating a girl in high school and they broke up junior year. Jeff was pretty devastated. Then he latched onto Maegan. But as far as I know, she's never told him that she wanted to be anything more than friends.

DEBBIE

Hmmmm.

At another campfire, Maegan is sitting with Brett.

BRETT

...so I'm using the trowel to scrape the dirt and I hit resistance. So I use my hands to find the edges of whatever it is, then start in with the brush. And there it was.

PROFESSOR THIGPEN

That's good technique. As many years as I've been doing this I still get surprised. I thought something like that would be several feet farther down.

No one notices a figure standing back in the woods that resembles a Christmas elf.

MAEGAN

So how exactly do armor scales work?

PROFESSOR THIGPEN

Overlapping rows of scales would be sewn to some backing material like cloth or leather. Then they were draped over horses and soldiers to give protection.

BRETT

What will happen with the scale I found?

PROFESSOR THIGPEN

It will go to Cukurova University for authentication. After that, if it is an authentic piece, it will probably go to one of the museums specializing in Hittite culture.

(pause)

Tomorrow could be an exciting day. You all should get some rest.

Professor Thigpen stands up and walks off toward his tent.

EXT. TURKISH FOREST OUTSIDE OF CAMPSITE - NIGHT

Pok walks away from the campsite muttering.

POK

I can't. I must. I can't. I must.

(sighs)

I can't. I promised.

He walks into a clearing where a reindeer is waiting.

POK

(to reindeer)

Don't look at me like that. You weren't there. You didn't see what they did. C'mon, let's go.

Pok uses magic to rise up and land on the reindeer's back. He takes one last look around and stops. His eyes widen.

POK

Was that...? Comet, did you see what I think I saw?

Comet shakes his head no.

POK

This stress is making me see things. Let's get back to Christmas Village -- I need some eggnog.

They take off.

EXT. TURKISH EXCAVATION SITE - DAY

Professors Humphries, Thigpen, and Dincer are standing just outside the excavation site while the students dig.

PROFESSOR THIGPEN

I think we're on to something here. A spearhead and several bits of pottery found in just a couple of hours this morning. We'll need to arrange to continue work at this site after the students return to school.

PROFESSOR DINCER

I'm not sure when we can do that. With all of the sites currently under excavation here in Turkey there isn't enough manpower to work them all. This site will probably be added to the waiting list unless something spectacular turns up.

PROFESSOR HUMPHRIES

I wouldn't mind returning with students again, but I'm not sure when I can get the university to sponsor another trip. It took me five years to get this one approved.

Out in section A3, Jeff and Maegan are talking.

MAEGAN

You know, this was fun for awhile, but now it's just boring. Maybe I should try a different major.

JEFF

Maybe you should wait until you discover what you really want to do before you choose a major.

MAEGAN

But that's just it. I don't want to specialize, I want to do a little bit of everything. I want to go everywhere. But there's not a degree for a worldwide generalist.

JEFF

Well, this'll be over in a few weeks, and then you can talk to a counselor. Maybe there's a career path that travels and does a lot of different things. How about being a spy? You could be Bond. Jane Bond.

MAEGAN

Maybe something a little less violent.

Maegan turns back to digging, and Jeff walks over to Larry and Debbie. In the next section over, Brett raises his hand.

BRETT

I've got something!

JEFF

You know, I'm starting to hate him.

BRETT

Hey Maegan! Look at this!

JEFF

Ok, now I hate him.

LARRY

What's to hate? He's a nice guy. He was giving me pointers yesterday on how to impress women.

JEFF

Har har, you are soooo funny.

DEBBIE

Jeff, instead of getting mad at Brett, why don't you find another girl? You never know -- maybe you'll discover someone you like better.

JEFF

Oh, no, I couldn't do that.

LARRY

Deb, I've been telling him the same thing for years. It's like talking to a wall.

DEBBIE

(to Jeff)

Maybe you should give it a try. Why don't you and I spend some time in Adana together?

JEFF

(panicked)

Um, wow Deb, I appreciate the offer, but you know how I feel about Maegan.

DEBBIE

Actually, I think I do. You got hurt in a relationship, and then you found the perfect answer: Maegan. She's willing to put up with you, but she's never going to want to be more than friends. You know that. But you can use her to avoid getting into any other relationships, to avoid getting hurt again. Well, we all get hurt. You need to learn to deal with it.

She walks off.

LARRY

Is she right?

JEFF

I don't know. Yes. No. I've always thought I was in love with Maegan. No, I do love her. She's perfect. But Deb may be right. I may also be using Maegan as a shield. Why does everything have to be complicated?

LARRY

Because men are men and women are women. That's why there's beer.

EXT. TOPALLI CAMPSITE - NIGHT

The professors are all together talking.

PROFESSOR THIGPEN

...six skull fragments, and part of a left tibia.

PROFESSOR 1

A lot of promise here for sure. On another note, a couple of my students are complaining of not feeling well.

PROFESSOR THIGPEN

Really? I heard a few of mine saying the same thing.

PROFESSOR 2

Me too.

PROFESSOR THIGPEN

To tell the truth, I don't feel so great myself.

PROFESSOR DINCER

This does not sound good.

PROFESSOR DINCER

In the morning we will take anyone who is feeling sick back to the university to see a doctor.

PROFESSOR HUMPHRIES

If there's some sort of virus going around we may need to shut down the excavation and keep everyone separated.

PROFESSOR DINCER

We will see how things stand in the morning.

EXT. TOPALLI CAMPSITE - MORNING

Many students, including Maegan and Brett, are sick. Most of the professors are feeling ill, including professors Thigpen and Dincer, but not Humphries. The professors are talking among themselves.

PROFESSOR DINCER

Thirty-six students and professors report feeling ill. We must return to the city.

PROFESSOR HUMPHRIES

It might be a good idea to separate the sick and hope we can stop this from spreading. We can send everyone who's ill back to Adana while the rest of us strike camp and catch up to you later today.

PROFESSOR DINCER

That is a good idea.

Professor Dincer motions to Bus Driver 1 to come over.

PROFESSOR DINCER

(to bus driver 1)

Please have a bus ready to go in 20 minutes. The rest will leave as soon as we pack up the campsite.

Bus Driver 1 nods and moves off toward the busses.

PROFESSOR DINCER

Professors, go tell anyone who is sick to meet us at the busses in 20 minutes.

The professors move off toward their groups. Professor Humphries gathers his students.

PROFESSOR HUMPHRIES

Listen up. Enough people have gotten sick we are canceling the rest of the excavation. Anyone who is sick get a carry bag together and get on the bus in 20 minutes -- we're taking you to Adana to see a doctor. The rest of you will help pack up the campsite. We'll meet the others in town afterward. Any questions?

LARRY

Will we spend the rest of the trip in Adana?

PROFESSOR HUMPHRIES

We haven't discussed that yet. My guess is that we will make arrangements to return to the U.S. in a day or two. We want to get the sick students back to their families. Everyone start packing up.

JEFF

(to Maegan)

Do you need any help packing?

MAEGAN

No, I'm just achy. I'll see you in Adana.

Maegan heads for her tent.

JEFF

(to Larry)

Something's not right.

LARRY

Brilliant deduction, Holmes. How do you do it? A third of us get sick, and from that meager evidence you are able to deduce that something's not right. If only I had your magnificent brain.

JEFF

No, I mean with Maegan. She's downplaying how bad she feels. I can tell.

LARRY

Well, I guess we'll find out once the doctor has a look at her. C'mon, let's start packing.

The move off toward their tent.

EXT. CUKUROVA UNIVERSITY - DAY (ESTABLISHING)

The university grounds. Cukurova University is situated next to a lake. A bus is parked in front of a building near the lake. Other busses are pulling onto the grounds.

INT. CUKUROVA UNIVERSITY MEDICAL OFFICE - DAY

The university doctor (KAPUR) is talking to Professor Dincer.

DOCTOR KAPUR

Everyone has the same symptoms...
tired, achy, continuing to feel
worse... I'm running tests, so we
should find the cause soon.

PROFESSOR DINCER

I hope so. I feel horrible.

Professor Humphries appears in the open doorway.

PROFESSOR HUMPHRIES

Ah, there you are. We just arrived --
the students are waiting out in the
busses.

PROFESSOR DINCER

Come in. Doctor Kapur, Professor
Humphries.

PROFESSOR HUMPHRIES

Doctor, have you had a chance to
diagnose what is happening?

DOCTOR KAPUR

The tests are being run. In the
meantime, tell me -- has anyone on
the busses with you developed any
symptoms?

PROFESSOR HUMPHRIES

Not that I'm aware of. No one has
complained.

DOCTOR KAPUR

Please check for me. But now I need
to go see how the tests are coming
along. Excuse me.

He leaves.

PROFESSOR DINCER

I spoke with the Dean. He is working
to arrange flights home for you all.
In the meantime, he asks that everyone
remain here at the medical college.

PROFESSOR HUMPHRIES

Where are the students and professors
that came with you?

PROFESSOR DINCER

We put them in a classroom upstairs.
I do not know yet how we will handle
overnight accommodations.

PROFESSOR HUMPHRIES

Where can we put the rest of the
students?

PROFESSOR DINCER

It is a nice day. For now it may be
best to let them sit by the lake.

PROFESSOR HUMPHRIES

Ok, I'll walk them down there and be
right back.

He leaves. Professor Dincer leans against a wall and groans.
Just then Jeff sticks his head in the doorway.

JEFF

Professor Dincer? I'm looking for
one of the students that came with
you.

PROFESSOR DINCER

They are all on the second floor.
Just walk up the stairs and you will
find them.

JEFF

Thanks!

INT. CUKUROVA UNIVERSITY MEDICAL BUILDING 2ND FLOOR - DAY

A hallway with a stairwell and a row of classrooms. Jeff
appears from the stairs and walks down the hall, peering
into classrooms. He stops at the third classroom and walks
in.

INT. CUKUROVA UNIVERSITY MEDICAL BUILDING CLASSROOM - DAY

Several of the students in the room have cell phones and are
talking or texting. Maegan is sitting with her head down on
a table. Brett is next to her texting on his phone. Jeff
sees Brett and sneers, then walks over to Maegan and puts
his hand on her shoulder.

JEFF

How ya feeling?

MAEGAN

(looking up)
Crummy. Don't get too close -- you don't want to catch this.

JEFF

Is there anything I can do?

MAEGAN

Can you find a store and pick up gifts for Stephen and Kathy? I told them I would bring them something.

JEFF

Sure. Anything else?

MAEGAN

If you can find something for mom and dad that would be good too. Oh, and aunt Olive and uncle Dave.

JEFF

Ok, ok, I'll go find gifts for everyone you know. Is there anything I can do for you besides shop?

MAEGAN

Did my stuff get packed up?

JEFF

Yes, it's all on the bus.

MAEGAN

Thanks. Are they going to send us home soon?

JEFF

Don't know. Let me go find out.

EXT. CUKUROVA UNIVERSITY LAKEFRONT - LATE AFTERNOON

The students and professors who did not fall ill are gathered. Jeff is not there.

PROFESSOR HUMPHRIES

The university has managed to get tickets home for everyone. Those who are sick will be leaving tonight, and the rest of us will head out tomorrow. Unfortunately, we still don't know where we will be staying tonight.

DEBBIE

Have they found out what it is?

PROFESSOR HUMPHRIES

I beg your pardon?

DEBBIE

The illness -- have they found out what it is?

PROFESSOR HUMPHRIES

Unfortunately, no. But they're starting to believe it isn't contagious -- none of us has gotten sick. Neither has anyone else here at the university who has been exposed. For the time being, they are asking that you stay in the vicinity of the medical building. I'll let you know when we have any more information.

He walks off as Jeff walks up with shopping bags. Debbie sees him coming and walks the other way.

LARRY

Man, I've been looking for you all afternoon and you've been shopping?

JEFF

Getting gifts for Maegan to take home to the family.

LARRY

Where did you go?

JEFF

Into town. It was farther than I thought. I must have walked ten miles there and back. Fortunately I have the stamina of a well-hydrated camel.

LARRY

One hump or two?

JEFF

(hunching over like
Igor in Young
Frankenstein)
Hump? What hump?

LARRY

Ok, you humpless wonder, I think you got back in time. They are taking all the sick folk to the airport soon. The rest of us leave tomorrow.

JEFF

I better go find her. Be back in a bit.

He heads up the path toward the medical buildings.

INT. CUKUROVA UNIVERSITY CLASSROOM - LATE AFTERNOON

Jeff enters the classroom and walks over to Maegan.

JEFF

Hi, I got your souvenirs.

MAEGAN

Oh, thanks Jeff. I really appreciate it.

JEFF

I heard you guys were leaving tonight.

MAEGAN

That's what they told us. We're supposed to be heading out any minute.

JEFF

How are you feeling?

MAEGAN

Not great. They gave us something for the pain but it doesn't seem to be working.

JEFF

Pain? You didn't say anything about pain.

MAEGAN

Don't worry. I'm sure we'll be fine once we get home.

Professor Humphries enters the room.

PROFESSOR HUMPHRIES

Ok, folks, time to get on the bus.

Jeff exits with Maegan, and stops as he passes professor Humphries.

JEFF

Professor? I need to get these bags into Maegan's luggage.

PROFESSOR HUMPHRIES

Ok. Come on down to the bus with us and we'll get everything organized.

EXT. CUKUROVA UNIVERSITY MEDICAL CENTER - LATE AFTERNOON

The sick students and professors file out of the building and onto the bus. Jeff gives Maegan a hug.

JEFF

Bye. I'll see you in a day or two.

Maegan nods and climbs aboard.

INT. BRIGHAM AND WOMENS HOSPITAL ROOM 321 - TWO DAYS LATER

Maegan wakes up in a hospital bed in a private room. Next to the bed is a stand with a drawer. Jeff is standing there.

MAEGAN

Where am I?

JEFF

In the hospital. You passed out last night and your parents brought you here. Your dad says they have a great research center and if anyone can find out what's wrong, they can.

MAEGAN

Where are mom and dad?

JEFF

They went down to the cafeteria to get a bite. I'll go get them.

MAEGAN

No, don't. Let them eat.

(beat)

How long have I been unconscious?

JEFF

You fainted last night around ten. It's now coming up on 2pm.

MAEGAN

When did you get here?

JEFF

My flight landed this morning. I called your parents when I got home and they said you were here.

MAEGAN

You're such a good friend.

JEFF

I... I'm the best friend you'll ever have, don't you forget it.

The door to the room opens and Maegan's parents walk in.

JEFF

She's awake.

DORIS

How are you, honey? We've been so worried.

MAEGAN

I'm fine, mom. I just feel tired. And sore.

ROBERT

The university in Adana sent a report. They didn't find anything.

DORIS

We saw Doctor Franklin in the cafeteria. She said she'd stop by in a few minutes and give us a progress report.

JEFF

So they found something?

ROBERT

Maybe. She didn't say for sure.

The door opens and DOCTOR FRANKLIN sticks her head in.

DOCTOR FRANKLIN

Mr. and Mrs. Miller? Would you please come with me?

The doctor pulls her head back and the door shuts. Robert and Doris look at each other, then exit.

MAEGAN

So what has she got to say that she can't say in front of me?

JEFF

Don't know. Probably just procedure. They're paying for it, they get to hear it first.

MAEGAN

Maybe. Maybe not.

INT. HOSPITAL CONFERENCE ROOM - EVENING

DOCTOR FRANKLIN

I'm afraid the news isn't good. Your daughter is obviously feeling pain and getting worse, but every test we've run so far has come back negative.

DOCTOR FRANKLIN

And just as odd, nothing that we've given her for the pain seems to be helping.

ROBERT

So what are you doing?

DOCTOR FRANKLIN

We're continuing to research it, and we've sent what little we know to the major research centers around the world. Hopefully someone has run across this before and has a treatment.

DORIS

So what does this mean? What's going to happen to my daughter?

DOCTOR FRANKLIN

If we can't stop this, you can expect her to get progressively weaker. I'm sorry, but at the rate she seems to be getting worse, there is a possibility this could be fatal. At the very least you need to be prepared for that outcome. I'm sorry. Take all the time in here you need.

The doctor exits. Robert hugs Doris, who has begun to cry.

INT. TOY WORKS - NIGHT

The worker elves have all left for the night. The elders of the Christmas elves sit at a table. They are Santa, Heydel, Jode, Pok, HOLLY, WIFFEL, GANDRICK, and FLIXIE.

SANTA

Eight weeks until the Christmas magic starts building up for the season. Currently we're at a little over fourteen percent. That's eleven percent before we reach critical, and only six percent until we won't be able to keep Christmas Village hidden.

FLIXIE

It's close, but it should be enough. We've been through years before when the magic was running low and made it through. We'll be fine.

SANTA

Maybe, but I want to be sure.

SANTA

What measures can we take to conserve magic until then?

HOLLY

Maybe we should start by reviewing what we can't conserve.

HEYDEL

We have to keep the toy works operating. You've given us quite a large Nice list this year, Santa.

SANTA

Yes, the number of naughty children is down for the tenth straight year. It makes a Santa proud.

POK

The post office needs to stay open. This year's Christmas lists will start arriving soon.

SANTA

Ok, what can we conserve?

WIFFEL

We can ask the reindeer to suspend practice for this year's games.

JODE

We can suspend magic lessons at the school.

GANDRICK

(to Santa)

We wouldn't have to worry about any of this if you hadn't gone and made that stupid oath.

SANTA

Gandrlick! We are aware of your feelings. You've been making them painfully clear for centuries.

HOLLY

(to Gandrick)

It's time to let it go, Gandrick.

GANDRICK

Elves belong in the woods, not in the snow.

SANTA

Let's start with those suggestions. Jode, suspend magic lessons immediately.

SANTA

Wiffel, ask the reindeer if they will stop their practices. Flixie, let everyone know to be prudent in their use of magic until Christmas season starts.

(beat)

We've all been through a lot worse than being a little low on magic. Everyone conserve and we'll get through this with no problems.

Santa stands.

SANTA

Thank you all for coming. Good night.

All the elves leave except Santa and Heydel.

HEYDEL

You're right. We've been through a lot worse than this. So why are you so worried?

SANTA

I don't know, Heydel, I don't know.

INT. BRIGHAM AND WOMENS HOSPITAL ROOM 321 - DAY

The bed is empty. Doris is standing, looking out the window. She hears the door open and turns to see who it is. Jeff walks in.

JEFF

(looking at the empty bed)

Where's Maegan?

DORIS

They've taken her for some more tests.

JEFF

How's she doing?

DORIS

It's worse than yesterday. She's very weak.

JEFF

There's got to be something they can do. Anything.

(beat)

I love her, Mrs. Miller.

DORIS

I know, dear.

JEFF

You do?

DORIS

A mother can tell these things. Why haven't you told her?

JEFF

I was going to on the trip, but now... now it all seems so futile.

DORIS

She'd like to hear it.

JEFF

I don't know. It may just cause her more grief before... before...

The door opens and an orderly backs in, pulling a wheelchair with Maegan in it. She's followed by a NURSE. The nurse and the orderly help Maegan into bed. The orderly exits with the wheelchair.

NURSE

(to Maegan)

Rest now. We won't be running any more tests until tomorrow.

Doris moves to the side of the bed. Jeff follows the nurse outside into the hallway.

INT. BRIGHAM AND WOMENS HOSPITAL HALLWAY - DAY

JEFF

(to nurse)

How is she?

NURSE

She's getting weaker. I'm afraid in a few days she won't be able to stay awake anymore.

The nurse walks off. Jeff stands there wrestling with his emotions as Robert walks up.

ROBERT

Is she back yet?

JEFF

They just brought her. Have you heard anything from the doctor?

ROBERT

Nothing promising. They think that Maegan has something similar to a disease that appeared in Bolivia a few years ago, but so far they haven't

ROBERT
found a treatment that does any good.
I'm afraid we have to prepare for
the worst.

Robert steps toward the door. Jeff stops him.

JEFF
Sir, there's something I want you to
know. I love your daughter.

ROBERT
I know, son.

JEFF
You do?

ROBERT
I was a young man myself once. We'll
get through this, Jeff -- all of us.

Robert puts his hand on Jeff's shoulder and steers him into
the room.

INT. BRIGHAM AND WOMENS HOSPITAL ROOM 321 - DAY

Robert and Jeff enter and walk over to the bed where Doris
is standing.

MAEGAN
Mom, I'm scared. There's so much I
wanted to do...

Maegan begins to sob. Robert, Doris, and Jeff look at each
other.

DORIS
There are a lot of people working on
your illness, Mae. They'll find a
cure.

MAEGAN
I hope you're right, mom. Can I
talk to Jeff for a minute?

DORIS
Of course.

Doris and Robert exit.

MAEGAN
Jeff, will you do something for me?

JEFF
Certainly.

MAEGAN

I feel kind of silly, but I just had to tell her. In the drawer there.

Jeff opens the drawer on the bedside stand and pulls out an envelope. The envelope is addressed to "Mrs. Santa Claus, North Pole."

MAEGAN

Will you mail it for me? Right now?

JEFF

It's as good as mailed. Be back in a bit.

Jeff exits, and Robert and Doris step back in.

INT. BRIGHAM AND WOMENS HOSPITAL LOBBY - DAY

Jeff is walking toward the exit when Larry and Debbie walk in, holding hands. They see Jeff and walk over to him.

DEBBIE

Hi.

JEFF

(sees them holding hands and raises an eyebrow)

Um..... hi.

DEBBIE

How is she?

JEFF

Weak. They're running tests, but haven't found anything. It's so frustrating to see her lying there and not be able to do anything.

DEBBIE

You really do love her, don't you?

JEFF

Yea.

DEBBIE

I'm sorry I tried to get in between you. Still friends?

JEFF

Of course. You certainly gave me something to think about, though.

DEBBIE

That's what friends are for. What room is she in?

JEFF

321.

DEBBIE

Thanks. See you later.

She lets go of Larry's hand and gives Jeff a kiss on the cheek.

DEBBIE

(to Larry)

Lets get her something from the gift shop before we go up.

She takes Larry's hand and leads him off, while Larry looks back at Jeff with a "who knew?" look. Jeff smiles.

INT. TOY WORKS - DAY

The toymaking elves go about their business. Santa and Heydel are looking at the Christmas Magic gauge. It is steady at 13 percent. The date and time are October 30, 4:17 pm.

SANTA

The gauge seems stable. As long as we stick to our conservation procedures, I'm no longer worried about running out of magic.

HEYDEL

You shouldn't have been worried in the first place. There's nothing to fear as long as Heydel is here.

SANTA

That's often been true, Heydel, but in this case there's nothing to fear as long as Mrs. Claus is here.

EXT. CHRISTMAS VILLAGE - NIGHT

A shadowy figure leaves Santa's house and furtively walks to the stable.

INT. REINDEER STABLE - NIGHT

At a stall marked "Dasher", a lamp is lit. Mrs. Claus stands there, dressed in typical human attire.

MRS. CLAUS

(to Dasher)

I need your help.

Mrs Claus hold an envelope toward Dasher, who touches it with his nose.

MRS. CLAUS
Can you find her?

Dasher nods yes. Mrs. Claus and Dasher stare at each other for a moment.

MRS. CLAUS
I know, but it can't be helped.
Nicholas will have to deal with it.

Mrs. Claus and Dasher stare at each other for another moment.

MRS. CLAUS
I'll try, but I can't guarantee it.
We'll return as soon as possible.

Mrs. Claus and Dasher exit the stable.

EXT. CHRISTMAS VILLAGE - NIGHT

Outside the stable, Mrs. Claus uses magic to mount Dasher and they take off into the sky.

INT. TOY WORKS - EARLY MORNING

Heydel enters the empty toy works, yawning and stretching. He casually waves an arm and the lights come on. He makes another gesture and the fireplaces start burning. He walks over to the hot chocolate station, grabs a cup, and makes another gesture. Hot chocolate flows into the cup.

Heydel glances at the Christmas Magic gauge, then turns and takes a couple of steps toward the interior of the toy works. Then he stops and spins around. His eyes grow wide as he takes a second look at the gauge. He drops the cup and runs toward the door.

INT. SANTA'S HOUSE - MORNING

Santa is in bed. There is a knock on the door. Santa moans and turns over, but does not wake up. There is a pounding at the door. Santa groans and sits up. The pounding continues.

SANTA
Coming, coming.

Santa gets out of bed and goes downstairs and opens the front door. Heydel is there.

HEYDEL
Santa! The gauge! The magic!

SANTA
Whoa, slow down, Heydel. What is it?

HEYDEL

(swallows)

The gauge - it's at eleven percent.

SANTA

(momentarily looks
stunned, then recovers)

Eleven percent? That fast? Come
in. Wait here.

Heydel enters the house and closes the door. Santa turns and walks back into the kitchen and looks around. Then he goes to the stairs and shouts for Mrs. Claus. There's no reply. He walks back to Heydel.

SANTA

Gather as many elves as you need and
search for Mrs. Claus.

HEYDEL

I'm on it. We'll find her.

Heydel exits. Santa drops into a chair.

SANTA

Oh, no.

EXT. BRIGHAM AND WOMENS HOSPITAL - MORNING

Mrs. Claus and Dasher come in for a landing on a grassy area next to the hospital sign. Mrs. Claus dismounts. Other people are going about their business. Mrs. Claus and Dasher are invisible to them.

Mrs. Claus looks at the sign.

MRS. CLAUS

(to Dasher)

Are you sure this is where she is?

Dasher nods yes.

MRS. CLAUS

Stay nearby dear, I don't know how
long I'll be.

Mrs. Claus walks up to the hospital and finds a secluded spot. She uses magic to make herself visible, then steps toward the hospital entrance.

INT. BRIGHAM AND WOMENS HOSPITAL LOBBY - MORNING

Mrs. Claus enters through a revolving door into the lobby of the hospital and walks to the reception desk. A RECEPTIONIST sits at the desk.

MRS. CLAUS

Excuse me dear, could you tell me
which room Maegan Miller is in?

RECEPTIONIST

Maegan Miller, let me see... here she
is. Room 321. Are you family?

MRS. CLAUS

A friend.

RECEPTIONIST

Visiting hours start at one.

MRS. CLAUS

Very well, dear. I'll be back.

Mrs. Claus walks back to the revolving doors. She enters
and uses the magic to make herself invisible. MRS. CLAUS'
POV continues back around the revolving door into the
hospital, onto an elevator, up to the third floor where she
exits the elevator and moves down the hall to room 321.

She uses the magic and is again visible. She enters the
room. Maegan lies in bed, resting. Mrs. Claus moves over
to the side of the bed.

MAEGAN

(weakly)

Who are you?

MRS. CLAUS

Don't you recognize me, dear? You've
sent me a letter every Christmas for
the past fifteen years.

MAEGAN

(beat)

So those letters do go somewhere.
It's very nice of you to come, but I
stopped believing in Santa Claus
years ago. Do you work for the post
office?

MRS. CLAUS

It's always this way dear. People
get older and they leave Santa Claus
behind. That's why only children
can create Christmas magic.

MAEGAN

Why are you here?

MRS. CLAUS

Why, to get to know you better, dear.
That's all.

MRS. CLAUS
 (whispers to herself)
 For now.

INT. SANTA'S HOUSE - DAY

There's a knock on the door.

SANTA
 Come in.

Heydel enters.

HEYDEL
 We've looked everywhere. Mrs. Claus
 is gone. And so is Dasher. And...
 the magic gauge is down another
 quarter percent.

SANTA
 (to himself)
 Where have you gone, Mrs. Claus?
 (to Heydel)
 Calm, Heydel. If Mrs. Claus saw fit
 to leave, it must have been necessary.
 I'm sure she'll return in plenty of
 time.

HEYDEL
 Yes, Santa.

SANTA
 However, one should always be
 prepared. Summon the elders. Have
 them meet here in one hour.

HEYDEL
 Right away, Santa.

Heydel exits.

INT. BRIGHAM AND WOMENS HOSPITAL ROOM 321 - DAY

MRS. CLAUS
 Would it be all right if I told you
 a story, dear?

MAEGAN
 What kind of story?

MRS. CLAUS
 A true story, although you will
 probably think it's a fairy tale.
 But it's the answer to some of the
 questions in your letters.

MAEGAN

I'm not sure. Look, I don't mean to be rude, but I don't know you. Maybe it would be better if you left.

MRS. CLAUS

Oh, dear. I shouldn't have come right out and told you who I am. Let me...

Mrs. Claus quickly looks at the door, then back at Maegan.

MRS. CLAUS

We'll talk more after the nurse is gone.

Mrs. Claus disappears. Maegan's eyes open wide. She is still staring at the spot where Mrs. Claus was, when the door opens and a nurse wheels a tray in.

NURSE

Breakfast. Although at this hour, it's more like brunch.

The nurse wheels the tray next to the bed, then takes Maegan's pulse.

NURSE

How are you feeling?

MAEGAN

I'm... not sure.

NURSE

Well, try to eat and maybe you'll feel better.

The nurse adjusts the tray so that Maegan can reach it, taps a few times on an electronic chart next to the bed, and exits.

MRS. CLAUS (O.S.)

She's right, although I can't recommend whatever that is they're serving you. A cookie would make you feel better.

Mrs. Claus reappears.

MAEGAN

How did you do that?

MRS. CLAUS

I told you, dear. I'm Mrs. Claus. Now you eat while I tell you a story.

MAEGAN

(somewhat in shock)

Ok.

Mrs. Claus seats herself next to the bed.

MRS. CLAUS

A long time ago -- a very long time ago -- humans and elves lived together on this earth. But there were only a few tribes of elves, and there were a lot of humans.

EXT. VILLAGE - DAY

There are huts with horses and livestock milling about. There are fields of crops. The entire area is surrounded by woods, with a couple of paths leading away.

MRS. CLAUS (V.O.)

The elves used their magic to help the humans grow crops...

A field of melons. An elf (Wiffel) places his hands on a small melon. It grows to three times its size.

MRS. CLAUS (V.O.)

To cure illness...

A hut. An obviously ILL WOMAN lays on a pallet. An elf lays hands on the woman, the magic shimmers, and the woman shows relief.

INT. BRIGHAM AND WOMENS HOSPITAL ROOM 321 - DAY

MAEGAN

Wait... you can cure illness?

MRS. CLAUS

The elves had the ability to nurture health. Unfortunately, that ability was lost during the transformation and replaced with other abilities. But I'm getting ahead of myself. Where was I? Oh yes, the elves shared their talents with the villagers. In return, the humans provided good companionship...

INT. LARGE HUT - DAY

Several humans and a few elves are sitting, drinking, and chatting.

MRS. CLAUS (V.O.)

... and many children for the elves to cherish.

EXT. SMALL FIELD - DAY

A group of elves and children are singing and dancing and laughing together.

MRS. CLAUS (V.O.)

For you see, elf magic was the magic to nourish all living things. The elves respected this magic, and from it grew a great reverence for all that is alive. But most of all they revere the young, for their innocence and pure joy.

(pause)

But the elves didn't anticipate the effects of human jealousy.

EXT. A DIFFERENT VILLAGE - DAY

A man stands before a crowd exhorting them to violence.

MAN

You've seen their crops! You've seen how they are never bothered by illness! Why should the elves help them and not us?

CROWD

Yea!

MAN

Gather your weapons! We march!

The crowd runs off to get their weapons.

MRS. CLAUS (V.O.)

They came with sword and axe and fire.

EXT. VILLAGE - DAY

The mob invades the village. Some of the warriors are wearing bronze scale armor.

MRS. CLAUS (V.O.)

The elves, with their reverence for life, were shocked but unable to fight back. Many were killed where they stood.

Gandrlick is running through the village as the battle rages. He stops and stares as a horseman with a sword rides up to an elf woman clutching a baby. The woman looks terrified as the horseman raises his sword. Gandrlick watches in horror.

GANDRICK

Glissa! Tally! Nooooo!

MRS. CLAUS (V.O.)
 Jandar, the elf king, made the
 decision to try and save the children.

The elves race through the village, picking up children and
 running into the woods.

MRS. CLAUS (V.O.)
 The elves gathered all the children
 they could find and disappeared into
 the woods. The humans searched, but
 the elves moved far away and were
 never found.

INT. BRIGHAM AND WOMENS HOSPITAL ROOM 321 - DAY

Mrs. Claus pauses and tilts her head as if listening to
 something.

MRS. CLAUS
 You have visitors, dear. I'll return
 after they're gone.

Mrs. Claus stands and disappears. A moment later the door
 to the room opens and Maegan's parents and Jeff step in.

INT. SANTA'S HOUSE - DAY

The elder elves sit around the kitchen table.

SANTA
 Heydel, what was the last reading on
 the gauge?

HEYDEL
 Ten and a half percent. It'll be
 down to ten by tonight. At this
 rate, we'll hit critical in less
 than a week.

SANTA
 Elves, I believe that Mrs. Claus
 will be back. But in order to be
 prepared, I called you here to discuss
 what we should do until she returns.

GANDRICK
 I say we leave now and go south while
 we have some magic left.

Most of the other elves are shocked at this suggestion, but
 Jode seems to agree and Wiffel looks like he's considering
 it.

SANTA
 Do you understand what you're saying?
 Abandon Christmas village? Never!

GANDRICK

Better to try that, than freeze to death.

WIFFEL

Nobody's going to freeze to death. If necessary, we can move everyone including the reindeer - into one of the larger buildings. If we keep the doors and windows shut we should be warm enough. If necessary, we can use the wood from the other buildings as firewood.

GANDRICK

And then what? No, we should use what magic is left to transport ourselves out of here.

SANTA

She'll be back, I tell you!

GANDRICK

How do you know that? What if she was taken? What if she decided to go back to her own?

SANTA

She's my wife!

WIFFEL

(stands)

Both of you calm down! Gandrick, you should be ashamed.

Wiffel pulls Santa aside.

WIFFEL

(quietly, to Santa)

He does have a point, though. She's been gone longer than usual. Now, I don't agree that she's abandoned us, but her need for the company of her own people may have become too great. We may be on our own for awhile.

SANTA

She...will...be...back.

WIFFEL

Just consider it, please? You are responsible for the safety of all of us.

Wiffle and Santa sit back down.

FLIXIE

Do we know why she left?

SANTA

She said nothing to me. Do any of you have any clue as to why she would leave?

They all indicate negative. Pok looks uncomfortable.

HEYDEL

We should probably ask everyone if they know anything. I'll organize a few of my workshop elves to make the rounds.

HOLLY

We should limit our use of magic immediately to just essentials.

SANTA

The magic will last longest here at my house. Perhaps we should all move in here.

HEYDEL

There's not enough room. We can all fit in the toy works, though.

INT. BRIGHAM AND WOMENS HOSPITAL ROOM 321 - EVENING

Robert and Doris and Jeff are standing next to Maegan's bed.

DORIS

Is there anything you want me to bring you tomorrow?

MAEGAN

No, mom.

The door opens and a nurse pokes her head in.

NURSE

Visiting hours are over.

DORIS

(to Maegan)

Rest now, sweetheart. We'll be back tomorrow.

MAEGAN

OK, mom, dad, Jeff.

Doris kisses Maegan goodbye. Doris and Robert and Jeff exit. A moment later, there's a shimmer and Mrs. Claus reappears.

MRS. CLAUS
Shall we continue, dear?

MAEGAN
I'm sorry, I need to rest. Maybe in
a while.

MRS. CLAUS
Of course, dear. I'll be here when
you're ready.

Mrs. Claus walks over to the window and stares out.

MRS. CLAUS
Oh my. Oh my.

EXT. CHRISTMAS VILLAGE - EVENING

Pok walks up to Santa's house, looking around to make sure
no one is watching. He stops at the door.

POK
(muttering to himself)
Ok Pok, you can do this. Just give
him a clue and don't reveal any
secrets.

He raises his fist to knock on the door.

INT. SANTA'S HOUSE - EVENING

Santa sits at a table looking through old documents. There's
a knock on the door. Santa stands, then walks over and opens
the door. Pok is standing there.

SANTA
Come in. Have you learned anything?

Pok enters and Santa closes the door.

POK
Santa, I need to tell you something.
A couple of weeks ago Mrs. Claus got
a letter from that human girl that's
been writing to her every year.
Thought it was a bit strange that it
was sent so early, but you never
know about humans. And then the
other day a second letter arrived.
I'm wondering if there may be a
connection between the letter and
Mrs. Claus' disappearance.

SANTA
Do you know the name of this human
girl?

POK

Of course I do! It's printed right there on the envelope, every year. Wouldn't be much of a postmaster if I didn't know that, now would I?

SANTA

I'm sorry, Pok. I'm a little distressed right now. Of course you know the names on all of the mail. What was the name on this envelope?

POK

Miller. Maegan Miller. She's the only human who sends Mrs. Claus a letter every year. Most humans quit sending letters after a few years. Not this one. Every year, the week before Christmas, there it is. Except this year, two letters arrive in October. Very strange. There's no predicting what humans will do.

SANTA

So I've been told. Thank you Pok.

Pok exits. Santa goes upstairs to Mrs. Claus' office and starts poking around. He finds a letter and starts reading.

MAEGAN (V.O.)

Dear Mrs. Claus. I am sending my Christmas letter early this year because I may not make it to Christmas. I caught a disease on my field trip, and the doctors don't know what it is. Every day I keep feeling worse, and I don't know what's going to happen.

Santa begins looking around the office.

SANTA

The envelope. Where's the envelope?

He doesn't find the envelope. Then he gets an idea, and exits the house.

INT. REINDEER STABLE - NIGHT

Pok and the other elf are whispering.

OTHER ELF

What do you think you're doing?

POK

(defiantly)

I had to do something.

POK

It's not like I told him anything
about... you know.

OTHER ELF

And you won't. Remember your promise.

POK

I remember. Maybe it's time you
spoke up. Santa will understand.

OTHER ELF

I will speak up when... someone's
coming. We will talk later.

They exit out a side door as Santa enters the front door.
Santa goes to the first stall and addresses Prancer.

SANTA

You know where Dasher has taken her,
don't you?

(to all the reindeer)

You all know, don't you? I need to
get to her, to tell her how much
time we have. Please tell me.

Santa walks over to Rudolph's stall.

SANTA

Rudolph, you're my lead reindeer.
You've saved Christmas before, and
now I'm asking you to help save it
again. Where is she?

(beat)

What is so important that you can't
tell me? I know that Mrs. Claus has
gone to visit a sick human girl.
Why won't you help me get to her?

He looks around at all the reindeer, then sighs and his
shoulders slump.

SANTA

Very well. If you change your minds,
let me know.

Santa exits. The reindeer all exit their stalls and move to
a large open area, where they stand in a circle facing each
other.

INT. BRIGHAM AND WOMENS HOSPITAL ROOM 321 - EARLY MORNING

Mrs. Claus is looking at the sleeping Maegan. She cocks her
head as though listening to something, then disappears. The
door opens, and Doctor Franklin and a nurse enter. The nurse
is pushing an empty wheelchair.

NURSE

Wake up, Ms. Miller.

Maegan slowly opens her eyes and looks up at the nurse.

DOCTOR FRANKLIN

We need to run some more tests. Can you get out of bed?

Maegan weakly sits up and swings her legs off the bed. She tries to stand, but has trouble. With the nurses help, she makes it into the wheelchair. The nurse gives the doctor a concerned glance.

NURSE

There you go. How are you feeling today?

MAEGAN

Tired. Weak. I hurt.

DOCTOR FRANKLIN

Hang in there. We think we may be making some inroads into understanding this thing.

The doctor and nurse exit with Maegan. Mrs. Claus reappears.

MRS. CLAUS

Oh, my. I hope they aren't long.

EXT. CHRISTMAS VILLAGE - MORNING

The elves are all moving toward the toy works. Some elves are leading the reindeer.

INT. TOY WORKS - MORNING

The Christmas Magic gauge displays nine percent. Santa and Heydel are looking at it in dismay as elves enter the building and find spots to settle.

HEYDEL

We're gathering up all the wood we can. Once the magic is gone, we'll be able to keep the fires burning for several weeks before we have to start tearing down any of the buildings.

SANTA

What about food and water?

HEYDEL

We're stockpiling all we can back in the warehouse.

HEYDEL

It may be a good thing that we lived all those years with the humans. They showed us how to survive without magic.

SANTA

Don't say that to Gandrick. He's never gotten over the... over what happened.

HEYDEL

I know.

Heydel turns to walk away, then turns back.

HEYDEL

We'll get through this.

SANTA

I hope so.

Heydel walks over to the door where elves continue to arrive. As he approaches, he puffs out and smiles.

HEYDEL

Welcome, welcome all! What a great adventure! We're going to have a great time all together! Why, I don't believe we've had a gathering of all the Christmas elves in centuries! Once we all get settled in, you can all curl up with some hot chocolate while I tell you how I saved us during the toy crisis of 1612! It's a story you'll want to re-tell to your children and grandchildren every year!

INT. BRIGHAM AND WOMENS HOSPITAL ROOM 321 - NOON

The nurse helps Maegan from the wheelchair into the bed, then exits. Mrs. Claus appears.

MRS. CLAUS

How are you, dear?

MAEGAN

Tired. Need to sleep.

MRS. CLAUS

I need to finish my story, dear. I'm running out of time.

MAEGAN

Me too.

Maegan falls asleep. Mrs. Claus moves over to the window and stares out.

MRS. CLAUS
Forgive me, Nicholas.

INT. BRIGHAM AND WOMENS HOSPITAL ROOM 321 - LATE AFTERNOON

Maegan awakes to find her parents at her bedside.

DORIS
Hi.

MAEGAN
Hi mom.

DORIS
Jeff said to tell you he'll be here as soon as classes are over, but you've slept for so long he should be here anytime now.

ROBERT
There's something else he'd like to tell you, too. He... ooof!

Doris jabs her husband in the side with her elbow.

DORIS
He wants you to know how much your other classmates are concerned about you. There's a card on your nightstand from the school.

Doris picks up the card and hands it to Maegan.

MAEGAN
Other classmates... what is happening with the others who got sick?

ROBERT
Jeff knows more about that than us, but I think they're all pretty much in the same condition you are. There are a lot of doctors and researchers working on this thing.

DORIS
Just be strong, Mae. They'll figure this out.

MAEGAN
What if they don't? I've been thinking I should write a will.

DORIS
Don't talk like that.

The door opens and Jeff walks in, carrying a large bouquet of flowers. He sets them on the nightstand.

JEFF

Here's something to make your day a little brighter.

MAEGAN

I wonder which of us will last longer -- me or the flowers.

DORIS

Stop that! You're going to get through this.

MAEGAN

I'm sorry. I've been feeling very mortal lately.

(to Jeff)

Thank you for the flowers. They're lovely.

JEFF

(softly)

So are you.

MAEGAN

What?

JEFF

Maegan, there's something I need to tell you.

(pause)

I...

The door opens and Doctor Franklin walks in.

DOCTOR FRANKLIN

How are you feeling, Miss Miller?

MAEGAN

Weaker.

DOCTOR FRANKLIN

Well, hang in there. I wanted to let you know that we've got the best researchers in the business looking into this. We've heard back that they may have found a combination of drugs that will possibly stabilize your condition if not reverse it. We could be ready to start treatment as soon as a day or two.

DORIS

That's wonderful news.

A nurse enters with a wheelchair.

DOCTOR FRANKLIN

We need to run a few more tests and
take a couple more blood samples.

(to parents)

It should take about an hour.

They help Maegan into the chair and wheel her out.

INT. SANTA'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

Santa is sitting at the kitchen table when he hears knocking. He goes to the front door and opens it. No one is there. More knocking. Santa looks up toward the ceiling.

SANTA

Oh.

He shuts the door, walks to the fireplace, places his finger aside his nose, and shoots up the chimney.

EXT. SANTA'S ROOFTOP - AFTERNOON

Rudolph is on the roof. Santa appears out of the chimney.

SANTA

(hopefully)

You've decided to tell me?

Rudolph shakes his head no.

SANTA

No?

Rudolph stares at Santa.

SANTA

Oh. You've decided to show me.

Santa uses magic to hop on Rudolph and they take off.

INT. BRIGHAM AND WOMENS HOSPITAL ROOM 321 - AFTERNOON

Mrs. Claus is in the room alone. Outside the window Santa pulls up on Rudolph, and taps at the window. Mrs. Claus looks up.

MRS. CLAUS

Oh, my.

She opens the window. Santa vanishes from the back of Rudolph and reappears in the room.

MRS. CLAUS

Rudolph, dear, will you please wait
with Dasher?

Rudolph nods and flies off.

SANTA

The magic is running low. You need to return.

MRS. CLAUS

I can't return until I'm finished here. I'm sorry.

SANTA

Why is this girl so important to you? Pok said that she's been writing to you for years, but is that enough to put Christmas Village in jeopardy?

MRS. CLAUS

It's more than that. Please, believe me. I have to be here.

SANTA

I always believe you. But whatever the issue is, it needs to be resolved quickly or Christmas Village will be in danger. Is there anything I can do to help?

MRS. CLAUS

I don't think so.

SANTA

Let's hope that...

Santa and Mrs. Claus both look toward the door, then vanish. A moment later, the nurse wheels Maegan into the room and helps her into bed. The nurse exits, shutting the door. Mrs. Claus reappears, followed a moment later by Santa.

MRS. CLAUS

Maegan dear? This is Santa.

MAEGAN

(very tired)

Pleased to meet you.

Maegan holds out her hand and Santa takes it. Then Santa gets a shocked look on his face. He lets go of Maegan's hand and holds his hands over Maegan's body, concentrating.

SANTA

(to Mrs. Claus,
whispered)

I need to talk to you alone.

MRS. CLAUS

(to Maegan)

Dear, I'm going to chat with Santa for awhile. You rest and I'll be back shortly.

Santa and Mrs. Claus vanish. The door opens and closes.

INT. HOSPITAL CONFERENCE ROOM - AFTERNOON

The room is empty. The door opens and shuts, and Santa and Mrs. Claus appear.

MRS. CLAUS

What is it dear?

SANTA

That girl is not sick. She is the victim of a magic curse -- an elvish curse.

MRS. CLAUS

Oh my. And she is not the only one -- she told me that several of the humans who were with her on the trip are ill.

SANTA

Trip? Where did they go?

MRS. CLAUS

Why, to Turkey. I believe the place was called Topalli.

She stops at the look of shock that has appeared on Santa's face.

SANTA

Oh...my...word. I hope that I'm wrong about this.

He opens the window and watches Rudolph glide up.

SANTA

(to Mrs. Claus)

I'm off to Topalli and then back to Christmas Village. I could really use your help.

MRS. CLAUS

I'm sorry dear. I need to be here.

Santa disappears from the room and reappears on Rudolph.

SANTA

I'll be back.

Santa and Rudolph shoot off.

INT. TOY WORKS - LATE AFTERNOON

Heydel is addressing the crowd of elves. The elders are all standing near the Christmas Magic gauge.

HEYDEL

So the pixies had gotten mad at the humans, and they were making all sorts of mischief, including sabotaging the making of toys! But did I let that stop me? You bet I didn't! I gathered my elves about me, and...

Santa flings open the door and enters.

SANTA

Elders! In my office! Now!

The elders look at one another then follow Santa into his office where he closes the door.

SANTA

Which of you did it? Someone put a curse on Peri-ev, and the only elves that would have a reason to do that are in this room.

JODE

Is that really important right now? The Christmas magic...

SANTA

I am well aware of the situation. I am also aware that the quickest resolution may be to lift the curse. So I ask you, who cursed our old homesite?

No one answers. Pok stares at Jode.

SANTA

All right, let me try this another way. All of our centuries of work, our commitment to bring happiness to the good children of this world, is about to end...unless I know who created that curse! Gandrick?

GANDRICK

Wish I had thought of it. But no, it wasn't me.

Pok continues to stare at Jode.

SANTA

Unless someone speaks up, this is
the end of the Christmas elves.

JODE

I did it.

Everyone turns to look at Jode.

JODE

They killed our people! They killed
children! They killed... my husband.

Jode continues in hushed tones.

JODE

I hated them. I hated what they
took from me. I swore that we would
have revenge. I put a curse on the
gravesite. Any humans that touched
the bones of our dead would suffer
and die.

GANDRICK

And you never told us.

JODE

Why would I? I was glad about what
I'd done. And... I know the
punishment for using dark magic.

SANTA

Jode... please. I need you to lift
the curse. Or tell me what the curse
is and I'll reverse it. We'll discuss
the consequences later.

JODE

I can't.

SANTA

You must. It's the only way to save
us all.

JODE

No, you don't understand. I can't.
You can't. When we became Christmas
elves we lost the ability to perform
that kind of magic. Only a wood elf
can remove the curse.

WIFFEL

But no one's seen a wood elf in
centuries. There may not be any
left.

POK

Um... maybe there are.

Everyone turns to him.

POK

I... um ...thought I saw a wood elf.
Just recently.

WIFFEL

Where?

POK

Near... near the old homesite.

SANTA

What were you doing... never mind, I
don't want to know. Jode, I need
you to go with Pok and find that
elf. Get that curse reversed.
Please.

Jode considers.

JODE

I still do not think what I did was
wrong. But I will go. For all of
you.

Pok and Jode exit.

HOLLY

What now?

SANTA

Now we wait. Let's hope that they
get that curse lifted.

GANDRICK

How will lifting that curse help us?

SANTA

Lifting the curse will cure a human
girl... a girl that is somehow
attached to Mrs. Claus. When the
girl is cured, Mrs. Claus will return,
and we'll be ok.

GANDRICK

A human girl? We're all being put
in danger for one human girl? I
told you not to marry a human! She's
going to be the end of us all!

SANTA

That's enough! I know the situation.
Come on, let's get back to the others.

They leave Santa's office. Heydel walks back toward the crowd while Santa and the other elders head for the Christmas Magic Gauge.

SANTA

Heydel!

Heydel turns to look at Santa, who is pointing to the Christmas Magic gauge. The level on the gauge is at five percent.

SANTA

We're at five percent. And that means...

THE ELDER ELVES

We're visible!

EXT. CHRISTMAS VILLAGE - LATE AFTERNOON

The magic fades leaving the village visible.

EXT. OUTER SPACE

A reconnaissance satellite passes over the arctic as it's camera goes click-click-click.

INT. AIR FORCE BASE - LATE AFTERNOON

Lieutenant Calloway is watching pictures of the arctic as they arrive on his monitor.

LIEUTENANT CALLOWAY

I am so tired of looking at this frozen wasteland. Snow, ice, snow, ice...

He looks up and massages his eyes. As he does, Christmas Village shows up on the monitor. The lieutenant stretches, looks back at the monitor, and his eyes grow wide.

LIEUTENANT CALLOWAY

Hey Captain, take a look at this!

Captain Garrett walks over and looks at the monitor, which shows Christmas village from a great height, so that few details are visible.

LIEUTENANT CALLOWAY

Last pass there was nothing there, now...this!

CAPTAIN GARETT

When was the last pass?

LIEUTENANT CALLOWAY

Two days ago, sir.

CAPTAIN GARETT

So you're telling me someone built...
that... in two days?

LIEUTENANT CALLOWAY

I can't explain it, sir. It just
appeared.

CAPTAIN GARETT

Zoom in.

Lieutenant Calloway presses a few keys and the image zooms
in.

CAPTAIN GARETT

Now who do you think... you don't
suppose some crazy movie company is
trying to shoot a Christmas movie up
there, do you? Trying to make it
authentic?

LIEUTENANT CALLOWAY

No idea, sir.

CAPTAIN GARETT

Well, it doesn't look very
threatening, does it? Still, we
better bring it to the attention of
the Colonel. Print this and the
shot from two days ago.

LIEUTENANT CALLOWAY

They'll be at the printer before you
get there, sir.

Captain Garrett walks across the room to a printer sitting
next to a door. In the printer, one photo sits in the tray
and another one is emerging. He grabs them and walks out
the door.

INT. COLONEL LATHAMS OFFICE - DAY

The colonel sits at his desk reviewing papers. There is a
knock on the door.

COLONEL LATHAM

Enter.

Captain Garrett enters and approaches the colonel.

CAPTAIN GARETT

Sir, we picked up something in the
arctic I think you should see. Here's
a photo from two days ago.

He places the photo on the desk.

CAPTAIN GARETT
And here's one from today.

He places the photo on top of the first one.

COLONEL LATHAM
Who in blazes would be putting
something like that up? And that
fast?

CAPTAIN GARETT
Don't know, sir. I thought it may
be a movie set. Christmas movie in
the arctic.

COLONEL GARETT
Where's the cameras and other movie
equipment? Where's the signs of the
transportation that got them there?

CAPTAIN GARETT
I don't know, sir. Maybe in one of
the buildings?

COLONEL LATHAM
Well, it doesn't look too threatening,
does it? But we'd better have a
look. Colonel Newman at the 821st
is an acquaintance of mine. I'm
sure she'd like something to do.

He picks up the phone and presses a single digit.

COLONEL LATHAM
Get me Thule base.
(beat)
This is Colonel Latham at Recon.
Put me through to the CO.

INT. THULE AIR FORCE BASE (GREENLAND) - LATE AFTERNOON

COLONEL NEWMAN is in her office, on the phone. She is in
her sixties and has a severe look.

COLONEL NEWMAN
Uh-huh. You see what? Yes, they
would have to be crazy to try making
a movie up there -- that weather is
not something you want to spend any
time in.
(beat)
Sure, we'll go take a look. Send me
the photo.

She hangs up the phone and shakes her head. Then she picks
up the phone again and dials a number.

COLONEL NEWMAN

This is Newman. Get the Black Hawk ready.

EXT. THULE AIR FORCE BASE - LATE AFTERNOON

Colonel Newman walks out onto a runway and into a Black Hawk helicopter. She has a photograph in her hand.

INT. BLACK HAWK COCKPIT - LATE AFTERNOON

Colonel Newman enters the cockpit. BILL DEVERS sits in the pilot seat.

COLONEL NEWMAN

'Lo, Bill.

BILL DEVERS

'Lo, Colonel. Where we headed?

COLONEL NEWMAN

'Bout a hundred miles north and east. There's some buildings showed up in a recon photo -- doesn't look like any of our concern, but we'll go scope 'em out.

BILL

You said buildings? So what do you think -- explorers or scientists?

COLONEL NEWMAN

Neither. Look at this.

She hands the photo to Bill, who looks at it in surprise.

BILL

Well, it's about time Santa Claus showed himself.

COLONEL NEWMAN

Don't joke, captain. Some fool movie company may be trying to create a set up there and they've gotten in over their heads.

BILL

Hmmm. I guess we won't find out sitting here.

COLONEL NEWMAN

They may be in one or more of those buildings and in need of help.

BILL

Well, they wouldn't be the first ones to underestimate the weather up here.

COLONEL NEWMAN

So let's go.

EXT. THULE AIR FORCE BASE - LATE AFTERNOON

The helicopter lifts off and heads northeast.

EXT. TURKISH FOREST OUTSIDE OF TOPALLI - EVENING

Pok and Jode, riding Comet, land in a clearing. They dismount.

POK

Over there is where I think I saw the elf. Let's try that direction. Comet, stay here. If any elves show up, try to keep them here until we return.

Comet nods. Pok and Jode head into the woods.

EXT. CHRISTMAS VILLAGE - EVENING

The sound of an approaching helicopter. It lands in the village. Bill and Captain Newman exit the helicopter and stand there, looking around.

BILL

This is spooky.

INT. TOY WORKS - EVENING

The elders are in a circle, talking.

GANDRICK

Don't do it, I say! I'd rather freeze to death than rely on humans!

SANTA

Gandrlick, like it or not, we're going to have to deal with them. Besides, not all of us Christmas elves feel the same... caution... that you express.

GANDRICK

Caution has nothing to do with it! They're dangerous! They're unpredictable! They're...

HEYDEL

Here.

The door opens and Colonel Newman and Bill enter. They look at the congregation of elves and reindeer milling about. Heydel walks toward them.

HEYDEL

Welcome, welcome to Christmas village!
I'm Heydel.

COLONEL NEWMAN

Colonel Newman. What are you folks doing here?

HEYDEL

Why, what we always do. Making toys for all the good boys and girls of the world.

Santa moves to stand with Heydel. The other elder elves follow.

HEYDEL

But don't take it from me, although you should. Colonel Newman, meet Santa Claus.

Colonel Newman and Bill exchange glances.

SANTA

Welcome. I'm afraid you've come at a difficult time.

COLONEL NEWMAN

We've come to offer aid if you require it. And I'd like some answers. How did you get here? What are you doing here?

GANDRICK

None of your business, young lady! Why don't you just go back to wherever you came from and leave us alone!

SANTA

Gandrlick!
(to Colonel Newman)
Sorry. He's a crusty old sort.

COLONEL NEWMAN

Not as much as me.
(to Gandrick)
You show up out of thin air without any trace of what got you here. We show up to make sure no one is in trouble and to offer aid if needed. So why don't you be a grateful old man and appreciate the fact that we've come?

GANDRICK

Why, you... you...

Colonel Newman turns her attention back to Santa. Gandrick continues to sputter.

COLONEL NEWMAN

Look, you don't have to tell me anything if you don't want to, but I need to make sure that you folks are going to be ok. Otherwise, I'm going to have to move you out of here.

SANTA

Thank you for your offer, but we will be fine. As soon as my wife returns we'll be able to get everything back to normal.

BILL

Your wife? You mean Mrs. Santa Claus?

Colonel Newman gives Bill a withering look.

SANTA

Why, of course.

COLONEL NEWMAN

Where is she? What is she bringing that will get "everything back to normal"?

SANTA

She's gone to visit a sick friend. When she returns, she'll bring back the Christmas magic.

COLONEL NEWMAN

All right, I've heard just about enough of this Santa and Christmas magic talk. Tell me straight and tell me now -- who are you and what are you doing here?

SANTA

I'm Santa Claus. This is my home.

COLONEL NEWMAN

Bill, call base and have them send a C130 up here. We're going to evacuate these people.

SANTA

No.

COLONEL NEWMAN

If you want to stay, you have to
give me a reason.

SANTA

(to the Elders)

I'm going to give her a reason.

JODE

We only have a tiny amount of magic
left.

GANDRICK

Waste of time, I say.

HEYDEL

We are the Christmas elves. Do what
you must to save this Christmas.

SANTA

Rudolph!

Rudolph walks over.

SANTA

Rudolph with your nose so bright,
can we have a ride tonight?

Rudolph nods.

SANTA

Colonel, if you would step outside.

Santa, Colonel Newman, Bill Devers, Heydel, and Rudolph go
outside.

EXT. CHRISTMAS VILLAGE - EVENING

Santa makes a gesture, and he and Colonel Newman vanish,
only to reappear a moment later on Rudolph, who leaps and
begins flying. Rudolph circles the village, nose glowing
brightly, then lands on the roof of the toy works.

HEYDEL

(to Bill)

Come on.

Heydel leads Bill back inside, to one of the fireplaces.
Christmas magic comes out of the fireplace and coalesces
into Santa and Colonel Newman. Santa has a finger aside his
nose, which he pulls away.

BILL

I don't believe what I just saw.

COLONEL NEWMAN

I don't believe what I just did.

HEYDEL

Believe it. We are the Christmas
elves. This is Santa Claus.

BILL

Then why aren't you at the north
pole?

SANTA

Ho! There are three north poles on
this earth, young man -- the
geographic north pole, the magnetic
north pole, and the Christmas north
pole.

COLONEL NEWMAN

All right, assuming for the moment
that you are Santa Claus, what's
going on here?

Santa looks at Heydel, who nods.

SANTA

Let's go into my office and sit down
with some hot chocolate. We've got
a story to tell you, and it's going
to take awhile.

INT. BRIGHAM AND WOMENS HOSPITAL ROOM 321 - EVENING

ROBERT

Goodnight, Maegan.

DORIS

We'll be back tomorrow.

JEFF

Count on it.

Doris and Robert exit the room. Mrs. Claus reappears. She
looks down on a weak and tired Maegan in sympathy.

MRS. CLAUS

That Jeff is awfully sweet.

MAEGAN

He's been like a brother to me since
high school.

MRS. CLAUS

Only a brother? Well, you just rest,
dear, while I continue my story.

Mrs. Claus sits.

MRS. CLAUS

The elves moved far away with the human children they had rescued. All of the human parents had been killed, so the elves decided to raise the human children as part of their tribe.

EXT. DEEP WOODS - DAY

Elven children and human children are playing together. In one area, an elf is explaining the characteristics of different trees to some children.

MRS. CLAUS (V.O.)

The human children grew fast when measured against elf lives, for elves live to be around three or four hundred years old, while most humans of that time were lucky to see fifty years.

Elves and teenage humans walk through the woods gathering fruits and berries.

MRS. CLAUS (V.O.)

One of the human girls -- her name was Eda -- caught the eye of the Elven prince Nicholas. He courted her, and they fell in love.

Nicholaus and Eda walk through the forest, hand in hand, laughing and enjoying each other's company.

MRS. CLAUS (V.O.)

Nicholaus went to the elders of the village to tell them that he wanted to marry Eda.

INT. ELVEN COUNCIL CHAMBER - DAY

The elders (Jandar, Heydel, Jode, Pok, Holly, Wiffel, Gandrick, and Flixie) are meeting.

NICHOLAUS

I love Eda and wish to take her for my wife.

GANDRICK

Impossible! Elves and humans cannot marry. We all saw what humans are capable of. And the difference in our lifespans is too great. What will you do when you are still young and she is old and dying?

FLIXIE

Peace, Gandrick. Nicholas came to me last week and asked me to research the elf histories. I have discovered... well, I'll let Nicholas tell us.

NICHOLAUS

Elders, it is possible to grant Eda an elf's lifespan. King Esen's council, over a thousand years ago, created a spell to heal a severely wounded human. The spell served its purpose, but also gave the human a lifespan to match the elves.

FLIXIE

Since it was not our intention to interfere with the normal lifespan of other beings, the spell was recorded and forgotten.

GANDRICK

And we still should not interfere! Princeling, how can you choose a human for your wife when we've all seen what they are capable of doing? These human children we took in are almost adults now. I say we send them back to their own kind and be done with them!

JODE

I have a different concern - what of the cost?

NICHOLAUS

Cost?

JODE

Spells like that one always have a cost associated with them -- something given, something taken away.

FLIXIE

There is no mention in the History of any cost for this spell.

The council argues.

MRS. CLAUS (V.O.)

In the end, the council decided to grant Nicholas his request. KING Jandar himself cast the spell that gave Eda an elf's life.

INT. ELVEN HOUSE - DAY

In one room, Eda sits in a chair while King Jandar stands in front of her. Flixie stands beside the king, holding a large ornate book open. The king reads from the book.

KING JANDAR

... kuvvetli... sihat... hayat.

Nicholaus and Heydel are standing behind the king. As the king completes the spell his hands begin to glow. When he is finished, Flixie closes the book, and the king places his hands on Eda. The glow envelops her, and then flares out. The king falls back, exhausted, and Nicholaus and Heydel catch him.

MRS. CLAUS (V.O.)

Nicholaus and Eda were happy together.
But the magic had a side effect that
they could not have forseen.

INT. ELVEN COUNCIL CHAMBER - DAY

Wiffel is talking to the council. Nicholas and Eda are there, looking pained.

WIFFEL

We have used all of the magic at our disposal and there is nothing we can do. The spell that gave Eda an elf's lifespan also has made her unable to bear children.

NICHOLAUS

Why wasn't this forseen?

WIFFEL

The one time the spell was performed, it was performed on a male. It is likely that he became unable to father children. But such an outcome would not have been paid much attention.

EDA

I'm sorry, husband.

NICHOLAUS

(quietly, to Eda)

It is not your fault, my love. It is mine.

(loudly, to all)

And I will find an answer!

Nicholaus runs from the room.

EDA

Nicholaus!

MRS. CLAUS (V.O.)
 Nicholaus was gone for weeks. When he returned, he called the elders to the council chamber.

INT. ELVEN COUNCIL CHAMBER - WEEKS LATER

Nicholaus and Eda stand in the center of the chamber surrounded by the elders.

NICHOLAUS
 You know my plight. I am an elf, and I prize children above all else. Yet through my own decision, the woman I love has be robbed of the gift of bearing our children. For three weeks I have despaired, but no more. Eda and I stand before you now to make a vow, that all children will be as ours! That we will find a way to cherish and value them all! This I Vow!

EDA
 This I Vow!

The elders look at each other and then answer in unison.

ELDERS
 So be it.

MRS. CLAUS (V.O.)
 The power of that vow invoked the elven magic.

In the council chambers, a wave of magic passes through all of the elders, then engulfs Nicholaus and Eda. The entire elven village disappears. Moments later it reappears in the far north as Christmas Village.

MRS. CLAUS (V.O.)
 In one moment, the elves of the tribe were transformed from wood elves into Christmas elves. Nicholaus and the elders were made immortal. And one other change occurred...

Under the magic, Nicholaus and Eda are transformed, becoming Santa and Mrs Claus. Finally, all of the magic comes together and enters into Eda.

MRS. CLAUS
 The Christmas elves then began to carry out the mandate that their magic and the Vow of Nicholaus had given them. They've been at it ever since.

MAEGAN

Do you ever regret what happened?

MRS. CLAUS

Regret? My goodness, dear, no. The Christmas magic is like joy itself -- it fills us and gives us purpose and lets us do what elves were meant to do -- love and cherish children.

MAEGAN

But you're not an elf.

MRS. CLAUS

That's correct, dear. I'm human. And I'm also something much more. And that's what my story has been leading toward. Now that you understand the history of the Christmas elves, I can tell you why I'm here.

INT. SANTA'S OFFICE - NIGHT

The elders, Santa, Bill, and Colonel Newman are all crowded into Santa's office. Santa's sack hangs on a coat tree in the corner. Pictures of Mrs. Claus and the reindeer hang on the walls. A small fire burns in a fireplace. Christmas lights overhead provide illumination.

SANTA

...and that's the story. As soon as Mrs. Claus returns, we'll be fine.

GANDRICK

If Mrs. Claus returns.

COLONEL NEWMAN

(to Gandrick)

You know what? This whole story is unbelievable, except for the fact that I teleported onto a reindeer, flew around this place, and transported through a chimney. So I'm going to believe. I'm going to believe that this is Santa Claus, that this is Christmas Village, that it's all real. And because of that, I'm also going to believe that you're a bitter old elf who spends his life looking backward instead of forward. We humans have a saying that you should hear: get over it.

GANDRICK

Listen, you... you... you human, I was alive when your great great great

GANDRICK

great great grandparents were still far in the future. I've done more, and seen more, and lived more than you will ever dream of doing. And I'll live my life the way I see fit. I...

The office door opens and Flixie enters.

FLIXIE

Santa, the magic gauge. It's...

The lights flicker and go out. There is still light from the fireplace.

FLIXIE

...at critical.

SANTA

Well, it's all up to Mrs. Claus now. We have provisions for a few days, but if she doesn't return by then...

COLONEL NEWMAN

There's no need to wait. I can have you all evacuated by tomorrow.

SANTA

No, colonel. We are the Christmas elves. If this is our end, we will meet it here in Christmas village.

COLONEL NEWMAN

I can't guarantee that. There's not a lot of surveillance over the arctic, but sooner or later you'll be spotted by other countries and other groups. Some will come to investigate as we have. What will you say to them? How will you show them who you are if you don't have any magic?

SANTA

This is our home. We are not leaving.

COLONEL NEWMAN

Well, there is one thing we can do.

INT. BLACK HAWK HELICOPTER IN FLIGHT - NIGHT

Colonel Newman, Bill, and Santa are in the helicopter, which Bill is piloting back to Thule base. Colonel Newman is on the radio.

COLONEL NEWMAN

You heard me.

COLONEL NEWMAN

I'm commandeering the Coast Guard supply plane. It's the only thing up here that will get us to Boston without refueling. Have it ready to go ASAP. Got it? Good. Newman out.

(to Santa)

We'll get you there. It'll take several hours, but we'll get there as fast as we can.

SANTA

Thank you, colonel.

INT. BRIGHAM AND WOMENS HOSPITAL ROOM 321 - NIGHT

MRS. CLAUS

My name -- my human name -- is Sarah.

MAEGAN

I thought you said it was Eda.

MRS. CLAUS

Eda was the girl Nicholas married, the first Mrs. Claus.

MAEGAN

The first?

MRS. CLAUS

When the elven magic was transformed, it entered Eda. She became the source of Christmas magic for the elves.

MRS. CLAUS (V.O.)

Each year, the children of the world would generate the Christmas magic anew, and Eda filled herself to the top with it.

MONTAGE: Excited children all over the world during the week before Christmas. Magic rises from them into the air and shoots north.

EXT. CHRISTMAS VILLAGE - DAY

Mrs. Claus sits on a balcony as though she's sunbathing. Except that instead of absorbing sunlight she's absorbing magic.

INT. BRIGHAM AND WOMENS HOSPITAL ROOM 321 - NIGHT

MRS. CLAUS

Then, the rest of the year, she provided the magic for all of the other elves to use -- even Santa.

MRS. CLAUS

We're not sure why it happened that way. Perhaps it was in the way Nicholas worded his vow. I don't know if we'll ever know for sure. But Mrs. Claus must stay in Christmas Village in order to share the magic with the others. When she -- when I -- am outside the boundaries of the village, I cannot share the magic.

MAEGAN

I wouldn't want to be stuck in one place all the time. There's so much to see and do.

MRS. CLAUS

Oh, my. Well, let me finish my story. After she had been Mrs. Claus for almost 300 years, Eda began to notice a problem.

MRS. CLAUS (V.O.)

She was becoming unable to hold as much magic as she had in previous years, and the elves were in danger of running out before the next Christmas season came along. She didn't know what to do.

INT. TOY WORKS - NIGHT

Mrs. Claus holds a lamp in her hand as she stares at the Christmas Magic gauge. She looks very worried.

INT. BRIGHAM AND WOMENS HOSPITAL ROOM 321 - NIGHT

MRS. CLAUS

She didn't want to panic Santa, so she went to her best friend and told him, swearing him to secrecy. I hope you get to meet him. He's the postmaster for Christmas Village, and he's delivered your letters to me every year. He spent weeks looking through the elven records before figuring out what was happening.

INT. CHRISTMAS VILLAGE POST OFFICE - NIGHT

Pok and Mrs. Claus are talking.

POK

Finding out what's wrong was the easy part. Finding out what to do about it, now that took some digging.

MRS. CLAUS

So what is it?

POK

What it comes down to is this: you're human, and no human can contain the power of elven magic forever. In fact, based on what I found in the records, it's amazing you've been able to hold the magic as long as you have.

MRS. CLAUS

The magic changed us all. You changed from a wood elf to a Christmas elf, and I changed from Eda into Mrs. Claus. Maybe that made it possible for me to hold the magic.

POK

Maybe. But -- I'm sorry about this -- you're going to have to give it up.

MRS. CLAUS

Give it up? I can't! There won't be any more Christmas magic! There won't be any way to keep the vow! There...

POK

Now just hold your reindeer there. You have to give up being Mrs. Claus, but I didn't say that Mrs. Claus had to end.

MRS. CLAUS

You are not making sense.

POK

I found a spell you can use to transfer your powers. You can find someone else to be Mrs. Claus.

MRS. CLAUS

But I don't want someone else to be Mrs Claus. I'm Nicholas' wife. I belong with him.

POK

You know the alternative.

MRS. CLAUS (V.O.)

As much as she hated it, she eventually accepted the inevitability of the situation. Pok helped her search for a replacement.

INT. VILLAGE HUT - DAY

Pok and Mrs. Claus are talking to a girl. Pok is holding Santa's sack. The girl makes a gesture of assent. Mrs. Claus places her hands on the girl, and transforms back into Eda while the girl transforms into Mrs. Claus. Pok uses the sack to transform the hut doorway into a portal to Christmas Village, and he and the new Mrs. Claus step through. Eda watches them go and sheds a tear.

INT. BRIGHAM AND WOMENS HOSPITAL ROOM 321 - NIGHT

MRS. CLAUS

The second Mrs. Claus served until it came her time to pass it on. And so the Christmas magic has been passed from Mrs. Claus to Mrs. Claus.

MAEGAN

What does Santa think of this?

MRS. CLAUS

(giggles)

Santa? Why dear, he doesn't know. We Mrs. Clauses have always thought it best to keep it a secret among ourselves. And now it's your turn. I want you to be the next Mrs. Claus.

MAEGAN

Why me? I've never been able to figure out what I want.

MRS. CLAUS

Sometimes you find your destiny, dear, and sometime it finds you. I can't say why the magic selected you, but I know that all Mrs. Clauses have had a special bond with children.

MAEGAN

But I'm so ill. Will becoming Mrs. Claus cure me?

MRS. CLAUS

Yes. The magic will make you well and keep you safe. It will give you the memories of all the Mrs. Clauses who came before. And it will give you opportunities -- when you're Mrs. Claus, you can go anywhere and see anything. The only rule is that you can't leave Christmas Village for more than a few hours at a time.

MAEGAN

If I do this, I want my parents to know. I don't want to just disappear -- they'll be frantic.

MRS. CLAUS

No, dear, that's not possible. No Mrs. Claus has ever permitted humans to see the transformation or to know it happened. The elves left the world of humans a long time ago, and they stay hidden.

MAEGAN

Nevertheless. I won't do that to my parents.

MRS. CLAUS

Oh, dear. Please think it over. But don't take much time, there isn't much left. Not only for you, but for the Christmas elves. The longer I am absent, the faster the magic fades from Christmas Village. They will be running out of magic soon.

INT. C130 JET IN FLIGHT - DAWN

Santa, Colonel Newman, and Bill Devers are on their way to Boston.

SANTA

How much longer?

COLONEL NEWMAN

A couple hours yet. It's 2000 miles from the base to Boston.

SANTA

We need the Christmas magic. The reindeer could have had me there in seconds.

COLONEL NEWMAN

Sorry, Santa. Humans have to make do with science.

EXT. TURKISH FOREST OUTSIDE OF TOPALLI - DAY

JODE

We've been searching all night and all morning. I don't know what else... Pok?

Pok is standing still, staring off among the trees.

POK

Please. We are elves too. We need
your help.

A few seconds later, an elf approaches and stops a few feet
away, staring at Jode and Pok. Then a dozen more step out
from behind trees.

ELF 1

(wary)
What help do you need?

INT. BRIGHAM AND WOMENS HOSPITAL ROOM 321 - MORNING

Maegan's parents and Jeff watch Maegan fall asleep.

JEFF

If you two want to go get some
breakfast I'll stay here.

DORIS

No, we aren't hungry. But if you
want to...

Mrs. Claus appears. Robert sees her first and jumps in
surprise.

ROBERT

Ah! I'm sorry, I didn't see you
come in. And you are?

MRS. CLAUS

Out of time.

Mrs. Claus moves to the side of Maegan's bed.

MRS. CLAUS

Maegan, wake up dear.

Maegan opens her eyes.

MRS. CLAUS

I'm afraid I'm out of time. I need
a decision.

Maegan notices that Jeff and her parents are in the room.

MAEGAN

(to Mrs. Claus)
Jeff... my parents... do they know...

MRS. CLAUS

Not yet dear, but they are about to.
(to Jeff and Doris
and Robert)
Hello. I'm Mrs. Santa Claus.

ROBERT
 (behind his hand, to
 Doris)
 Escaped from the mental ward?

Mrs. Claus walks over to the window and opens it.

MRS. CLAUS
 I don't have time for this, but you
 need to know.

Dasher appears at the window.

Mrs. Claus then makes a gesture and she and Jeff and Robert and Doris all vanish and reappear astride Dasher, who makes a quick loop around the hospital and hovers at the window again. They all vanish from Dasher's back and reappear in the room.

JEFF
 Woah. There is a Santa Claus.

MRS. CLAUS
 Mrs. Claus, dear.

Doris faints. Robert catches her.

ROBERT
 What... what do you want with my
 daughter?

MRS. CLAUS
 I want her to become the next Mrs.
 Claus.

Jeff looks at Mrs. Claus for a second, and then walks over to Maegan's bed.

JEFF
 What about you, Maegan? What do you
 want?

MAEGAN
 I've discussed this with Mrs. Claus.
 I get to travel the world, and care
 for children. I finally found my
 perfect job description.

She looks at Mrs. Claus.

MAEGAN
 Go ahead.

JEFF
 Wait!

He looks at Maegan.

JEFF

I love you.

MAEGAN

I know. Let me go.

MRS. CLAUS

Please step back everyone.

She stands next to Maegan's bed and holds out her hands. The magic envelops them both, and Maegan transforms into Mrs. Claus as Mrs. Claus transforms back into Sarah. The new Mrs. Claus sits up and climbs out of bed.

JEFF

(to himself, in shock)

Now that's something you definitely don't see every day.

ROBERT

I don't believe what I just saw.

MRS. CLAUS

Dad, tell mom I love her. I'll come visit.

JEFF

I want to go with you.

MRS. CLAUS

I'm sorry, dear... I mean, I'm sorry, Jeff, but that's not possible. You can write to me -- I'll get the letters.

SARAH

(to Jeff)

Don't worry, she's going to be very happy for a very long time.

EXT. TOPALLI EXCAVATION SITE - MORNING

Jode, Pok, and a group of wood elves are at the site.

ELF 1

Are you sure that is the curse you used?

JODE

I remember it like it was yesterday.

ELF 1

You would have been banished from our tribe for using such magic.

JODE

I may yet be banished from mine.

The wood elves hold out their hands. Magic forms around them, then around the site, and then shoots off in all directions.

ELF 1

It is done.

SERIES OF SHOTS - ELVEN MAGIC REVERSING THE CURSE

A) Professor Dincer in bed at home. The magic envelops him, then he sits up and stretches.

B) Professor Thigpen in a hospital bed with his wife beside him. The magic envelops him and he looks relieved. Then he sits up and smiles at his wife.

C) Brett in a hospital bed. The magic envelops him and he takes a deep breath, then sits up in amazement and raises both hands in victory.

INT. BRIGHAM AND WOMENS HOSPITAL ROOM 321 - MORNING

Robert, the fainted Doris, Jeff, Sarah, and Mrs. Claus are there. Colonel Newman and Santa rush into the room.

SANTA

(to Mrs. Claus)

We're out of time. We have to return now.

MRS. CLAUS

Of course, dear.

Dasher appears at the window. Santa and Mrs. Claus vanish and reappear on the reindeer, which shoots off northward. Then Doctor Franklin walks in.

DOCTOR FRANKLIN

I think we may be on the verge of a break... what happened? Where's Maegan?

ROBERT

She... uh...just got taken away.

SARAH

She's gone to a better place.

DOCTOR FRANKLIN

Oh... I'm terribly sorry. Is there anything I can do?

ROBERT

Can you help me with my wife? She's fainted.

EXT. CHRISTMAS VILLAGE - MORNING

Santa and Mrs. Claus land in Christmas Village and dismount. Mrs. Claus spreads her arms and twirls. The magic spreads from her to cover Christmas village, which becomes invisible again.

EXT. BRIGHAM AND WOMENS HOSPITAL PARKING LOT - MORNING

Jeff and Sarah are walking with Maegan's parents to their car. Jeff is carrying a bag of Maegan's belongings. A phone rings, and Jeff fishes it out of Maegan's bag and flips it open. The screen displays a text message: "Feeling much better. How about you? Brett". Jeff growls and throws the phone across the parking lot, where it lands and shatters.

SARAH

I know it hurts. I had to give up everything to become Mrs. Claus. And now I've given up everything again to return to being Sarah. We can help each other through this.

INT. BRIGHAM AND WOMENS HOSPITAL ROOM 321 - MORNING

Colonel Newman is standing there alone. She sits on the edge of the bed.

COLONEL NEWMAN

Join the air force, they said. You'll see things you never would have seen otherwise, they said. You'll have experiences you can't imagine, they said.

(pause)

How in the world am I going to explain commandeering a plane to Boston?

INT. TOY WORKS - DAY

The Christmas Magic gauge is at 12%. The elves are hard at work making toys, with Heydel supervising.

INT. SANTA'S HOUSE - DAY

The elders are gathered at the kitchen table.

SANTA

We are gathered to determine an appropriate judgment for Jode, who broke elven rules and used dark magic. Jode, what do you have to say for yourself?

JODE

We all saw what the humans did to our people.

JODE

Even to this day the wood elves hide from humans. I do not think it was inappropriate to cause them some of the pain and suffering they caused us. I think Gandrick will back me up on this, right, Gandrick?

GANDRICK

Eh? Well, I certainly have believed that humans can't be trusted. But maybe there's some good in them. That Colonel Newman, for instance. She's got spunk.

POK

Can I say something?

SANTA

Go ahead Pok.

POK

Jode is my sister. I know that she has been conflicted over this, as much as she says that humans deserve what they got. She would have spoken up sooner, but she was afraid of being banished.

JODE

Please, Pok. I did this, let me face my punishment.

SANTA

Very well. We all were there. We all saw what the humans did. We all felt the shock and the loss. But you were the only one to break elven law and turn to dark magic. For that, there must be consequences. However, you did help us find the wood elves and reverse the curse. And other than performing that one dark act and hiding it from the rest of us, you have been an exemplary teacher to the elflings for many centuries. Therefore, it is my judgment that you go live among the humans and obtain a job teaching human children. You will do this until the time the elders determine you can return.

JODE

Live and work among... them? Can't I just cut off my hand or something?

SANTA

Elders? Is the sentence appropriate?

One by one the elders nod.

SANTA

It is decided then.

(to Jode)

I expect you will find that most humans aren't as bad as you think.

(to all)

Thank you all for coming. Let's get busy and make this the best Christmas ever.

Santa watches the elders exit. Mrs. Claus enters the room.

MRS. CLAUS

You know, dear, this place needs some serious redecorating.

SANTA

Not again. We just redecorated three hundred years ago.

INT. JEFF AND SARAH'S LIVING ROOM -- TEN YEARS LATER

Jeff and Sarah are married. They are sitting on a sofa with their 5 year old daughter. The room is decorated for Christmas. The daughter is dictating a letter to Santa.

DAUGHTER

...and a doll and a computer game and roller blades.

Sarah writes it down.

JEFF

Well there you go. I'll get that in the mail to Mrs. Claus tomorrow.

DAUGHTER

No daddy, Christmas letters go to Santa.

Jeff and Sarah exchange a glance.

JEFF

Come here, honey. Daddy wants to tell you a story.

FADE OUT.

THE END