

# Time and a Half

By Kara Lee Corthron

Contact:  
Beth Bickers  
Agency for the Performing Arts  
135 W 50th Street, 17th Floor  
New York, NY 10020  
212-621-3098  
[bbickers@apa-agency.com](mailto:bbickers@apa-agency.com)

Kara Lee Corthron  
Cell: 646-209-4943  
[karalee77@gmail.com](mailto:karalee77@gmail.com)  
karaleecorthron.com

### Characters

CAROLYN – mid-upper 20s, supervisor and single mom. Though she’s around the same age as everyone else, she’s a natural mother. She also loves her team and wants them to love her back.

ALEXA – low 20s, cashier and college student. Self-righteous and politically active and not necessarily honest with herself.

JOEY – 17 or 18, female, cashier and youngest on the team. Relatively quiet, but has a sharp edge.

GAGE – low 20s, male, greeter. Goes to the local university where he’s training as an actor.

MOOSE – mid-20s, male, stockroom, etc. A bit socially awkward, but tries his best, particularly to please Carolyn.

RACHELLE – mid-upper 20s, customer service and part-time student. Competent and has no patience for bullshit. \*Rachelle is **biracial (half black and half white)** and the only person of color in the cast.

KELLY – mid-20s, cashier. Was once teen royalty—cheerleading captain and homecoming queen, but now gets through her days using her acerbic sense of humor. Not a bubble head.

KAITLYN – 16 or 17, Kelly’s younger sister who believes she’s way smarter than Kelly, but actually longs to be like her.

JUDY – upper 20s, maintenance and oldest on the team. Judy has seen a lot of shit in her life, but is NO whiner. She naturally finds the humor in the worst situations. And she moves at her own, slow pace no matter what’s happening.

\*There are also three small roles: CUSTOMER, CUSTOMER 2, and CUSTOMER 3. These can all be played by the actress that plays JUDY.

**Setting:** A Lucky Daze Superstore (not unlike a Wal-Mart Superstore) in a rural town in what some people might consider a flyover state.

**Time:** The present. December 24th. The end of the last shift.

**Playing Note:** For the most part, this play moves fast with a rhythm similar to a farce. When it needs to slow down and breathe, it will be clear. *Time and a Half* is a comedy until it’s not. Misunderstanding the rhythm will muddy the tone.

**The Scene:** The Lucky Daze Superstore. Ugly florescent lights, cash registers, baskets, sale items, and all the typical superstore accoutrements. Plus lots and lots of tacky “holiday” decorations and by “holiday,” I mean Christmas. Nobody’s celebrating Hanukkah or Kwanzaa here. In the background, until the official closing time, inane Christmas music should be played starting with “Up on the Housetop.”

CAROLYN

Oh it’s this one! This wasn’t in the mix we had on earlier. This is Ava’s favorite one. She hardly even knows what they’re saying, but she loves screaming “CLICK, CLICK, CLICK.”

(CAROLYN giggles, but then realizes something.)

When you think about it, this song is kinda weird, though. “Reindeer *paws*?” Reindeer have hooves, don’t they? And “Who didn’t go?” Go where? And who are they talkin’ about? Santa Claus? He’s on the roof! We know where he is.

Joey. *Joey!*

(JOEY suddenly stands at attention, eyes wide.)

You’re not listening to me.

JOEY

Yes, I was. Reindeer do have hooves. It’s “reindeer *pause*.” They’re pausing so Santa can get outta the stupid sleigh.

(A moment.)

CAROLYN

Ohhhh I get it! I wonder why I never thought a that.

JOEY

It’s a common lyric error. Like “Scuse me while I kiss this guy” and “There’s a bathroom on the right.”

CAROLYN

Huh. It’s also a . . . homophone. Ya know?

(CAROLYN is proud of the fifty-cent word she just used and waits for JOEY to be impressed. JOEY stares at her, blankly.)

Whatever. No dozing.

JOEY

I wasn’t!

(CAROLYN decides to inspect everyone.)

(Calling off stage:) Gage? CAROLYN

(os:) Yeah? GAGE

You're not texting are you? CAROLYN

(A slight pause.)

Gage?

(os:) No way! GAGE

Better not be. CAROLYN

Alexa?

What? ALEXA

Are you reading? CAROLYN

(As she tries to hide her book:) No. ALEXA

Really? Cuz it sure looks like you're reading to me. CAROLYN

I barely read a sentence. ALEXA

Against the rules. CAROLYN

I'm sorry, but nobody's here and I can't leave my register. Do you want my mind to atrophy? ALEXA

(CAROLYN takes the book from her and looks at it frowning.)

*Civilization and Its Discontents?* On Christmas Eve? CAROLYN

ALEXA

What? I'm entitled to a little light reading on winter break.

CAROLYN

Not while you're on the clock.

KELLY

Carolyn, were you a warden in a past life?

(CAROLYN turns to KELLY who is sitting on her ass, painting her nails.)

CAROLYN

Kelly? What the holy heck are ya doin'?

KELLY

Don't worry. I'm workin'. Lynnies got it covered.

CAROLYN

*Lynnies?!*

KAITLYN

I have never in my life been called "Lynnies" by anyone. Not one time. Why start now?

CAROLYN

That's seriously been going on all shift?

KELLY

Yeah. I told you she's my servant for a week so she has to do all my chores.

CAROLYN

I thought you were kidding.

KELLY

Oh. I wasn't.

CAROLYN

This is a real job, Kelly. It's totally against store policy to have—

KELLY

No, it's not. You can have a proxy. I looked it up.

CAROLYN

In the event of an emergency!

JOEY

(Mumbling:) She's more agreeable than Kelly.

CAROLYN

But we can't pay her.

KELLY

You're not supposed to pay her. You pay *me*. It's very simple.

(CAROLYN is confused, looks at KAITLYN.)

KAITLYN

(Resigned:) It's fine. I haven't made a mistake yet.

(GAGE appears holding a Santa Claus head.)

GAGE

(Delighted:) Look! I found this on the floor. Why do we sell this crap? It's so creepy!

CAROLYN

We'll go take it back to—

GAGE

No wait watch this first.

(GAGE gets down on his knees and using the Santa head as a puppet, does his best Terry Malloy impression, which isn't that great.)

**You don't understand. I coulda had class. I coulda been a contender. I coulda been *somebody*. Instead of a bum, which is what I am.**

(He cracks up. No one else does.)

KELLY

What is wrong with you?

GAGE

You don't know *anything* about prop comedy!

KELLY

I'll add that to my suicide note.

CAROLYN

Kelly, no black humor! Gage, get that thing outta here and—

(A CUSTOMER approaches.)

Go! Go greet!

(GAGE runs over to the door and arrives just before the CUSTOMER enters, as though he's been standing there the entire time.)

GAGE

Good evening, ma'am and welcome to Lucky Daze, your one-stop shopping hub for all your last-minute holiday savings!

CUSTOMER

(Fast:) Ah you're cute, but remind me where's the toy section?

GAGE

You're in luck! For your convenience and for a limited time only—

CUSTOMER

ComeoncomeoncomeON!!

GAGE

Just to the right.

CUSTOMER

Thank you!  
(As she races to the toy section:) Jesus!

GAGE

Nobody wants to hear the spiel today.

CAROLYN

That doesn't matter.

GAGE

It's a good spiel.

CAROLYN

You're doing it well. Just keep it up.  
Where's Moose?

KELLY

Isn't he always in the stockroom?

CAROLYN

He volunteered to do a clean sweep.

JOEY

(Expectant:) Why? Are we gonna close early?

CAROLYN

NO! I just want to make sure all customers are getting the service they need while y'all are up here messin' around.

ALEXA

Gage. Gage was the one messing around.

CAROLYN

Sorry. You're right. It's always the boys.

(RACHELLE enters.)

RACHELLE

Carolyn, I'm wondering, do you think I could close down customer service? Nobody's coming there and if they need anything, I'm sure they're just asking Gage and the cashiers anyway.

CAROLYN

Hmm. That's definitely not protocol.

RACHELLE

I'm happy to stay back there if that's where you want me. But I haven't spoken to another human for the last forty minutes. I might be of more use elsewhere.

CAROLYN

Yeah I find that odd. Does anybody else find that odd? Last year, we had a buttload a last-minute shoppers. Where is everyone?

JOEY

Who can afford it?

CAROLYN

People can always afford Lucky Daze.

RACHELLE

I don't know, Carolyn. They laid off almost half the staff at CarMax right after Thanksgiving. My uncle and cousin both got axed.

KELLY

They also got rid a lay-a-way here. Big mistake.

KAITLYN

And I realize I don't officially work here so maybe I shouldn't be saying anything, but the National Weather Service is calling for a pretty severe snowstorm so that might be a shopping deterrent.

(CAROLYN gets dreamy.)

CAROLYN

Oh, won't that be nice? A real white Christmas.

KAITLYN

I guess . . .



RACHELLE

Not so nice if we're trapped here.

ALEXA

It's not sposeda start 'til late.

KELLY

Regardless, Carolyn you might want to seriously consider closing up early. Ya know? For safety reasons.

CAROLYN

I'm sure your concern for our safety is your top priority, Kelly. But you have never had a meeting with corporate.

We are not closing early.

(Several groans.)

Guys, come on! I know you wanna leave as soon as possible and I understand that, but you are gettin' extra pay tonight and you did choose to be here. I don't wanna hear any more complaints. Nothin' but holiday cheer.

EVERYONE IN THE ROOM WHO ISN'T CAROLYN

(Mumbling:) Woo-hoo / merry merry / fa la la whatever... / candy canes, etc.

(JUDY appears pushing a large broom.)

CAROLYN

(A bit too forceful:) Not yet, Judy! There's still plenty of time for dirt to accumulate. Put that away!

JUDY

I sweep at the top of every hour. All the time. Why you buggin' out on me?

CAROLYN

Right. Of course. Sorry about that, Judy.

(JUDY sweeps through slowly and steals a few glances at CAROLYN like she might be crazy. At some point, she'll just exit.)

Rachelle, I think it's fine for you to be on the floor, but I'd like you to do an aisle check and start with toys.

RACHELLE

Sounds good.

KELLY

I can help Rachelle.

KAITLYN

You mean *I* can help Rachelle?

KELLY

No, I'll do it. You've got your hands full with my register.

RACHELLE

Help me . . . what? Walk around the store?

KELLY

. . .Yeah.

(RACHELLE and KELLY regard each other for a second. KELLY starts to join her, but)

RACHELLE

Nah I got it. Better let your nails dry.

KELLY

'K.

(She goes back to painting her nails.)

CAROLYN

I appreciate your can-do spirit, Kelly. Way to pitch in!

(KELLY smiles artificially.)

GAGE

Just a quick thought, do those of us with vehicles have four-wheel drive?

RACHELLE

I have room in the Jeep for four if anyone needs.

ALEXA

By the time we leave, it'll be a light powdering of snow at most.

GAGE

I'm just bein' precautious. Can't help it: I was an *Eagle* Scout.

KELLY

Didn't need to know that.

GAGE

Only *four percent* of all Boy Scouts become Eagle Scouts, Kelly!

KELLY

Stop stop I'm getting moist.

KAITLYN

(To ALEXA:) Actually the National Weather Service is calling for 12-15 inches by morning soooo—

ALEXA

Soooo that's *morning*. Not now.

(MOOSE enters.)

MOOSE

Carolyn, I checked all around the store. I saw three women of various ages. I asked each of them if they needed help and they thanked me and said "no."

CAROLYN

Thank you, Moose. That's perfect.

MOOSE

My pleasure.

RACHELLE

After my aisle check, I'll do a quick walk-through as well.

CAROLYN

Terrific.

(RACHELLE exits.)

MOOSE

Why?

CAROLYN

Hmm?

MOOSE

Why is Rachelle also doing a walk-through when I just said I did it?

CAROLYN

Uh ya know. Just in case.

MOOSE

In case what?

(CAROLYN is at a loss for how to answer this.)

KELLY

In case they lied.

MOOSE

Who lied?

KELLY

The women. They might have said they didn't need help, but really they just didn't want help from you. No offense, but I'm sure you know you can be a bit off-putting at times.

CAROLYN

Kelly, come on.

KELLY

I said "at times."

MOOSE

No, it's fine. I get it.

(MOOSE looks around for something to do, awkwardly. He notices some shopping baskets that need to be organized so he busies himself with that. CUSTOMER rushes up to JOEY's register. JOEY sighs and slowly starts to ring her up.)

JOEY

Your total is \$23.92.

CUSTOMER

For real? Holy shit! 'Scuse my French, but that's a helluva good deal.

JOEY

(Mechanical:) Every day is a lucky day at Lucky Daze.

CUSTOMER

I know, but damn. You sure you added everything?

JOEY

Yeah. All Hasbro and Playskool products are 60% off today. Congrats. We call that the procrastinator's discount.

CUSTOMER

The what?

CAROLYN

Joey.

(JOEY rolls her eyes.)

JOEY

Just kidding. Ha ha ha ha.

(JOEY is not really laughing.)

JOEY (cont.)

Happy holidays and come back to Lucky Daze on Friday for our day-after-Christmas sale! You think these prices are good? Just wait—

(CUSTOMER rushes off. JOEY drops the fake smile.)

OK she's gone.

CAROLYN

Spirit, Joey. People come here for the Christmas spirit. Not just the savings. A little pep goes a long way.

JOEY

I thought I was being peppy.

CAROLYN

Do you know the definition of peppy?

(A moment.)

JOEY

(Yes:) No.

(CAROLYN stares at JOEY trying to decide what to do with her.)

ALEXA

To be fair to her, she *was* educated in the Shawnee County public school system. What do you honestly expect?

JOEY

That was unnecessarily mean. Not wrong, but mean.

ALEXA

Just a general observation.

KELLY

*Hey!* Don't you start that crap again! Our schools are just as good, if not better, than the mediocre schools downstate.

CAROLYN

Ladies, please.

ALEXA

I went to a private school specializing in the humanities and performing arts, thank you very much.

JOEY

Yes, we all know you're rich and gifted. You don't need to keep reminding us.

ALEXA

(Falsely modest:) I'm not *rich*.

KELLY

Not with those pleather Payless Shoesource specials on your feet.

ALEXA

Wrong! These are Toms! These are boots with a conscience!

CAROLYN

OK. Let's not make superficial assumptions about each other, please.

KAITLYN

She kind of has a point, though. I mean, she's being a bitch about it—

CAROLYN

Language!

KAITLYN

I don't really work here so I don't have to follow the rules.

CAROLYN

When you're wearin' the smock, you work here.

(KAITLYN sighs.)

KAITLYN

Fine. She's being a b-word about it, but how many kids from your class actually went to college, Kelly? It had to be less than half.

KELLY

You don't know that!

KAITLYN

It was a paltry figure.

KELLY

Ohmygod will you stop talking like you're on the BBC! Nobody cares if you sound smart here.

GAGE

Oh shit – I mean, shoot! (Sorry, Carolyn.) You ever watch *Call the Midwife*?

KAITLYN

So good, right?

GAGE

I know! No one I know gives it a chance but Miranda Hart is soooo AMAZING!

KAITLYN

Yeah.

KELLY

(GAGE:) Please. She's never seen that show in her life. She's just trying to impress you.

KAITLYN

*Shut up!* You don't know everything!

GAGE

(Fascinated:) Whoa. Sibling rivalry.

KELLY

Oh really? Where does *Call the Midwife* take place?

(An awkward pause.)

KAITLYN

England!

GAGE

She's totally right!

KELLY

You're both idiots.

KAITLYN

Go suck a dick, Kelly!

CAROLYN

WHAT DID I SAY?

KAITLYN

I may be an idiot, but *I* didn't flunk out of freshman comp AND *pre-collegiate algebra!*

(KELLY looks hurt for a tiny second, but then she quickly picks up her phone and pushes a button.)

KELLY

Hey Mom!

KAITLYN

What are you doing?

KELLY

I was just wondering, did you know that Kaitlyn's been—

(KAITLYN lunges for KELLY grabbing the phone.)

KAITLYN

(Fast:) Hi Mom I'm just helping Kelly out at work BYE!

(She hangs up and KELLY laughs.)

(To KELLY:) You're the antichrist.

CAROLYN

Really, girls? OK then. Gimme phones.

(Everyone groans as CAROLYN collects all their phones into a plastic bag.)

I try to be nice, but when you cause trouble—

ALEXA

It's completely unfair that we all have to suffer because of them.

CAROLYN

That's the trouble with livin' in a democracy. It's never that democratic, is it? Cough 'em up.

MOOSE

I forgot my phone today. You can search me if you want.

CAROLYN

No. I don't think you'd lie to me.

ALEXA

He could easily be lying.

CAROLYN

But he isn't.

(To MOOSE:) Are you?

MOOSE

No. I'm not.

(CAROLYN smiles, satisfied. MOOSE smiles back. ALEXA rolls her eyes in disgust.)

GAGE

I forgot mine, too, Carolyn.

CAROLYN

Nice try. Give it to me.



(GAGE affects himself to the point of tears.)

GAGE

The truth is? I can't find it anywhere. I think . . . I think someone stole it! Someone I trust. I'm sorry I lied I was just too ashamed to admit that I'd left it out of my sight. It's been a tough couple days.

(All applaud GAGE's performance.)

CAROLYN

Very nice. If I could give you an Emmy, I would. Gimme the phone.

(GAGE drops the act in an instant and is pissed.)

GAGE

Dammit.

CAROLYN

Language! I don't care if it's in the good book!

(He hands the phone to CAROLYN.)

GAGE

Thanks a lot, Kelly!

(KELLY gestures like she's blowing him a kiss, then she taps her butt or something equally obnoxious.)

CAROLYN

Because I love yas, no one's gettin' written up. Not yet.

JOEY

You didn't get Rachelle's phone.

CAROLYN

I'll get it from 'er when she comes back.

JOEY

She could be on it right now. She could be in the middle of an obscene phone call.

CAROLYN

Don't be ridiculous!

KELLY

Judy. What about Judy's phone?

(CAROLYN sighs. She radios Judy.)

CAROLYN

Judy? What's your 20?

(As she starts off:) CUSTOMER!

(They all quiet down as CUSTOMER 2 approaches. She goes to ALEXA's register. RACHELLE reenters, passing CAROLYN, who disappears momentarily.)

CUSTOMER 2

Hi there!

ALEXA

Hello.

(ALEXA rings up CUSTOMER 2's items.)

I hope you were able to find everything you were looking for this evening.

CUSTOMER 2

Almost. I almost got everything I wanted, but I was looking for a special crocheting needle for my mom and I just couldn't find it. I got her a gingerbread candle instead, but it's just not the same, ya know?

ALEXA

Yes, those two items are completely different.

CUSTOMER 2

Wish I coulda got her somethin' nice. Bad year for us. Looks like it's just gonna be this dumb candle and my deviled eggs.

ALEXA

Making someone food is always thoughtful.

(CUSTOMER 2 smiles. CAROLYN reenters, still carrying her bag of phones, and creeps over to observe ALEXA. ALEXA can feel her eyes on her.)

CUSTOMER 2

Always end up waitin' 'til the last minute. I should know better, but I never seem to learn my lesson.

ALEXA

Hmm.

CUSTOMER 2

You have big plans for tomorra?

ALEXA

Yes, actually. I'm going to a Black Lives Matter protest on campus.

CUSTOMER 2  
They have that on Christmas?

ALEXA  
Of course.

CAROLYN  
Alexa . . .

ALEXA  
(Pointed:) Yes?

(CAROLYN gives her a warning look, but says nothing.)

ALEXA  
All right. Your total is 14.67. Would you prefer debit or credit?

CUSTOMER 2  
I'll just give ya cash.

(ALEXA lightly sighs, not wanting to deal with cash right now, but she takes it and enters it into the register.)

It's good that you like to get involved. But you have to remember: *All* lives matter.

(ALEXA freezes.)

RACHELLE  
No one has ever said otherwise.

(CUSTOMER 2 jumps, unaware that she was being listened to.)

CAROLYN  
Rachelle, I need your phone.

CUSTOMER 2  
Well, it seems to *me* that they are saying that their lives matter *more*.

RACHELLE  
"They?"

ALEXA  
You are woefully mistaken.

CAROLYN  
Ma'am? Thank you SO much for your business tonight! And you make sure to come back on Friday morning, bright and early, for our Lucky Daze day-after-

Christmas sale! Happy holidays!

RACHELLE

We're saying our lives matter just as much.

CUSTOMER 2

"We?" You're not even—

RACHELLE

Woman, you don't know *what* I am!

CAROLYN

MERRY CHRISTMAS! Or . . . I mean HOLIDAYS! Shoot! HAPPY—

(CUSTOMER 2 leaves, angry.)

Y'all. How many daggone times do I have to tell you: No politics?!!!

RACHELLE

We were quite civil, Carolyn.

ALEXA

Seriously! And that snaggle-toothed cu - bi - *shopper* didn't deserve our civility!

CAROLYN

It doesn't matter. You are not to engage the customers in that way. Ever. We have to get along with *EVERYone* that comes through those doors whether you agree with them or not. Rachele, I'm takin' phones. Gimme your phone.

(RACHELLE sighs and gives it to CAROLYN.)

JOEY

Who goes to a protest on Christmas Day?

ALEXA

Revolutionaries that's who!

MOOSE

How are you a revolutionary? You work retail part-time and attend a state university on scholarship. You are completely status quo.

ALEXA

Maybe on the outside, but you don't know me.

KELLY

Why do you even work here? Don't your people see this place as some evil temple to corporate greed?

ALEXA

Of course we do!

KELLY / KAITLYN

Then why do you work here?

KELLY / KAITLYN

(To each other:) Shut up!

ALEXA

(She eyes CAROLYN warily:) I have my reasons. And they're good reasons. Let's leave it at that.

CAROLYN

(Sighing:) Alexa, my darling. Don't waste your precious time trying to change this place. We will never be unionized. We will never get health care. We will always need other sources just to get by. It is not fair, but that's the way it is.

ALEXA

I don't understand how you can be OK with that.  
I don't understand why people laugh at me for fighting for what's right.  
Why is everyone so cynical?

(Beat.)

CAROLYN

I don't know, honey. I'm a twenty-six-year-old single mom and some days I feel like I'm *fifty*-six. I'm so tired. Fightin' takes so much strength. More than most of us have. More than *I* have, anyway.

JOEY

I'm gonna go visit my dad tomorrow. At North River. I told him I wouldn't, but I will. That'll be my protest. Imma protest The System.

KAITLYN

(Gasps:) Your dad's a prisoner?

KELLY

Stop talking.

ALEXA

That's cool of you to visit. I bet he'll be really happy to see you.

MOOSE

This has been too much talk about feelings and personal things.

KELLY

True story.

MOOSE

I wanna work. I come to work so I don't have to think about feelings and personal things. Carolyn, is there anything I can do right now? Anything at all?

CAROLYN

Oh well since you asked, could you go outside and make sure all the carts are neatly in the corrals?

MOOSE

(Relieved to have something to do:) Thank you!

(He rushes off.)

KAITLYN

Am I allowed to ask what's up with him?

CAROLYN

How do you mean?

KAITLYN

Seriously?

ALEXA

He might have some kind of special needs. It's not that big of a deal. We're all differently equipped.

CAROLYN

I don't think that's exactly his situation.

KELLY

No. He's not retarded or anything.

(CAROLYN is horrified.)

CAROLYN

No. R. Word. Ever. EVER! You *know* this!

KELLY

OK OK! He's not mentally . . . reduced or whatever you call it. His brain is normal, he's just weird. He went to Shawnee High with me. Maybe middle school, too. Can't remember. He was all weird and quiet and he got made fun of mercilessly so he just became weirder and quieter. That's all it is. And maybe he's got depression or something, too. Who knows? I don't think he has any friends, either. He just comes here and when he's done, he goes home to his trailer.

JOEY

Wow.

Not that there's anything wrong with livin' in a trailer . . .

KELLY

And the saddest thing is? Take a good look at him sometime. If he paid any attention to his wardrobe or his hair and if he had even a speck of confidence, he'd be seriously hot. But he doesn't. So he's not.

RACHELLE

Aww, man. That is sad. For some reason, I decided he was a peepin' Tom or somethin', but that wasn't fair of me.

KELLY

He could be one. That wouldn't shock me at all.

GAGE

I didn't know all that. Maybe I'll ask him to grab a beer sometime next week.

KELLY

If it's charity, he will recognize it.

GAGE

No. Just a beer.

CAROLYN

Regardless, we are not to treat anyone who works here any better or worse than anyone else. Therefore, this conversation ends now and it will not be picked up again. Understood?

(They all sort of mumble assent. JUDY enters, slowly.)

JUDY

You call me?

(CAROLYN looks confused, then remembers that she did call her.)

CAROLYN

Oh yeah. Confiscatin' phones for the rest a the shift.

(JUDY snorts and hands CAROLYN her phone.)

JUDY

I'm already outta minutes for December anyway so a lotta good it'll do ya.

CAROLYN

I'm not plannin' to use it. I'm just tryin' to keep things fair.

JUDY

I hear ya.

(JUDY suddenly staggers like she might pass out, but steadies herself.)

Ooh ya OK? CAROLYN

Yeah, I'm fine. JUDY

You need anything? Water or somethin'? JOEY

No no no. Prolly just gettin' old. JUDY

(JUDY waddles away.)

(Calling:) Judy, you're twenty-seven. CAROLYN

Oh no. She *is* old. Do you think it's her heart? KAITLYN

You are raisin' my BP, li'l girl. CAROLYN

Sure she's OK? GAGE

I'll keep an eye on 'er, but I'm sure she's fine. Not much bothers Judy. CAROLYN

Shoot! Every time she comes through I forget to ask her if these are right. GAGE

(KAITLYN jumps when she sees the box of American Eagle bullets in his hand.)

Right for *what*? KAITLYN

For Mike, my step dad. He loves to hunt, but he sucks at it. I wanna give him a gift that reminds him of his failures. GAGE

(Likes his logic:) Cool! KAITLYN

Barbaric. ALEXA



GAGE

Here we go.

RACHELLE

Anyone who eats meat in this country has no right to judge hunters.

ALEXA

I am a raw vegan.

RACHELLE

(Not sweet:) Bless your heart.

ALEXA

The very existence of guns is barbaric.

JOEY

Some of 'em are kinda badass, though.

CAROLYN

(To JOEY:) I'm gettin' tired of policin' the language. Just know that it hurts my heart.

JOEY

OK.

CAROLYN

(To ALEXA:) And once again: no politics. It's an open carry state. Get used to it.

ALEXA

The second I graduate, I am so moving to Europe.

KELLY

You sound like a delusional twelve-year-old.

ALEXA

I'm not deluded. I need to be amongst free thinkers.

KAITLYN

Like the ones who voted for Brexit?

RACHELLE

Or almost elected Le Pen?

ALEXA

Ugghhh! There are weirdos everywhere!

JOEY

(To herself:) That's for damn sure.

GAGE

So then . . . what's the point of moving?

ALEXA

Oh my god. I can't even— A familiar. ONE person who understands me. A familiar, my kingdom for a familiar!

GAGE

*Richard III!* Ha-HA! Nailed it!

(MOOSE reenters, frozen and covered in snow. They run to him as he stumbles and falls to the ground.)

Oh god, are you all right?

MOOSE

(Through chattering teeth:) I c-c-couldn't get all of them, Carolyn. I tried, but I c-c-couldn't.

(GAGE opens the door. There is a ton of snow.)

GAGE

Um Carolyn?

KAITLYN

(To ALEXA:) The National Weather Service doesn't lie.

CAROLYN

Well...

(She panics, looking at her watch.)

CAROLYN

We officially close in about forty minutes and after clean up—

KELLY

You're talking about another whole hour at least.

RACHELLE

Gettin' trapped in a Lucky Daze on Christmas Eve is my nightmare. I've had this dream *twice!*

JOEY

The bus won't be runnin' now . . .

RACHELLE

Joey, I got you. Don't worry.

(Suddenly CUSTOMER 3 seems to float to KELLY's register. CUSTOMER 3 is sort of like Glinda the Good Witch.)

CUSTOMER 3

Season's greetings and yuletide cheer! Does anybody actually work here?

(They jump, having not noticed her. KAITLYN rushes to the register.)

CAROLYN

(Sotto voce:) How did nobody notice this one?

MOOSE

(Through chattering teeth; not mad. Cold!:) I did! I told you: th-th-three women of various ages. This is number three.

(KAITLYN quickly rings up CUSTOMER 3's items, which are a few simple things like tape and perhaps some rolls of wrapping paper. CUSTOMER 3 beams like the Sugar Plum Fairy.)

CUSTOMER 3

This is my FAV-OR-ITE time of the year! Trimming the tree! Decking the halls! Fattening the geese!

RACHELLE

(To CAROLYN:) Crashing on the highway.

CUSTOMER 3

(Singsong:) Oh nooooo, little girl! There will be no danger beyond these doors for you tonight! I'll tell you why: the elves are among us. They are the real watchmen.

CAROLYN

(Diplomatic:) Oh, is that right?

(CUSTOMER 3 giggles in delight and mischief.)

GAGE

This is far out.

ALEXA

This is untreated bipolar disorder.

KAITLYN

OK. Your total is 127.54.

CUSTOMER 3

(Normal voice:) Say what now?

KAITLYN

Yeah that doesn't sound right.

KELLY

God. I have to do *everything*!

(KELLY goes to the register, voids all mistaken charges and then rings up the items once more, quickly and correctly.)

Your total is 6.21.

(CUSTOMER 3 giggles in delight and mischief again.)

CUSTOMER 3

Oh I thought you were attempting to trick the Snow Queen! You musn't ever do a thing like that! Santa wouldn't like it.

(She pays and **remains standing, smiling at them. For several uncomfortable seconds.**)

RACHELLE

(Quietly to CAROLYN:) Should we call someone?

CAROLYN

I don't know.

(To CUSTOMER 3:) Miss? Is – uh – is there anything else we can do for you?

(CUSTOMER 3 stares, a frozen smile on her face. Is she breathing?)

Miss? Or . . . Ma'am? If there's nothing else – I mean, I hate to be rude, but unfortunately . . . I mean . . . ? You can't stay here.

(CUSTOMER 3's smile fades and her demeanor darkens as if a cloud has just appeared over her head.)

CUSTOMER 3

You're kind.

I appreciate that.

No matter what I do

It all ends.

There isn't any real magic anymore.

Do you know what happened to it?

(Beat.)

No. I didn't think you did.

(As CUSTOMER 3 exits:)

JOEY

Make sure to come back on Friday for our day-after—

CAROLYN

Not now, Joey.

ALEXA

That poor woman. This is the state of mental health care in this country.

GAGE

I know she's a real person and wasn't acting, but her moment-to-moment life was sensational.

CAROLYN

Moose?

MOOSE

Yeah?

CAROLYN

You OK?

GAGE

I could make some coffee.

CAROLYN

That's an excellent idea, Gage.

(GAGE heads toward the back.)

MOOSE

I'm feeling better. I'm starting to warm up. Thanks.

CAROLYN

Good.

I had no idea the weather had gotten so bad. You should've come back in right away.

MOOSE

I thought I could handle it.

CAROLYN

Your wellbeing is more important to me than completing a task. Please don't ever do anything that risky again. OK?

(MOOSE is grateful.)

MOOSE

OK.

(CAROLYN smiles, relieved.)

JOEY

Will the heat cut out at a certain time?

CAROLYN

Same time as usual.

JOEY

No, I mean. If we got stuck and had to sleep here. We wouldn't freeze would we?

RACHELLE

That isn't going to happen. Carolyn is too smart and too cool to let that happen. No matter *what* corporate says. Right, boss lady?

CAROLYN

Don't call me that.

KELLY

In all seriousness, Carolyn: There will be a mutiny.

CAROLYN

*You're* not even working as it is!

ALEXA

Here's what I think. Since we have no more customers, we could go ahead and lock the doors and start clean-up time early, which would get us out of here early.

(GAGE returns with the coffee pot and some Styrofoam cups.)

CAROLYN

You're not sposeta remove that from the break room!

GAGE

(Handing a cup to MOOSE:) I agree with Alexa. Probably for the first and last time.

KELLY

I second it.

GAGE

Well technically, *I* seconded it. You're *thirding* it.

KELLY

And that is why you don't have a girlfriend.

RACHELLE

Should we put it to a vote?

CAROLYN

Put *what* to a vote?

KELLY

All in favor of officially closing now and cleaning up so we can get the hell outta here, raise your hands.

(Everyone except MOOSE and CAROLYN raises a hand.)

All opposed.

(MOOSE raises his hand.)

(To MOOSE:) Why?

(MOOSE shrugs.)

MOOSE

Cuz I don't care either way.

KELLY

Whatever. Majority rules.

(To CAROLYN:) That's six to one, Madam Capiton.

CAROLYN

You're all so selfish.

(Pointing to MOOSE:) Except him.

RACHELLE

How are we being selfish?

CAROLYN

Rachelle, when you had to switch shifts for your finals, did I give you a hard time about it? NO! I just did it for you. No questions asked. Joey when you needed to take the day off at the last minute for your Mom's hearing, again: it was fine. I said nothing. Alexa! You consistently steal creamers and stirs and napkins from the break room—

ALEXA

I do not—

CAROLYN

Would you like to see the security footage?

(ALEXA shrinks.)

Gage, you're always throwin' the schedule off with your ever-changing rehearsal times. And God knows how *you're* still workin' here, Kelly, but I put up with it. I put up with all of it. Because I want my team to be happy.

(CAROLYN starts to cry.)

RACHELLE

What's wrong, Carolyn?

ALEXA

Uh – I'm sorry about the creamer. And napkins. And stirs. I won't do it again.

GAGE

Yeah. I'll make them give me more notice about rehearsals at school.

JOEY

I'll try to keep my Mom from needing to go to court.

CAROLYN

I'm sorry, you guys. You didn't do anything wrong. I just –  
Oh God I hate Christmas!

ALEXA

I'm so glad to hear you say that! I assumed you loved it!

CAROLYN

Are you kidding me? If I have to hear  
(She does a dead-on and joyless impression of Jose Feliciano:) "I WANNA WISH  
YOU A MERRY CHRISTMAS" one more time, I'm gonna gouge my eyes out  
with a grapefruit spoon.

RACHELLE

Yeah, but you'll be going home to be with Ava, right? I bet she wants to see her  
mama as soon as she can.

MOOSE

(Gently:) Carolyn? Would you like a cup of coffee?

CAROLYN

Thank you, Moose. I'd like that very much.  
Just black please.

(MOOSE pours her a cup. During the next few lines, he gives it to her.)

KAITLYN

I don't really like Christmas, either.

KELLY

Shut up yes you do.

KAITLYN

Why won't you let me have an identity?



JOEY

It's not something . . . is Ava OK?

CAROLYN

Yeah. She's good. She's real good. She's with her daddy right now. Tomorra will be our day to have a good time. Tonight is – um –

(CAROLYN finds the bag of phones and switches them off one by one as she speaks and sips coffee. She always has to have something to do.)

Don't wanna run y'all's batteries down.

So. On Christmas Eve, my Mama always invites my aunts and uncles and cousins over for a big dinner. This was fine, more or less, for a number of years. But – um – now. I have an uncle that once did . . . some stuff to me. When I was a kid. I haven't seen him in years cuz he was takin' care of his sick mother. She recently passed on, God rest her soul. So that means that he's free again to attend family functions. Such as the dinner tonight at my Mama's house. I purposefully chose to work tonight. Hopin' that by the time I'd get home from the shift, all the extended family members would be gone. So. Y'all ain't selfish. I'm the selfish one. Keepin' you here right up 'til the bell cuz *I* don't want to leave yet. I'm sorry.

ALEXA

All in favor of working the full shift in solidarity with Carolyn against her scum-of-the-universe, pedophilic uncle, raise your hands.

(After a moment, they all raise their hands.)

CAROLYN

You guys. You don't have to—

KELLY

It's done. And

(KELLY checks her watch.)

Official closing time is in 27 minutes. I think we'll survive.

ALEXA

And it's good to stand together for a righteous cause.

CAROLYN

Y'all are so sweet. I don't even know what to say.

JOEY

Maybe you could sing us a Christmas carol as thanks.

CAROLYN

Very funny.

(GAGE grabs the empty coffee cups and starts to take the coffee pot, but KAITLYN grabs it.)

KAITLYN

I'll help you.

GAGE

Thanks.

KELLY

Why do you wanna help him, Linnie?

KAITLYN

Leave me alone! And stop calling me that! Where did that even come from?

(KAITLYN follows GAGE off.)

KELLY

(Trailing after them:) Really, Linnie. What are you hoping might happen all alone with a college boy?

KAITLYN

(os:) I hate you!

ALEXA

Carolyn. I know we're staying open for now, but it really doesn't look like anyone else is gonna come in so—

CAROLYN

Yeah. You may as well start closin' out the registers. Keep one active just in case.

(ALEXA and JOEY go to close out their registers.)

RACHELLE

I think I'll do one more walk-through. Just to be safe.

(She exits. Everyone is busy with some task except for CAROLYN and MOOSE.)

MOOSE

Um – is there anything I can -?

CAROLYN

Yes. Just sit with me for a minute. Would you mind that?

MOOSE

No.

(A moment.)

CAROLYN

Holidays can be a real downer.  
It does help havin' a lil' one, though. Big time.  
You don't have any kids yet, do ya?

(MOOSE laughs.)

MOOSE

No. Not even close.

CAROLYN

Do you want kids, though?

(Beat.)

MOOSE

I don't feel prepared to be anybody's father.

(CAROLYN laughs.)

CAROLYN

None of us are prepared when it happens.

MOOSE

I bet you were.

CAROLYN

No, I was not.

MOOSE

I can't imagine you being unprepared for anything.

(CAROLYN smiles, shyly.)

Does – uh – Ava's father help out?

CAROLYN

When it's fun. He loves her to death. She's with him and his people right now and I know they're spoilin' her rotten. But when she needs shots, where is he? When she's pukin' in the middle a the night, where is he? He comes and goes when it's convenient for him. I'd like to put a stop to that, but he's her daddy. What can I do?

MOOSE

But are you . . . together?

CAROLYN

Oh with *him*? No! That ended I don't know how long ago! We try to be friendly for Ava's sake, but that's as good as it gets.

MOOSE

Having a kid sounds scary to me. I wouldn't want to screw it up.

CAROLYN

Well there's no rush. You have plenty a time. And when the time is right, I bet you'll know.

MOOSE

Ya know? The only reason for time . . . is so that everything doesn't happen at once.

(A moment. They stare at each other. Something passes between them.)

CAROLYN

Wow. That's deep. And kinda beautiful.

MOOSE

I know.

CAROLYN

How'd you'd come up with that?

MOOSE

I was just sitting by myself one day thinking about time and how there's either too much of it or not nearly enough of it and how things just happen and sometimes they make perfect sense and most of the time, they don't make any sense at all. And then I found that quote on the Internet.

CAROLYN

(Disappointed:) Oh.

MOOSE

What's wrong?

CAROLYN

Nothing.

MOOSE

Ohhhhh. You thought I put those words together on my own.

Well. Yeah. Just for a second.

CAROLYN

No. It was Einstein.

MOOSE

(Awe:) Oh.

CAROLYN

Time might ultimately be meaningless, but for a second—maybe a *half* second—you thought I was as smart as Einstein.

MOOSE

I don't know why that should surprise you. You are smart. I could always tell.

CAROLYN

(They stare at each other for a moment. It's intense. Something has shifted.)

May I ask you something?

MOOSE

Yes.

Why in the world do you go by Moose?

CAROLYN

(MOOSE laughs.)

Really.

I can't remember. I've just been called that since I was young.

MOOSE

It doesn't suit you.

CAROLYN

No?

MOOSE

Not at all.

CAROLYN

Carolyn suits you.  
It's a name of beauty and consequence. It's perfect.

MOOSE

Gosh. Thank you.

CAROLYN

(A moment.)

MOOSE  
May I ask *you* something?

CAROLYN  
Of course.

(He takes a deep breath.)

MOOSE  
Would you like to have a drink with me sometime?

(A moment.)

I don't mean anything . . . just casually? Like one day after—

CAROLYN  
Yeah.

MOOSE  
Really?

CAROLYN  
Yeah. Why not? I don't think two friends gettin' a drink together would harm anyone. Do you?

(JUDY comes back with the broom.)

JUDY  
This'll be my last sweep a the day. That all right, boss?

CAROLYN  
Sure thing, Judy.

(CAROLYN and MOOSE are still locked into each other. JUDY pushes the broom across the floor slowly, completely uninterested in whatever's going on with MOOSE and CAROLYN, until she's gone.)

MOOSE  
It's nice. Having a moment to talk to you. Just you.

CAROLYN  
It is nice.

MOOSE  
But the second you need me to work again, I'll do it. Whatever you need, I'll do it. That. Applies . . . to anything.

(CAROLYN takes this in. RACHELLE reenters.)

RACHELLE  
Floor is totally clear. We are set for closing.

CAROLYN  
Thanks, Rachelle.

RACHELLE  
Anything else you need from me?

CAROLYN  
Nothing right now.

RACHELLE  
Nothing? Nothing at all—

CAROLYN  
OK! Can you just go check on the others? Make sure they aren't gettin' into anything?

RACHELLE  
Will do.

(RACHELLE dashes off.)

CAROLYN  
What's your real name?

MOOSE  
Caleb Freeling.

CAROLYN  
That is a powerful name.

MOOSE  
I think so.

CAROLYN  
Imma call you Caleb from now on. If that's all right with you.

(MOOSE smiles and nods. JOEY, ALEXA, and KAITLYN reenter from wherever they've been.)

ALEXA  
(To KAITLYN:) I really hope you're academically inclined, because retail is not for you.

KAITLYN

Thank you!

JOEY

You feelin' better, Carolyn?

(CAROLYN and MOOSE exchange a secret smile.)

CAROLYN

Actually? I'm feelin' pretty great.

JOEY

*Great?* Was there oxycontin in that coffee?

CAROLYN

Opioid abuse is not even a little bit funny, Josephine.

(RACHELLE reenters.)

Where are the others?

RACHELLE

They're coming.

CAROLYN

(Whispers:) They weren't foolin' around back there, were they?

KAITLYN

Ew! She had better not even dare!

CAROLYN

There's a lotta things I'll tolerate, but that is not one of them.

RACHELLE

No. I wouldn't tolerate that, either. Trust me.

(CAROLYN smiles with pride.)

CAROLYN

Imma talk to Paul and Ed about you again. First thing Friday morning.

RACHELLE

Don't trouble yourself.

CAROLYN

You are a natural leader. You need a leadership role.

RACHELLE

I appreciate it, but you and I know they will never promote me. Customer



service is as far as I can go at Lucky Daze.

CAROLYN

'S not right.

RACHELLE

It's disgusting, is what it is.

ALEXA

It's because you're not white, isn't it??

RACHELLE

What do you think?

(ALEXA looks at RACHELLE for a minute. It is intense: she is inspired. CAROLYN busies herself with something else for a moment.)

What?

ALEXA

I want to empower you.

RACHELLE

(Uncomfortable:) That's OK, thanks.

ALEXA

What are you doing tomorrow?

RACHELLE

It's Christmas.

ALEXA

And?

RACHELLE

And I'll be with my family.

ALEXA

All day?

RACHELLE

That's the plan.

ALEXA

Would you be up for a morning protest?

RACHELLE

No.

ALEXA

Just come for an hour.

RACHELLE

Why? You need to bring a POC to validate you?

(ALEXA blanches.)

ALEXA

No. God. That's not what I mean at all.

RACHELLE

Thanks, but no thanks. I have better ways of spending my time.

ALEXA

Like slavin' for a company that doesn't give a shit about you?

CAROLYN

Hey! What's goin' on over there?

ALEXA

Have you ever put your body—your *life*—on the line for something that matters?

RACHELLE

Alexa. Alexa, Alexa, Alexa. I have lived in this ninety-five percent white town in the middle of nowhere since my birth. I've been in rooms where someone tells a racist joke and everyone laughs because they forget I'm there. I've seen people I thought were my friends hoist up confederate flags outside their homes the instant they feel threatened. It's taking forever, but I am working as hard as I can to get my teacher certification so that eventually I might be able to find a job I'm proud of in this town. (No offense, Carolyn.)

CAROLYN

Not offended at all. I don't have no stocks in Lucy Daze.

RACHELLE

And even in those circles, people with advanced degrees are quite comfortable asking me "What are you?" or worse: "Can I get a dime bag?" Do not come at me with your middle-class WASP-y eating-disorder-having white feminist privilege and suggest to me that I'm not doing enough. Every day I wake up without succumbing to despair, I am doing enough.

(Silence.)

JOEY

And I believe that's called a mic drop.

ALEXA

I didn't mean anything.

RACHELLE

Maybe you'll think before you speak next time.

CAROLYN

That's good advice for all of us.

(Suddenly the inane Christmas music cuts out and GAGE's voice can be heard on the loud speaker.)

GAGE

(v.o.) Good evening, Lucky Daze workers!

CAROLYN

Oh what fresh hell is this?

GAGE

(v.o.) In honor of the end of the last long work holiday of the year, we invite you to countdown with us to the official store closing time. Which will be in . . .

10, 9

KAITLYN / JOEY

8, 7, 6, 5, 4

ALL (except CAROLYN and ALEXA)

3, 2, 1

GAGE

(v.o.) MERRY-WE'RE-ALMOST-FUCKIN'-OUTTA-LUCKY-DAZE-HOLIDAZE!

CAROLYN

GAGE!

GAGE

(v.o.) Sorry, Carolyn, but sometimes ya need an F bomb!

(The Doors's "Alabama Song" now blasts on the speakers. They laugh or cheer; there is general merriment. KELLY and GAGE reenter with a whisky bottle and paper cups.)

CAROLYN

Y'all . . .

KELLY

It's a holiday for shit's sake!

CAROLYN

(Sotto voce:) The security cameras are recording everything.

GAGE

Nobody gets a shot who's underage! It's all on the up and up!

(He starts to pour for everyone and passes cups around. KAITLYN tries to sneak in line, but KELLY pulls her away by her pigtailed or something. JOEY surreptitiously snags a cup.)

CAROLYN

Oh no no no no no!

(She takes the cup, which GAGE fills, and looks around nervously, but finally shrugs.)

Fuck it. I can just erase the tape!

(CAROLYN downs the shot. Everyone cheers.)

GAGE / KELLY / RACHELLE and eventually the others

(Sing:)

*For if we don't find  
The next whisky bar  
I tell you we must die  
I tell you we must die  
I tell you, I tell you  
I tell you we must die!*

GAGE

Ooh fun fact: this song isn't by Morrison. It was actually written by Kurt Weill and Bertolt Brecht.

KELLY

Is what universe is that a *fun* fact?

GAGE

This one! My God! Even theatre from the 1920s in Germany is still relevant to this day! Theatre is the lifeblood of the world!

(He slams another shot.)

KAITLYN

It's not by Brecht.

GAGE

What did you say?

KELLY

Ohmygod stop trying to be the smartest person in the room! It's so annoying!

KAITLYN

It was written by Elisabeth Hauptmann. She wrote it *for* Brecht.

(A moment.)

GAGE

I'm a theatre major.

(Proudly:) I've been one for five years. I think I know Brecht better than you.

KAITLYN

You'd think that, but you don't.

GAGE

Prove it.

KAITLYN

I WILL

(She reaches in her pocket for her smart phone when she realizes it's not there.)

NOT. Because she took our phones away.

But I'll do it later. You'll see.

GAGE

Oh, yes I will.

KAITLYN

Yes, you will.

GAGE

Yes. Indeed I will.

KAITLYN

With positivity. You will.

KELLY

Ohmygod you're literally killing me.

(KELLY exits.)

MOOSE

I don't mean to be a wet blanket, but—

(GAGE pours MOOSE another shot. MOOSE raises his cup in thanks.)

MOOSE  
Just – uh – shouldn't we start – ya know? – closing up?

CAROLYN  
He's right.  
Come on, guys.

(A new song blasts from the speakers. Something in the vein of "This is What You Came for" by Calvin Harris and Rihanna.)

Oh Lord.

(KELLY reappears.)

KELLY  
Dance break time.  
Let's go!

CAROLYN  
Go where?

KELLY  
Everybody has to dance for one full minute and then we'll close up.  
Come on!

(There are a variety of reactions, but gradually everyone starts dancing. Everyone except MOOSE. Some of them get into it. KELLY is a pretty great dancer and she and RACHELLE have a fun, friendly dance-off moment, but KELLY is victorious.)

KELLY  
Moose?

MOOSE  
What?

KELLY  
Get up.

MOOSE  
No.

KELLY  
Literally everybody is dancing but you. Just this once, try to fit in.

MOOSE  
I don't want to dance, Kelly.

Are you kidding me? KELLY

I'm not comfortable. MOOSE

It's one minute out of your entire life. You really can't spare it? KELLY

Please just leave me be. MOOSE

Jesus Christ. KELLY

(KELLY storms off and the music abruptly cuts out.)

Kelly sucks as a D.J. GAGE

I know. She's not very talented in general. I worry about her. KAITLYN

Helluva dancer, though. GAGE

(under her breath, mocking GAGE:) *Helluva dancer, though.* KAITLYN

(KELLY reenters, angry.)

What is your problem? KELLY

My . . . problem? MOOSE

Oh stop it with your act! KELLY

Kelly, please! CAROLYN

KELLY  
Carolyn, I am sorry. Write me up or whatever, but this is ridiculous.  
(To MOOSE:) Yes. People teased you. Yes, you got bullied. That sucks. It really does. I am sorry you went through that. But man, at some point, you have GOT to get over it.

CAROLYN

Kelly, I'm warning you.

KELLY

I am trying my best to include you and you just piss all over it. We're not in high school anymore. You have to get past that crap. If not for other people, for yourself. I mean, how do you expect to get through life being so meek and wounded?

(Pause.)

That was a real question and you should answer it.

CAROLYN

Kelly, I want you to close out automotive and when that's done, electronics and then I want you to go home. And you can call me in two days to see if you still have a position here.

KELLY

But Carolyn—

CAROLYN

Go before I get truly angry.

(KELLY storms off. KAITLYN stands awkwardly.)

KAITLYN

She's my ride home so . . .

(KAITLYN follows KELLY. There is a silence.)

CAROLYN

Caleb?

GAGE

Who?

CAROLYN

Are you—

(MOOSE runs off. JUDY enters mopping.)

(Quietly:) Fuck.

JOEY

Language.

CAROLYN

Knock it off, Joey.



JUDY

You guys make a lotta noise.

JOEY

Not *all* of us, but who's keepin' score?

GAGE

(Downing another shot:) How does a whisky celebration fall apart so goddamn fast?

ALEXA

Everyone's on edge I guess. We all have our reasons.

JUDY

(Pausing in her mopping:) You all are interesting to me. I don't understand what gets you all on edge. Carolyn maybe, but I know her and I understand her. I mostly don't understand the rest of you.

RACHELLE

We're not that complicated.

JUDY

All the complainin'. All the dissatisfaction. I don't understand that. Or maybe I just don't have time for it. I come to work, I do my work, I go home, I watch TV, I feed the dogs, I go to sleep and I do it over again and this is OK for me. I don't sit around or stand around talkin' about life or whatever. Cuz, let's be honest, I prolly would get real frustrated if I did that. I didn't even finish high school like alla you. I had to leave school cuz I had other things to do, but I did 'em and now I'm fine. Wait. Y'all had whisky and didn't think to tell me? You lousy sons a bitches.

RACHELLE/JOEY/ALEXA/CAROLYN/GAGE

Sorry, Judy.

(GAGE quickly pours her a shot and hands it to her. She stares at it.)

JUDY

That's fine. I'm used to bein' forgotten. Better than bein' remembered most a the time.

(She downs the shot.)

Ya know, my last Christmas wasn't so bad. Not much money so there wasn't no gifts really. My Aunt Linda farted and that was pretty wonderful. And when I say she farted, I mean she really let one go. Like there was no chance it was the wind or a chair cushion or somethin.' And we all knew who did it. That was a treat. Not for her, but for us, ya know? Nice when you have memories like that. The kind you can bring up years later and they still bring a smile to your face. It

was all fine and good. Ham and mashed potatoes and green beans. It was nice like that 'til the grasshopper pie. That's when the liquor really started to hit and Pop pulled out his Daisy semiautomatic.

GAGE

Oh speaking of . . .

(GAGE pulls the pack of bullets from his pocket again.)

Does this look right for Mike's piece?

JUDY

Ain't a piece; it's a rifle. Get it straight.

(GAGE nods obediently. JUDY looks at the box. ALEXA makes a sound to loudly show her disgust.)

Yeah. Good brand. Get the twenty pack. Cheaper.

GAGE

Cool. Thanks.

JUDY

Uh ya wanna top me off, barkeep?

(GAGE refills her cup and she downs it.)

So. My Ma and Pop got into it and then he ended up chasin' her around the house with the Daisy and she was screamin' "Help! He's gonna kill me! He's gonna do it this time!" Stuff like that. Ya know, he bought that thing right here from the Sportin' Goods Department. Think it was maybe . . . thirty percent off? Not a bad deal.

(JUDY thinks for a minute.)

Ain't that funny? You ever think about how you can buy all manner a guns and ammo up in this piece, but not a *Playboy*? Not that I'm lookin' to buy any nudie mags. It's just funny, ain't it? Bullets, not boobies.

(JUDY chuckles, puts the cup down and starts mopping again.)

RACHELLE

Wait a minute!

JUDY

What?

JOEY

*What happened?*

RACHELLE

Yeah! Was your Ma OK??

(JUDY looks confused, then figures it out.)

JUDY

Oh, yeah. She was fine. He was just chasin' 'er with it. He's never shot at 'er, I don't think. He just likes to wave it around. Makes 'im feel powerful, proolly. My Pop ain't very powerful most a the time. My Uncle Donald got 'im to calm down. Ma went to her room cryin,' ya know? 'Bout an hour or so later, Pop barfed up that grasshopper pie and the living room smelled like rancid Peppermint patties through New Year's, but he's always nice again after he barfs. So all in all, compared to previous years? I'd say it was a really nice Christmas. Nobody called the police. Nobody went to the hospital or jail. It was great!

(All except CAROLYN stare at her, stunned. This amuses JUDY.)

But. I bet to alla you that's the saddest thing you ever heard.

GAGE

(Trying to hold back tears:) No. Not at all.

JUDY

Oh please. I ain't got no call to bitch-n-moan. I got work. I got enough food to eat with my food stamps and WIC cuz I'm pregnant.

ALEXA

Your *pregnant*?

JUDY

Yeah. Didn't I tell ya'll?

CAROLYN

No, you didn't.

JUDY

Well I am. So what?

(Awkward pause.)

JOEY

Congratulations?

(JUDY looks really puzzled, then cracks up laughing.)

JUDY

Oh, yeah right! Like on TV!

ALEXA

You shouldn't be . . . drinking if—

JUDY

Psh! Get outta here with that crap. Two lil' shots ain't gonna hurt nothin'. When my Ma was pregnant with me and my brothers, she drank pure corn whisky everyday on account a her nerves. And none of us came out all busted.

(JUDY thinks.)

Well. One a Jared's eyes is bigger'n the other one, but he can see fine.

(They all stare at JUDY.)

Life's too short to be worryin' about how perfect it *ain't*. Y'all are spoilt.

(JUDY mops off. GAGE wipes his eyes.)

GAGE

My God her life is bleak.

CAROLYN

No, it's not.

ALEXA

The best part of her Christmas was a toss up between her aunt farting and her dad NOT murdering her mother.

CAROLYN

She's fine. That's just Judy.

RACHELLE

She's so smart, too. I wish she could go back to school.

JOEY

Why? If she's happy the way things are, she's happy. She's doesn't have to become something else.

RACHELLE

I know. I didn't say she—

JOEY

If you know, then leave her alone. Her business.

(Beat.)

CAROLYN

Oh no. It's been a while. I should prolly go check on Moose. I mean Caleb.

Caleb? ALEXA

His real name. CAROLYN

I'll come with you, Carolyn. GAGE

I'll come watch. JOEY

What? CAROLYN

Help. I said I'll come help. JOEY

(They exit. RACHELLE and ALEXA look at each other, awkwardly.)

I'm sorry about earlier. ALEXA

Don't worry about it. RACHELLE

I struggle with checking my privilege. All the time. I appreciate you for holding me accountable. I just hope you don't think I'm . . . ALEXA

The "R" word? RACHELLE

(ALEXA looks confused.)

Retarded? ALEXA

Racist. RACHELLE

Oh. Yeah. *That* "R" word. ALEXA  
I guess that is my concern yes.

I think you're all right. RACHELLE

(ALEXA smiles.)

RACHELLE

Are you gonna go home at all this week?

ALEXA

(As in no:) Uh-uh. I'm gonna stick around. Work some extra shifts. Read some books that I don't have time to read during the semester. I'm so ashamed that I still haven't read *Between the World and Me*.

RACHELLE

Aren't your parents gonna miss you?

ALEXA

Well. Ya know?

RACHELLE

No, I don't know. That's why I'm asking.

ALEXA

Well . . . my dad has to be in Sao Paulo for business at the beginning of the year. So he and my Mom thought it might be fun to spend Christmas week and New Year's in Rio and then Mom will fly back and he'll just take a fast train to Sao Paulo. They figured I wouldn't want to be stuck with only them for the week so they went without me.

I'm completely all right with their decision. But I may go home just to say "hi" to Amelia. She's my nanny.

RACHELLE

She still lives at your house even though you're grown up?

ALEXA

(Nervously:) Um-hm. Because. Because she does other things, too. Around the house.

(A moment.)

RACHELLE

Alexa? Would you like to join my family tomorrow for Christmas dinner?

(ALEXA is surprised.)

ALEXA

I wasn't fishing for an invitation or anything! I'll be at the protest tomorrow and we'll probably go to the Chinese buffet or something afterward. Thanks, but I'm fine.

(Beat.)

RACHELLE

I've noticed you in the breakroom a few times. On your lunch break. Not eating.

(ALEX shrugs.)

ALEX

I'm a raw vegan. It's not easy for me to find proper food.

RACHELLE

Then why do you steal creamers? They aren't non-dairy.

(Silence. ALEXA suddenly seems terrified, caught.)

Are your parents *really* in Brazil?

ALEXA

(Small:) Why would I lie?

RACHELLE

I don't know.

ALEXA

I'm not lying. I'm a middle-class privileged WASP-y white feminist. Just like you said.

(Beat.)

RACHELLE

It would be my pleasure to have you join my family tomorrow for Christmas dinner. Would you like to?

(A moment.)

ALEXA

Yes please.

RACHELLE

Good.

ALEXA

What time?

RACHELLE

Come anytime after 2. We probably won't sit down to eat until about 3 or 3:30.

ALEXA

Thank you.

RACHELLE

You're welcome.

ALEXA

Oh! Should I bring something!

RACHELLE

God no! My mother is the ONLY one who cooks in the house. There will be plenty and the last thing we need is some white people Jell-O salad.

ALEXA

Oh, right. We do like that.

RACHELLE

Part of me wants to try it someday, though. I guess I can thank my dad's genes for that curiosity.

(KELLY crosses angrily, doing some task.)

ALEXA

I got the impression we weren't supposed to see your face any more this shift.

(KELLY flips ALEXA the bird and keeps moving.)

(To RACHELLE:) I shouldn't pick on her. I actually feel bad for her sometimes. She calls out Moose for being stuck in high school, but her only friends are from her cheerleading squad.

(ALEXA glances at her watch.)

If Carolyn asks, I'm on a pee break.

(ALEXA dashes off. KELLY crosses back.)

RACHELLE

For what it's worth, I agree with you.

(KELLY stops and turns to RACHELLE.)

About

(Whispers:) Moose.

I think he's a nice guy, but babying him isn't helping him in the slightest.

KELLY

Thank you!

RACHELLE

Was still a bitch move to call him out like that.



KELLY

But you think I'm right.

RACHELLE

Yeah.

KELLY

So really you're just as much of a bitch as I am. You just don't want people to *think* you are.

(Pause.)

RACHELLE

Touché.

KELLY

I rarely say anything about him, because honestly—what is there to say? But it drives me crazy. Everyone that works here is totally kind to him and he still walks around like he's this sad little outcast. It's too pathetic.

RACHELLE

I know! I mean, *fuck!* This is not the greatest town by any stretch, but if you're gonna live here, you gotta at least *try* to make it work!

KELLY

Why do you stick around?

RACHELLE

(Shrugs:) 'S the only place I've ever known. After my dad died, I didn't feel right leaving my Mom. But there's a lot I do like about living here.

KELLY

And you want to be a teacher?

RACHELLE

Yeah. My hope is to teach in the elementary school where I went.

KELLY

But don't you just get furious at all the redneck assholes around here?

RACHELLE

For real? All the fuckin' time! It's just – If I let myself stop and think about it, on a bad day? Yeah. I'd probably decide this place is hopeless and that I need to get the hell out. But I don't wanna do that. That's what *everyone* does. What about the little kids like me? The specks in the snow? They can't help it if they were born here. It would've made a big difference when I was small if I'd seen one adult face, outside of my family, that I could respect that wasn't a white one. A teacher, a doctor, a librarian— someone doing something valuable. I wanna try

to be that person for the black and brown littles in this town. If I can give kids hope that they don't have to grow up to be addicts or criminals, that would make livin' here worth it for me.

(KELLY smiles.)

KELLY

That's nice. I like that a lot.

RACHELLE

What about you?

KELLY

Oh God no! I could never be a teacher. Kids are gross.

RACHELLE

Yeah but what do you wanna be?

(A moment.)

Come on. I know you don't wanna be a cashier forever.

KELLY

It's totally dumb.

RACHELLE

Tell me.

KELLY

You'll judge me.

RACHELLE

No I won't.

KELLY

I wanna be a dancer.

RACHELLE

Really?

KELLY

See! I told you, it's dumb.

RACHELLE

No it's not! That's so cool! You wanna be like a real . . . artist.

KELLY

I just don't know how to do it. Like I don't even know where to start.

RACHELLE

Probably by dancing.

KELLY

Well yeah, but—

RACHELLE

Seriously. You should probably be dancing everyday.

KELLY

(Shy:) How?

(RACHELLE thinks.)

RACHELLE

Do you take ballet lessons?

KELLY

I did. But my teacher became a Mennonite and decided all forms of art were evil so she's no help these days.

RACHELLE

Seems like everyone goes nuts eventually. Like it's the law.

KELLY

One of my high school friends, though. Her mom has a studio. So what? I should like ask to dance there?

RACHELLE

Why not?

Maybe you could help her teach classes. *Advanced* classes. That way you can avoid the gross kids. And . . . maybe you could choreograph, too. I don't know. It's something.

(KELLY loves this idea.)

KELLY

Wow.

Why haven't we ever talked before?

RACHELLE

I know right?

KELLY / RACHELLE

I wanted to.

KELLY

What?

RACHELLE

What?

KELLY

I wanted to talk to you. You always seemed interesting to me.  
(A profound compliment:) I have never found you boring.

RACHELLE

Same.

KELLY

Then why'd we take so long?

RACHELLE

I might've judged you unfairly. Still thinking you were this cheerleader chick and not much else. But I hoped I was wrong. And I was.

KELLY

You're right. You were.  
You coulda figured that out if you'd ever asked. Why didn't you?

RACHELLE

I don't know about you, but I always put off doing the hard stuff that could possibly make me happy. It's sad. I feel like we think "oh not today. Maybe tomorrow. Maybe next week. Maybe when Mercury's out of retrograde." Like there's just this infinite amount of time to—

(KELLY leans in. She hesitates and starts to lean back, but then RACHELLE quickly kisses her on the mouth. It is a sweet, solid kiss. They hear others coming and break.)

KELLY

I better get out of sight.

RACHELLE

Yeah yeah totally.

(They giggle nervously.)

RACHELLE

Kelly? Do you wanna maybe . . . hang out? Like after—

KELLY

YES.

RACHELLE

Good.

Maybe even . . .

KELLY

Tomorrow night?

KELLY / RACHELLE

Ha!

KELLY

Yeah.

RACHELLE

Yeah. Me, too. Good.  
Uh – bye.

KELLY

(KELLY exits grinning from ear to ear. CAROLYN, GAGE, and JOEY reenter with MOOSE.)

Sorry, Carolyn.

MOOSE

Stop apologizing. We understand.

CAROLYN

But I need you to know how sorry I am.

MOOSE

I do.

CAROLYN

I am so sorry.

MOOSE

I know!

CAROLYN

I need a thicker skin.

MOOSE

Truly.

RACHELLE

(CAROLYN shoots RACHELLE a warning look.)

GAGE  
I can be sensitive, too, Moose. Like the thing I was starting to say before when you kept cutting me off to cry? It was this one time I did the Ricky Roma “you don’t know what the shot is” monologue for my acting class and I had worked so

frickin' hard on it. And when I was done, my acting teacher was like "why don't you try Neil Simon next time." I just stood there shaking and a few people laughed and after class I cried like a baby. We all have our things.

JOEY

I don't.

GAGE

Don't what?

JOEY

I don't have anything that makes me freak out and run away or cry. I don't have anything like that.

CAROLYN

That's a little hard to believe.

RACHELLE

What about when people talk about your Mom?

JOEY

What? Like when they say she's a slut or a junkie? Or say my dad should get a paternity test? I don't care. Alla that's true.

CAROLYN

Don't mean it doesn't hurt.

JOEY

Why should it hurt me? *I* didn't do anything wrong.

(JUDY pushes her bucket through.)

JUDY

Y'all sure like to talk. Don't nobody do no work around here?

(ALEXA reenters.)

ALEXA

God! Old Crow just runs right through me.

(JUDY looks at ALEXA.)

JUDY

Did you just pee?

ALEXA

Yeah, why?

(JUDY sighs and heads back to clean the bathroom again.)

JUDY

Y'all are on my last nerve tonight.

(JUDY exits.)

CAROLYN

We can start locking up. I'll program the alarms. When you're all done, come back out here cuz I wanna say somethin' to everyone.

GAGE

Oh, man.

JOEY

What did we do?

CAROLYN

(Laughing:) You're not in trouble. I just want to have a quick huddle before we go off into the night. Is that all right?

(They mumble different assents.)

Thank you.

(They scatter. CAROLYN goes to a computerized system on the wall that is close by. MOOSE follows her.)

MOOSE

Carolyn.

(CAROLYN jumps.)

CAROLYN

Oh. I didn't realize you were still standin' here.

MOOSE

I won't say I'm sorry again, because I know you don't want me to. I do want you to know that you don't have to babysit me. I plan on working on myself this year. I want to get stronger.

CAROLYN

I'm glad.

MOOSE

I feel like – I feel grateful to you.

CAROLYN

(Not sure how to respond:) Well. OK.

(MOOSE smiles. So does CAROLYN and she goes back to her work.)

MOOSE

I don't know why I let Kelly get to me. She's was one of the ones. The beautiful people. There were the beautiful people and then there were the normal people and then there were the freak people like me. That kind of thing gets decided really early. Elementary school. I don't know why. It isn't fair.

CAROLYN

The important thing is you got through it, right?

MOOSE

Is that the important thing?

CAROLYN

Isn't it?

(She looks up at MOOSE.)

MOOSE

No. The important thing is it was wrong. I shouldn't have been singled out for being different. There's no positive spin to torment, Carolyn.

(Beat.)

CAROLYN

What good does it do to stay stuck in the past?

MOOSE

Now you sound like Kelly.

CAROLYN

Well . . .

(A moment.)

MOOSE

Well what?

CAROLYN

I'm sorry. You're right. Your tormentors were wrong. Very wrong. However, I now see an intelligent, inquisitive, and interesting man standing before me. So, who's having the last laugh?

(MOOSE smiles a radiant smile.)

MOOSE

I'll be right back.



(MOOSE races off. CAROLYN goes back to what she was doing. KAITLYN appears.)

KAITLYN

Hi. There.

CAROLYN

Can I help you?

KAITLYN

I heard that you want to meet the staff soon before the end of the shift. I'm wondering if Kelly should be at that meeting.

CAROLYN

I've said all I need to say to Kelly today. She can stay wherever she is until it's time to clock out.

KAITLYN

Would it change anything if I said she's sorry?

(CAROLYN looks at KAITLYN.)

CAROLYN

What difference does it make to you? Or her for that matter? I know she's only doin' this job cuz she has nothing else to do in her life right now. She's not living paycheck to paycheck like most of us. Your parents take care a the both a yas and prolly always will.

KAITLYN

No. I'm moving out as soon as I can.

CAROLYN

We all think that, honey.

KAITLYN

It's true. I'm going to get into Brown and major in semiotics.

(CAROLYN has no idea what she's talking about and doesn't want to ask.)

CAROLYN

Well. Bless your heart.

KAITLYN

She's their favorite anyway. If she ever did get some independence, I bet they'd bribe her to stay.

CAROLYN

Why are you here? Lettin' her push you around?

She's got dirt on me. KAITLYN

Real dirt? CAROLYN

Yeah. KAITLYN  
Can't say what it is.

'S fine. None a my business anyway. CAROLYN

(CAROLYN sighs. MOOSE returns, surprised to see KAITLYN.)

All right. If your sister can offer him a sincere, heartfelt apology . . . she's off the hook. For now. But it *better* be sincere.

I'll let her know. KAITLYN

(KAITLYN awkwardly exits.)

Carolyn? MOOSE

(Getting a hair impatient with him:) Yes, Moose? I – I mean Caleb? CAROLYN

This is for you. MOOSE

(MOOSE hands her a package hastily wrapped.)

Oh, you shouldn't have gotten me a present. CAROLYN

I wanted to. MOOSE  
Please. Open it.

(CAROLYN opens it. She stares in confusion. The gift is a loose length of sisal rope and a set of XXL thermal underwear.)

Oh. Um – thank you. CAROLYN

MOOSE

It's a practical gift.

You mentioned once that Minka scratches up your couch. Well on the Internet, I saw that you can make a scratching post just using glue and rope. I'll send you the video. And I got you the—

CAROLYN

Yes. I know what thermal underwear is for.

MOOSE

But did you know about its alternative uses?

CAROLYN

I'm sure you can send me that video, too.

(Awkward pause.)

MOOSE

Do you like the gift?

CAROLYN

Well it's certainly . . . unique.

MOOSE

I didn't want to get you something conventional.

CAROLYN

Well done.

MOOSE

I'm saying too many things, aren't I? Sometimes I say too many things.

(CAROLYN stares at him.)

CAROLYN

No. You're fine.

(He nods, but is even more anxious now.)

MOOSE

I was thinking about Fat Baby maybe. For when we get drinks. You ever been there?

CAROLYN

Sure. Every now and then.

MOOSE

They have the best wings and a good music selection. A lotta Maroon 5. I know you like them.

How'd you know that? CAROLYN

I pay attention. To you. MOOSE

Caleb? CAROLYN

Yes, Carolyn? MOOSE

CAROLYN  
How do I – I just – I don't know if us gettin' a drink after work is such a good idea after all.

(Silence.)

I don't mean we shouldn't hang out, but if we do, I think we only should if some other members of the team join us.

Why? MOOSE

CAROLYN  
I just think it's more appropriate that way.

MOOSE  
The whole point was to be alone with you.

CAROLYN  
(Laughing nervously:) Wouldn't want you to claim sexual harassment or anything.

MOOSE  
You didn't think about that before.

CAROLYN  
It's true. I wasn't thinkin' as clearly at that moment. As I am now.

(Beat.)

But I'm sure we'll have just as much of a good time.

When? MOOSE

CAROLYN  
'Scuse me?

MOOSE

When will we have this team hang out?

CAROLYN

Uh – I don't know. Maybe second, third week a January? Once everything calms down, ya know? We'll figure it—

(Suddenly all the lights go out. There's a brief silence, then sounds of cursing and complaining from all over the store.)

Dammit to hell!

'Scuse my language.

(On the radio:) Judy? Do you copy me?

(JUDY enters walking pokily with a tool belt. She doesn't seem to care about the darkness.)

JUDY

Already on it.

(She exits. The others trickle in from wherever they've been.)

CAROLYN

Dear lord please, please, *please* be the circuit breaker.

GAGE

How do we clock out if we're in a blackout?

CAROLYN

Judy is gonna try to fix it.

(A bright flashlight illuminates some of their faces. The flashlight is held by KELLY.)

KELLY

Yes, it's Kelly. Evil Kelly.

RACHELLE

Bearing the gift of light.

ALEXA

Did you just have that ready to go?

KELLY

I'm very resourceful.

KAITLYN

(Mumbling:) *I'm* the one that found the batteries.

KELLY

Where's Moose?

(She shines the light over all of their faces, obnoxiously, until she spots MOOSE.)

Moose, I am very sorry that I snapped at you earlier. You have the right to be however you want to be. That was a sincere apology. Nothing I said was fake. Do you accept?

(Silence.)

I'm really trying to be a team player right now.

CAROLYN

It sounds like she means it. Whadya say? Moose?

(MOOSE flinches at CAROLYN reverting to calling him MOOSE. He tries to catch her eye, but she won't look at him.)

MOOSE

Fine.

(A few lights come on, but not the regular ones. These are generator-powered and cast a different type of glow.)

ALEXA

Lights are coming back. That's good.

CAROLYN

Not good.

ALEXA

Not good?

CAROLYN

Those are the emergency lights.

(JUDY reappears moving at her typically slow pace. She tosses a few flashlights around and the others snap them on. She stops and looks around at all of their partially illuminated faces. Everyone waits for JUDY to make a pronouncement.)

JUDY

Is it just me, or is this place a clam bake?

(A moment.)

GAGE

Fine. I'll ask. What the hell does that mean?

JUDY

Tons and tons a clams. Vagendas. The opposite of a sausage party?

GAGE

Ohhhhhhhhh.

(He laughs.)

That's funny.

(Then he stops laughing.)

Wait a minute. *I'm* here. *Moose* is here.

JUDY

What's your point?

CAROLYN

So?? I'm guessing it's not the circuit.

JUDY

Nah. I *would* suggest gettin' the heck outta here. The only problem is . . .

(JUDY opens the door or pulls up a blind or something to the outside, which is pitch black.)

Power's out all over. No street lamps, no traffic lights. I think y'all better get comfortable.

RACHELLE

WHAT?

KELLY

Oh no we are getting out of here.

(KELLY runs for the door, but JUDY blocks her; nobody's gettin' past JUDY.)

JUDY

Yeah I don't think so, prom queen.

Wait 'til first light. Then you can drive. Maybe. If the plows have been out.

CAROLYN

Wait. A second. You mean we might be stuck here all of tomorra?

(JUDY shrugs.)

JUDY

Maybe. I dunno. I ain't psychic.

(JUDY doesn't give a shit.)

KAITLYN

The whole town has lost power because of a *snowstorm*? That's the dumbest thing I've ever heard!

ALEXA

Yet another reason I'm moving to Europe.

JUDY

(Deadly serious:) Looks like it's one a them "acts a God." That's what caused it. Could be the snow. Could be the Russians. Either way, you gotta embrace the darkness now. You don't got a choice.

(They are all fucking freaked!)

Or not. I'on't care.

Better call your people. Alert 'em to the situation.

(JUDY moves off.)

JOEY

Where is she even going?

GAGE

(To CAROLYN:) Phones, Carolyn.

CAROLYN

OK. Yes yes. I'll get your phones for you.

I just wanted to quickly thank you all for all your hard work these past several months.

KELLY

You're welcome.

CAROLYN

Supervisin' your peers isn't the easiest thing to do, but you've helped me a lot. I want you all to know that I'm proud to work with you. Like right now, for instance? A lotta folks would be panicking or cursin' me out or who knows what? But you all are strong and smart and I appreciate you.

MOOSE

(Sadly:) Thanks, Carolyn.

(The rest sort of mumble uncomfortable "thank you's." This moment



isn't as moving as CAROLYN expected it to be, but she decides it will do.)

CAROLYN

That's it. I – uh – I don't have anything else.

(CAROLYN rushes to the cupboard where she's locked up their phones.)

KAITLYN

(To KELLY:) This really sucks.

KELLY

Shoulda thought a that before you misbehaved, wild woman.

JOEY

We didn't do anything.

(KELLY and RACHELLE exchange a subtle, but knowing glance.)

KELLY

I dunno. There are worse ways to spend a Christmas Eve.

ALEXA

You could be one a the girls kidnapped by Boko Haram.

JOEY

Or awaitin' your lass stay a execution.

MOOSE

Or burying your dead dog.

ALEXA

Or working in a Lucky Daze sweatshop in Bangladesh.

JOEY

Or! Or you could be one a the people Jeffrey Dahmer chopped up and ate.

(Brief pause.)

ALEXA

That's a pretty good one.

GAGE

Bullshit. This sucks and you all *know* it sucks!

RACHELLE

Oh really? So you can read my mind?

(KELLY giggles; she and RACHELLE are still being cute, but quickly break it up before anyone notices.)

ALEXA

It's interesting. Spending the most wholly consumerist holiday of the year in this hideous monument to consumerism disguised as an egalitarian bargain basement for the poor. I'd say it's poetic, but it's too on the nose.

MOOSE

I could take a look outside.

(A few of them look at him.)

Just like to see?

GAGE

To see what? The lights are all out.

MOOSE

No, but like to see if they're on in any other neighborhoods.

RACHELLE

How would you see that from here?

(MOOSE is confused.)

MOOSE

I don't know. I could go on the roof.

(CAROLYN returns.)

CAROLYN

Nobody's going on the roof!

JOEY

There's only two floors. You wouldn't be able to see anything.

MOOSE

I just want to help.

(A pause.)

CAROLYN

Thank you, Moose. We're all grateful to you. Aren't we?

MOOSE

What do they have to be grateful for? I didn't do anything.

CAROLYN

But you *wanted* to.

MOOSE

A person who comes in last place in an Olympic event wants the gold medal. The person should not receive the gold medal anyway or be congratulated for winning when everyone knows he didn't.

RACHELLE

I completely agree, Moose.

MOOSE

I didn't ask for your fucking help and my name is Caleb.

(Silence.)

RACHELLE

(Carefully:) OK. But I was agreeing with you, Caleb. For the record.

CAROLYN

Right. From now on, call him Caleb. Get used to it. I have to get used to it, too. We'll get you a new nametag on Friday. All right?

(MOOSE doesn't respond.)

*All right?* Caleb?

(MOOSE nods, but clearly doesn't feel any better. An awkward pause. CAROLYN doesn't have the phones.)

GAGE

Um Carolyn...?

CAROLYN

What, hon?

RACHELLE

Where are the phones?

CAROLYN

Oh goodness yes! I came back here cuz I couldn't find the key I locked 'em up with, which is just silly.

(CAROLYN looks around the space.)

JOEY

You're not messing with us, are you?

CAROLYN

*What?*

JOEY

Like that prison experiment they did in California?

CAROLYN

Stop being paranoid.

(She continues looking.)

I *know* I just had it.

GAGE

I could pick the lock.

CAROLYN

We're not quite there yet.

RACHELLE

We're not? Cuz some of us do have families that occasionally worry about us.

CAROLYN

(Flipping out:) *Will you get off my back?!*

(Silence.)

I'm sorry. But I am doing the very best that I can. I did not mean to misplace the key. If you would be so good as to help me find it, that would be wonderful. If we have to pick the lock, then we do, but not before doing a brief and thorough search. You all may not realize this, but whenever Lucky Daze property is damaged in any way, paying for repairs and/or replacements comes right out of the supervisor's paycheck whether she is responsible or not. I have a disabled mother and a two-year-old and I let you drink whisky earlier! The least you can do is help me!

RACHELLE

Sorry, Carolyn.

GAGE

Yeah, we're sorry. We'll help.

MOOSE

Maybe you left it in the break room.

JOEY

I'll check the utilities closet.

(MOOSE and JOEY exit. The others look around, quickly but

thoroughly. Everyone seems distressed, except for RACHELLE and KELLY. When they come near one another, they grin. No one else notices. Well, maybe KAITLYN does. At some point, CAROLYN gets down on the floor looking under everything and everyone imitates her by getting down on the floor, too. Out of nowhere, ALEXA starts to laugh.)

CAROLYN

I don't see anything funny about this situation.

ALEXA

No, I know. It's terrible. It just reminds me of something that happened to me in high school when I was in drama club.

(GAGE stops looking and eyes ALEXA.)

GAGE

You were in drama club? You've been holding out on me!

ALEXA

Pipe down, little Barrymore.

CAROLYN

Can you guys look *and* talk?

ALEXA

We had this idiot teacher that would lead us in these acting exercises, right? Be a book. Be a tree. Breathe from your ass.

CAROLYN

He said that to high schoolers?

ALEXA

All the time.

(CAROLYN shakes her head in disapproval.)

So this one time, we were mirroring him as a class and he started doing these really strange movements that were all twisty and twitchy.

(ALEXA imitates him.)

And we tried to do that. Then he fell on the ground, so we did that, too. He started grabbing at his pants and it wasn't until he got his phone out that we realized something wasn't right.

(ALEXA cracks up so hard for a minute she can't speak.)

He was having a seizure!

(She tries to calm herself.)

ALEXA

We just thought it was the most challenging mirror exercise ever.

(They all stare at her now.)

Anyway. We were all moving around exactly like Carolyn just now and it made me think of that day.

CAROLYN

You find a man's seizure that funny?

ALEXA

Oh no! It was sad. I'm laughing at our stupidity. Just the idea that all fifteen of us misunderstood his situation so wildly. That's what's funny. To me.

RACHELLE

Was he OK?

(A beat. ALEXA thinks.)

ALEXA

Yes. Yes he was. Well. He did die a few months later, but that was because of a car accident.

CAROLYN

Oh my lord.

GAGE

What roles did you play?

ALEXA

What?

GAGE

In high school. Senior year I was Willy Loman.

ALEXA

Portia.

GAGE

Caesar or—

ALEXA

Merchant.

GAGE

(Impressed:) Nice.

CAROLYN

Crap on a flapjack!!  
I give up. Go ahead, Gage. Go pick the lock.

GAGE

All righty.

(He exits. JUDY and JOEY appear eating chips from a giant bag.)

CAROLYN

Guess you didn't see the key.

JOEY

I got distracted because Judy had chips.

(ALEXA, RACHELLE, KELLY, and KAITLYN run over to her  
and scarf down some chips. JUDY pulls a few packs of Skittles and  
Junior Mints from her pockets and hands them around.)

CAROLYN

Seriously, Judy?

JUDY

Dock me. Won't hardly make a diff.

CAROLYN

But you got a baby on the way.

JUDY

Gimme a break, will ya? It's my lil' Christmas present to them.

CAROLYN

Well. Since we are on Lucky Daze property and the new rules are in effect, I  
guess we should say "holiday" present.

(They stare at each other for a seconds, then bust out laughing.)

JUDY

I never did go in for that bullshit.

CAROLYN

I know! I mean who are we kiddin'?

ALEXA

(Mouth full:) Have you ever had an employee here that was actually religious  
and *not* Christian?

CAROLYN

Not that I know of.

JUDY

We did have that boy from the university that said he was a Rasty Farian. Turned out, he just wanted an excuse to smoke weed.

CAROLYN

Oh I forgot all about him.

JUDY

He wasn't a black, though. So when they fired 'im, it wasn't racist.

RACHELLE

Thank you for the snacks and—as always—the cultural sensitivity, Judy.

JUDY

You're welcome, hon.

CAROLYN

You thought any about names yet?

JUDY

For the baby? Yeah. Hans Gruber if it's a boy. Apricot if it's a girl.

(CAROLYN thinks about these names for a second.)

CAROLYN

Not bad.

JOEY

I like it better like this. The regular lights make my headaches worse.

CAROLYN

I told you: Excedrin geltabs and cut out the chocolate.

JOEY

I need *some*thin' to live for.

(GAGE comes back angry.)

RACHELLE

Where are the phones?

GAGE

Damn thing must be some kinda like military strength lock.

CAROLYN

You couldn't get it open???



GAGE

Where did you get that thing?

CAROLYN

Aisle 8.

GAGE

Nope. There's no way that is a normal, civilian lock.

(JUDY shoves a handful of chips into her mouth, then wipes her hands off on her pants.)

JUDY

(Mouth very full:) Show me it.

GAGE

I'm telling you: there's no way to break that lock.

JUDY

And I'm tellin' you: Clam. Bake.

(JUDY exits and GAGE follows her grumpily. After a few moments, the normal lights slowly come back on and the safeties go out. Also, a few street lamps from outside start to come on. Everyone cheers!)

CAROLYN

Hallelujah! You guys! We should sing a carol.

RACHELLE

No.

JOEY

I suggested you sing one earlier and you ignored me.

CAROLYN

That was different. You were bein' a smart bee-hind! But *this* – this is like a miracle or somethin'.

ALEXA

I don't believe in God so I'm not going to sing a carol.

(CAROLYN holds back everything she wants to say because she is not cool with that atheism crap.)

CAROLYN

OK then. What about other . . . holiday traditions. Anyone wanna suggest one?

KAITLYN

We could dress up like Black Peter!

What?  
JOEY

What?  
RACHELLE

What?  
KELLY  
Stop acting like you're from Holland! Nobody wants to hear about Black Peter!

(To KELLY:) Black Peter?  
RACHELLE

(Under her breath:) I'll tell you later.  
KELLY

What about this: The gratitude game.  
CAROLYN

Sounds too personal.  
JOEY

No no no. Lightning round. We just go around the circle or whatever this shape is we're standing in, and everyone has to say one thing you're grateful for and we have to do it 3 times. I tried to get my family to do this last Christmas after I read *The Secret* and they just couldn't take it seriously, but I know y'all can.  
CAROLYN

This sounds like work, Carolyn.  
KELLY

It's good for us! I'll start.  
I'm grateful that my co-workers are also my friends. Next.  
CAROLYN

Um . . .  
RACHELLE

Don't think too hard. Just say the first thought that comes to ya!  
CAROLYN

I'm grateful for—  
RACHELLE

(She looks at KELLY.)

New possibilities.  
(KELLY blushes. KAITLYN notices.)

CAROLYN

A bit vague, but – OK, sure. Now you.

KELLY

OK. I'm grateful for . . . secret kisses.

KAITLYN

Whoa.

JOEY

I'm grateful . . . for this job.

CAROLYN

Wonderful.

ALEXA

I'm grateful for all social justice warriors that gave their life fighting the good fight.

KELLY

(Sotto voce:) Of course you are.

KAITLYN

I'm grateful for . . .

(KAITLYN thinks, then eyes KELLY.)

Every bit of new information I learn.

(She smiles deviously. KELLY glares at her.)

CAROLYN

Good! Gratitude for education is perfect.  
Two more rounds and let's make it fast this time.  
I'm grateful for my daughter's smile.

RACHELLE

I'm grateful—

CAROLYN

Let's just skip that part and say whatever it is.

RACHELLE

For the time I had with my Dad.

KELLY

My iPhone.

McDonald's dollar menu. JOEY

My intellect. ALEXA

Focaccia. KAITLYN

That was *perfect*! Last round! CAROLYN

Wait. What about the others? Why don't they have to do this? JOEY

First of all, this is a privilege, not a chore. Second of all, soon's they come back, I'm gonna make 'em do three each! CAROLYN

Here we go!  
My Mama's cooking!

Oh. Uh – RACHELLE

Now we lost our rhythm. Come on, quick! CAROLYN

Cat videos. RACHELLE

Merce Cunningham. KELLY

(To KELLY:) What? KAITLYN

Shut up. KELLY

Clean underwear. JOEY

Dinner at Rachele's tomorrow. ALEXA

(They all stop and look at her.)

Oh, sorry, Rachele. Was that a secret?

RACHELLE

(Unsure:) No.

KELLY

What's she talking about?

RACHELLE

Believe me: it's not a big deal.

KAITLYN

I'm telling Mom you're a lesbian now.

KELLY

Fuck off, retard!

CAROLYN

I don't believe you all! Here we are showing gratitude for all our blessings and this is *still* how you treat each other?!

(GAGE and JUDY reenter. JUDY, a tad triumphantly, with the phones.)

JUDY

What are y'all ho biscuits fussin' about now?

(All except CAROLYN descend on JUDY to find their phones.)

CAROLYN

I just don't understand. You are all so fortunate! So—

(With no warning, MOOSE enters with an assault-style rifle and opens fire. First on KELLY then on a screaming KAITLYN, then on RACHELLE, then on JOEY. ALEXA tries to run, but he gets her in the back. Then he shoots GAGE in the forehead and JUDY in the stomach and they collapse. Things are happening **way** too fast and CAROLYN is too petrified to speak or move. There may be a few slight movements. If there is, MOOSE takes care of them, shooting until all is still. CAROLYN stands, staring at him, trembling. Deep silence. They stare at each other for an immeasurable amount of time. Then he makes a sudden movement to his pocket and pulls a key from it.)

MOOSE

You left the key in the break room.

(He bends down and slides it across the floor to CAROLYN. She doesn't move.)

He did say that thing about time only existing so everything doesn't happen at

once, but that's not really true. He put it that way in order to make a Daedalean concept sound simple. In reality, time exists so we don't *perceive* that everything happens at once. It's too much for our linear minds. But everything does. Everything is simultaneous. It all is and isn't at the exact same . . . time. The erection of the pyramids, Jews and other undesirables being gassed at Auschwitz, Christ on the cross. Your birth. It's all happened and it's all happening and it all will happen. I found my dog, Duchess, cold and stiff last Christmas morning and she hadn't even been sick. I dug a grave for her and buried her all on my own and I was sad but I did not cry. Because death is meaningless in a universe where everything is happening at once. I am already dead and I'm dying and I'm going to die. We have nothing to fear.

(He takes a long look at Carolyn.)

MOOSE

Beautiful, Carolyn. You have nothing to fear.

CAROLYN

(Terrified:) Caleb?

...Why?

(Silence.)

MOOSE

Middle-school girls don't have body odor yet, do they?

(MOOSE waits for a response. CAROLYN can't move.)

I bet they don't. I didn't at age eleven. I didn't. My mother would check me for it periodically and could detect no scent. That didn't matter. They made us take showers every day after P.E. regardless of how much effort we put in. I wasn't good at sports. I wasn't terrible and I wasn't good. We were divided into teams and forced to play basketball. I would run up and down the court with everyone as best I could, but no one ever passed to me and they were right not to. I would've panicked and messed up. I never do things right when other people are watching. However. There was a strange exception to this rule one day. An accident. Ashton Clark passed the ball to Darren Fowler, but it was a bad pass and Darren wasn't paying attention and the ball somehow landed in my hands. I quickly looked around to see if I could pass it off to someone else, but in this nanosecond of time, everything shifted and slowed down and I could see a secret diagram of the whole court and all the people in it and understood geometrically how to play this game. Playing in slow time with the panoramic world in front of me demarcated into right angles, slopes and curves—basketball becomes an immensely easy sport. It was a moment of perfect timelessness. I wonder if that's how Einstein felt when he discovered the theory of general relativity. Out of nowhere, it showed up and probably seemed very obvious to him. I leapt off the ground, shooting the ball into the air and it just swooshed through the net. Like it was the easiest goddamn thing to do in the world. It was a three-pointer. Can

you believe it?

(He actually looks at CAROLYN waiting for a response. She still hasn't moved.)

I couldn't believe it. My team couldn't believe it. The other team couldn't believe it. Mr. Swanson, the gym teacher and athletic coach couldn't believe it. He smiled at me that day as if I were someone special. Someone to be admired above others and that had never happened before. My teammates high-fived me and said things like "Way to go, Freeling!" and "You the man." And I felt like I *was* the man. I think I might have even stood up to my full height after that and walked around a little puffed up. Because that's all it takes really. An accidental reversal of fortune to jumpstart the ego. I didn't hide in the stall to change for our mandatory shower, which I'd normally take as late as possible so everyone was gone. I just did what all the others did. I took my clothes off by the lockers and the benches and a couple of them looked at me and they were quiet. Then some others looked at me and the laughter started. I tried to laugh at first, hoping I could actually be in on the joke this time. But I was the joke. Again. It was too late to hide and there was nothing I could do. So I just stood there as more and more boys from class gathered around to get a look and a laugh.

Darren Fowler was the one to say it. He's the one that missed that pass that led to my moment of triumph.

He said: "Damn, Freeling. What's that thing on your dick? Looks like a fuckin' *Moose!*"

But

It's just a birthmark.

(Swiftly, MOOSE puts the gun in his mouth and pulls the trigger.)

(CAROLYN can't move. Deep silence. After several moments, she slowly looks around. No one seems to be breathing, but her. \*I'm really interested in building a brief, but intricate terror ballet for CAROLYN. A physical vocabulary that can be played with and built upon. At the end of it, she looks at her trembling hands as if they are foreign objects she doesn't understand. There is a stirring. KELLY attempts to move, to speak, though she can't. Maybe she can make small sounds. CAROLYN races to her. She dumps the bag of phones, quickly gets one and dials 9-1-1. KELLY grabs her hand and CAROLYN holds on tight. The OPERATOR's voice will be amplified so that it can be heard.)

OPERATOR

What is your emergency?

CAROLYN

...

OPERATOR

Hello? You've reached 9-1-1. What is your emergency?

(KELLY slowly releases CAROLYN's hand. She dies. CAROLYN screams.)

OPERATOR

Ma'am? Can you hear me? I need your location.

(Weeping and screaming, CAROLYN digs through the phones like an animal searching for her own. She finally finds it and turns it on. It immediately starts ringing. Her ring tone is "Sugar" by Maroon 5. The ringing stops. Then after a moment, it immediately begins again. CAROLYN finally answers.)

CAROLYN

(Weak:) . . . Mama?

Blackout

**End of play**