

# **CHRISTMAS at WINTER LAKE**

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FADE IN:

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

A quaint kitchen with an ocean view. A lighthouse stands on a craggy cliff.

EVE DAVIS (33), stunning, poised, every inch the soap opera queen, sits by a corded phone in full 1960s-style makeup and costume.

She delivers her lines with practiced intensity.

EVE  
(into phone, wistful)  
I don't love him anymore, Mary  
Jane. I told you once, I told you  
twice. I just don't love him...  
It's this town. It's that  
lighthouse -- it has a spell over  
us... it always has, it always  
will...

She takes a breath, dramatic pause --

EVE (CONT'D)  
I'm going to leave Lighthouse Cove  
forever.

A MUSICAL STING swells.

The scene is actually playing on --

A TV MONITOR

Displaying the episode in progress.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)  
Join us again tomorrow, where  
drama swirls like the restless sea  
around Mavis Jones and the people  
of... Lighthouse Cove.

INT. TV STUDIO - SOUNDSTAGE - DAY

BUZZERS. LIGHTS DIM.

Crew members relax, reset equipment.

Eve snaps out of character, sighs, and rips off her wig, shaking loose her real long, effortless waves. The illusion breaks -- just another day on set.

Eve drops her "character" and steps out of the kitchen.

BEN (40s), the seasoned director, strides up, beaming.

BEN  
Fantastic as always, Eve!

EVE  
Ben, this script is ridiculous.  
It's like they're setting up  
Hunter Franks to return.

BEN  
Hunter? He was lost in the Amazon  
jungle last season.

EVE  
And yet his fan mail keeps showing  
up.

BEN  
Well, rumor has it... he might  
return as his evil identical twin.

EVE  
(deadpan)  
Of course he is.

She shakes her head and steps off the set, meeting her  
assistant and closest confidante, MARGE KIRKBRIDE (60s),  
an ex-Broadway dancer with thick glasses, green streaks  
in her hair, and zero patience for nonsense.

INT. TV. STUDIO - HALLWAY - DAY

As they walk past framed photos of network stars --

EVE  
Marge, I don't know how much  
longer I can do this.

MARGE  
How about 'til the money runs out?

EVE  
Money isn't everything.

MARGE  
Try saying that when you're back  
waiting tables.

Eve gives a look.

EVE  
I wanted to be an actress.

MARGE  
You are, sweetie.

Eve stares at a glossy photo of herself -- all smiles, dressed in character.

EVE  
All I do is rotate between the kitchen, living room, and front porch, reading off a teleprompter.

MARGE  
And making it look like you're not reading is real acting, kid.

Eve laughs, but something in her expression falters.

INT. EVE'S DRESSING ROOM - LATER

Christmas decorations hang awkwardly—a few sparse garlands, a half-hearted wreath.

It's festive, but it's lonely.

Eve wipes off her makeup as Marge flips through emails on a tablet.

MARGE  
All right. You got three interview requests, an invite to some fancy party, and -- oh, surprise, surprise -- Clark Maverick moved up your press junket.

Eve groans.

EVE  
Merry Christmas from Clark Maverick.

A PRODUCTION ASSISTANT (20s), appears in the doorway.

PRODUCTION ASSISTANT  
Miss Davis? They're ready for you.

EVE  
Who is?

PRODUCTION ASSISTANT  
The reporter from "Afternoon Drama  
Magazine."

Eve turns to Marge.

MARGE  
I thought we canceled that?

PRODUCTION ASSISTANT  
Clark vetoed it.

Eve rubs her temples.

EVE  
Wonderful.

MARGE  
Hey, someday they won't want an  
interview, and you'll miss it.

Eve rolls her eyes.

Marge starts to leave -- but pauses at the door.

MARGE (CONT'D)  
Heads up. Associate Producer  
incoming.

DAN HOLMES (40s), overeager network exec, pokes his head  
into the room.

DAN  
Eve! Car's picking you up at  
seven.

EVE  
For what?

DAN  
Dinner with Lance Montgomery.

EVE  
Who?

DAN  
Lance Montgomery. "Hope Springs  
Eternal?"

Blank stare.

DAN (CONT'D)  
He plays Dan Hope.

Nothing.

DAN (CONT'D)  
Maverick's other soap. The one  
after yours?

EVE  
Never saw it.

DAN  
Well, his ratings are slipping, so  
you're being seen with him  
tonight.

EVE  
Wait, wait, wait -- so I'm  
contractually obligated to date  
random soap stars now?

DAN  
Just enjoy yourself!

Dan disappears.

Eve turns to Marge.

MARGE  
I had nothing to do with this.

Eve grabs her coat.

EVE  
I'm going to tell Clark Maverick  
I'm an actress, not a commodity.

INT. CLARK MAVERICK'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

CLARK MAVERICK (45), suave, manipulative, dressed in a  
\$5,000 suit, practices his smile in a mirror.

Loud KNOCKS.

CLARK  
Come in, Eve.

She storms in.

EVE  
How did you know it was me?

CLARK  
I know your knock.

She drops into a chair.

Behind him. Awards and plaques form a golden wall of ego.

CLARK (CONT'D)  
You seem a little upset.

EVE  
Oh, just a smidge.

Clark leans forward, smiling.

CLARK  
What are you angry about? The  
ratings? They're through the roof.

EVE  
Not for "Hope Springs Eternal."

CLARK  
I fired the head writer.

EVE  
I was being sarcastic.

CLARK  
Oh.

A beat.

EVE  
I'm not going on a date for  
ratings, Clark.

CLARK  
It's just one night. Some press  
photos, a drink, a few hors  
d'oeuvres --

EVE  
No.

CLARK  
Excuse me?

EVE  
I said no.

Clark folds his hands, calculating.

CLARK  
How can there be anything between  
you and Lance Montgomery...

A beat.

CLARK (CONT'D)  
...when you're in love with me?

Eve stares.

EVE  
I am not in love with you.

Clark leans back, unfazed.

CLARK  
Well, I'm in love with you.

Eve exhales, done.

EVE  
Clark, I'm going home for  
Christmas.

CLARK  
Not if I have anything to say  
about it.

EVE  
What?

CLARK  
You can skip the date.

EVE  
Thank you.

CLARK  
But I need you here for the  
Christmas episodes.

EVE  
That's not happening, Clark. My  
vacation starts tomorrow. The  
writers already wrote me out.

CLARK  
I had them rewrite it. You're back  
in.

EVE  
(with a raised  
eyebrow)  
Say again?

CLARK

Lighthouse Cove can't afford to  
lose its biggest star during the  
holidays.

EVE

You can't just --

CLARK

I can. You're under contract.

EVE

So what happens if I don't show  
up?

CLARK

Then Mavis Jones has a little...  
accident. Maybe she vanishes in  
that lighthouse for good. Or maybe  
she turns up --

(beat)

-- on "Hope Springs Eternal." I  
hear they need a wood nymph.

Eve glares at him, then stands.

EVE

Mavis might be yours, but I'm not.

She walks out, leaving Clark smug behind his desk.

INT. EVE'S DRESSING ROOM - DAY

Marge, on the phone, her back to the open door.

TRAVEL AGENT (V.O.)

I can get you on the six o'clock  
to Boston, then you switch to  
Burlington Airways.

MARGE

I never heard of Burlington  
Airways. How many props?

TRAVEL AGENT (V.O.)

Two.

Eve enters and starts to shove a few scripts into her  
handbag, fuming.

MARGE

Forget it. Boston is great. We'll  
rent a car from there.

TRAVEL AGENT (V.O.)  
Very well. I'll email you the  
ticket to the address I have here?

MARGE  
Yeah. Thanks.

She hangs up.

EVE  
He threatened to send Mavis to  
Hope Springs Eternal as an  
imaginary wood nymph.

MARGE  
I hear they do that kind of thing  
over there.

EVE  
That explains the ratings.

MARGE  
You sure about this?

EVE  
I wouldn't even know how to play a  
wood nymph! Are we booked?

MARGE  
We're booked.

EXT. NYC AIRPORT - NIGHT

A light snowfall drifts down.

INT. AIRPORT - NIGHT

Eve and Marge wait in the VIP lounge. Eve flips through a  
magazine while Marge sits wide-eyed and frozen.

EVE  
You okay?

MARGE  
(stiff)  
I ain't ever been on a plane  
before.

EVE  
You haven't?

MARGE  
Since when have I ever left New  
York?

Eve thinks back.

EVE  
Never, I guess.

MARGE  
Bingo.

EVE  
You've never seen the mountains?

MARGE  
Nope.

EVE  
A small-town main street?

MARGE  
Nope.

EVE  
A church social?

MARGE  
Once. In a movie.

Eve laughs, shaking her head.

EVE  
Marge, you're about to have your  
eyes opened.

A boarding announcement comes over the speakers.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)  
Now boarding Flight 725 to Boston,  
first-class passengers.

They grab their bags and head to the gate.

EXT. AIRPLANE - NIGHT

The plane lifts off, disappearing into the snowy sky.

MARGE (V.O.)  
Wake me when we get there --  
unless we crash, then don't  
bother.

EXT. A LONELY ROAD - NIGHT

A luxury car appears and passes as a light snow falls.

INT. LUXURY RENTAL CAR - NIGHT

Marge keeps her eyes peeled out the front and passenger windows as Eve drives.

MARGE

I can't see what Bing was raving about all those years. Nothin' out there but dark. Don't they have streetlamps in Vermont?

EVE

Yes, but not on roads in the middle of nowhere.

MARGE

Ah. So, when did you learn to drive?

EVE

When I was fourteen. My dad taught me.

MARGE

Well, you ain't lost your touch.

She cranes her neck toward the windshield.

MARGE (CONT'D)

Let it snow, let it snow.

EVE

Just flurries.

MARGE

I was hopin' for a blizzard.

EVE

A blizzard would have turned a four-hour trip into ten.

MARGE

Okay, forget the blizzard. What's that sign say?

EXT. SIGN ON THE SIDE OF THE ROAD - NIGHT

The sign reads: WINTER LAKE, 2 MILES

MARGE (V.O.)  
Winter Lake!

INT. LUXURY RENTAL CAR - NIGHT

Marge squints to see the writing.

MARGE  
Such a nice name. Winter Lake.

EVE  
It is.

MARGE  
A little out of season in the  
summer, though.

EXT. MAIN STREET - WINTER LAKE - NIGHT

The car turns onto a quiet Main Street, impressively decorated for Christmas with garlands, ornaments, wreaths, and colored lights in stores and on trees.

The car pulls over and Eve and Marge step out.

Marge is dumbfounded.

MARGE  
Eve, I've got a feeling we ain't  
in New York anymore.

EVE  
True. Like I said, not a cement  
building to be found.

MARGE  
I don't believe it. It looks like  
an old movie! Will you look at  
that...

Marge has a tear in her eye.

MARGE (CONT'D)  
(softly)  
Will you look at that.

They stand on the sidewalk and take in the beautiful sight of Winter Lake at Christmas.

## EXT. WINTER LAKE TRANSCRIPT - NIGHT

The town paper is on the Main Street block, nestled between two stores.

JASON ELDER (30), exits and locks the front door. With movie star good looks and a killer smile that will melt the strongest female heart, he is humble and polite.

He pulls his collar up against the wind as he makes his way down the sidewalk.

## EXT. MAIN STREET - WINTER LAKE - NIGHT

Marge sees Jason approach.

MARGE

Hey, look! A person! I was starting to think this was all an illusion.

Eve squints, then her face lights up with recognition.

EVE

No. It can't be.

MARGE

Who?

Jason stops short, recognizing her, too. He studies her for a second, then --

JASON

Eve? Eve Davis?

EVE

Jason Elder!?

Before he can respond, Eve rushes into his arms for a warm embrace. He laughs, wrapping his arms around her just as tight. When they pull back, they take a second to really look at each other.

JASON

Still the prettiest girl in town.

MARGE

Well, till I arrived, anyway.

Marge extends her hand. Jason shakes it, charmed by her.

EVE

Jason, this is Marge Kirkbride. My right-hand woman.

JASON

Nice to meet you, Marge.

Marge studies him as she leans toward Eve --

MARGE

Kid, you never mentioned your hometown had leading-man material.

Eve nudges her, blushing slightly.

JASON

How long are you home for?

EVE

Until New Year's. Back to work on the second.

JASON

Lighthouse Cove?

EVE

Yeah.

JASON

I watch it when I can.

EVE

You do!?

JASON

Oh yeah. Some of us in town make bets on which long-lost twin or mysterious illness will pop up next.

EVE

Gee, thanks.

Marge watches their natural chemistry with interest.

EVE (CONT'D)

You work here? The Transcript.

JASON

Yep. Reporter. Of course, there's not much goes on that's newsworthy except high school sports.

Again, they stare into each others eyes in silence.

JASON (CONT'D)  
Oh! And, of course, the play. I'll  
cover the play.

Eve beams.

EVE  
The Christmas play! I forgot! Oh,  
I can't wait!

JASON  
Your dad is directing it again.  
Fifteenth year in a row.

MARGE  
Fifteen years? Long run!

EVE  
Oh, it's just one show a year.  
It's all about the founding of  
Winter Lake.

MARGE  
Why at Christmas?

EVE  
The town was founded Christmas  
Eve, Seventeen fifty-four.

MARGE  
Ya don't say?

JASON  
Yeah, the French pushed the  
settlers from New York near Crown  
Point all the way into Vermont.  
The settlers got as far as a large  
lake. They thought they were  
goners.

MARGE  
But they weren't?

JASON  
With their backs to the lake and  
no way to cross, a blizzard  
struck.

EVE  
The French retreated for shelter.

MARGE  
What did the settlers do?

EVE

One of them, Martha Williams, kept their spirits up and urged them to take shelter under wagons.

JASON

They decided that was where the Good Lord wanted them to settle, and that's what they did - Christmas Eve, Seventeen fifty-four.

EVE

And they named the lake, and the town, Winter Lake.

Marge thinks about this.

MARGE

Is it a musical?

JASON

No, but there are Christmas carols afterward.

MARGE

All right, I'll leave you two to reminisce, but I'm freezing my designer thermals off.

Marge heads for the car.

MARGE (CONT'D)

Nice meetin' ya, kid.

JASON

You, too.

EVE

I should be going, too. Mom and Dad are waiting.

He laughs.

EVE (CONT'D)

What?

JASON

That's what you used to say when we're in high school.

She smiles.

EVE  
I remember.

JASON  
It's great to see you again.

EVE  
Goodnight, Jason.

JASON  
Goodnight.

Eve gives him one last smile and a delicate wave before climbing into the car.

INT. RENTAL CAR - NIGHT

Eve gets behind the wheel as Jason watches from the sidewalk. Marge smiles and gives a half-hearted wave.

MARGE  
Why is he staring at us?

Jason waves back.

EVE  
He's waiting 'til we leave.

MARGE  
Why?

EVE  
To make sure we leave with no troubles.

She starts the car and pulls into the street.

MARGE  
I forgot. People have manners out here.

Eve laughs.

EXT. MAIN STREET - WINTER LAKE - NIGHT

Eve's car travels down Main Street, as Jason heads in the other direction. Soon, Main Street is left alone in all of its Christmas splendor.

EXT. DAVIS FRONT PORCH - NIGHT

A finger pushes the doorbell button, and the RING is heard inside the house.

The door, adorned with an evergreen wreath with a bright red bow, opens to reveal Eve's parents.

KAY DAVIS (60s), is proof that Eve will still be beautiful in middle age. Makeup perfectly applied, not a hair out of place, and an eye for style in her clothes.

She's from an age when you looked your best at holidays and for company.

KAY  
Eve! Merry Christmas!

She locks Eve in an embrace.

EVE  
Oh, Mom! It's been too long!

On the other hand, FRANK DAVIS (60s), every bit as middle-aged as his wife, except in his case it shows. His eyes are helped by glasses, and he tries to look festive with a red cardigan.

FRANK  
Aw, there's my baby!

Eve rushes to his arms and a warm embrace.

Kay notices Marge.

KAY  
You must be Marge.

MARGE  
The one and only.

They shake hands.

KAY  
Eve has told us so much about you!

MARGE  
Good things, I hope?

KAY  
Oh, yes, indeed! Come in, please!

Marge enters, and the door closes with the wreath facing outward in silent vigil.

INT. DAVIS LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The Davis home is magnificent and decorated as elaborate as possible - but with great taste.

A real Christmas tree, draped in silver tinsel that reflects the colored lights is near the window.

Marge shakes Frank's hand as they meet.

FRANK

You can call me Frank, Marge.

MARGE

Nice to know ya.

As Frank takes their coats, Marge notices the tree and is genuinely impressed.

MARGE (CONT'D)

Will you look at that!? That is without a doubt, the most beautiful tree I have ever seen.

EVE

Mom puts all the tinsel on one strand at a time.

Kay nods in agreement.

MARGE

Doesn't that take forever?

KAY

Not once you get started. It's the only way to do it.

Kay carries over a small wooden ornament shaped like an angel; paint faded with time.

KAY (CONT'D)

Look what I found.

Eve gasps softly, taking it.

EVE

My kindergarten Christmas project?

KAY

I never could bring myself to throw it away.

EVE

I remember making this...

FRANK  
Where do the years go, huh?

EVE  
(quietly, to herself)  
They go away...

MARGE  
Kid, you might have a fan club,  
but your biggest one lives right  
here.

Eve embraces Kay.

MARGE (CONT'D)  
And that Jason fella, too.

FRANK  
You ran into Jason?

EVE  
Yeah.

FRANK  
He still asks about you. Every  
once in a while.

KAY  
You two had something special.

EVE  
Mm --

MARGE  
Oh-ho! Jason's an ex? Now this is  
getting interesting.

EVE  
Ancient history.

MARGE  
Yeah, well, history has a funny  
way of repeating itself.

FRANK  
Especially in small towns at  
Christmas.

KAY  
Come on, let's eat.

Eve sets the ornament back on the tree. She shows a warm  
smile before she follows them into the kitchen.

INT. DAVIS LIVING ROOM - LATER

Kay and Frank sit on the couch, Eve and Marge sit in separate chairs. Frank stirs his tea, uncharacteristically quiet.

KAY

And that's when I knew Eve was born to be an actress.

EVE

Mom, you don't have to tell that story to everyone I bring home.

KAY

Oh, darling, every parent brags. Embarrassing stories are the best kind.

MARGE

Frank, she get the acting bug from you?

FRANK

Oh no, I'm just a director. Community theater, small stuff.

EVE

Dad's won awards.

FRANK

Now, Eve.

MARGE

That's wonderful!

EVE

And he directs the town's Christmas play every year.

Eve notices her father's non-reaction.

EVE (CONT'D)

Dad? What's wrong?

KAY

Oh... let's not spoil the evening.

EVE

Spoil what?

FRANK

It's the play.

KAY  
Elaine Waugh -- our Martha  
Williams -- quit.

EVE  
Quit? Why?

KAY  
She's in the hospital. Pneumonia.

MARGE  
Isn't there an understudy?

FRANK  
We barely had enough people  
audition to fill the roles.

EVE  
Then hold another audition.

FRANK  
Christmas Eve is one week away --  
and Martha has one hundred fifty-  
four lines to memorize.

MARGE  
That's nothin'. Eve learns that  
much in a single episode of  
Lighthouse Cove.

Frank is torn between a good idea and the impossibility.

FRANK  
Well... even if I could... how  
would we get the word out?

EVE  
Dad, you're talking to a soap  
star. Social media exists.

FRANK  
Do you really think people would  
show up?

MARGE  
Oh, honey, we're about to turn  
this into Broadway.

EXT. SIDEWALK IN FRONT OF DAVIS HOUSE - NIGHT

Frank takes slow steps, deep in thought.

Eve approaches and walks with him.

EVE  
What are you going to do?

FRANK  
I don't know. Cancel, maybe.

EVE  
The play has been performed every  
Christmas Eve for over seventy  
years. You can't cancel.

FRANK  
Maybe it's time. People aren't as  
excited about it as they used to  
be anyway.

EVE  
I don't believe that. The town  
always looked forward to the play.

FRANK  
We've only sold a few dozen  
tickets. The auditorium seats  
seven hundred.

Eve stays positive.

EVE  
People like to buy at the door.

Frank doesn't buy it.

FRANK  
For the past ten years, the  
audiences have gotten smaller and  
smaller. Maybe it's time.

EVE  
Think of the others in the cast.  
How long have they been in  
rehearsals?

FRANK  
Three months.

Eve hides her shock.

EVE  
Three?

FRANK  
We only rehearse once a week.

EVE  
I forgot.

He puts his arm around her.

They turn and continue towards the house.

INT. DAVIS LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Marge is reading a script.

KAY  
Marge, Eve always speaks so highly  
of you.

Marge is lost in the script.

MARGE  
Uh-huh...

KAY  
She said you once met Richard  
Burton?

MARGE  
Yeah... at Sardi's.

KAY  
What did he say!?

MARGE  
"Get outta the way, kid."

KAY  
Oh.

MARGE  
Hey, is this the script they use  
for the play?

KAY  
That's the one.

MARGE  
Interesting.

Frank and Eve enter; they remove their coats and brush  
off the cold.

EVE  
It must be twenty degrees out  
there!

FRANK  
Seasonable.

KAY  
I'll hang those up for you.

Kay takes their coats and exits.

MARGE  
Frank, about this script.  
There's only one thing to do.

FRANK  
And that is?

MARGE  
Hold another audition.

FRANK  
Christmas Eve is one week from  
tonight.

MARGE  
Martha Williams has one hundred  
fifty four lines. I just counted  
'em. They're all short, only two  
speeches! It-can-be-done.

FRANK  
It would take a week to get an  
audition notice in the paper.

EVE  
Internet, Dad. We could have a  
hundred people at an audition  
tomorrow!

Frank has hope.

FRANK  
Do you think it will work?

MARGE  
Do I!?

EXT. WINTER LAKE STREETS - DAY

Eve and Marge drive through town.

EVE (V.O.)  
All the social media went out?

MARGE (V.O.)  
Every community theater and drama  
club in a thirty-mile radius. Oh,  
and high school bands.

INT. RENTAL CAR - DAY

Marge holds a takeout tray of coffee cups.

EVE  
High school bands?

MARGE  
Yeah.

EVE  
It's a play, not a concert.

MARGE  
You never know. Cindy and Cissy  
might be tired of baton twirling.

EVE  
Let's just hope Dad gets a crowd.

MARGE  
He'll need riot control.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL AUDITORIUM - DAY

Seated at a table facing the stage are Frank, WENDELL GIBBS (60s), a spindly suit and tie-wearing grocery store owner, and PEG SIMMS (60s), the self-professed queen thespian of local community theater fame.

Eve and Marge enter from the back of the auditorium with coffees in hand.

EVE  
Where is everyone?

PEG  
A tragedy! The theater calls, and  
no one answers!

FRANK  
We gave it our best try.

PEG  
Well, there is only one solution.  
I shall play the role.

WENDELL

You?

FRANK

Peg, Martha is in her late  
twenties.

PEG

So?

FRANK

I'll... I'll think about it, Peg.

Peg, filled with hope, grabs her coat.

PEG

I shall expect your call. Good  
day, all.

She heads up the aisle.

Wendell looks at Frank, shrugs, and exits.

MARGE

I don't get it. How does a whole  
town ignore a Christmas play?

FRANK

Maybe they've moved on.

EVE

Dad, no. This play means  
something.

FRANK

Maybe it meant something twenty  
years ago.

A beat.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Eve... will you play the part?

EVE

What?

FRANK

You're perfect. You've been in the  
play before.

EVE

Dad, I was twelve. I was a tree.

FRANK  
You were a settler!

MARGE  
Okay, I gotta hear this.

EVE  
I carried a sack of fake potatoes  
and stood in the background.

FRANK  
Eve, please.

A beat.

EVE  
Dad, I love you more than  
anything, but --

FRANK  
This is my last year of directing.

That hits Eve differently.

MARGE  
Oof. Well played, Frank.

EVE  
Dad...

FRANK  
It would mean the world to me, and  
Marge said you that many lines in  
just one episode --

EVE  
It's not the same! There's  
commercials, and we can do retakes  
and --

FRANK  
It would mean the world to me.

A long silence. Eve exhales.

MARGE  
Wow!

EVE  
You got me.

He pulls her into a hug.

EVE (CONT'D)  
But listen. This is important.

FRANK  
What?

EVE  
Clark Maverick thinks I'm back at work on Monday. If he finds out I'm in this play, I'm toast.

FRANK  
What's the worst he can do?

EVE  
You know the lighthouse in Lighthouse Cove? I'll be trapped in it for eternity.

MARGE  
Or alien abduction. That's still on the writers' table.

FRANK  
Don't worry. Mum's the word.

She smiles as Marge downs what's left of her coffee.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL AUDITORIUM - DAY

Frank, Eve, and Marge exit, bundled up against the cold as they head for their cars.

EVE  
See you back at the house.

FRANK  
See you there.... Oh, and Eve?

She turns to him.

FRANK (CONT'D)  
You've made me very happy.

She smiles as he climbs into his car.

MARGE  
You won't be able to keep this quiet. Let's hope they don't get the Winter Lake Transcript in Manhattan.

They get into their car.

INT. DAVIS HOME KITCHEN - NIGHT

The house is dark and still. Eve stands at the counter, watching the kettle as it starts to boil. Kay enters in her robe, tying the sash.

KAY  
You're up late.

EVE  
Couldn't sleep.

Kay pulls out the cocoa mix.

KAY  
Tea won't help. Cocoa will.  
Christmas in a cup.

EVE  
I don't know if I made a mistake  
saying yes to the play.

Kay pours the hot water into the cup and stirs the cocoa.

KAY  
Why did you?

EVE  
Dad. I couldn't let him down.

KAY  
Is that the only reason?

EVE  
What do you mean?

KAY  
Jason's been at that play every  
year since you left. Never missed  
one.

EVE  
Mom --

KAY  
I'm just saying. He spent years  
looking up at that stage, watching  
you. Maybe it's time you looked  
back.

Kay smiles, brushing a hand over Eve's hair like she's still her little girl. Eve watches her go, then exhales, sipping her cocoa -- lost in thought.

EXT. DAVIS HOME - DAY

Snow falls on the masterfully decorated home. It certainly is Christmas here.

EVE (V.O.)  
John. This is dangerous. To take all these people... line?

MARGE (V.O.)  
Across...

INT. EVE'S BEDROOM - DAY

The décor has not changed since her teenage years. Marge sits on the bed, script in hand, as Eve paces.

EVE  
Line.

MARGE  
The.

EVE  
To take all these... line?

MARGE  
People.

EVE  
Across... the... line?

MARGE  
Mountains.

EVE  
To take all these people across the mountains.

She flops down into a chair.

EVE (CONT'D)  
Marge, I can't do this!

MARGE  
Yes, you can.

EVE  
What page are we up to?

MARGE  
One.

EVE

Oh, this is doomed from the start.

MARGE

See? Television soaps can ruin an actor. You rely on them teleprompters, and after a season, your memory cells take a long vacation.

EVE

I played Lady Macbeth in college and never missed a line! Shakespeare! Now I just need to say "Settlers are running around the mountains" and I have a mental block!

Marge pays no attention to her.

MARGE

You'll get it. Top of the page.  
Again.

EVE

John. This is dangerous. To take all these people across the mountains... mountains.... Don't tell me...

INT. HIGH SCHOOL AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

Eve is on stage, script in hand, playing opposite SILVESTER WHITNEY (20) in the role of John Mathews. He is in 18th-century costume and carries a prop musket.

It's obvious he is star-struck with Eve.

Frank watches from the floor at the front of the stage.

SILVESTER

Martha, this is not something we have to choose. It is fate.

EVE

There is no such thing.

Silence.

Then she remembers.

EVE (CONT'D)  
as fate.

Marge watches from the third row. Jason, notepad in hand, takes the seat behind her.

SILVESTER (O.S.)  
If we do not leave now, we will  
surely be attacked by the French.  
At this moment, they march for  
Crown Point.

Marge notices Jason and fakes a smile.

EVE  
John, this is dangerous, and in  
the winter, too.

FRANK  
Okay! Excellent! Let's take a  
break.

SILVESTER  
Miss Davis, could I have your  
autograph?

EVE  
Sure.

From a pocket inside his coat, he produces a glossy photo of Eve.

EVE (CONT'D)  
Wow -- you're prepared. What would  
you like me to say?

SILVESTER  
To my number one fan...

She writes.

EVE  
Aww, Sylvester.

SILVESTER  
Helen Whitney.

Eve looks up at him.

SILVESTER (CONT'D)  
It's for my grandmother. She never  
misses Lighthouse Cove!

In the third row, Marge hears pencil scratches from behind as Jason writes.

MARGE  
What are ya writing about?

JASON  
The paper wants a blurb.

MARGE  
You ain't seen anything yet. How  
can ya blurb about it?

Eve joins them.

EVE  
Jason? What a surprise.

JASON  
I must admit, I was surprised to  
see you up there!

EVE  
Just helping Dad.

JASON  
That's a lot of lines to learn in  
just a few days.

EVE  
You're not kidding -- it's murder.

JASON  
Hey, I'd be happy to help.

Eve shows the hint of an "oh?" smile.

JASON (CONT'D)  
I could run lines with you. Like  
old times in high school.

Their eyes gaze at each other.

JASON (CONT'D)  
Remember high school?

EVE  
That would be a great help. It's  
difficult on my own.

Marge gives her a "thanks a lot" look.

JASON  
How about dinner tonight? We can  
run lines after.

Eve nods "Yes."

MARGE  
Bring me home a doggy bag.

EXT. WINTER LAKE TRANSCRIPT - DAY

Christmas shoppers pass by on a busy sidewalk. Jason arrives and enters the building.

INT. WINTER LAKE TRANSCRIPT - DAY

Jason goes to his desk as he is greeted by his boss, RAY NORRIS (50s), gruff, rolled up sleeves, newspaper ink in his blood.

JASON  
Hi, Ray.

RAY  
What'cha workin' on?

JASON  
Covering the play.

RAY  
That dried-up old thing?

JASON  
Not this year. Eve Davis is  
starring in it.

This stops Ray in his tracks.

RAY  
The soap opera Eve Davis? In  
town!?

JASON  
She grew up here.

RAY  
Yeah, I know, but --

JASON  
She's back for Christmas and  
helping her dad out.

RAY  
Yeah?

JASON  
I'm gonna help her with her lines.

Jason takes a camera from the desk.

RAY  
She needs help? Big star like her?

JASON  
Well, she's kinda been thrown into  
this. I gotta run -- I'm off to  
get those shots of the Library  
Christmas tree! See ya!

Jason exits.

Ray picks up the phone, punches a few numbers.

RAY  
Associated Press? This is Ray  
Norris, Winter Lake Transcript.

EXT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

A sign over the door reads: ANTONIO'S

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Cozy and intimate, romantically lit, Eve and Jason are at  
a small table, having just finished dinner.

EVE  
Have you been in town since high  
school?

JASON  
No, I worked for a paper in  
Burlington for two years.

EVE  
What brought you back?

JASON  
Cities aren't for me.

Eve smiles, intrigued.

EVE  
Really? I don't remember you being  
the small-town type.

JASON

That's because I spent most of high school trying to impress a certain aspiring actress who had her sights set on the big city.

Eve raises an eyebrow.

EVE

Oh? And how'd that work out for you?

JASON

Well, considering she left town and became a soap opera star, I'd say the jury's still out.

They share a quiet laugh. A soft instrumental Christmas carol plays in the background.

JASON (CONT'D)

What about you? Ever think about coming back?

Eve hesitates, then covers with a joke.

EVE

I think I'd miss the traffic too much.

Jason smirks but doesn't push.

JASON

I know what happened to you!

They both laugh.

EVE

I know what's going to happen to me if I don't get the lines learned.

JASON

Right! The lines.

He reaches into his coat pocket and pulls out a small notebook, flipping through it.

JASON (CONT'D)

Good news -- I brought notes.

EVE  
(mock dramatic)  
Oh, no. A journalist's notes.  
Should I be worried?

JASON  
(grins)  
Depends. Do you want me to be  
honest?

Eve meets his gaze, holding it just a second longer than  
she meant to.

EVE  
Always.

A beat.

There's a flicker of something unspoken between them  
before Jason smirks.

JASON  
Then I'd say we better start  
running lines before you get  
recast.

Eve laughs as they clink coffee cups.

INT. DAVIS KITCHEN - NIGHT

Kay stands at the counter, calmly piping icing onto a  
tray of gingerbread cookies, each one pristine.

Marge, wearing an oversized apron that says "Mrs. Claus'  
Kitchen", stands beside her, frowning at a gingerbread  
man that looks like it barely survived an earthquake.

KAY  
Steady hand, light pressure --  
just like this.

She demonstrates, gliding the icing in perfect loops.

Marge grips the icing bag like she's about to ring out a  
towell and squeezes hard --

SPLAT. A horrific blob of icing lands square on the  
gingerbread man's face.

A beat.

MARGE  
There! Perfect! Gingerbread man in  
a snowstorm!

Kay stifles a laugh, gently taking the icing bag back.

KAY  
Let's try something simpler --  
buttons! Just three little dots,  
easy as pie.

Marge scoffs.

MARGE  
Kay, I eat pie. I don't decorate  
it.

She tries again. One dot is huge; the second is missing,  
and the third is... halfway off the cookie.

Marge sighs.

MARGE (CONT'D)  
Alright, my talents clearly lie  
elsewhere.

She picks up a finished cookie, takes a big bite, grins.

MARGE (CONT'D)  
Like quality control. I take that  
job very seriously.

Kay shakes her head, laughing, as Marge happily polishes  
off the cookie.

MARGE (CONT'D)  
(enjoying the cookie)  
Yep! This one passes inspection!

EXT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

A light snow falls as Eve and Jason step onto the  
sidewalk. They look at each other with dream-like eyes.

Jason speaks quietly.

JASON  
You want to work at your place or  
mine?

Her hands slide up to his shoulders, fingers grazing the  
collar of his coat. Jason's arms wrap around her, pulling  
her in.

Their breath mingles in the cold night air, lips just inches apart.

WHAM!

The restaurant door swings open. A laughing couple stumbles out, accidentally bumping into them.

MAN DINER  
Oh! Sorry about that --

He freezes, eyes widening as he recognizes Eve.

WOMAN DINER  
(tugging his arm,  
whispering)  
I told you it was her!

The moment is shattered. Jason exhales, stepping back slightly as Eve pastes on a polite smile.

WOMAN DINER (CONT'D)  
Miss Davis, could I --?

She fumbles in her purse, producing a crumpled napkin and a pen.

WOMAN DINER (CONT'D)  
It's all I could find.

Eve forces a smile and signs as Jason shoves his hands into his pockets, glancing away.

The woman squeals with delight, clutching the napkin like a priceless artifact.

WOMAN DINER (CONT'D)  
Oh, thank you so much! Merry  
Christmas!

Eve hands her the autograph.

They scurry away.

The moment is broken.

EVE  
(small sigh)  
My place, I guess.

Jason nods, resigned. They head for the car, the magic of the moment left behind in the snow.

EXT. BROADCAST STUDIO - DAY

A cold, dark day in Manhattan.

INT. CLARK MAVERICK'S OFFICE - DAY

A gloomy Manhattan morning. Clark Maverick sits at his desk, newspaper in hand. Headline:

"SOAP STAR EVE DAVIS STRUGGLES IN SMALL-TOWN PLAY."

The timid Production Assistant steps in.

PRODUCTION ASSISTANT

You wanted to see me, sir?

Clark slowly lowers the paper, his smile razor-sharp.

CLARK

She went home?

PRODUCTION ASSISTANT

I -- I only delivered the tickets, sir.

CLARK

(cool, controlled)

And I canceled them.

A beat.

He tosses the newspaper onto the desk.

CLARK (CONT'D)

Yet here she is, starring in a barnyard production making me look like a fool.

The assistant swallows hard.

CLARK (CONT'D)

Tell me something. Do you work for me?

PRODUCTION ASSISTANT

Ye... yes?

CLARK

Not anymore.

The assistant blanches, his breath hitching.

CLARK (CONT'D)  
(calm, final)  
Get out.

The assistant turns to flee.

CLARK (CONT'D)  
(casual)  
Tell my secretary to bring me a  
coffee.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL AUDITORIUM STAGE - DAY

The set is on the stage. Jason and Marge tape pages of the script behind props and set pieces - mugs, trees, chairs, all out of view of the audience.

ALVIN LANE (60s), weathered and rustic, just like the hardware store he runs, approaches.

JASON  
Hey, Alvin.

ALVIN  
What are you doing?

JASON  
Eve has some stumbling blocks with  
the script, so we're placing some  
pages out of view from the house.

Alvin looks around.

MARGE  
Yeah, lots of stumbling blocks.

A smile comes on his face.

ALVIN  
I'm Alvin Lane. Stage manager.

Marge shows a smitten smile and holds out her hand.

MARGE  
I'm Marge Kirkbride. Available.

He bursts out with laughter as they shake hands.

INT. BACKSTAGE - DAY

Eve is mouthing words as she steals glances at the script. Silvester, in costume, arrives next to her.

SILVESTER

How are the lines coming along?

EVE

Better!

SILVESTER

Awesome!

Silvester goes on his way.

Eve continues to read the script while mouthing lines.

Jason joins her.

JASON

All right! Your troubles are over!

EVE

What do you mean?

JASON

I asked Marge how it was you could learn a new script every day on your show.

EVE

Oh, you did?

JASON

She said the actors used a teleprompter.

EVE

Uh-huh...

JASON

Well, I created one for you!

EVE

What do you mean?

Her phone RINGS.

A look at the screen. Her face sinks.

EVE (CONT'D)

Excuse me a moment.

Answers the call.

EVE (CONT'D)  
Clark. How are you?

INT. CLARK MAVERICK'S OFFICE - DAY

Clark is reclined in his chair.

CLARK  
Oh, just ducky.

INT. BACKSTAGE - DAY

Taking a deep breath for the impact.

EVE  
I'm happy to hear that.

INTERCUT PHONE CALL - EVE/CLARK

Clark leans forward and looks at a script on his desk.

CLARK  
I just wanted you to know that you  
need to be here tomorrow morning.

EVE  
I'm on vacation.

CLARK  
Vacation is over.

EVE  
Listen, Clark. I am a star, and  
you can't push me around!

CLARK  
I am a producer and will sue you  
for breach of contract. And I will  
sue for damages of shutting down  
for a week. Do you have any idea  
how much that will be?

EVE  
You wouldn't kill the ratings like  
that. It's against your nature.

CLARK  
My good humor and sunshine only go  
so far.

EVE  
Clark, listen to me --

CLARK  
How can we have any kind of  
relationship if you're always so  
disagreeable?

EVE  
Clark. We have no relationship.  
When will you understand that?

CLARK  
How can you leave a network soap  
to appear in some community  
theater play in Winter Lake?

Eve freezes.

EVE  
How did you know?

CLARK  
I read it in the newspaper.

Her eyes divert to Jason.

EVE  
Newspaper? In New York?

CLARK  
Yeah. An AP story. You're in big  
trouble, Eve.

EVE  
I'm not the only one!

She hangs up.

CLARK  
Hello!? Hello!?

EXT. BACKSTAGE - DAY

Eve glares at Jason as she tries to control her anger.

JASON  
What? What's the matter?

She SLAPS him!

JASON (CONT'D)  
Hey! What's that for!?

EVE

Here I thought you liked me and  
wanted to help me!

JASON

I do, and I do!

EVE

Oh, don't give me that. It's too  
late!

JASON

Huh!? Eve, talk to me!

EVE

I've done just about as much  
talking with you as I can stand. I  
never want to see you again!

He's dumbfounded.

EVE (CONT'D)

Never mind! I'll leave!

She storms towards the door and exits.

Marge joins Jason.

MARGE

What happened!? Where did she go?

JASON

I don't know -- she got a call,  
got angry about a New York  
newspaper, slapped my face, and  
bolted.

Marge makes her way to the door.

MARGE

I better see what's wrong.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL AUDITORIUM - DAY

Marge exits a side door and looks in all directions, with  
no sign of Eve.

Marge turns and hails an imaginary --

MARGE

Taxi!

INT. WINTER LAKE TRANSCRIPT - DAY

A weary Jason enters, takes his coat off, plunks down into his chair, and stares at his blank computer screen.

Ray enters from his office, newspaper under his arm.

RAY

Where have you been?

JASON

At the play rehearsal.

RAY

Why so gloomy? It's not every day  
your name goes out on the AP wire.

JASON

What are you talking about?

RAY

You haven't seen it? It's in the  
Boston papers.

JASON

The AP!? Are you crazy!? That  
means it's everywhere!

Ray hands the newspaper to Jason, who reads it and grows angrier with every word.

JASON (CONT'D)

"Soap star Eve Davis is in the  
small Vermont town of Winter Lake,  
to take the lead in their annual  
play... The star is reportedly  
having trouble memorizing lines...  
Who wrote this!?

RAY

I did, but I gave you credit!

JASON

Ray! What have you done!?

RAY

It's news, Kid.

Jason rushes for the door.

JASON

It's her career, Ray. This isn't  
some high school basketball score!

EXT. DAVIS HOME - DAY

Eve's car pulls into the driveway. She jumps out, SLAMS the door, and turns with a shocked expression at the vacant passenger side.

EVE  
Oh, no! Marge!

She notices another car in the driveway as her mother exits the house.

KAY  
There you are!

EVE  
I forgot Marge!

KAY  
She'll get a ride from someone.  
Eve, have you seen the paper?

EVE  
No, but I heard all about it.

KAY  
I'm sorry, dear.

EVE  
I can't believe that Jason would do such a thing.

KAY  
Are you sure it was Jason?

EVE  
His name was on it!

Eve glances again at the strange car.

EVE (CONT'D)  
Who does that belong to?

KAY  
Your agent.

EVE  
Sal Dukes!? She's here!?

Eve rushes inside.

INT. DAVIS LIVING ROOM - DAY

SAL DUKES (40s), paces the room with a drink in hand. She's striking, calm, professional, the best at her job.

Eve rushes in, tossing her coat on a chair. Kay disappears into another room.

EVE

Sal! What a surprise. Have you been here long?

SAL

Don't worry -- I don't start charging until we start talking.

EVE

Take a seat.

SAL

I work better when I pace.

Eve sits.

EVE

You got a call from Clark Maverick.

SAL

Give the lady a prize.

EVE

Sal, I had a vacation scheduled, and I took it.

SAL

And Clark changed his mind.

EVE

So how is this my fault?

SAL

Because in your contract, he has the option to reject scripts and order re-writes, and you, as talent, need to fulfill production requirements scheduled, regardless of pre-arranged conditions.

EVE

Meaning?

SAL

He can legally postpone your vacation.

EVE

What can we do about it?

SAL

Get the next train, plane, or rental car back to New York.

EVE

I can't do that. My dad's play.

SAL

That's another thing--

EVE

I'm not getting paid, so don't ask about your ten percent.

SAL

I was going to point out that your Lighthouse Cove contract prohibits you from performing in any other medium whatsoever without the written consent--

SAL (CONT'D)

of the Executive Producer. EVE  
of the Executive Producer, yes, I figured that out.

SAL (CONT'D)

Do I phone Clark and tell him to expect you tomorrow morning?

EVE

I need to think about this. Lighthouse Cove isn't the only show in town, Sal.

SAL

If Maverick gets the word out, no one will hire you on either coast.

EVE

I need to think about it.

SAL

Let me know. I'm staying at the Lake Motel.

Sal opens the door, and she's gone.

EXT. DAVIS HOME - NIGHT

The Christmas lights glow as a pickup truck rumbles into the driveway.

INT. DAVIS LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Marge enters. An apologetic Eve rushes up to her and helps her off with her coat.

EVE

Marge! I'm so sorry I left without you --

MARGE

-- you walked in to find Sal Dukes. She must have rented a car. I doubt her usual broomstick works in cold weather.

EVE

You knew?

MARGE

She called, begging you to fly back.

EVE

What did you say?

MARGE

"Merry Christmas," and hung up.

EVE

How did you get home?

MARGE

Alvin dropped me off.

EVE

The stage manager?

MARGE

Yeah. He couldn't manage a hot dog stand, but I humor him.

Eve slumps onto the sofa.

EVE

I've never been so mad.

MARGE  
Mm-hmm. And not about Clark  
Maverick.

EVE  
Marge, I trusted Jason.

MARGE  
I know. You slapped him, too.

Eve groans, covering her face.

EVE  
Did I?

MARGE  
Oh yeah. Shockwave hit center  
stage.

EVE  
I didn't let him give me one.

KAY (O.S.)  
Maybe you should.

Eve looks up to see Kay, arms folded.

KAY (CONT'D)  
Call him, Eve.

EVE  
Absolutely not.

She storms out. A door SLAMS.

Kay exits to another room.

Marge pulls out her phone and dials.

INT. CLARK MAVERICK'S OFFICE - DAY

Clark, in his dimly lit office, answers.

CLARK  
Speak.

INTERCUT PHONE CALL - MARGE/CLARK.

MARGE  
(cheery)  
Clark! Hey there!

CLARK  
Who is this!?

MARGE  
Marge Kirkbride. I hate it when  
you pretend to forget.

CLARK  
What do you want, Marge?

MARGE  
(casual)  
Well, me and Eve went skiing.  
Beautiful mountain. Unfortunately,  
I lost control, grabbed Eve, and --  
whoops -- down we went.

CLARK  
What!?

MARGE  
Broke her ankle.

CLARK  
I want to talk to her.

MARGE  
She's sedated.

CLARK  
For an ankle!?

MARGE  
Vermont, Clark. Takes a while to  
find a good doctor.

CLARK  
Marge --

MARGE  
Oops, gotta go! I'll keep you  
updated!

She HANGS UP, then shuts off her phone.

MARGE (CONT'D)  
Problem solved.

EXT. A RESIDENTIAL STREET IN TOWN - DAY

Eve walks aimlessly, snow crunching underfoot.

A local LADY checks her mailbox, glances up.

LADY  
(squints)  
I know you! Mavis from Lighthouse  
Cove!

Eve plasters on a polite smile.

EVE  
That's right.

LADY  
(gasping)  
Oh, thank goodness! I just  
watched, and it looked like you  
were abducted by aliens!

Eve quickens her pace.

Her phone RINGS. She checks the screen.

JASON (V.O.)  
Eve! Please, just --

She hangs up and continues her walk.

EXT. TOWN COMMON GAZEBO - DAY

Snow drapes the gazebo, twinkling with Christmas lights.

Eve climbs the steps, settles onto the bench.

YOUNG EVE (V.O.)  
Let's have a snowball fight!

YOUNG JASON (V.O.)  
You'll lose!

FLASHBACK - 14 YEARS AGO

A younger EVE (14) and JASON (14) pelt each other with  
snowballs near the gazebo.

Jason lands a perfect hit.

YOUNG EVE  
No fair! You play baseball!

YOUNG JASON  
And you dance! Should've dodged!

They LAUGH, collapsing onto the gazebo bench.

Young Jason hesitates.

YOUNG JASON (CONT'D)  
Are you really going to New York  
when you get out of high school?

YOUNG EVE  
Yep! Broadway, here I come.

Jason stares at her.

YOUNG JASON  
Maybe I'll go too.

YOUNG EVE  
And do what?

YOUNG JASON  
I can... I can do lots of things.

YOUNG EVE  
Like what?

YOUNG JASON  
I can get one of my stories  
published in a big magazine.

They fall back onto the gazebo floor and gaze at the roof  
and colored lights.

YOUNG JASON (CONT'D)  
I just... well, I'm gonna miss  
you. That's all.

YOUNG EVE  
You will?

He sits up with a start!

YOUNG JASON  
Aw, heck! Don't you know I'm in  
love with you!?

Young Eve sits up faster!

YOUNG EVE  
No, you're not!

YOUNG JASON  
I am, and I'll prove it!

He kisses her on the cheek. His eyes open wide, surprised at what he has done!

He jumps off the stairs and runs from the Common.

Young Eve removes a glove, touches her cheek, and smiles.

END FLASHBACK

BACK TO SCENE

Eve remains on the bench, her eyes locked on the steps where her former self and Jason once sat.

Her phone RINGS. She answers without checking the screen.

EVE  
Jason, how many times do I have to tell you --

CLARK (V.O.)  
-- Who's Jason?

EVE  
Clark! Sorry... I thought --

INT. CLARK MAVERICK'S OFFICE - DAY

Clark is at his window, looking out over the city.

CLARK  
How's the ankle?

EVE (V.O.)  
What?

CLARK  
Your ankle. How is it?

INTERCUT PHONE CONVERSATION - EVE/CLARK

Eve has known Marge too long and knows something is up.

EVE  
My ankle... Yeah... ow...

CLARK  
You shouldn't have gone ice skating.

Eve opens her mouth to respond but senses a trap.

EVE  
Ice skating?

CLARK  
Is that how you broke it?

EVE  
Did you call to play fifty  
questions?

CLARK  
That, and to say I expect you here  
for tomorrow's taping.

EVE  
Clark, there's only one thing I  
want to say.

CLARK  
And what is that?

A pause.

EVE  
Merry Christmas.

She hangs up.

CLARK  
Hello? Hello!? Eve?

EXT. TOWN COMMON GAZEBO - DAY

Eve has hung up the call and takes slow steps away from  
the gazebo.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

Snow falls as several actors enter the building, SINGING  
a traditional carol.

INT. THE AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

Eve sits in the middle aisle of the room by herself, her  
eyes are closed.

She hears the distant SINGING of the actors.

LAURIE  
Miss Davis?

Eve opens her eyes to see a nervous LAURIE (16), with innocent eyes and a pretty face, in the aisle.

EVE  
Hi. Laurie, right?

Laurie nods. Eve smiles back.

EVE (CONT'D)  
Call me Eve.

LAURIE  
I just wanted to say how exciting it is to be in this show with you.

Eve is genuinely surprised.

EVE  
That's nice of you to say.

LAURIE  
But it's true. Every day, all I have on my mind is going to New York to be on the stage.

Laurie speaks in a quiet tone.

LAURIE (CONT'D)  
You... you give me hope and inspiration! Hope that one day I can leave Winter Lake. Hope that I can succeed. Anything is possible.

A warm smile from Eve.

LAURIE (CONT'D)  
Isn't that true? Really?

EVE  
Laurie, I'm proof that anything is possible. You just have to want it bad enough... and work for it.

LAURIE  
I do! I want it just as much as you did!

EVE  
Just remember... it's never quite what you expected. It's not the same as in your dreams.

There is a sadness from Eve.

ALVIN (O.S.)  
All right, everyone! Places in ten  
minutes!

LAURIE  
I better get ready. See you soon!

Laurie hurries off. Eve lifts her script and reads.

MARGE (O.S.)  
Need help?

Marge sits in the row behind her.

EVE  
Hi, Marge.

Eve hands her the script.

EVE (CONT'D)  
So, I'm curious... how did I break  
my ankle?

MARGE  
You mean to tell me he called  
you!?

EVE  
You knew he would. You should have  
told me so I knew what to say.

MARGE  
Probably. Anyway, I told him we  
went skiing and you fell. What did  
he say?

EVE  
I hung up on him. I have a feeling  
I'm going to be out of a job.

MARGE  
I would say that's a pretty  
accurate feeling.

Eve considers for a moment --

EVE  
Skiing?

MARGE

Yeah. I wanted him to think we  
were the daredevil, carefree,  
adventurous types.

EVE

I never went skiing in my life.

MARGE

That's why you broke your ankle.

Marge reads from the script.

MARGE (CONT'D)

"It's Christmas Eve, Martha. I say  
we make it a Merry Christmas for  
the children."

A pause.

EVE

Oh.... ah.... because it's....

MARGE

Despite.

EVE

Despite the blizzard!?

MARGE

Good! Now, just need to learn one  
hundred fifty-three more lines and  
we got a show!

EVE

What kind of actress can't  
memorize lines!?

MARGE

The kind who does soaps and has  
the support of teleprompters.  
You've got Jason on your mind.

Eve gives her a look of warning.

MARGE (CONT'D)

Kid, I can read you like a book.  
You're fallin' in love with that  
big dope. It's all over your face.

EVE

He doesn't love me. If he did, he  
wouldn't have used me for the sake  
of a story.

INT. THE AUDITORIUM - LATER

Eve is surrounded by several men, women, and children, on the stage. She fumbles through her lines.

EVE  
We survived the wrath of the  
Producer... I mean the blizzard!  
We had an agent looking out -- I  
mean an angel looking out for us.

The cast CHEERS.

EVE (CONT'D)  
Let this be the first of many  
Christmases... in Winter Lake!

The cast CHEERS again.

Frank rises from the first row.

FRANK  
Very good. That's all for tonight.  
See you all tomorrow night.

The cast dissipates as Frank takes the stairs and joins her on the stage.

FRANK (CONT'D)  
Producer? Agent?

EVE  
I'm sorry, Dad.

FRANK  
You have some heavy things on your  
mind that you need to address.

EVE  
I know. Dad --

FRANK  
You need to clear the air with  
your Agent and Producer.

EVE  
There's no compromise with them.  
None at all.

FRANK  
There's always room for  
compromise. You'll see.

He exits, leaving her alone on the stage.

SAL (O.S.)  
Very good, Eve.

Eve looks out into the auditorium to see Sal headed down the aisle toward her.

EVE  
How long have you been here?

SAL  
Long enough to see that if you go through with this play, it could be the end of your career.

EVE  
That's a little dramatic, Sal.  
Even for you.

SAL  
Not if the AP sends a reviewer.

EVE  
What?

SAL  
They are. Maverick has seen to it.

EVE  
That despicable man.

SAL  
And he does have a contract. Have you given it any more thought?

EVE  
I've been giving a lot of things some thought, Sal... but not about Lighthouse Cove.

SAL  
Eve, it's admirable for you to want to help your dad. But he'd understand.

EVE  
Sure he would. That doesn't mean I'd be doing the right thing.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Marge and Eve approach their car.

JASON  
Eve, please. Just a minute. That's all. A minute!

Eve turns to see Jason, a short distance away.

EVE  
One minute.

Marge climbs into the car as --

Jason steps closer.

JASON  
Eve, I need to know if there is anything I can do to make things right again.

EVE  
Haven't you done enough?

JASON  
You think I would do this?

EVE  
Your name was on it. That's all I need to know.

She gets in the car.

INT. RENTAL CAR - NIGHT

Eve shows no emotion as she starts the car while Jason stands still and watches.

MARGE  
So why the cold shoulder bit? That was the part where you were supposed to throw yourself into his arms.

Eve puts the car in gear.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Jason watches as they drive away.

EXT. DAVIS HOME - DAY

Snow covers the yard, flurries fall.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)  
And now we return to where drama  
swirls like the restless sea  
around Mavis Jones and the people  
of... Lighthouse Cove.

INT. DAVIS LIVING ROOM - DAY

Eve has her script on her lap, but is watching  
"Lighthouse Cove." Marge is on the sofa, working her way  
through a bowl of popcorn.

EVE  
Well, my character is still in the  
title.

GAVIN (V.O.)  
Doctor... please... tell me...  
what happened?

DOCTOR (V.O.)  
As best we can tell, she was  
buried in the avalanche while  
skiing.

Eve and Marge sit up and take notice.

GAVIN (V.O.)  
But... her injuries...

DOC (V.O.)  
Snow can be a powerful weapon,  
Mister Jones. It can... destroy a  
person's face. You may enter the  
room now...

EVE  
Wait a second...

They watch as GAVIN (70s), the LIGHTHOUSE KEEPER and the  
DOCTOR (50s), enter a bedroom.

In bed is a figure covered in bandages. Only the nostrils  
and little slits for eyes remain uncovered.

MARGE  
Who's that? King Tut?

GAVIN  
What do you mean, Doctor... snow  
can damage her face?

DOCTOR

It's called... snow burn. I did the best facial reconstruction I could... but when these bandages are removed...

GAVIN

She'll look like my daughter always looked?

DOCTOR

Or she'll look like someone... completely different.

CLICK! The television snaps off.

EVE

Do you see what he's doing!?

MARGE

Yeah! He used my idea about skiing! I should get paid for that.

EVE

He's ready to replace me!

MARGE

Looks like.

A beat.

MARGE (CONT'D)

Hey, at least they got rid of that stupid U.F.O. abduction plot.

Marge takes another mouthful of popcorn.

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

Shoppers carry wrapped gifts and shopping bags as they bustle along the sidewalk, in and out of stores.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Eve and Sal are at a table drinking coffee.

SAL

Your character's face is covered because Maverick is giving you a chance to return to the show.

EVE  
I know.

SAL  
If you want me to deal with him, I  
can.

INT. WINTER LAKE TRANSCRIPT - DAY

Jason is in a heated discussion with Ray.

JASON  
Ray, you had no right to send out  
that story!

RAY  
I own the newspaper!

JASON  
First, it was my story, second;  
you misrepresented it; and third,  
Eve won't even speak to me!

RAY  
So, I shouldn't have printed the  
story because of your romantic  
aspirations!?

JASON  
You shouldn't have printed it  
because it wasn't entirely true!

RAY  
This is a newspaper! What's truth  
got to do with it!?

Jason throws his arms in the air.

RAY (CONT'D)  
What do you want me to do!?

JASON  
Print a retraction!

RAY  
Are you out of your mind!?

JASON  
Ray, I love her!

Ray turns stoic as he stares at Jason.

Jason sees that this has had an impact.

JASON (CONT'D)  
I love her, Ray.

Ray sits behind his desk.

RAY  
Well, now, this changes things...  
I mean, you're never going to  
trust me again as an editor.

JASON  
I will if you apologize to Eve.

RAY  
I don't have to apologize to her.  
Or you, for that matter. I'll tell  
you how we fix this.

JASON  
How?

RAY  
You're fired.

JASON  
What!?! On what grounds?

Ray leans back in his chair.

RAY  
I don't need any grounds.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Eve and Sal stare at a phone on the table.

It's RINGING.

SAL  
Are you going to answer that, or  
am I?

The screen on the phone reads: FULL OF HIMSELF.

Eve takes the call.

EVE  
Hello, Clark.

INT. CLARK MAVERICK'S OFFICE - DAY

Behind his desk, Clark taps a finger on a small, ring-sized, gift-wrapped box.

CLARK  
I'm glad you picked up.

INTERCUT PHONE CONVERSATION EVE/CLARK

EVE  
I'm glad you're glad.

CLARK  
Eve, I want to end this little  
feud between us.

EVE  
There's no feud, so let's not  
quibble.

CLARK  
Is Sal with you? You don't need to  
answer. I'm sure she is. Did you  
happen to catch the show today?

EVE  
You mean, "Return of the Mummy?"

CLARK  
People don't want alien abductions  
during Christmas week, but a nice,  
exciting avalanche with lots of  
snow just sings out with the  
spirit of the season.

EVE  
You know best, Clark.

CLARK  
Speaking of which, I have  
something for you.

EVE  
What?

CLARK  
I was hoping you would return to  
New York... but seeing as you  
didn't...

EVE  
Let me guess. A pink slip?

CLARK

Oh, no, no. Nothing that breaks a contract. Quite the contrary. Something that creates a new kind of contract.

Eve looks worried.

SAL

What's he saying?

Eve covers the phone.

EVE

Do you know anything about a new contract?

SAL

No.

Eve puts the phone to her ear.

EVE

I'm a bit confused, Clark. I'm actually very busy right now --

CLARK

Too busy for my proposal!?

EVE

I have a rehearsal to get to, and lines to learn and -- Proposal!?

SAL

Proposal!?

EVE

What are you talking about?

CLARK

I told you I was in love with you.

He taps the wrapped box.

CLARK (CONT'D)

I bought a ring to prove it.

EVE

Clark, listen to me.

CLARK

I can think of twenty-thousand different ways to say I love you, and that's one dollar per "way," twenty thousand times. The cost of the ring.

EVE

You spent twenty grand on a ring!?

GASPS from the onlooking diners.

SAL

You should marry him!

Eve shoots Sal a look.

SAL (CONT'D)

Think of the settlement!

EVE

Clark. Clark -- I am not in love with you.

CLARK

I'll fly out. We can get married in Winter Brook.

EVE

Winter Lake. Clark, listen to me. I have no feelings for you other than contempt.

CLARK

Now, be serious. I'm proposing!

EVE

Take the ring and give it to whoever is underneath all the bandages.

She hangs up.

Sal takes a breath and rises from the chair.

SAL

You had an offer for a movie in Bulgaria. I'll see what I can do. Merry Christmas, Eve.

EVE

Merry Christmas.

Sal exits.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL AUDITORIUM STAGE - DAY

TWO YOUNG BOYS (10), dressed in costume for the play, are on the stage, switching the locations of the script pages taped to the furniture and props.

INT. BACKSTAGE - HALLWAY - DAY

Marge is behind a partition where she changes a bulb in a large portable makeup mirror that sits atop a small table filled with makeup.

A rack of Eve's costumes is next to it.

JASON (O.S.)

Hey, Marge.

Marge turns to see Jason next to the partition screen.

MARGE

She's not here yet.

JASON

Well, I came to see you, actually.

MARGE

Me? Why?

JASON

Because you're still talking to me. I'm on my way out of town and I wanted to say goodbye... and maybe you'll say bye to Eve for me.

MARGE

Where are ya goin'!?

JASON

Well, for starters, I think I'm going to head down to Burlington, then probably Boston.

MARGE

Why!?

JASON

I've got a friend on a newspaper there. Maybe I can get a job.

MARGE

You have a job... don't you?

JASON  
No. I got fired.

MARGE  
Why?

Jason grows uneasy.

JASON  
It doesn't matter anymore.

MARGE  
You didn't write that article, did  
you?

JASON  
My boss did. I made the mistake of  
telling him I was helping Eve with  
her lines.

MARGE  
And you wanted him to print a  
retraction.

JASON  
Yeah.

MARGE  
And he wouldn't -- then he fired  
ya.

JASON  
How do you know all this?

MARGE  
Because anything you do, I've  
already done. Not the exact same  
circumstance as you, but close  
enough.

Marge eases into Eve's chair.

MARGE (CONT'D)  
Now, what can we do about it?

She looks up to find that Jason has gone.

Marge mutters to herself.

MARGE (CONT'D)  
There's more drama in this little  
town than there is on Lighthouse  
Cove.

Frank arrives.

FRANK  
Hi Marge. Has Eve arrived?

MARGE  
Not yet.

FRANK  
This is the dress rehearsal. She should be here!

MARGE  
She will be! She's a professional.

Eve enters and notices the set-up.

EVE  
This is nice. Thanks, Marge.

MARGE  
Don't mention it.

FRANK  
I thought you forgot!

MARGE  
Sorry, I'll be ready in a minute.

He smiles and kisses her forehead.

FRANK  
Thank you again.

He exits as Marge surrenders the chair to Eve, who starts to apply her makeup.

EVE  
Why the long face?

MARGE  
What do you mean? This is my natural face.

EVE  
It's longer than usual.

MARGE  
All right. You forced it outta me.

Eve turns to her.

EVE  
Forced what?

MARGE  
You're makin' a huge mistake about  
Jason.

EVE  
Jason again?

MARGE  
His editor wrote and printed that  
story. Jason didn't know anything  
about it, and when he demanded a  
retraction, he got fired!

EVE  
Fired? Jason was fired?

MARGE  
That's what I said, sweetheart.  
Now he's headed to Boston, where  
he'll probably join the Foreign  
Legion or something.

ALVIN (O.S.)  
Five minutes, Everyone! Five  
minutes!

INT. HIGH SCHOOL AUDITORIUM STAGE - LATER.

Eve is in her colonial costume, in an amateur-at-best set  
of a colonial home.

Silvester is seated at the kitchen table.

SILVESTER  
I have sold our cow.

EVE  
The cow!? But why?

SILVESTER  
We will need a team of horses to  
carry us from this place of  
oppression.

Eve stares at Silvester, who stares back. She picks up a  
mug on the table.

Part of the script is taped to the back of the mug. She  
reads from it.

EVE  
It was Rachel Hudson!

Silvester is puzzled.

SILVESTER  
The cow?

EVE  
Don't deny it, husband. You're in  
love with her.

SILVESTER  
I'm not in love with the cow!  
(whispers)  
Rachel Hudson is in Act Two!

Eve realizes her mistake and subtly checks the script  
taped to the back of the chair.

EVE  
Oh! Something about the cow...

She scans the chair.

EVE (CONT'D)  
Right! The snow will fall and...

Silvester winces.

EVE (CONT'D)  
No snow? Ahh...

Back to the chair.

EVE (CONT'D)  
The French are all I fear - the  
French and the weather - and where  
were we? Something about a cow,  
right?

INT. BACKSTAGE - DAY

The TWO COLONIAL BOYS are trying their best to stifle  
their laughter.

MARGE  
Ah-ha!

They turn to her with terrified eyes.

MARGE (CONT'D)  
This is your handiwork, ain't it!?  
Lets go find your mothers!

INT. HIGH SCHOOL AUDITORIUM STAGE - LATER

The rehearsal is over; the lights are off except for a work light. Eve sits alone on the stage.

JASON (O.S.)  
We still have a day to get those lines down.

Eve looks up to see Jason.

JASON (CONT'D)  
I can't leave. I thought I could, but I can't.

EVE  
Marge told me what happened.

She goes to him as he meets her center stage.

They kiss.

He pulls her close. The kiss breaks off as she looks at him with loving eyes.

Until --

EVE (CONT'D)  
I have an idea.

JASON  
For what?

EVE  
I need you to write an article for me.

JASON  
I can't get it printed. I've been canned.

EVE  
I can get it printed.

JASON  
What's the article?

EVE  
The article is about me leaving Lighthouse Cove.

JASON  
What!? You're not serious!

She gazes back in silence.

JASON (CONT'D)  
You're serious.

EXT. DAVIS HOME - DAY

Christmas music plays from a radio.

INT. DAVIS KITCHEN - DAY

The radio music adds to the festive atmosphere as Kay removes a batch of Christmas cookies from the oven.

At the kitchen table, Eve mouths words to herself then checks the script.

EVE  
Got it!

She puts the script down, mouths a line, and checks the script once more.

Kay transfers the cookies onto a plate.

KAY  
Doesn't the music disturb you?

EVE  
You know something, Mom? I'm learning these lines with no trouble at all.

KAY  
I hope so. The play is tonight.

EVE  
No, I mean, it's like a burden has been lifted.

KAY  
What burden?

Kay leaves the kitchen as Eve responds.

EVE  
I quit my job.

Kay returns, stunned.

KAY  
You what?

EVE  
I left Lighthouse Cove.

KAY  
Can you do that!? Your contract...

EVE  
I'll have to buy it out for a tidy sum, but it's worth it.

KAY  
Are you sure?

EVE  
I'm sure.

They hear the front door BURST open!

FRANK (O.S.)  
Eve! Eve!

EVE  
In the kitchen!

Frank arrives, out of breath.

KAY  
Frank, what is it? What's wrong?

FRANK  
The show tonight...

EVE  
What about it?

FRANK  
It's sold out!

EVE  
Sold out!?

FRANK  
It must have been the article in the paper! Word got out, and now your fans are coming to Winter Lake to see you on stage!

EVE  
I'm happy for you, Dad.

KAY  
Oh, dear.

FRANK

What?

KAY

Eve was just saying she was able to memorize lines because the pressure was off. Now it's on again.

EVE

Yeah, but this is a good kind of pressure, Mom.

INT. BROADCAST STUDIO - DAY

Gavin, the Lighthouse Keeper actor, is on set, next to the bed with the bandaged actress as the crew gets ready to shoot.

BEN

Gavin, we're ready in three.

GAVIN

I'll be here.

Clark Maverick enters, newspaper in hand.

His face is ashen. Something is wrong. He hands the paper to Gavin, who reads the page.

GAVIN (CONT'D)

Eve quit Lighthouse Cove!?

CLARK

Don't sound so happy about it!  
Now, we need to change the  
storyline.

He looks at the wrapped-up actress.

CLARK (CONT'D)

Who's under there?

MUMMY ACTRESS

Pearl Faye, Mister Maverick.

CLARK

We'll go back to the U.F.O.  
storyline. Someone get an alien  
under that wrapping.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL PARKING LOT - NIGHT

The lot is filled as the snow falls.

EVE (V.O.)

It's true, my husband is no longer with us. Claimed by the cold of winter and the despair of having taken the wrong path.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL AUDITORIUM STAGE - NIGHT

Eve is surrounded by the cast, all are "freezing" as snow falls onto the stage.

EVE

But it is Christmas Eve. I say we run no more! The good Lord chose this land for us. We shall build our settlement here! This lake... it has a spell over us... it always has, it always will... I'm never going to leave...

She catches herself.

EVE (CONT'D)

Merry Christmas, everyone. This first year will be difficult, but we will endure! Merry Christmas, our first here at...

BOY IN CAST

What should we call this place,  
Mrs. Williams?

EVE

Since we're at a lake... and it's winter... we shall call this new settlement Winter Lake! Merry Christmas!

CAST

Merry Christmas!

The curtain closes to exuberant applause.

The curtain opens as the CHILDREN from the cast walk to center stage and take a bow.

INT. BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

Eve and Jason are locked in an embrace as they kiss.

Nearby, Marge watches as various cast members walk onto the stage for their bows.

MARGE

You got about thirty seconds.

INT. THE AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

The audience APPLAUDS and CHEERS.

INT. BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

Three actors walk center stage for their bows.

MARGE

Okay, time's up, Eve! Your turn.

Eve and Jason end their kiss, as Jason smiles at her.

JASON

Time for your bows, Eve.

She smiles, gives him a quick kiss on the cheek, and steps onto the stage as --

The audience goes wild!

HIGH SCHOOL AUDITORIUM STAGE - NIGHT

Eve bows as the audience erupts into thunderous APPLAUSE.

She takes another bow, tears glistening in her eyes.

Frank stands near the curtains, proud, crying, clapping the hardest.

Laurie is next to him, clapping wildly.

LAURIE

She was amazing!

FRANK

(beaming)

That's my girl!

Peg Simms dabs her eyes dramatically with a handkerchief.

PEG  
A triumph. An utter triumph!

Jason watches from the wings -- his expression soft, full of admiration.

INT. BACK STAGE - HALLWAY - LATER

The air BUZZES with post-show excitement. Cast members, still in costume, congratulate each other.

Eve, still glowing, signs play programs and napkins for a small line of fans.

Marge masterfully weaves through the crowd, dragging Alvin behind her.

MARGE  
Hey, Eve! Are you going to the New Moon for an after-show snack!?

EVE  
It's Christmas Eve, Marge!

MARGE  
Eh, they close at ten! Lots of time for Night before Christmas stuff!

Eve laughs, shakes her head.

EVE  
I think I'll pass.

MARGE  
(smirks)  
Looks like it's just you and me, Alvin!

Alvin raises an eyebrow at Marge, but she simply grabs his hand and pulls him along.

Marge glances over her shoulder, giving Eve a knowing wink before disappearing through the door.

Eve chuckles, watching her go -- then feels a presence.

Jason.

EXT. TOWN COMMON - NIGHT

Christmas twinkles around them -- lights wrapped around snow-dusted trees, a crisp chill in the air.

Jason and Eve walk hand in hand, boots crunching softly on fresh snow.

EVE

I forgot how quiet it gets here at night.

JASON

Peaceful, huh?

She nods.

EVE

In New York, even the snow feels loud.

JASON

Did you hear from your producer?

EVE

No, but my director sent me a message.

JASON

And?

EVE

I've been replaced.

Jason nods, absorbing that.

They arrive at the gazebo.

Jason leans against a wooden post, watching her.

JASON

What made you change your mind?

EVE

Believe it or not... this.

JASON

The gazebo?

EVE

And the memories that go with it.

She gazes out, taking it in -- the twinkling lights, the silent snowfall.

Jason turns her toward her.

Their breath mingles in the cold air.

JASON

I think it's time for a new  
memory.

And then, he kisses her.

Slow. Deep.

Right where he first kissed her all those years ago.

Suddenly --

Her phone RINGS.

They break apart.

She sighs, checks the screen.

EVE

My Agent.

Jason groans.

JASON

You sure you don't want to toss  
that thing in the lake?

EVE

Hi, Sal.

SAL (V.O.)

Better not toss me in the lake. I  
can't swim.

Eve laughs.

INT. SAL'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Sal lounges at her desk, sipping a glass of wine.

SAL

I heard the news.

EVE (V.O.)

Clark must have called.

SAL

No, I met with him about two hours  
ago.

## INTERCUT PHONE CONVERSATION - SAL/EVE

EVE

So, Clark is okay with it?

SAL

I got him to just release you from  
the contract. Won't cost you a  
dime.

EVE

(suspicious)

How did you manage that?

SAL

Easy.

Sal admires her hand, twisting a twenty-thousand-dollar  
diamond ring in the light.

SAL (CONT'D)

Let's just say we made a deal.

Eve freezes.

EVE

Sal. You didn't.

SAL

Oh, relax. New York's new power  
couple!

EVE

Sal! He's awful!

SAL

You just have to know how to train  
them, Eve!

EVE

Sal, I meant it! He's --

SAL

At this moment, he's out doing  
some last-minute Christmas  
shopping for a Bentley.

Eve bursts into laughter.

EVE

Unbelievable.

SAL

Now, let's talk business.

EVE

Oh, no.

SAL

Oh, yes. I've got the perfect project for you. The money is insane!

Eve groans, rubbing her forehead.

SAL (CONT'D)

Are you ready!? The Betsy Ross Story!

Eve blinks.

EVE

Betsy Ross?

SAL

She did a lot more than sew the first flag!

EVE

Did she?

SAL

Well... I don't know exactly. But they managed to get 120 pages out of it!

Eve shakes her head, amused.

SAL (CONT'D)

The money for this ONE movie is more than you made at the old Lighthouse in an entire year.

A beat.

Eve softens.

EVE

Sal. I can't thank you enough for looking out for me.

SAL

Think nothing of it.

EVE

But I'm going to have to turn it down.

Silence.

SAL

You want to run that by me again?

EVE

I'm leaving the business, Sal.

SAL

We must have a bad connection  
here!

EVE

Nope. You heard me just fine.

SAL

Eve! We're talking Betsy Ross!  
She's never been filmed before!

EVE

I'm not going back to New York.

SAL

They're filming it in Mexico!

EVE

I'm sorry, Sal...

SAL

(sputters)  
Who's gonna play Betsy!?

EVE

Someone who actually wants to.

SAL

Listen. Sleep on it. Call me in  
the morning.

EVE

I'll be back in the city to close  
out my apartment. We'll go to  
lunch.

(heartfelt)

Merry Christmas, Sal.

A beat.

SAL

(softer)

Merry Christmas, Eve.

She hangs up.

MARGE (O.S.)  
Wow. I didn't think you would  
actually do it.

Eve JUMPS -- so does Jason.

On the bench next to the gazebo, seated comfortably, are  
Marge and Alvin.

EVE  
I thought you were going out!?

MARGE  
Alvin had better ideas.

Marge leans back, cozy against Alvin.

MARGE (CONT'D)  
You know, I could get used to this  
small town life.

EVE  
What about New York?

MARGE  
What about it?

EVE  
Well... you've lived there all  
your life.

MARGE  
I know. And coming here... the  
change has been nice. Real nice.  
I'd like to make it permanent.

Eve smiles.

JASON  
Eve, are you sure about turning  
down that movie?

EVE  
I'm sure. I want to stay here.  
Maybe open a shop or teach.

MARGE  
I want to help Alvin with whatever  
it is he does. What do you do,  
anyway?

ALVIN  
I'm a dentist.

Marge's eyes widen.

MARGE

Oh! A professional man! I need to talk to you about my bridge work.

Eve groans.

Alvin and Marge kiss.

MARGE (CONT'D)

You know -- I always wanted to be a dental assistant.

They kiss again.

JASON

Eve, are you really going to stay here?

EVE

You're staying here, aren't you?

JASON

I want to. If I can get a job.

EVE

You have a job.

JASON

No, I don't. Remember? I was fired.

EVE

Not anymore. I bought the Winter Lake Transcript today.

Jason blinks.

JASON

You what!?

EVE

This town deserves a real newspaper. And I can't think of anyone better to run it.

Jason lets out a stunned laugh, running a hand through his hair.

JASON

Eve, buying a cup of coffee is a spontaneous decision. Buying a newspaper is --

(MORE)

JASON (CONT'D)  
(pauses, shaking his  
head)  
I don't even know what you would  
call it!

EVE  
(softly, almost to  
herself)  
An investment...

Jason tilts his head, watching her carefully.

EVE (CONT'D)  
(meeting his gaze)  
...in us.

Jason takes her hands, studying her.

JASON  
You're really staying?

Eve hesitates as she looks out at the snow-dusted town --  
her hometown.

She exhales, taking in the Christmas lights, the quiet,  
the warmth of Jason's hands in hers.

A tiny flicker of her old life flashes across her face --  
the glitz, the contracts, the headlines -- before she  
looks back at Jason.

EVE  
(softly, but with  
certainty)  
I'm really staying.

Jason lets out a relieved, joyful laugh.

Snow swirls around them.

She grins.

He pulls her into his arms.

They kiss.

FADE OUT.