

ACT I (35 MIN): SCENE 1

ANDY AND SARAH: SCENE 1/3 (8 MIN)

Andy and Sarah have previously arrived at the mountain resort they are staying at for a few days before Christmas and are sitting down for dinner. A piano player is lightly playing Christmas music in the background.

Andy: Man, this place is nice!

Sarah: It's a good thing we won this trip because I don't think we could ever afford to stay here. I mean, the room is absolutely beautiful, everything here is so romantic and the food smells amazing! I am starving!

Waiter: Good evening sir. Ma'am. Welcome to The Summit. Just the two of you this evening?

Andy: Just us.

Sarah: [To Andy] Just the two of us. I love the sound of that!

Waiter: Follow me please. [Seats Andy and Sarah and pours water] Here are your menus. Your waiter will be with you shortly. Enjoy your meal.

Sarah: Thank you. [To Andy] You think the kids are doing ok?

Andy: We agreed not to mention the kids for the next couple of days, remember?

Sarah: Right. No kids. [Long pause while looking at menu] So do you think they are ok?

Andy: I'm sure they are doing just fine. In fact, I bet my dad is trying to keep up with Emma as we speak and Landon is probably getting his first taste of every sweet imaginable.

Sarah: I feel so guilty for leaving them during the holidays.

Andy: We'll be back for Christmas Eve and it's about time you and I had a few days to ourselves. We haven't had a break for three years! This contest we won is a huge blessing so let's enjoy every minute we have. Besides, I have a feeling you'll get over your guilt quickly. Maybe this afternoon during ski lessons?

Sarah: Oh, I doubt that! I'm not 100% sold on the idea of rocketing down a mountain on two little boards in the middle of blizzards and freezing temperatures. You know what I'm looking forward to? Relaxing. Warm baths, a good book, maybe an afternoon at that spa we walked by. No children yelling at each other or fighting for my attention every minute. Pure bliss.

Andy: You deserve it all. Whatever you want.

[A resort staff member gets on the stage and welcomes a singer for the evening's entertainment. "The Christmas Song" is sung while everyone enjoys. Afterwards, a piano player takes the stage to play some Christmas background music.]

Sarah: I love that song.

Andy: That was really good.

Hey, I've been meaning to mention that Pastor's wife said to say hello last week. [Sarah nods, but doesn't respond.] She wanted me to tell you that her invitation for coffee is still open if you want to go. [Sarah acknowledges but doesn't respond again.] There's going to be a special night of music on Christmas night. I really think you'll enjoy the service. I thought it would be something fun to do.

Sarah: I'm just not sure I'm ready yet Andy.

Andy: [pauses] It's been almost two years. I don't want to force you into anything, but Sarah, my life has dramatically changed.

Sarah: I know. You tell me constantly. And I see it. You've become a better person and husband and father...and that's great, but...

Andy: It's not just about being a better person. Sarah, I've learned that this time we're having right now, as incredible, enjoyable and precious as it is, it's a blink in the eyes of eternity. I don't want just a few moments with you and the kids Sarah. I want eternity together.

Sarah: I'm not going anywhere Andy.

Andy: [feeling defeated] I know. Just think about it while we're up here, away from the stresses of everyday life.

Sarah: Sure. Ok. I wonder how our kids are doing? [Andy stares and she laughs.] I'm kidding! So what's for dinner?

ACT I: SCENE 2

JOSIAH & BROOKE: SCENE 1/3 (3 MIN)

The couple is sitting at their kitchen table pouring over what seems like a hopeless pile of unpaid bills and discussing the events that got them into debt. There is a lot of obvious tension between them.

[Brooke is sitting on left, Josiah on right]

Josiah: I've been over these numbers a dozen times. There's no way we're going to be able to pay half of these bills and most are already a couple months late as it is. [Sits back in frustration]

Brooke: Ok. So what do we do?

Josiah: I don't know. [Short pause] I mean, I didn't think we'd be in this position. I haven't been able to find a job since getting laid off six months ago, collectors are all but breaking down the doors, and if I have to choke down one more bowl of mac and cheese... [Both lightly laugh but the humor fades quickly.] I mean, how did we get here?

Brooke: [A little offended.] We both know how we got here.

Josiah: No, look, I'm sorry. I'm not trying to start a fight or throw out any more blame. I'm past that. We'll work through this together, alright?

Brooke: Right. Sure. [Pauses] Look, I know we've talked about it, but we could ask our parents for some help?

Josiah: No way.

Brooke: We're desperate Josiah. We're way past the point of having to hang onto our pride.

Josiah: This mess is ours to solve. I'm not going to go running to my mommy and daddy and ask for a handout. Not after all they did for us for our wedding last year. And I'm certainly not putting more burdens on your parents who are barely making ends meet themselves.

Brooke: Well, there's got to be a solution that gets us out of this. We've cut out almost everything we can, but I'm sure there's something we can get rid of. [Grabs pile of bills and begins to flip through them.] Let's see, phone, water, gas...

[Stage lights go dark]

Brooke: Josiah?

Josiah: [Short pause] Yeah?

Brooke: You uh, didn't happen to pay the power bill did you?

Josiah: I told them the check was in the mail.

Brooke: You told them that three months ago! [No answer. Audience hears emotion in Brooke's voice as she gets overwhelmed by the situation.] Right, well, power is overrated anyway. I'm really sorry honey. I know this isn't what you signed up for. I'll find another job. I'll work as much overtime as possible. Honey, are you there?

Josiah: [Doesn't address comments] I'll go find some candles.

Brooke: We don't have any.

Josiah: Do you know where the flashlight is?

Brooke: No batteries.

Both: [In unison.] We can't afford them.

Josiah: This is pathetic. [Audiences hears Josiah get up and open the door.]

Brooke: Where are you going?

Josiah: To talk with the landlord. There's got to be something we can do here. [Door slams shut.]

ACT I: SCENE 3

MIKE AND ANN – SCENE 1/2 (7 MIN)

Mike and Ann are at home in their living room enjoying a quiet evening. Mike is reading the newspaper and Ann is decorating the tree when the phone rings.

Mike: [picks up phone] Hello? Oh hey David... [To Ann] Your son finally decided to call, let me put him on speaker. David, you there?

Ann: Hi Davy!

David: Hey Mom, Dad. Good to hear your voices!

Mike: How's New York treating you?

Ann: You haven't been mugged yet have you? Is everything ok? Are you eating? Do you need any money? Can we send...?

David: MOM [laughing] Calm down. I'm just fine. I'm on my way to a dinner meeting and had a few minutes so I thought I'd check in.

Mike: A meeting at dinner this close to Christmas? They work you too hard.

David: Ok Dad, I know. How's everything going there?

Mike: Same as always. Nothing new to report here.

Ann: Have you heard from you sister lately?

David: Yeah, we talked last week. College seems to be treating her well.

Ann: We sure do miss having the two of you around.

David: I know. Sorry I couldn't make it home for Christmas this year. You know, work ... well, you know.

Mike: Don't worry about it David. Mom and I are actually looking forward to our first Christmas alone in a long time. Don't get me wrong, we love having you kids around, but we have a nice dinner and quiet evening planned.

David: I'm really happy for you two. You deserve some time alone after all these years. Hey, I have to jet, but keep watching the mail. I sent a few things last week so you should get it any day now.

Ann: Ok. Thanks for calling sweetie.

David: Sure thing mom. I love you both.

Ann: [Gets up to finish decorating the tree with a box of ornaments. Holds up an ornament and recalls a fond memory.] Remember this one Mike? Davy was 5 years old when we made this.

Mike: [Looks up from newspaper.] Isn't that the third ornament we made that night?

Ann: Yep. He ate the first two faster than I could say no. I think the fact that we were baking them made him a little confused.

[Both laugh and eventually Ann's laughter turns to quiet tears. Mike gets up to console his wife.]

I know they're grown but I'm having such a hard time letting go. We've had twenty holidays with them here Mike. I love you, I do, but the house feels so empty without them.

Mike: I know. I miss them too. But we'll adjust just fine. I promise. Why don't we go to bed? It's getting late.

Ann: I'm going to stay up for just a bit longer and finish decorating the tree. You go on. I'll be there in a bit.

[Mike kisses Ann goodnight while Ann puts on an old record. Plays "I'll Be Home For Christmas" while going through an old Christmas box. She quickly finds an old video and plays on TV while video plays on screen for audience. At the end of the song, Ann turns off light and goes to bed to end the scene.]

ACT II (35 MIN): THE SHELTER

The stage has been reset as a high school gymnasium that has been transformed into a temporary shelter. Mike and Ann are already there and the scene opens with their conversation.

Ann: Well, this kinda stinks. Justin and Jill need to move to the city. Who lives in Pine Isles anyway?

Mike: It's not that bad Ann.

Ann: We're stuck here on Christmas Eve! The highway is closed, we can't get to the Christmas party, and we can't get back home until this storm let's up. This is just awful!

[Mike and Ann find a seat as Andy and Sarah enter, brushing snow off their coats.]

Andy: Home sweet home.

Sarah: Very funny. And I especially liked the little bit you just pulled with the officer out front. "Got any room in the inn?" Really, we need to build you that comedy club you've been wanting so you can headline every night.

[Andy just laughs and the two make their way over to a section by Mike and Ann.]

Andy: Excuse me, are these taken?

Mike: I'm afraid...**COT** [Laughter and a wink as Andy quickly joins in.]

Andy: Good one. [Nudges wife.] Funny stuff huh Sarah?

Sarah: Congrats Andy, you found someone to headline with. [To Ann.] Hi, I'm Sarah. You wouldn't happen to know where we could get something to drink, would you?

Ann: [Laughs.] Sure, I'll walk with you.

[Mike and Andy continue to talk while Ann and Sarah have a conversation while they walk across stage to a table set up with drinks.]

Sarah: So Ann, what are you in for?

Ann: My husband and I were headed into town for a Christmas party with a couple of friends.

Sarah: Aw yes, the annual Christmas party. Why is it that certain couples feel obligated to round us all up for finger foods, awkward conversations and silly party games with people we barely know? It's kind of like church, minus the finger foods!

Ann: Silly games? You play a lot of charades in church?

Sarah: I haven't been to church in awhile, but my experience is that it's one

big game of charades for most people.

- Ann: I guess I walked right into that one. We certainly all have our flaws, don't we? But I think that most of us are being as transparent as possible given the circumstances.
- Sarah: And what are those?
- Ann: Well, we're all sinners to begin with, from the pastor in the pulpit to the wanderer in the back row. I'm certainly not surprised to hear that some people are a little guarded, afraid of being judged. You mentioned you haven't been in church for awhile. If you don't mind me asking, what made you stop?
- Sarah: It's a long story.
- Ann: Sweetie, I can tell you don't like it any more than me, but I think we're going to be here for a while.
- Sarah: (Pauses) Do you think just being a good person is enough to get into heaven?
- Ann: I think what I think doesn't matter. I lean on the Bible to answer those questions for me.
- Sarah: That sounds like you're sugarcoating the answer to my question.
- Ann: There is nothing about the Bible that's sugarcoated. It's pretty straight forward. In fact, one of the most well known scriptures says, "I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." Jesus says in John 3:3 that no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again. The Bible also says "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved." And as far as getting into heaven on good works alone, James 2:26 says "For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also." [Pauses] Wow, I'm sorry.
- Sarah: What are you sorry about?
- Ann: I'm actually a little surprised I remembered all of that just like it was yesterday. It's been a long time since I've quoted scripture. Guess I forgot how much it lifts my spirit. [Both quietly agree.] So, what does the husband think about all of this?
- Sarah: He thinks I need to get with the program.
- Ann: The program?
- Sarah: Church. Faith. Building a personal relationship with the Almighty. [Pauses] This time of year just gets you thinking, you know? I actually planned on going to the Christmas evening service with him tomorrow, but I guess that won't be happening.