

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 were 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, Silvester.

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 towel 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.