

Miss Christmas City
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FADE IN:

1 EXT. DOWNTOWN CHRISTMAS CITY - EVENING - 25 YEARS AGO 1

The decorated and bedazzled streets of Christmas City, MN are shimmering with Christmas lights and bustling with townsfolk and tourists. They have all come to town for the annual Holiday Festival and tonight it kicks off with its Christmas City Parade.

Hours before the start of the parade people have set up their lawn chairs to claim their prime spots.

Front and center are two ten year old girls, AUDREY and MAXINE. The best friends are huddled together wrapped in a handmade holiday quilt that has seen its share of parades.

The parade starts with the MAYOR leading the Christmas City High School Band down the street past the jubilant spectators.

Floats, dance troupes, costumed characters, more bands, more floats, elves throwing candy move by as Audrey and Maxine watch in wonder.

And then the moment the two of them have been waiting for... Sitting high atop a festooned horse drawn carriage comes the reigning Miss Christmas City. Walking beside her are the ladies of her Candy Cane Court.

As she waves to her adoring crowd Miss Christmas City makes eye contact with Maxine.

She tosses her a poinsettia from her bouquet and Maxine catches it.

AUDREY

Maxine! That's a sign.

MAXINE

Do you think so, Audrey? Do you think one day I could be Miss Christmas City?

AUDREY

I think we can be anything we want to be Maxine.

2 EXT. HOLIDAY FESTIVAL PARK - STAGE - DAY - EIGHT YEARS LATER 2

Holiday Festival Park is ablaze with Christmas lights and lighted Christmas displays. It is playing host to the Miss Christmas City Pageant.

Audrey and Maxine, now young adults and the final two contestants in the Miss Christmas City pageant, stand on stage clutching each other. They are pulling for themselves as much as for each other.

Maxine is decked out in a confection of a dress topped off by a snow-white fur shawl that frames her rosy cheeks.

Audrey appears classic and timeless in a wool jersey dress with a matching cape that keeps her warm and toasty.

In the audience is Audrey's boyfriend ZACH STOFER.

The tuxedoed HOST opens the envelope.

HOST

And, the first runner-up and Candy
Cane In Waiting is....

(a beat)

Audrey Sorenson.

The capacity crowd bursts into applause.

Maxine's hands shake as they come to her mouth.

HOST (CONT'D)

That means Maxine Rumson is our new
Miss Christmas City.

Audrey and Maxine hug each other.

MAXINE

I was sure you were going to win.

AUDREY

(sincerely)

If it's not me, I'm happy it's you.

Audrey is handed a giant candy cane.

Maxine is given a lavish bouquet of poinsettias.

MAXINE

This is the greatest day of my
life.

A twinkling rhinestone tiara is placed on Maxine's head.

Audrey stands there like an afterthought. Now that the attention is not on her, what is she supposed to do?

As Audrey is escorted to stage left she looks out into the crowd and sees Zach clapping wildly for her.

ZACH
(mouthing to Audrey)
I love you.

As Maxine takes her stroll down the runway, she waves to her adoring hometown crowd.

The bright light from hundreds of flashbulbs and thousands of twinkling lights illuminate her already glowing face.

Behind her, in the corner of the stage, Audrey watches.

Her smile begins to fade and the all too familiar look of "why couldn't that be me" creeps over her face.

Maxine stands at the end of the runway, blowing kisses.

Above her hangs a huge banner reading: "THE MISS CHRISTMAS CITY PAGEANT SPONSORED BY STAN'S HOLIDAY SMOKED HAM HUT".

3 EXT. STAN'S HOLIDAY SMOKED HAM HUT - LATER 3

Stan's Holiday Smoked Ham Hut is surrounded by fire trucks as the smell of the honey smoke wafts through the air as it burns to the ground.

4 EXT. DOWNTOWN CHRISTMAS CITY - DAY - ONE YEAR LATER 4

A banner is being raised between two streetlights. It reads: "THE MISS CHRISTMAS CITY PAGEANT SPONSORED BY PATTY'S FIGGY PUDDING CAFE".

5 EXT. PATTY'S FIGGY PUDDING CAFE - DAY 5

Two people walk up to the door but are turned away by a sign reading: "DUE TO A BREAKOUT OF E. COLI THIS RESTAURANT IS CLOSED BY ORDER OF THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH".

6 EXT. DOWNTOWN CHRISTMAS CITY - DAY 6

The banner is coming down.

7 EXT. DOWNTOWN CHRISTMAS CITY - DAY - ONE YEAR LATER 7

A banner is being raised between two streetlights. On it is a photo of BRETT HALVERSON. It reads: "THE MISS CHRISTMAS CITY PAGEANT SPONSORED BY BRETT HALVERSON LAW OFFICE"

8 EXT. BRETT HALVERSON LAW OFFICE - DAY 8

Brett Halverson is being led away in handcuffs by an OFFICER.

OFFICER

Mr. Halverson, you are hereby charged with eleven counts of theft by swindle, six counts of embezzlement and seventeen counts of returning previously worn suits to Men's Wearhouse.

9 EXT. DOWNTOWN CHRISTMAS CITY - DAY 9

The banner is coming down.

10 INT. MISS CHRISTMAS CITY HEADQUARTERS - DAY 10

CAROL MALLOW, the pageant coordinator, is sitting at the head of a table along with fellow committee members, HOLLY and NOEL as well as Audrey and Maxine.

CAROL

Due to the recent incarceration of our latest sponsor combined with last year's E. Coli outbreak at Patty's Figgy Pudding Cafe and the previous year's wood fire at Stan's Holiday Ham Hut...

NOEL

Wood fire? I thought it was struck by lightning?

HOLLY

It was. The lightning strike is what started the wood on fire.

CAROL

If I may continue. With this series of unfortunate events the local businesses are now under the delusion that there is some sort of curse when it comes to sponsoring the Miss Christmas City pageant.

HOLLY

It is like we are the first leper
in the colony: No one will touch us
or give us a hand.

CAROL

That leaves us no choice but to
completely suspend the Miss
Christmas City pageant until we
find a sponsor not affected by
silly superstition.

She knocks on the wooden table.

CAROL (CONT'D)

Hopefully we will find someone in
time for next year but for now
Maxine you will continue your reign
as Miss Christmas City.

Maxine and Audrey look at each other and smile.

CAROL (CONT'D)

Audrey, you will remain the first
runner-up and the Candy Cane in
waiting.

AUDREY

Waiting?

CAROL

Yes. Waiting. Indefinitely.

As the shock of that notion seeps into Audrey's head, her
smile droops.

Maxine continues to smile.

11 EXT. JENNY'S HOT COCOA FOOD TRUCK - DAY - ONE YEAR LATER 11

Maxine is surrounded by a crowd. She is holding a giant pair
of scissors preparing to cut the grand opening ribbon.

Audrey is in the crowd with Zach cheering along.

A flash goes off.

12 EXT. SORENSON'S HOUSE - LIVINGROOM - NIGHT - ONE YEAR AFTER THAT 12

A sign hanging on the house reads; "GOOD BYE AUDREY. DRESS
FOR SUCCESS".

Audrey is wearing a Fashion Institute of Technology sweatshirt. Maxine has one arm around her while the other points to the logo as they pose for a picture.

Audrey motions for Zach to join them.

He comes over and gives Audrey a big ol' kiss.

Audrey's eyes well up. Zach wipes the tear from her eye.

A flash goes off.

13 EXT. CHRISTMAS VILLAGE - DAY - ONE YEAR AFTER THAT 13

Maxine is surrounded by a crowd. She is holding a giant pair of scissors preparing to cut the grand opening ribbon.

Audrey is in the crowd clapping politely.

Zach is eating a funnel cake and offers Audrey a bite.

A flash goes off.

14 INT. FASHION INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY - DAY - TWO YEARS AFTER THAT 14

Audrey is on stage receiving her diploma. She waves to Zach in the audience.

Maxine is seated next to him and claps wildly.

A flash goes off.

15 EXT. JUDY'S HOUSE OF GARLAND AND CHRISTMAS DECOR - DAY - TWO YEARS AFTER THAT 15

Maxine is surrounded by a crowd. She is holding a giant pair of scissors preparing to cut the grand opening ribbon.

Zach is in the crowd but Audrey is not.

A flash goes off.

16 INT. SET OF "PROJECT RUNWAY" - DAY - TWO YEARS AFTER THAT 16

Audrey is on stage next to another contestant, ANNA LEFFRING.

Standing alongside each of them is their respective MODELS wearing their signature looks.

Audrey's look is yet another take on the dress she wore in the Miss Christmas City pageant.

KARLI KLOSS along with BRANDON MAXWELL and NINA GARCIA are seated looking at them.

KARLI
(to Audrey)
Audrey, your designs were
effortless, clean and versatile.
(to both)
But there can only be one winner.
The winner of Project Runway is...

Audrey fidgets nervously but smiles.

KARLI (CONT'D)
Anna Leffring!

Audrey claps. She's been here before.

A flash goes off.

17 EXT. SNOWMOBILE DEALERSHIP - DAY - TWO YEARS AFTER THAT 17

Maxine is surrounded by a crowd. She is holding a giant pair of scissors preparing to cut the grand opening ribbon.

A flash goes off.

18 INT. PHOTO STUDIO - DAY - TWO YEARS AFTER THAT 18

A MODEL stands in the middle of the studio wearing Audrey's signature "Dozen Dress". It is yet another take on Audrey's Miss Christmas City dress.

A PHOTOGRAPHER is snapping pictures as Audrey shows the dozen different ways it can be worn.

A flash goes off.

19 INT. MISS CHRISTMAS CITY AIRPORT - COFFEE SHOP - DAY - PRESENT 19

Maxine is surrounded by a crowd. She is holding a giant pair of scissors preparing to cut the grand opening ribbon.

Before she does she looks down at the rack of magazines.

Front and center is Inc. and on the cover is Audrey surrounded by models wearing The Dozen Dress.

A flash goes off.

20 INT. QVC STUDIOS - DAY - PRESENT

20

The QVC studio is decked out for the holidays.

Audrey is being interviewed by the hostess, DENISE as Christmas music is piped in to add to the festive ambiance.

There are two mannequins each dressed in a different color that The Dozen Dress comes in. Audrey wraps and drapes the fabric to show a new version of the dress.

AUDREY

(in mid pitch)

...when I first designed the dress it was meant to be more formal. Then I realized that wearing it for only one occasion was not the thriftiest thing to do. I mean aren't we all on a budget?

DENISE

Just to keep going with that, I understand that the idea for The Dozen Dress is based on one that you actually only wore once.

AUDREY

That is correct. I spent the money on the fabric and the time to make it and then after only wearing it that one time I thought "Well, that was kind of wasteful."

DENISE

What was the big event?

AUDREY

Oh, well. It really wasn't that big of an event.

DENISE

Are you kidding me? That one dress and the one time you wore it totally changed your life.

AUDREY

Uh, um, well. Yes it was...

DENISE

Come on. We all want to know what this crowning moment was.

Audrey REALLY doesn't want to answer this question, but she is on live television.

AUDREY
(hesitantly)
I was in a Christmas pageant. And to be clear I don't consider myself a beauty. I was hoping to score the prize money.

DENISE
A Christmas pageant! How did you do?

AUDREY
I didn't win.

DENISE
Oh. Too bad. Did you come close?

AUDREY
I was first runner-up.

DENISE
First runner-up. That is awesome!

AUDREY
You would think so, wouldn't you.

Something on the prompter catches Denise's eye.

DENISE
I'll tell you what is awesome. We have just sold out of The Dozen Dress. All colors, all sizes, all are officially sold out.

As the camera shifts from a two shot to a close on Denise, Audrey looks past the cameras to her assistant, ANDY, who is waiting in the wings. He smiles and gives her two enthusiastic thumbs up.

21 INT. QVC STUDIOS - A MOMENT LATER

21

Audrey removes her mic as Andy effusively gets her up to date.

ANDY
OMG, QVC across the USA! You are a BFD my B.O.S.S.

AUDREY
What does bee-oh-ess-ess mean?

ANDY

Boss.

AUDREY

Quit texting me with your mouth,
Andy. I swear I will lose my
flippin' mind.

ANDY

O.K.

Audrey shoots him a look.

ANDY (CONT'D)

Okay, is a word, okay?

Audrey shakes her head, smiling.

ANDY (CONT'D)

Okay, you have messages.

Andy refers to a pad of paper.

ANDY (CONT'D)

Your mom called. She was watching.
She said you did a great job. You
looked and sounded very
professional. But your top came
down way too low.

AUDREY

That's my mom. She thought my
communion dress was too revealing.

ANDY

How can a communion dress be too
revealing?

AUDREY

The turtleneck collar was made of a
sheer fabric.

ANDY

Jesus.

AUDREY

Keep going.

ANDY

She also said she thinks your Dad
has the flesh eating bacteria.

AUDREY

Did she say what she based this on?

ANDY

She saw it on the TODAY show this morning.

AUDREY

I'll call her later. I'm sure the flesh eating bacteria will not have devoured my father before lunchtime. Next?

ANDY

J. Crew called and wanted to know what you thought of the last offer.

AUDREY

It's good. And they are definitely making it hard to say no.

ANDY

Then make it easy on yourself and say yes.

AUDREY

Mmmm, I don't know. I need to think about it. This little company has been all I've had for forever. It's my baby. My only child. If I sell it I'm an empty nester.

ANDY

But eventually you will have to stop feeding this baby your regurgitated worms and let it fly.

AUDREY

Gross. Anything else?

ANDY

Last thing. Maxine called.

AUDREY

Maxine? Why would she be calling? We haven't spoke in months.

ANDY

I was wondering that too, so just for funzies I googled and...

Andy hands his phone over to her.

ANDY (CONT'D)

Maybe you should read this.

CLOSE ON:

There is an article in The Daily Beast. The headline reads: "Long Did She Reign." With the article is a picture of Maxine then and now, wearing her Miss Christmas City sash and crown.

Before you know it, Audrey has her phone up to her ear.

AUDREY

Hey, Maxine! What's up?

22

EXT. QVC STUDIOS PARKING LOT - DAY

22

Audrey shivers as she sprints through the frosty parking lot. Andy follows in hot pursuit.

AUDREY

I need you to clear the last two weeks of the month and check on flights to Christmas City.

ANDY

Great! You decided to head home for a little extended holiday R and R.

AUDREY

Oh, yeah. Holidays. Right. Yeah, no. It is on! It is back on! It is on, on! The Miss Christmas City pageant is back on!

ANDY

Yeah I got that. I read the article.

AUDREY

They want me to be a judge! I have to go!

Andy stops Audrey.

ANDY

Oh my God! Really Audrey. You cannot be serious. You just sold out your line at QVC, you got J. Crew offering to buy your company, you have me who's job among other things is to make sure you don't see any "Great British Bake Off" spoilers and you want to put all that on pause because of a pageant? And I know what you're going to say,

(MORE)

ANDY (CONT'D)

(mockingly)

"Andy. This is not just a pageant. For years I have been first runner-up, second best, I would love to get this monkey off my back." Well, screw the monkey. Screw that tree dwelling, pants-less, poop throwing, Ebola spreading howler monkey.

AUDREY

Ebola was spread by bats.

ANDY

Whatever. You should be ignoring the monkey and instead focus on the life altering, eight hundred pound gorilla called J. Crew banging its hairy chest in front of you.

AUDREY

Andy, trust me. I haven't gone bananas. I need to first deal with the monkey so I can focus on the gorilla.

(she puts an arm around
Andy)

Do you get it, Doctor Zaius?

ANDY

Get your paws off of me, you damn dirty ape.

23 INT. CHRISTMAS CITY AIRPORT - DAY

23

Audrey is walking through the terminal. She pulls the neck pillow from her neck.

In a desperate attempt to pull her self together she stops, bends over, and whips her hair back. She does this several times until she makes herself dizzy.

She glances around looking for Maxine. It is never difficult to spot Maxine in a crowd. And it is especially easy to spot Maxine when she is wearing her crown and Miss Christmas City sash in the Christmas City airport.

MAXINE

Audrey! Over here!

Audrey takes a good look at Maxine. Her hair is perfect. Her lips are glossed. In a word, Maxine is flawless.

Audrey smiles a Miss Christmas City Pageant smile and makes a bee line to her old friend.

AUDREY

Maxine!

They give each other a big hug.

Audrey pulls away and eyes Maxine up and down.

AUDREY (CONT'D)

Wow! Crown. Sash. Did you think I wouldn't recognize you?

MAXINE

Oh this. During the month leading up to The Christmas City Holiday Festival I have to wear this whenever I am on official business and picking up a judge for the pageant is pretty darn official.

AUDREY

Well, you look great.

MAXINE

So do you.

AUDREY

Ugh, no. Look at me. I fell asleep on the plane. I must look a mess.

MAXINE

Ok, good. I was a little worried. When I first saw you, it looked like you had the flu. You can fix yourself in the car. I'll drive slow. Really slow.

24

INT. MAXINE'S CAR - DAY

24

Maxine has her Christmas playlist playing on the car stereo.

On the rear view mirror hangs a candy cane air freshener.

MAXINE

The new Mayor made it her mission to find a sponsor and start up the Miss Christmas City Pageant again.

AUDREY

Surely the new mayor had other policies she was passionate about.

MAXINE

She did, but in my eyes the pageant is a huge publicity stunt. I think she wants to be governor and this is giving her the attention she needs. I didn't vote for her. I voted for Mayor Fox. He kept things the way I like them.

AUDREY

They say change is good.

MAXINE

It depends on what's changing. Underwear is important. Mascara every six months. Your date of birth on your profile page. But this new gal is too heavy into renovation.

25 EXT. THE GINGERBREAD HOUSE BAKERY - DAY

25

Their car pulls into the parking lot.

They exit the car.

Maxine has yet to remove her crown and sash.

MAXINE

Mayor Fox only lost the election because he loved animals.

AUDREY

How could that ruin a campaign?

MAXINE

Well, he covered himself with salt and went out looking for deer.

AUDREY

That's disgusting.

MAXINE

Maybe, but this is America. People should be allowed to live their life as they choose.

AUDREY

Yeah, but, not as a lollipop for Bambi.

MAXINE

He was still a good mayor.

AUDREY

So after all this time who did they finally find brave enough to sponsor this thing? Aren't they worried about the curse?

MAXINE

Actually, he thinks it'll be good for business.

As the girls enter the bells above the door jingle lightly.

26

EXT. HOLIDAY FESTIVAL PARK - STAGE - DAY

26

A new banner is being hoisted above the stage.

It reads: "THE MISS CHRISTMAS CITY PAGEANT SPONSORED BY BURKE FUNERAL HOME".

A dark suited man watches as the banner is put into place.

He is KEVIN BURKE, undertaker and new sponsor of the Miss Christmas City Pageant.

He speaks in a slow whisper.

KEVIN

That's nice. Very nice.

27

INT. THE GINGERBREAD HOUSE BAKERY - DAY

27

Audrey holds up a loaf of cinnamon bread.

AUDREY

Is this any good?

MAXINE

I wouldn't know. I don't eat bread.

AUDREY

You eat bread.

MAXINE

Not anymore. Right after I called off my engagement to Joel I put on a ton of weight. All of it in bread. I was living in my yoga pants even though I wasn't taking yoga. My fitbit was step-shaming me. People started to tell me I looked good with a fuller face.

AUDREY

Please, Maxine. We all gain a little weight as we age. I mean I designed a dress that stretches for a reason.

Audrey puts the bread down and picks up pumpkin bars.

AUDREY (CONT'D)

How about pumpkin? It is a superfood.

MAXINE

I've lost the weight.

AUDREY

Great. And you lost that loser of a fiancée.

MAXINE

I still fit into the gown I wore in the pageant.

AUDREY

Maxine, you look great.

MAXINE

(confidently)

I know.

28

INT. THE GINGERBREAD HOUSE BAKERY - DAY

28

Audrey is placing her bakery bounty on the counter when she is tapped on the shoulder by MRS. GILDNER.

AUDREY

Mrs. Gildner! How are you?

MRS. GILDNER

Good, good. But I guess I don't have to ask you that.

She opens her coat and models The Dozen Dress she is wearing.

CASHIER

(to Audrey)

That'll be twenty-four eighty.

AUDREY

(to cashier)

Add hers in.

MRS. GILDNER
You don't have to do that.

AUDREY
It's my pleasure.

As Audrey hands over her platinum card, Maxine walks up next to them.

MRS. GILDNER
Hello, Maxine. Did you see who's
back in town?

MAXINE
Audrey's back in town to judge the
Miss Christmas City Pageant.

MRS. GILDNER
Well, sure.
(turning to Audrey)
It's only fair that after all these
years of waiting around for Maxine
not to be able to perform her
duties as Miss Christmas City, thus
allowing the lead Candy Cane to
take over, they finally found
something for you to do.

Audrey is shrinking like a violet.

MRS. GILDNER (CONT'D)
Right, Audrey?

AUDREY
You have no idea how much I'm
looking forward to this pageant.

She hands Mrs. Gildner her complimentary baked goods.

MRS. GILDNER
Of course, it's not like being on
stage like Maxine, here.

AUDREY
No. No, it's not.

Audrey leads the way as the threesome leave the counter.

MRS. GILDNER
(to Maxine)
You are going to be on stage,
right?

MAXINE

I sure am.

MRS. GILDNER

Boy, that's gotta be exciting.
Right, Audrey?

Audrey is the first one out the door as the bells jingle.

29

EXT. THE GINGERBREAD HOUSE BAKERY - DAY

29

Audrey and Maxine wave goodbye to Mrs. Gildner as they get into the car.

MAXINE

Her husband came on to me at the
Rotary barbecue fundraiser. Mr.
Gildner sits down next to me...

She leans into Audrey for dramatic effect.

MAXINE (CONT'D)

... and starts to lick his fingers.

AUDREY

He licked his fingers?

MAXINE

Yeah. It was like he was licking my
clothes off.

AUDREY

Maybe it was just barbecue sauce.

MAXINE

Oh please. He had a napkin.

AUDREY

He wasn't coming on to you.

MAXINE

I was there, okay?

Audrey laughs.

AUDREY

As always, loitering in your own
snow globe of thoughts.

Having heard enough of the mythical perils of being Maxine,
she changes the subject.

AUDREY (CONT'D)
 Hey, I got a joke for you.

MAXINE
 Shoot.

Maxine starts the car.

AUDREY
 What do they sing at a snowman's
 birthday party?

MAXINE
 I don't know.

AUDREY
 Freeze a jolly good fellow!

Maxine doesn't laugh.

MAXINE
 That's not funny.

AUDREY
 That's funny.

MAXINE
 Maybe if you're a snowman.

They drive off.

30

EXT. SORENSON'S HOUSE - DAY

30

Maxine's family home is decorated for the holidays. As is the tradition in Christmas City all houses have their holiday flair up and running ahead of the Christmas City Parade.

Maxine helps Audrey get her bags out of the trunk when JANE, Audrey's mom, comes running out of the house.

JANE
 Audrey! Audrey! My fair lady!

Jane slides along the icy driveway into her daughter's arms.

JANE (CONT'D)
 Let me look at you.

She steps back to look at her only daughter.

JANE (CONT'D)

You look good. I like your hair.
How was your flight? You look
tired.

AUDREY

I'm not tired, mom.

JANE

The dark circles run in our family.
You're Uncle Teddy looked like the
Hamburglar his whole life.

AUDREY

Mom...

JANE

You should really come home more
often. Get some rest.

Audrey knows where this is going: a one-way, non-stop ticket
on the guilt trip.

JANE (CONT'D)

I hope your family is worth more
than an occasional visit.
Especially now that you have the
pocket for it.

AUDREY

Mom...

JANE

Your father and I aren't going to
be alive forever. A mole on your
fathers back started to change
color. The doctor said it was
nothing, but it reminds us of how
short and precious life can be.

A look of motherly fear comes over her face.

JANE (CONT'D)

Is your company in trouble?

AUDREY

No...

JANE

Is that why you are so stressed?
Are you on the run from creditors?

AUDREY

No!

JANE

I'm your mother. Don't shut me out.

AUDREY

Mom, everything is fine. I've just been busy.

JANE

You better be careful. Our family tends to overwork themselves. Your Uncle Ronnie dropped dead while working a week long convention.

AUDREY

Uncle Marty dropped dead while having sex with a hooker at that week long convention.

JANE

Uncle Marty hired that hooker because he was stressed and worked too hard.

Audrey's father, BILL, and her brother JIMMY make their way from the house to the girls.

AUDREY

Dad!

BILL

Hey there, my little Coco Chanel.

AUDREY

I am hardly Coco Chanel, Dad.

BILL

Yeah, her designs were a little too stiff and stuffy. You remind me more of Donna Karan or Stella McCartney.

AUDREY

I'm impressed. Dropping all this fashion knowledge on me.

BILL

I have to admit, even though I thought you were robbed and swore I would never watch that stupid show again, I binge Project Runway. That show is freakin' addictive.

Maxine stands alone and watches as Audrey is welcomed by her loving brood.

MAXINE

I'm gonna take off.

JANE

You're welcome to stay for dinner.

MAXINE

Thanks, but Mrs. Mallow wants me to go over a few things for the pageant.

Maxine talks as she heads to her car.

MAXINE (CONT'D)

She's got all these years of ideas and wants to use them all at once.

AUDREY

I'll see you at Zach's party tonight, right?

Maxine hesitates before she gets into her car.

MAXINE

Yeah. Yeah, you will.

Bill and Jane head toward the house as Jimmy and Audrey watch Maxine pull away.

JIMMY

Do you think she keeps her tiara in her glove compartment?

AUDREY

No. She keeps her back up tiara in her glove compartment.

JIMMY

Back up tiara? For what?

AUDREY

Far be it for Maxine to miss a ribbon cutting. She'll cut the ribbon for the opening of the new live tank at the Red Lobster.

JIMMY

And what is with her wearing the tiara and sash? That's bit much don't you think?

AUDREY

Apparently she is obligated to wear it whenever doing official duties as Miss Christmas City and picking up a pageant judge from the airport qualifies as an official duty.

JIMMY

Ha! You said "duty".

31 EXT. SORENSON'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - EVENING

31

The Sorenson's living room is aglow with a roaring fire.

Strung above the mantle are all the Christmas cards they have already received.

Audrey is helping Jane put the finishing touches on the Christmas tree. Each ornament is a memory.

The family is laughing as they tell Audrey a story.

JIMMY

We're heading back to the dock and we haven't caught crap and Captain Cappy is ticked because if we don't catch anything, he's got to give us a complete refund.

Bill's laughing so hard, he's going to blow nog out of his nose if he's not careful.

BILL

Then, then, then, then....

JANE

Breathe, Bill, breathe.

BILL

Mom gets a nibble.

JIMMY

What are you talking about? She was born with two of them, just like the rest of us.

BILL

I said "nibble".

JIMMY

Oh. Yeah, she got one of those.

BILL

And your Mom starts screaming.

JANE

I've never caught a fish before.

BILL

She hauls it in, and it's a trout
the likes of which I have only been
told of in fairy tales.

JANE

It must have weighed twenty pounds.

AUDREY

Did you weigh it?

JANE

No, but it felt like a turkey.

The family looks at her quizzically.

Audrey pauses the decorating.

JANE (CONT'D)

I know what a good sized bird feels
like. I get a twenty pound turkey
to feed this family every
Thanksgiving and this felt like
there would be enough for dinner
and leftovers.

JIMMY

Then Mom throws it back in the
lake. She didn't want to put it in
her new cooler and stink it all up.

JANE

I wasn't about to ruin a brand new
cooler for one smelly fish.

BILL

You should've seen Captain Cappy's
face when she let that sucker go.

JIMMY

(to Bill)

Should've seen yours.

Audrey looks at her family.

Sometimes she wishes she was part of their stories, instead
of being told them.

AUDREY

Alright. Alright everybody. I have something to tell you.

JIMMY

It surely cannot top the terrific tale of the trophy trout.

AUDREY

It comes pretty close.

Audrey unwraps the star that tops the family Christmas tree.

AUDREY (CONT'D)

J. Crew wants to buy my company.

JANE

Are you serious?

BILL

How much?

AUDREY

They've offered me twenty-four-point-eight.

JIMMY

Million?

JANE

No Jimmy, Oreos. Twenty-four-point-eight Oreos.

BILL

Listen to your old man, Audrey. I think you are worth more than that. J. Crew has got plenty of money. They can throw plenty more of it your way. What with their men's, women's and kids lines plus their burgeoning bridal wear collection.

AUDREY

More Project Runway?

BILL

Jenna Lyons was a judge a few seasons ago. She built that company to the powerhouse it is today. That girl knows how to mix her prints.

AUDREY

I think what they are offering is a fair price.

JIMMY

Screw fair! Don't settle for fair.
There's nothing good about fair. I
got fairly good grades in school.
It's fairly sunny outside. They won
fair and square. The cheese was
fairly moldy...

AUDREY

I get it, Jimmy.

A timer goes off.

JANE

Dinner time!
(motioning to the star)
Ok, Audery. You do the honors.

Audrey places the star atop the tree.

The family applauds.

JANE (CONT'D)

Come on, Bill. Let's go fashion
this chicken into a ready to eat
masterpiece.

BILL

Audrey, all I'm saying is don't
sell yourself short.

Jane and Bill head into the kitchen.

AUDREY

Anyway, if I decide to sell the
company I think I would like to
move back home.

JIMMY

Feel like your self-imposed exile
has lasted long enough?

AUDREY

No?! What are you talking about?

JIMMY

Jeez Audrey. You're not Nixon. You
didn't leave town in disgrace.

AUDREY

It's not that.

JIMMY

Liar! You let the fact that you were first runner-up get to you. And honestly, no one cares.

AUDREY

Maxine cares.

JIMMY

Of course she cares. It's the only thing she's ever accomplished.

AUDREY

Stop it.

JIMMY

Seriously, Maxine has dined out more often on being Miss Christmas City than Dad at the all you can eat crab leg buffet at the casino.

AUDREY

You guys don't know what it's been like to be constantly reminded, year after year, every year when that stupid Christmas City Festival comes around, that you finished second.

JIMMY

No. We don't. But we do know what it's been like to be constantly reminded, year after year when that stupid Christmas City Festival comes around, that YOU finished second.

The siblings take a moment to gaze at the tree, admiring their handiwork.

32

EXT. SORENSON'S HOUSE - NIGHT

32

Audrey is on the front porch kissing her mother goodbye.

JANE

Now, don't drink and drive. And be home at a decent hour.

AUDREY

I can promise two of the three.

Jane goes back inside as the siblings head out to Jimmy's car parked in the driveway.

33 EXT. ZACH'S CABIN - NIGHT 33

The car maneuvers down a long driveway, the lights of a party can be seen through the snow flecked trees.

Jimmy parks at the end of a long row of cars.

34 INT. ZACH'S CABIN - NIGHT 34

The party is raging. Zach's cabin is filled with all the familiar faces.

Audrey is nursing a Budweiser and talking to BLAKE THOMAS.

She remembers his name. He, on the other hand...

BLAKE
Lea Buckingham?

AUDREY
No.

BLAKE
Kendra Carlson?

AUDREY
No.

BLAKE
April Ellingson?

AUDREY
No.

BLAKE
You're sure you hung out with
Maxine Rumson in high-school?

AUDREY
Yes.

He studies her face as if there were a test on it the next morning.

AUDREY (CONT'D)
It's Audrey Sorenson.

BLAKE
Really?
(surprised)
I was way off.

In a frosted window behind Blake's head Zach appears.

He smiles at Audrey and she smiles back.
 Zach motions for her to meet him outside.
 Audrey wastes no time doing just that.

35 EXT. ZACH'S CABIN - NIGHT 35

Audrey shuts the door behind her and looks around for Zach.
 She sees him down by the bonfire. He waves for her to come.
 She makes her way toward him.

36 EXT. ZACH'S CABIN - BONFIRE - NIGHT 36

Zach gives Audrey a hug.
 Audrey holds on a little longer.

AUDREY

Wow. I can't believe this. Is it possible we haven't talked in over a year? I guess the vet business is keeping you pretty busy.

ZACH

Very. I got a cow pregnant today.

AUDREY

Did she lie about being on the pill?

ZACH

No. Bessie's not much of a talker. She's real cute, though.

AUDREY

At least she's not a porcupine. That would be some rough sex.

Audrey and Zach crack themselves up.

ZACH

Yeah, It is crazy that we haven't talked in so long. But I can only imagine how crazy and hectic your life is. I have missed talking to you. I like talking to you.

AUDREY

That might change.

ZACH
No, I'll always like talking to
you.

AUDREY
Ha-ha. I meant you missing me.

Zach looks at her quizzically.

She is eager to share her news but not yet.

AUDREY (CONT'D)
So, how is life? Business is good.
Seeing anyone special?

ZACH
As a matter of fact I am seeing
someone.

AUDREY
Great! I'm happy for you. Anyone I
know?

A VOICE (O.S.)
Maxine! Hey, Maxine's here!

Audrey decides she doesn't really want to know and starts to
make a quick exit.

AUDREY
Perfect. Maxine is here. I'm going
to head back in.

37 INT. ZACH'S CABIN - NIGHT

37

As always, Maxine is the focus of the entire party.

She at the piano banging out and singing "Winter Wonderland".

MAXINE
Later on, we'll conspire. As we
dream by the fire. To face I'm
afraid, the plans that we made...

Audrey walks in and is soon followed by Zach.

CROWD
Walking in a winter wonderland!

AUDREY
That Maxine, she can always find
the center of attention.

ZACH

We need to finish talking.

AUDREY

Really. It's fine. I'm cool. New subject. Miracle Whip: bread spread, or bougie mayonnaise?

Maxine, once again grabs the spotlight.

MAXINE

Listen up, everyone. I got a joke. What do they sing at a snowman's birthday party?

Audrey's head whips over to look at Maxine.

CROWD

What?

MAXINE

Freeze a jolly good fellow!.

The crowd erupts into laughter.

Except for Audrey. She's heard that one before.

AUDREY

That's my joke. She didn't even think it was funny.

Maxine walks up to them.

MAXINE

Is everything okay?

Audrey thinks she's referring to the joke.

AUDREY

I'm a little upset, but, I'll get over it. I mean that was "mine" after all.

MAXINE

Great.

Maxine puts her arms around Zach.

It isn't what you would call a "buddy" hug.

This is no joke.

Audrey looks like she's been hit in the face with a wet fish.

MAXINE (CONT'D)

I'm so happy you know now. I have been avoiding posting anything since this "thing" started but now that you know I can dump some really cute photos of us onto my socials.

Maxine takes out her phone and shows Audrey.

You could drive a truck through Audrey's gaping mouth.

Maxine looks up from her phone and at Zach.

MAXINE (CONT'D)

Let's go get a drink, babe.

Audrey looks like she's been hit across the face with the no good brother of the wet fish.

Maxine and Zach walk together.

Together.

Audrey is getting her ass kicked by said fish.

Jimmy comes over to his sister with a bottle of Bailey's and a glass in hand.

JIMMY

You okay?

Audrey is dazed.

AUDREY

Yeah. Yeah, I'm fine.

She grabs the bottle and the glass from Jimmy. She pours herself a shot. More like a double. Alright, a triple.

She swallows it in one gulp.

JIMMY

That's not gonna make you feel any better.

AUDREY

I know that.

She pours herself another.

AUDREY (CONT'D)

I want to feel worse so that, comparatively, having my heart ripped out and stomped on by a pair of size nine pumps, that she swears are a size eight, would feel great.

She gulps her drink.

38 INT. ZACH'S CABIN - LATER THAT NIGHT

38

The party is winding down.

Audrey is at the piano playing Jingle Bells with one finger.

Jimmy walks over and sits down next to her.

AUDREY

She stole my joke, then she stole my man.

JIMMY

Actually it's the other way around.

AUDREY

But, you know what really frosts my popsicle? It's that, again, I'm second to Maxine. She always comes in first, and she always gets the neat prizes.

Jimmy is too tipsy to play therapist.

JIMMY

Yeah, well, we gotta go.

AUDREY

Just once I'd like to know what it feels like not to lose something to Maxine.

Jimmy thinks about this in earnest.

JIMMY

You didn't lose your virginity to her. That's something.

AUDREY

No, I lost that to Ronnie Case.

JIMMY

Yeah, I know. He told me. He told everybody.

AUDREY
 (humiliated)
 I can't believe he bragged about
 it.

JIMMY
 He wasn't bragging. He was
 complaining. He said you lost a
 contact and sneezed halfway
 through.

Audrey looks like she's going to throw up.

JIMMY (CONT'D)
 Don't feel bad. I sneezed my first
 time, too. I think it runs in the
 family.

AUDREY
 What a jerk.

She takes a swig of booze.

AUDREY (CONT'D)
 I still love him, you know.

JIMMY
 Ronnie Case? Even after he blabbed?

AUDREY
 No! Zach. I love Zach. He got me.
 He supported me. We were a great
 pair.

Jimmy is pretty over this.

JIMMY
 Yeah, well, we gotta go.

AUDREY
 Wait, wait, wait. One more number.

Audrey plays another round of single finger Jingle Bells.

Jimmy listens thoughtfully.

Jane bursts into the room singing.

JANE
 (singing)
 It's the most wonderful time of the
 year!

Audrey peels her face from her pillow.

JANE (CONT'D)
 (sing-songy)
 Time to get up.

Audrey grunts like Frankenstein. At least she's alive.

Jane leaves as sprightly as she came.

Audrey rises up stiffly from the bed like Frankenstein.

She trudges, like Frankenstein, over to her vanity.

She looks in the mirror.

Oh my God, she looks like Frankenstein.

40 INT. SORENSON'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - MORNING 40

Audrey shuffles out of her room and heads down the hallway.

She can hear her mother singing in another bedroom.

JANE (O.C.)
 (singing)
 There'll be much mistletoeing and
 hearts will be glowing...

A pillow flies through the open door and into the hallway.

JANE (O.C.) (CONT'D)
 Oh, Jimmy.

41 INT. SORENSON'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - MORNING 41

Audrey, still half asleep, shuffles into the room.

Jane zips past her and starts pouring juice.

JANE
 Audrey, be a sweetheart and go get
 the paper.

Audrey pours herself a cup of coffee.

AUDREY

You still get those delivered?

JANE

Your Dad says he likes the nostalgia of flipping through the pages. I think he just likes hiding behind it so I won't ask him to do anything. Now go get the paper.

AUDREY

Mom, I look terrible.

JANE

Only on the outside, dear.

42 EXT. SORENSON'S HOUSE - MORNING

42

Audrey pokes her head out the front door to survey the situation.

Seeing it's all clear she starts to make her way to the end of the driveway, ducking in between snowbanks as she makes her way to the paper.

As she bends down to pick up the paper she hears a car honk.

Audrey shrinks like an inflatable Rudolph lawn decoration.

She looks up. A car drives by and the MAN inside waves.

MAN

Hey, Audrey!

From the opposite direction the Sorenson's NEIGHBOR jogs by.

NEIGHBOR

Morning, Audrey.

Audrey waves. She's feeling self-conscious.

She stands up. But, before she can go anywhere, a garbage truck pulls up. The DRIVER hangs his head out the window.

DRIVER

Audrey! You're back in town?

Audrey waves and runs inside.

43 INT. SORENSON'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - MORNING

43

Jimmy is hunkered over his breakfast.

Audrey slides up to the table with the paper in hand.

Bill breezes into the room. He's late for work.

BILL

Good morning, everybody.

JANE

You need some breakfast.

BILL

I'll just grab something on the go.

JANE

That's what you always do, Bill and now look at you. You're one gingerbread man away from a heart attack.

BILL

They give me energy, Jane. God bless the Fudgy Pecan Bourbon Ball.

Bill breezes out the door.

Jane chases after her husband armed with a banana.

JANE

At least have a banana.

BILL (O.C.)

(from outside)

No way. Those things are loaded with pesticides.

JIMMY

Audrey, hand me the sports section.

Audrey takes the sports section.

Jimmy extends his hand to take it.

Audrey whacks him over the head with it.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

Hey!

AUDREY

You knew about Zach and Maxine and you never told me? You never said a thing?

JIMMY

Yeah.

Audrey nearly jumps out of her skin.

AUDREY

Why?! Why didn't you say something?

JIMMY

I didn't think you should hear it from me. And I sure as hell didn't want to be the one to tell you.

AUDREY

You could have given me a heads up. You could have at least shot me a text you douche-bag.

Jimmy throws his spoon down.

JIMMY

Alright, now you're ruining breakfast. Just the thought of...freshness while this hungover...now I can't eat. And you're mad at the wrong person, Audrey.

AUDREY

Oh, something that feels this right can't be wrong.

JIMMY

That's what people said about gerbiling, but nobody considered how the poor gerbils felt.

The room snaps quiet.

Audrey looks at Jimmy.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

What? I thought the analogy worked.

AUDREY

Is it an analogy, or something you want to tell me?

JIMMY

Okay. Yes. His name is Peanut Butter and we are in love.

The two bust into laughter.

Audrey's laughter slides into a sorrowful moan.

AUDREY

Ha ha ha ah aaaah, this sucks.

She rests her achin' head on the kitchen table.

Jane comes back in.

JANE

Look who I found outside.

Zach walks in behind her.

ZACH

Mornin'.

JIMMY

What are you doing here so early in the morning?

ZACH

Don't you remember?

JIMMY

The last thing I remember was getting really drunk and seeing how many gum drops I could fit in my mouth.

ZACH

You asked me to pick you up so you could get your car from my cabin.

JIMMY

Hey! We Ubered home. Jimmy for the responsible win. I'll go get my wallet.

Jimmy gets up from the kitchen table and leaves.

AUDREY

How was the rest of your night?

ZACH

It was good.

AUDREY

Of course it was. You and Maxine.

ZACH

I tried to tell you.

AUDREY

Yeah. Tried to tell me. Tried to tell me you've been banging my best friend behind my back.

ZACH

I didn't know you wanted me to do it in front of you.

AUDREY

Ew. Gross.

ZACH

Come on, Audrey. You're acting like I cheated on you. We broke up years ago. I got on with my life.

AUDREY

Yeah, but did you have to get it on with her?

ZACH

Maxine and I have been friends...

AUDREY

As long as you and I have.

ZACH

What bothers you more: that I'm seeing someone else or that I'm seeing Maxine?

Audrey doesn't know how to answer the question.

AUDREY

We both knew us breaking up was for the best. I told you it wouldn't be fair to ask you to wait for me. And I thought...

Zach finishes her sentence.

ZACH

That I was lonely and too good for masturbation. Let me tell you honey, no one is above that.

AUDREY

It's not that. I just thought...

ZACH

You've always been more concerned with what you thought other people thought.

Jimmy comes back into the room.

JIMMY
Let's blow.

ZACH
I'll meet you outside.

Jimmy would rather stay and watch, but he obliges.

Audrey and Zach stare at each other.

AUDREY
I'm sorry. I'm just stressed. You.
Maxine. Surprise! And there's stuff
going on with my company.

ZACH
Yeah. I get it. Anyway, I'm glad
your finally home and I'm glad we
got to talk.

Zach walks out the door.

44 INT. SORENSON'S HOUSE - AUDREY'S BEDROOM - DAY

44

Audrey's bedroom hasn't changed much since she left home.

Littered about the room are photographs of her and Maxine,
her and Zach, and the three of them together.

Audrey is fresh out of the shower.

She is rummaging through her suitcase, trying to find
something to wear.

Jane pokes her head in the door.

JANE
What are you doing today?

AUDREY
Well let's see. I showered, I'm
gonna have some lunch and after
that I plan to spend the rest of
the day kicking myself.

JANE
What?

AUDREY
Nothing.
(a beat)
(MORE)

AUDREY (CONT'D)
I actually have to go to this
pageant thing.

She starts to fling clothes out of her suitcase.

AUDREY (CONT'D)
Some stupid orientation.

Her mother comes into the room and starts to pick up and fold
the clothes Audrey is throwing around the room.

AUDREY (CONT'D)
And, I've got nothing to wear.

Audrey throws herself, dramatically, onto the bed.

JANE
I don't think you're upset about
your lack of clothing options.

She sits on the bed next to her daughter.

JANE (CONT'D)
Audrey, it's not Zach's fault or
Maxine's that they are dating.

AUDREY
Well I gotta blame someone.

Jane opens her mouth.

AUDREY (CONT'D)
Don't say it. Don't you dare say
it.

JANE
Okay, I won't.

AUDREY
Good.

JANE
But I will say you need to remember
that Maxine didn't have it as good
as you growing up. I always felt it
was important for you to be the
bigger person when something went
wrong between you two. I'd hate to
see you lose your best friend over
a boy. And, I'm sure you would too.

AUDREY
Thanks, Mom.

Jane gets up from the bed.

JANE
Wear the jumpsuit.

45 INT. COUNTRY CLUB - DAY 45

Audrey walks in through the huge double doors.

Front and center in the grand entry is a towering Christmas tree with impeccably placed ornaments.

The voice she hears is familiar.

MAXINE (O.S.)
Freeze a jolly good fellow!

The room breaks into laughter.

Audrey pivots away from the voice.

46 EXT. COUNTRY CLUB - DAY 46

Audrey and Maxine walk down the stairs of the large back patio and onto the snowy grounds of the country club.

AUDREY
You could have anyone, why him?

MAXINE
The three of us used to spend so much time together. Then it was just the two of us. And you know Zach is a great guy and he's a doctor. I didn't want to see him go to waste.

AUDREY
(unconvinced)
Go to waste? It's not like Zach's the last piece of pie, Maxine.

MAXINE
All I really wanted was to have a successful relationship like you always had. So I figured why not go to the source.

AUDREY
But what about the girl code? Did you even think to ask me about it?

MAXINE

I knew what you would say. What would you have said, Audrey?

AUDREY

I would have said "go for it".

Audrey reaches down to make a snowball.

AUDREY (CONT'D)

Do you remember after they announced your name as Miss Christmas City I said...

MAXINE

If it wasn't me I'm glad it's you.

Audrey tosses the snowball narrowly missing the tree she was aiming for.

AUDREY

I lied. I lied a little.

Maxine makes a snowball for herself.

MAXINE

I figured.

Maxine throws her snowball grazing the tree.

AUDREY

You know Maxine, you got the life. Everything you want comes your way.

Audrey is working on her next snowball

MAXINE

Oh, please. You're the one with the life.

AUDREY

But I busted my ass for it. Fashion Institute, student debt, racking up credit cards to launch my company.

MAXINE

And getting on Project Runway couldn't have been easy. Such a shame you didn't win.

Audrey launches her snowball. This time she hits a branch scaring a cardinal away.

AUDREY
I'm selling my company.

Maxine, not to be outdone, lets her next snowball fly hitting a branch that sends a squirrel scurrying.

MAXINE
Congratulations.

AUDREY
And as soon as the check clears I'm thinking about moving back here.

Both girls are packing snowballs. Packing them hard and tight.

MAXINE
I bet they offered you a lot of money.

AUDREY
More than I ever thought I was worth.

MAXINE
Great. That's great.

Both let their snowballs fly hitting the trunk square on.

AUDREY
Wow! Look at that.

MAXINE
(casually, out of breath)
Yeah. But mine got there first.

Audrey and Maxine stare at each other for a moment.

They turn to walk back to the club.

AUDREY
Let's just hit a reset on this whole dating Zach thing. What are you two doing tonight? Maybe we should go out to dinner and put all this in the rear view. And it'll be my treat. My accountant says I don't put enough entertainment expenses on my corporate card. So maybe you guys can entertain me.

MAXINE
Are you sure you'll be okay?

AUDREY

It took me by surprise at first, but I'm really okay with this. I mean we're adults. We're friends. I get why it might have been tough to tell me. So let's move on. All that really matters is that I get to spend time with two of my favorite people while I'm home.

47

INT. THE WARMING HOUSE RESTAURANT - EVENING

47

Audrey, Maxine and Zach are sitting in a booth enjoying dinner together.

Well, Maxine isn't exactly enjoying her dinner. Watching the ease that Zach and Audrey have around each other is troubling to her.

AUDREY

I can't believe I haven't been home in over a year. It actually took the official reboot of Miss Christmas City to pull me out of my workroom.

She slurps her stroganoff.

AUDREY (CONT'D)

I have to admit that more than once I've thought about how my life would have been different had I been named Miss Christmas City.

MAXINE

Your life wouldn't have changed much.

ZACH

I think losing worked out great for you. If you won, you probably never would have left town and become the big shot in fashion you are now.

AUDREY

I guess everything happens for a reason.

She takes another bite of her stroganoff.

AUDREY (CONT'D)

It's kinda funny, but when you dissect it, the path my life has taken can all be boiled down to the "Dress Your Elf" competition.

ZACH

Dress your elf? Refresh my memory on this one.

AUDREY

The Dress Your Elf portion of the competition was when contestants came up with our own elf costumes and then showcased them.

ZACH

Oh God. How could I elf-ing forget something so elf-ing dorky.

AUDREY

I went to put on my costume and there was a run in my tights. That stinking run. I always felt that was the deciding factor between us two.

MAXINE

It could've been.

Maxine takes a sip of wine.

MAXINE (CONT'D)

I, on the other hand, got lucky that night. I completely forgot my tights but I found an extra pair.

Audrey stops in mid chew.

AUDREY

(her mouth still full)
You found an extra pair?

MAXINE

Yeah.

Audrey swallows. Swallows hard.

AUDREY

What kind of tights were they?

MAXINE

I don't know.

Audrey pushes her plate away.

AUDREY
Were they in a Ziploc bag?

MAXINE
Maybe. Who knows?

AUDREY
Were they in a Ziploc bag with
"extra tights" written in gold
marker?

MAXINE
Audrey, that was a long time ago. I
can't remember.

Audrey wipes her mouth with her napkin and throws it aside.

AUDREY
(agitated)
Oh, come on now. Something that had
this great of an impact on your
life is surely memorable.

Exasperated, Maxine looks at Zach and then to Audrey.

MAXINE
They were in a bag. Okay. But I
think it was a Hefty Slider. Not a
Ziploc.

Audrey slams her hands on the table.

AUDREY
You bitch! You! You were the one
who took my extra elf tights!

MAXINE
You're insane! I found an extra
pair.

AUDREY
Did you have an extra pair?

MAXINE
No!

AUDREY
Then you took someone's. You took
mine! You took my tights you thief!
You are a no good, back stabbing,
tight stealing, little elf thief!

ZACH
Hey guys, come on. This is silly.

AUDREY
No it's not Zach. She always has to
beat me and she doesn't care how.

MAXINE
(patronizingly)
If I took your tights, I'm sorry.

AUDREY
No you're not!

Zach motions to the waiter.

ZACH
Check please!

48 EXT. ZACH'S CAR - NIGHT 48

Zach and Maxine pull into Maxine's driveway.

49 INT. ZACH'S CAR - NIGHT 49

MAXINE
She's unraveling, you know.

ZACH
I can't believe I am asking this
question: Did you take her tights?

MAXINE
The specter of years of being
second to me is possessing her. We
need to perform some sort of envy
exorcism.

ZACH
Did you take her tights?

MAXINE
That's not what I'm talking about.

ZACH
But I am. Just tell me the truth.

Maxine looks away.

MAXINE
No, I did not.

ZACH

Good. That's all you needed to say.

Maxine opens the car door.

MAXINE

I won that pageant fair and square and it's her problem if she can't deal with it. And, really, she needs to get over it. I mean this was years ago.

Maxine gets out of the car and heads to her house.

ZACH

Good-night?

Maxine turns around and comes back to the car.

She leans in and gives Zach a distracted good-night kiss.

MAXINE

Good-night.

50

INT. SORENSON'S HOUSE - AUDREY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

50

Audrey storms into her room, slamming her door.

She paces angrily back and forth.

She stomps over to her vanity and grabs a framed photo of her and Maxine and hurls it against the wall.

Audrey looks in the mirror for answers.

All she sees has a piece of parsley stuck between her teeth.

AUDREY

Oh, for crying out loud.

Jimmy walks in.

JIMMY

Hey, what's with the banging?

AUDREY

What are you still doing here?
Don't you have a home?

JIMMY

Yes. But Mom and Dad have all the good Christmas snacks. What's going on?

AUDREY

Nothing.

Jimmy spies the recently heaved evidence of a friendship gone awry.

JIMMY

Okay. Let's hear it.

Audrey opens the floodgates.

AUDREY

Everything I ever had growing up was because of Maxine. I had friends because of her, I got invited to parties because of her, I had fun because of her, and, as it turns out, I was head Candy Cane because of her. Everything that came my way came with Maxine's help. Except Zach. He was mine. I got him on my own, not because I hung out with the most popular girl in Christmas City, but because I was me.

After her tirade there is a long pause.

JIMMY

You are pathetic.

AUDREY

(sarcastically)

Thanks, Jimmy. I never thought of that. You have all the answers.

JIMMY

Audrey, you left home with savings from waitressing, put yourself through school, came in second on Project Runway, started a multi-million dollar company on your own and have run it so well someone wants to drop a pile of money in your lap. But, here you are, whining because Maxine stole your boyfriend? Who, by the way, you dumped. Please. Grow the hell up.

AUDREY

I'm trying.

She folds her arms and pouts.

AUDREY (CONT'D)

But little miss Maxi pad won't let me.

Jimmy gets up from the bed.

JIMMY

If you won't grow up and be the mature one, let me give you a little advice: When you don't like the cards life has dealt you, you change the game.

51 INT. SORENSON'S GARAGE - MORNING

51

Audrey is rummaging through the various shelves and storage areas littering the garage.

Jimmy is heading to his car when he sees Audrey and walks in.

AUDREY

Have you seen my fishing pole?

JIMMY

Yeah.

AUDREY

Great. Where is it?

JIMMY

Somewhere in the lake. I dropped it over the side of Zach's boat this summer. Who are you going fishing with?

AUDREY

Zach.

JIMMY

Just Zach?

AUDREY

Yes. Just me and Zach. Ice fishing like we used to.

JIMMY

I hope you know what you're doing.

AUDREY

Jimmy, I've baited a hook before.

JIMMY

I know what you're trying to reel
in this time.

Audrey smiles.

AUDREY

What? It's just two old friends
spending time together.

52

INT. STOFER VETERINARIAN CLINIC - AFTERNOON

52

Zach is in an examining room administering a shot to a
nonplussed pussycat.

There is a knock on the door.

ZACH

Come in.

Audrey enters the room.

AUDREY

(surprised)

Oh God, you're not sending it over
the rainbow bridge, are you?

ZACH

No, just a rabies shot.

(a beat)

I should probably give you and
Maxine one.

AUDREY

Oh that. I totally overreacted last
night. I've been under a lot of
stress lately and was hoping coming
home would be a nice break and I
could have some fun.

She looks into Zach's eyes.

AUDREY (CONT'D)

I need to have some fun.

ZACH

I'm neutering a dog later. Wanna
watch?

AUDREY

Mmm, tempting, but I'll pass.

ZACH
Well, I'm outta ideas.

AUDREY
Tonight is the big ice house
Christmas decorating contest on
Fish Lake. Do you still enter it?

ZACH
Every year.

AUDREY
So how about a little ice fishing
in your house. See if you win?

ZACH
Yeah. Ok. Sounds good.

AUDREY
Should we ask Maxine?

ZACH
She hates fishing.

AUDREY
(lying)
Oh yeah, I forgot.

53 INT. MAXINE'S HOUSE - BATHROOM - EVENING

53

Maxine is seated at her vanity listening to her voicemail on
speakerphone while primping in a mirror.

ZACH (O.S.)
(on voice mail)
Audrey stopped by today. She felt
bad about what happened last night.

Maxine is paying more attention to the application of her
mascara than to Zach's voice.

After attending to her lashes, she pulls out her lipstick.

ZACH (O.C.) (CONT'D)
(on voice mail)
...I know you are busy with pageant
stuff, and it is the night of the
ice house decorating contest, and
Audrey hasn't been ice fishing in
awhile so that's what she and I
are doing tonight...

Maxine stops at her cupid's bow.

ZACH (O.C.) (CONT'D)
 (on voice mail)
 ...and I guess that's it. I'll see
 you tomorrow. Bye.

Maxine looks into the mirror, her lips twisting into an angry
 clench.

54 INT. ICE FISHING HOUSE - EVENING

54

Zach and Audrey are sitting inside Zach's ice fishing house.
 This year his decorating scheme is a salute to Santa's Elves.
 Their fishing lines dangle through the hole in the ice.

ZACH
 Out of the three of us, I always
 thought Maxine would be the one to
 move away. She always had the big
 dreams and ambition. And you, I
 always thought that you would be a
 Christmas City lifer just like me.

AUDREY
 I thought I would be a lifer too,
 but things don't always go as
 planned.

ZACH
 She was even valedictorian. At
 reunions people still talk about
 her graduation speech.

Audrey remembers it well.

AUDREY
 The candy bar speech.

ZACH
 Yeah.

Zach recites a memorable passage.

ZACH (CONT'D)
 High school is like a candy bar:
 Wrapped in a thick layer of
 chocolate tradition with a bunch of
 nuts inside. No matter how far
 apart the nuts travel they will
 always be connected by...

AUDREY

A thin, hanging strand of caramel.

ZACH

Always a part of the candy bar that is Christmas City High School. That was pretty cool.

Audrey doesn't look too impressed.

ZACH (CONT'D)

Come on, that was a great speech.

AUDREY

I know. I was the one who wrote it.

ZACH

You wrote that speech? Why did you write her speech?

AUDREY

Maxine showed up at my house the night before graduation a total basket case. Her mom and dad were at it again. Apparently your parents telling each other what losers they are and how their marriage was a catastrophic mistake makes it difficult to concentrate. She needed my help and I wanted to help her. I wasn't worried about her getting my credit. I just couldn't stand to see my best friend hurting so much. I never hurt like that. So I wrote the speech while she slept in my bed.

(a beat)

That's what friends are for, right?

Zach smiles.

ZACH

You know what the best part about dating Maxine is?

Audrey shakes her head no.

ZACH (CONT'D)

Being with her reminds me of being with you.

AUDREY

That has a kinky, sort of swapping, throuple feel to it, Zach.

ZACH

What I'm trying to say is, when I'm with her I find myself thinking of you.

Audrey would love to kiss him right now, but doesn't. Guilt is getting the best of her.

She changes the subject.

AUDREY

Man, I'm getting hungry.

ZACH

I can't wait to sink my teeth into some fresh fish.

AUDREY

I hate to break it to you, but...

She lifts up a stringer filled with a whole bunch of nothing.

AUDREY (CONT'D)

...we haven't caught anything.

ZACH

I know. But, there is a great restaurant on the lake.

55 EXT. FROZEN LAKE - EVENING

55

Zach is driving his snowmobile across the frozen lake with Audrey wrapped around his waist.

In the distance there is a lodge lit up with hundreds of white lights that illuminate the smoke that curls upward from its chimney.

56 INT. MISS CHRISTMAS CITY HEADQUARTERS - NIGHT

56

Maxine and Carol are sitting at a large conference table with the rest of the pageant committee.

Maxine, ever the pro, is not letting the evening's earlier message get her down.

This is her domain.

CAROL

We need all the contestants at the press conference a half hour early and please remind the girls that bras are not optional. Is that all?

HOLLY

I have one last thing. Trader Joe's will be opening...

This bit of information excites old Carol.

CAROL

Trader Joe's is coming?!

NOEL

Everybody knows about Trader Joe's.

HOLLY

I swear Carol, you can be so far out of the loop sometimes. Any-who, they would like Miss Christmas City to appear at the grand opening and hand out kombucha.

MAXINE

Sounds like fun. I'll do it.

NOEL

You can't, Maxine.

CAROL

Yeah, Maxine. By then we'll have a new Miss Christmas City.

Carol, along with the committee members, watch as the color drains from Maxine's face.

They try to make it up to her.

HOLLY

You can still shop there.

NOEL

And come by for the kombucha.

Maxine tries to save face.

MAXINE

Oh yeah, sure. I love kombucha.

As the meeting comes to a close, Maxine sits with her own thoughts. Suffice to say they aren't pleasant ones.

57 INT. DEEP LAKE LODGE - NIGHT

57

The Deep Lake Lodge is decorated with so many sprays and garlands of pine you can almost smell it.

Audrey and Zach sit at a table by the fireplace and have yet to finish their food because they've been enjoying each other's company too much.

A band is set up at the far end of the room, ready to start.

The OWNER of the restaurant steps up to the microphone.

OWNER

Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to polka night here at Deep Lake Lodge. Remember, tonight we have a wonderful trout special and every Tuesday is "you catch it, we cook it" night, and be sure to get those votes in for the ice house decorating contest. Now, without further ado, it gives me great pleasure to introduce The Luoma Brothers.

The LUOMA BROTHERS, a hipster-ific polka band, kick it down.

ZACH

Oh, I love polka.

AUDREY

That's a big leap for a guy who has every Foo Fighters album.

ZACH

In my maturity I have become a lover of all musical genres.

He gets up from the table and extends his hand to Audrey.

ZACH (CONT'D)

Come on.

AUDREY

You know I don't know how to polka.

ZACH

What's there to know? You hop around like a damn fool and try not to break a hip in the process.

AUDREY

Alright!

She gets up from the table.

AUDREY (CONT'D)
Just don't kick me in the shins.

He leads her onto the dance floor.

ZACH
I'm not making any promises.

58 INT. MAXINE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

58

Maxine is sitting on her couch illuminated only by her television screen. She's on the phone with her FATHER while "Love Actually" plays in the background.

FATHER (O.C)
I am so sorry I'm going to miss your pageant.

MAXINE
Well, this wouldn't be the first time, Dad.

FATHER (O.C)
Really? I was sure I was at the last one.

MAXINE
No. You weren't.

FATHER (O.C)
Well, I'm really busy, and, well, I'll try to make it up to you soon.

Maxine has heard that before.

FATHER (O.C) (CONT'D)
I gotta run.

MAXINE
Okay. Do you want me to say "hi" to Mom for you?

FATHER (O.C)
Sure. Yeah. Whatever. I gotta go.

MAXINE
Okay. Bye.

That's all. Maxine hangs up and tosses her phone aside.

MAXINE (CONT'D)
I don't need him there anyway.

59 INT. DEEP LAKE LODGE - DANCE FLOOR - NIGHT 59

Zach is whipping Audrey around like she was a blow up doll.
Audrey is having the time of her life.
The band stops and thus the dancing.

AUDREY
Where did you learn to do that?

ZACH
My mom used to make me practice
with a mop.

Audrey laughs.
She looks at him and can't stop smiling.
Zach smiles at her and can't stop looking.

ZACH (CONT'D)
I think we should get out of here.

AUDREY
Good idea.

60 EXT. FROZEN LAKE - NIGHT 60

The snowmobile cruises across the ice.
The moon has illuminated the night sky coloring it the
perfect shade of midnight blue.
Zach cuts the engine.

AUDREY
What happened?

ZACH
You're not going to believe this,
but, I think we ran out of gas.

AUDREY
Please, you're not going to try
that one on me.

Zach gets off the snowmobile.

AUDREY (CONT'D)

The next thing you know you'll try
the old yawn and put your arm
around me.

Zach lifts his arms.

Yawns.

Then pounces on her.

They collapse on to the lake in an embrace.

They kiss.

ZACH

Let's go somewhere warmer.

61 EXT. ZACH'S CABIN - BEDROOM - MORNING

61

Audrey is laying in Zach's bed.

Zach is whistling as he comes in carrying two cups of coffee.

AUDREY

You're awfully jolly this morning.

ZACH

(proudly)

I had sex last night.

AUDREY

I know. I was there.

ZACH

Were you? The sex was so good I
blacked out.

Zach hands her a cup of coffee.

AUDREY

Thanks.

Zach hops in bed next to her.

ZACH

So, you want to hang out and do
some more "fishing"? Put some bait
on my hook? Let me drop a line in?

Audrey rolls her eyes and laughs at the "sexy talk".

AUDREY

I'd love to, but I gotta get home and get dressed. Miss Christmas City is having a press conference today and I need to be there. Apparently, the internet picked up the whole "no pageant for umpteen years" angle and certain news outlets feel it's a quirky human interest story. Plus that blizzard that was supposed to hit New York has been downgraded to an annoying slush, so slow news cycle. Word is that the Today Show is sending Hoda Kotb here.

ZACH

Wow. I don't think the Today Show has mentioned Christmas City since the E. Coli breakout fifteen years ago.

AUDREY

It was sixteen years ago. Sixteen long years.

ZACH

Are you sure?

AUDREY

Oh, yeah. I'm sure.

Audrey shivers a little. Not because she's cold, but because of what she's about to say.

AUDREY (CONT'D)

Do you think you and I were meant to be together? Are meant to be together?

ZACH

I would like to say yes. But there is also a whole lot of states and your growing company between us that say no.

AUDREY

And then there is Maxine.

Zach sighs. How can he tell the truth without looking like an ass.

ZACH

Maxine and I... we hold hands, we kiss, but it feels like we're acting in a school play. It doesn't feel like the real thing. And I know what the real thing feels like because I have had the real thing.

AUDREY

Have you guys had sex? Wait. No. Don't tell me. I don't want to know.

Audrey takes a swig of coffee.

AUDREY (CONT'D)

Have you guys had sex?

ZACH

Yes. We have had sex.

AUDREY

God. I bet Maxine is great at that too. Wait. No. Don't tell me. I don't want to know.

Audrey takes a swig of coffee.

AUDREY (CONT'D)

Is Maxine good at sex?

ZACH

I am not going to answer that.

AUDREY

Because she's amazing.

ZACH

No. Because that is a weird and creepy question to ask and even worse to answer.

Eager to change the subject she brought up Audrey, shifts the conversation.

AUDREY

I have an offer from J. Crew. A good one. If I sell my company, I'm thinking about moving back here. I've been working like crazy since the day I left. No downtime. No me time. No time for friends. And now I want to slow down and just spend time.

Zach looks deep into her eyes. He starts to squint.

AUDREY (CONT'D)

What are you doing?

ZACH

I'm trying to see if you're messing with my head.

AUDREY

I'm not.

ZACH

Are you doing this because of me?

AUDREY

Not exactly. I'm selling my company for me. I'm ready to and it is what I want to do. But moving back. Yeah, I'd be lying if I said you weren't part of the reason moving back here sounds good.

(a beat)

I love you. I always have.

ZACH

I love you, too. I always have.

62 EXT. HOLIDAY FESTIVAL PARK - PARKING LOT - AFTERNOON 62

Maxine pulls her car into the parking spot reserved for Miss Christmas City.

63 INT. MAXINE'S CAR - CONTINUOUS 63

Maxine does some last-minute touch ups to her face by powdering her nose.

She opens the door to her car.

Crap. She never put the compact away. It crashes to the ground, breaking into a million pieces.

MAXINE

Crap.

She maneuvers herself to pick up the pieces and salvage its remains. In the process, she tears the seam in her blouse.

MAXINE (CONT'D)

Crap.

64

EXT. HOLIDAY FESTIVAL PARK - AFTERNOON

64

The park is hosting the press conference for the Miss Christmas City Pageant.

The local news is covering the event as well as the newspapers and broadcast media from around the country including HODA KOTB from the Today Show.

Scattered around the stage are twelve young women all competing for the crown of Miss Christmas City.

Maxine is holding court. As usual, she's the one everybody wants to talk to.

REPORTER #1

It must be bittersweet giving away
a crown that has been yours for
nearly two decades?

Maxine answers the question with the vocal cadence of any pageant contestant who's made it to the interview portion.

MAXINE

It has been my honor and privilege
to be Miss Christmas City for as
long as I have and I hope the next
Miss Christmas City wears the crown
as proudly.

REPORTER #1

So what is next for you?

Maxine's smile stiffens as she thinks for a moment.

MAXINE

I plan to continue my work at the
Christmas City Tourism Office and
look forward to making sure you
good folks visit Christmas City
year round.

Across the way, Audrey is talking to Carol.

Maxine watches as Hoda Kotb approaches them.

HODA

Okay, Carol, we're done here for
now. We're going to shoot the
rehearsal tomorrow and, of course,
the pageant. I'd like to get
reactions, talk to the winner, that
sort of thing.

CAROL
Anything you want. We're just
tickled to have you here.

HODA
It's an interesting story.

CAROL
Have you met Audrey Sorenson yet?

HODA
No.
(extending her hand)
Nice to meet you.

Audrey shakes her hand.

AUDREY
Likewise.

CAROL
Audrey was the first runner-up in
the last Miss Christmas City
pageant. She has been second to
Maxine all this time.

HODA
You don't say.

CAROL
Audrey's done okay for herself
since then. She is the designer of
The Dozen Dress as seen on QVC.

HODA
Really.

AUDREY
So you've heard of it?

HODA
I have one in every color. Love the
stretch.

You can almost see the light-bulb go off over Hoda's head.

HODA (CONT'D)
Do you mind if we talk to you?

AUDREY
No, not at all.

Hoda motions to her cameraman.

He turns his spotlight on Audrey and starts rolling.

A reporter from across the room notices what NBC is doing and goes over to get in on the action.

Pretty soon, all of the reporters who were hovering around Maxine begin to flock to Audrey.

Maxine won't go down without a fight.

MAXINE

Hey. Where are you all going? I'm still Miss Christmas City. What the...?

A straggling REPORTER isn't moving fast enough.

Maxine grabs him by the arm.

MAXINE (CONT'D)

You know, I still fit into the dress I wore in the pageant.

REPORTER #2

I'll spread the word.

He yanks his arm back and hustles away.

MAXINE

I got a good joke for you!

Maxine is left alone.

MAXINE (CONT'D)

Crap.

She watches as Audrey hijacks the spotlight.

TWO PAGEANT CONTESTANTS are also watching the hoopla surrounding Audrey.

CONTESTANT #1

Who is that?

MAXINE

(through clenched teeth)
Audrey Sorenson.

CONTESTANT #2

Why is she so special?

MAXINE

She is the one who lost to me.

CONTESTANT #1

That poor thing.

Maxine throws her hands up in exasperation.

MAXINE

You would think so, wouldn't you?

Maxine watches as court is now held by Audrey.

65

INT. SORENSON'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - AFTERNOON

65

Audrey is on her cell, pacing back and forth.

AUDREY

I mulled over the proposal and it looks good. But you have to understand I am concerned about the people that work for me and with me and have helped grow the company.

She gives her father the thumbs up.

Bill crosses his arms and nods.

Her mother has other concerns.

JANE

(to Audrey)

You've been on that phone too long.

Audrey waves her off. She holds the phone to her chest.

AUDREY

(whining)

Mo-om, I'm negotiating.

JANE

That's all well and good, but if you talk any longer you're going to get an ear tumor.

Audrey turns away rolling her eyes.

AUDREY

If I sell I want to make sure production stays where it is, officers stay where they are.

(a beat)

Great, I look forward to hearing from you soon.

She hangs up the phone.

JANE

You were on that phone way too long. You might as well stick your head in a microwave.

66 EXT. HOLIDAY FESTIVAL PARK - SUNSET

66

Maxine and Zach are walking through the Christmas light display as it gets its finishing touches.

ZACH

I know this has been a weird time for you so I'm sorry about this, but we both know this was never going to work out between us.

She shakes her head.

MAXINE

Unbelievable.

ZACH

I still want to be friends.

Maxine rolls her eyes.

MAXINE

Yeah. Friends.

ZACH

I don't think you and I should see each other anymore.

MAXINE

I thought for sure you would go with "it's not you, it's me"?

ZACH

Would it make you feel better?

Maxine shoots him a look.

ZACH (CONT'D)

Maybe I'll skip that one.

MAXINE

Now that you've flipped through every break-up cliché in the book, why don't you give me the real reason.

Zach knows that this idea of dating didn't mean that much to either of them.

He tries to add levity to the situation.

ZACH

It's not like we're even really breaking up. We weren't seriously dating even though we were dating. And you were the one who said it was convenient for us to be together. Wasn't that what you said when we talked about giving this a try?

Maxine knows he's right, but she is still upset.

She's losing patience. She motions for him to get on with it.

MAXINE

And...

ZACH

I want to get back together with Audrey. You know it was always Audrey.

She knew it.

MAXINE

So you're dumping me.

ZACH

Yes.

MAXINE

For her.

ZACH

Well, no. It's more like Audrey and I decided that seeing other people is no longer good for our relationship.

MAXINE

So you're dumping me.

ZACH

Yes.

MAXINE

For her.

A long pause.

ZACH

Yes.

Suddenly the Christmas displays come to life all at once illuminating Maxine's darkened mood.

MAXINE
Unbelievable.

67 INT. SORENSON'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

67

Audrey paces as she talks on the phone.

The entire family is gathered around, listening to her side of the conversation.

The smile on Audrey's face is ten feet wide.

AUDREY
Again, I really appreciate the dynamics of this offer and the creativity you've shown in putting this deal together.
(a beat)
Yes. You have a good night as well.

She hangs up the phone.

AUDREY (CONT'D)
Well, family, I sold my company.

Jimmy thrusts his hands in the air.

JIMMY
We're rich!

BILL
You're not rich. Your sister is.

JANE
Oh, now, I'm sure Audrey will share.

BILL
Jiminy Christmas, Jane, it's not like she's hogging all the egg nog.

JANE
Well, she certainly doesn't need all that money for herself.

AUDREY
Let's go celebrate.

JIMMY
Are you treating?

AUDREY

Hell, yeah!

JANE

Language, Audrey.

68

INT. THE WARMING HOUSE RESTAURANT - NIGHT

68

The Sorenson family is sitting at the best spot in the place. Champagne buckets are littered about the table.

JIMMY

How soon before you move back?

AUDREY

Well, I have to finalize the deal. I'll probably keep my place in New York. I bought it when the market was down so it's a good investment. And there is obviously going to be a certain transition period. Hopefully it won't take too long.

JIMMY

Are you going to buy a house here?

AUDREY

Definitely.

JANE

Don't buy a real big one. People will think you're showing off.

AUDREY

I want one big enough for a family.

Bill stops eating.

He throws down his napkin.

He leans over and looks his daughter dead in the eye.

BILL

Are you knocked up?

AUDREY

No, I'm not...

JANE

(mortified)

Who's the father?

AUDREY

I'm not pregnant, I promise you.
I've been on the pill since senior
year.

Repulsed by the very thought of sperm swimming up his
daughter's vagina, Bill cuts off the conversation.

BILL

This conversation is over.

Jane changes the subject.

JANE

It would have been nice if Zach and
Maxine could have joined us.

AUDREY

If they did we probably would've
had dinner AND a show.

Jimmy looks at Audrey.

JIMMY

You caught that fish, after all.

JANE

What?

AUDREY

Nothing.

(a beat)

Zach and Maxine had plans. Well
Zach had a plan. For Maxine it was
more of a surprise.

69

INT. THE WARMING HOUSE RESTAURANT - BAR - NIGHT

69

In another room of The Warming House, Maxine is sitting alone
at the bar.

The BARTENDER walks up to her.

BARTENDER

Another?

MAXINE

Yeah.

(a beat)

Hey. Do you know who I am?

BARTENDER

Should I?

MAXINE

Yes.

He stares long and hard at her.

She positions her body to show off her good side and smiles.

BARTENDER

Sorry. I have no idea.

MAXINE

So. I don't know who you are
either.

BARTENDER

Ted.

He points to his name tag.

BARTENDER (CONT'D)

Ted.

(a beat)

You should get a name tag.

70 EXT. SORENSON'S HOUSE - MORNING

70

Audrey walks to the end of the snowy driveway to get the morning paper.

Her neighbor comes jogging by.

NEIGHBOR

Hey, Audrey.

AUDREY

Good morning!

She flips open the newspaper.

Her eyes widen with joy and a giant smile comes over her face. She looks like a kid that just got the best Christmas gift ever...and she has!

Audrey clutches the paper to her chest and lets out a scream.

AUDREY (CONT'D)

(screaming)

Yes!

71 INT. SORENSON'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - MORNING

71

Jane is cooking breakfast.

Audrey bursts into the room waving the paper.

Jane gets frantic.

JANE
Is there a bee in the house?
(to Audrey)
Did it sting you?

Jane starts waving her spatula in the air at the phantom bee.

JANE (CONT'D)
Get it out of the house. Shoo, you
wicked little bee. Shoo.

Bill comes running in rolling up a magazine ready to do battle.

BILL
Alright, who let the bee in the
house?

AUDREY
It's the dead of winter. There is
no bee.

She whips open the paper.

AUDREY (CONT'D)
But this is what everyone is
buzzing about!

There, on the front page of the Christmas City Chronicle, is a picture of Audrey and the headline "The First Runner-Up Finishes Second to None".

Jane's eyes avert to above her head.

JANE
I can still hear that bee.

72

EXT. MAXINE'S HOUSE - MORNING

72

The PAPER BOY is riding his bike down the street. He tosses a paper onto Maxine's driveway.

Maxine peers out her front door to make sure the paper boy has passed by and no one is watching.

She sneaks out to the driveway and grabs her paper.

On her way back to the safety of her house she stops.

She has read the headline.

She lets out a scream of anguish.

MAXINE
(screaming)
No!

The paper boy is making his way back down the other side of the street.

He waves politely to Maxine.

PAPER BOY
Good morning.

She spins around and whips the paper at him.

The kid ducks as the paper goes sailing past him.

PAPER BOY (CONT'D)
What the heck, lady!

He gets off his bike, fetches the paper and whips it back into Maxine's driveway.

Maxine marches back, picks up the paper and re-whips it back at him.

She stomps into her house and slams the door.

PAPER BOY (CONT'D)
(pleading)
I'm just trying to earn a living here.

73

INT. STOFER VETERINARIAN CLINIC - DAY

73

Zach is doing inventory when Audrey comes bounding in.

AUDREY
Morning.

She jumps on him and plants a big kiss on his lips.

ZACH
(jokingly)
Why so glum?

AUDREY
I got some big news.
(a beat)
It's done. I sold my company.

Zach's face lights up.

AUDREY (CONT'D)

I mean it's underway. Nothing is signed yet. But it's done. I'm ready.

ZACH

This is good.

They put a big squeeze on each other.

AUDREY

I know, I know. It's like after all these years everything is starting to go my way.

(a beat)

Did you see the paper this morning?

ZACH

I sure did. Front page.

AUDREY

Did you also see that they barely mentioned Maxine.

Zach's smile wilts.

AUDREY (CONT'D)

She must be killing herself. All those years in the limelight and now she's going out in a puff of smoke instead of a blaze of glory.

He pulls away.

AUDREY (CONT'D)

Kind of like the witch in the Wizard of Oz. All that hullabaloo and yet she just melts away.

ZACH

Did you take some mean girl pills with those Flintstones chewables this morning?

AUDREY

Oh, stop.

ZACH

I'm sorry, but you have to be careful as far as Maxine is concerned. She's going through a really tough time.

AUDREY
Oh that's right.

Audrey feigns compassion.

AUDREY (CONT'D)
How did she take it when you dumped
her?

Zach lets out a sigh and leaves the room.

AUDREY (CONT'D)
Did she cry?

Audrey skips after him.

AUDREY (CONT'D)
Did her mascara run?

74 EXT. STOFER VETERINARIAN CLINIC - EVENING

74

Zach is locking up the office for the night.

As he walks, he spots Maxine's car parked next to his.

Zach approaches her.

ZACH
Hey, Maxine.

Maxine rolls down the window.

MAXINE
Hi, Zach. I'm not stalking you, if
that's what you're worried about.

ZACH
Are you kidding? A stalker. I'd
take it as a compliment.

MAXINE
I was wondering when I could come
by your house and pick up my stuff?

ZACH
Gee, I didn't even know you had
stuff at my place.

MAXINE
Not much. Just a couple of
sweatshirts, my "Beaches" DVD and a
pair of Stuart Weitzman pumps.

ZACH

I was hoping you'd let me keep the pumps. They really give my calves definition.

Maxine smiles.

MAXINE

There's no way you could get your foot into a size eight shoe.

(a beat)

I've got the Miss Christmas City rehearsal tonight, can I stop by after that?

Zach shifts back and forth, uncomfortable with the suggestion.

ZACH

Tonight? I'm a little busy.

MAXINE

Audrey must be coming over.

ZACH

Yeah. Yeah, she is.

(a beat)

Why don't you come over? The three of us are still friends. Right?

Maxine's not quite sure of what her answer is.

MAXINE

It's okay.

She starts her car.

MAXINE (CONT'D)

I always knew the two of you would eventually end up together. You can't blame me for trying.

She starts to back out but then stops.

MAXINE (CONT'D)

It's funny how Audrey came running back to you after I started seeing you. She never made a commitment to you until then.

Maxine shrugs her shoulders and cheerfully adds...

MAXINE (CONT'D)

But, as long as it doesn't bother you. Have a good time tonight.

She drives off.

Zach stands there, thinking.

75

EXT. HOLIDAY FESTIVAL PARK - SUNSET

75

The outdoor stage for the Miss Christmas City Pageant has been fully and festively dressed in Christmas regalia.

The contestants are on stage rehearsing the opening number. Maxine is there helping Carol run through some cumbersome choreography.

Zach comes bolting across the grounds.

He walks up to the edge of the stage, gesturing to Carol.

ZACH

Excuse me, Mrs. Mallow, have you seen Audrey?

CAROL

Indeed I have. She's in the tent.

As soon as those words are out of her mouth, Zach takes off.

ZACH

Thanks.

Maxine watches him go.

MAXINE

Carol, I think we need a quick break.

Carol looks over at the weary contestants.

Their shins are starting to bruise from the various missteps they have taken.

CAROL

You're right. We've been working the poor dears too hard.

Maxine exits stage left.

CAROL (CONT'D)

Okay girls, take five.

The contestants deflate from their perfectly poised posture.

CAROL (CONT'D)

Make sure you hydrate and eat a snack. We don't need anyone passing out up here. If you go down it throws off all the formations and there aren't enough hot toddies to get me through another rehearsal.

76 INT. VIP TENT - SUNSET

76

Behind the stage is the VIP tent for the judges.

Audrey is mingling with her fellow judges when Zach approaches her.

AUDREY

Well this is a nice surprise.

ZACH

We need to talk.

77 EXT. VIP TENT - SUNSET

77

Audrey and Zach exit the tent and find a quiet place to talk.

Maxine, seeing them, goes to find a hiding spot to eavesdrop.

ANOTHER ANGLE

AUDREY

What's wrong?

ZACH

Why are you with me?

AUDREY

Because you fit the suit, Johnny
Bravo.

Zach's not laughing.

Audrey realizes he's serious when a nostalgic Brady Bunch reference passes by without a chortle.

AUDREY (CONT'D)

What kind of question is that?

ZACH

It's an important one.

AUDREY

It's one you shouldn't have to ask.
It's one you should know the answer
to by now.

ZACH

Are you with me because of Maxine?

AUDREY

I'm with you in spite of Maxine.

Zach asks the question staring right into Audrey's eyes.

ZACH

You've been in New York for a long
time and never considered coming
back before. You've got a career
and success and all of that. I
start dating Maxine and suddenly
you are moving back. Tell me, did
you sell your company and do all of
this, not for me, but because I
started seeing Maxine?

AUDREY

That is the most ridiculous thing I
have ever heard.

ZACH

Of course it's ridiculous, but that
doesn't mean it's not true.

Audrey doesn't want to lie to him.

AUDREY

It's a little true.

Zach thrusts his finger toward her as though he were
jousting.

ZACH

A-ha!

AUDREY

What a-ha?

ZACH

You were just using me for your
perverted plan of revenge.

AUDREY

I never used you.

ZACH

You used me to get back at Maxine.

AUDREY

I never set out to use you. I wanted us to be together again. Getting back at Maxine was an added bonus.

ZACH

A-ha!

AUDREY

Will you knock it off with the a-ha-ing. I'm trying to be honest here.

ZACH

I can't believe I'm having this junior high conversation with the woman I want to spend the rest of my life with.

The wheels in Audrey's head start to run at full speed.

ZACH (CONT'D)

Whatever Saved By the Bell, High School Musical, whacky Hannah Montana scheme you and Maxine have going on, it's time to grow up and put an end to it.

Audrey snaps back from her thoughts.

AUDREY

Maxine planted this demon seed in your head, didn't she?

ZACH

Can we please leave Maxine out of this.

AUDREY

I'm being truthful, you should too.

Zach knows that if he answers truthfully he's screwed.

He lets out a sigh.

AUDREY (CONT'D)

A-ha!

Zach throws up his hands in exasperation.

ZACH
I'm out of here.

AUDREY
That little bitch.

Zach leaves.

AUDREY (CONT'D)
Zach, come back. Can't you see?
This is exactly what she wants.

He keeps walking.

AUDREY (CONT'D)
Don't give her the satisfaction!
(a beat)
Zach!
(a beat)
ZACH!

Maxine walks around from the other side of the tent.

Maxine and Audrey lock eyes.

MAXINE
Here.

Maxine lobs a pair of tights to Audrey.

She catches it.

MAXINE (CONT'D)
Now we're even.

CAROL (O.S.)
We need the contestants back on
stage. Judges, we're ready for you
down front.

78 EXT. HOLIDAY FESTIVAL PARK - SUNSET

78

Audrey is with fellow judges in front of the stage.

Noel is showing them the judges table.

NOEL
Your score sheets will be set up
right in front of you. Please don't
doodle on them, or make a grocery
list, or anything, it could affect
the final tabulations.

Audrey listens intently until she sees Maxine take center stage.

Noel's words drift off as she focuses entirely on Maxine.

79

EXT. HOLIDAY FESTIVAL PARK - STAGE - CONTINUOUS

79

Maxine is on stage rehearsing the crowning of her success with Holly acting as proxy.

CAROL

Now Maxine, you remove the crown
from your head...

Maxine removes the crown from her head, but stops short.

MAXINE

I get to keep my crown, right?

She pulls the crown back.

CAROL

Of course, dear.

MAXINE

Okay.
(losing patience)
Let's move it along.

CAROL

Uh, yes. Now you take the crown and
gently place it on the head of the
new Miss Christmas City.

As Maxine places the crown on Holly's head she sees Audrey.

The two exchange stony steely gazes.

CAROL (CONT'D)

You'll have to quickly put some
hair pins in to hold the crown in
place.

Carol turns to the contestants standing up-stage.

CAROL (CONT'D)

Now, whoever wins, make sure not to
leave before Maxine gets the pins
in. If she should happen to bore
into your scalp with the bobby pin,
just keep smiling.

(MORE)

CAROL (CONT'D)
It would be better to have a
throbbin' noggin', than to have
your crown crash to the ground.

MAXINE'S POV

Audrey mouths something to her.

AUDREY
(inaudible)
You suck.

AUDREY'S POV

Maxine mouths back.

MAXINE
(inaudible)
You suck for money.

MAXINE'S POV

Audrey is getting steamed.

AUDREY
(inaudible)
Backstabber.

AUDREY'S POV

Maxine is getting just as mad.

MAXINE
(inaudible)
Loser.

MAXINE'S POV

Audrey's not playing fair anymore.

AUDREY
(inaudible)
Yoga pants.

AUDREY'S POV

Maxine's eyes open wide. So does her mouth.

MAXINE
(shouting)
What did you say to me?

ANOTHER ANGLE

Carol stops addressing the contestants and turns to Maxine.

Audrey approaches the foot of the stage.

AUDREY
I said...

The whole congregation has come to a halt.

AUDREY (CONT'D)
(shouting)
Yoga pants!

Maxine and Audrey are in their own world now.

MAXINE
You've got a lot of nerve! I still
fit into the dress I wore in the
pageant.

AUDREY
Oh please, that dress has had more
alterations than the Kardashians.

CAROL
Maxine! Audrey! This is not how the
reigning Miss Christmas City and
her Candy Cane in waiting behave!

Carol is wasting her breath.

AUDREY
Look at you, swaggering around up
there, you show off. It's just like
back in junior high when you were
the first one to get boobs.

MAXINE
That's right, I was first. I was
first to get boobs, I was first to
get a boyfriend, I was first to
rock the smoky eye look. I was
first for everything. Except I
wasn't first runner-up.

AUDREY

That may be true, but when it comes to true success and true love, it's no contest and you can't stand losing. You can't stand the fact that I am successful and that I will live happily ever after and you will end up decrepit and alone with only several hundred stray cats for companionship. People will stop on the street and point at you. And they won't be saying "look there goes Maxine Rumson, she used to be Miss Christmas City" they'll say "look there goes that crazy, smelly cat lady who used to be something".

Maxine stands, fists clenched, seething.

Audrey has hit home and she knows it.

AUDREY (CONT'D)

Me-ow.

She turns to leave.

MAXINE

Second place is first loser, bitch, and I got your consolation prize right here!

Maxine runs to the end of the stage and dives onto Audrey's back.

Audrey falls to the ground, flattened by Maxine.

All of the contestants run to the edge of the stage to watch the battle royale.

Maxine clearly has the upper hand and starts to slap Audrey around.

Audrey throws her off and springs to her feet.

Carol comes running off the stage.

CAROL

Ladies! Ladies! What kind of example are you setting?

Audrey grabs a pitcher of cranberry juice from the judges table and throws it in Maxine's face.

Maxine covers her eyes.

MAXINE

Oh God! The cranberries! It burns!

CAROL

(to Audrey)

That juice was for all the judges.

Maxine pulls her hands away. Her eyes are red, giving her a devilish quality.

She is drenched. Is that blood? No, it's cranberry juice.

They start to circle each other.

AUDREY

You're mine.

MAXINE

You only wish you could have me.

AUDREY

Why not? Everyone else has.

(a beat)

At least I'll be satisfied when I'm done with you.

Audrey steps up and gets Maxine in a headlock.

Maxine's only line of defense is to reach around and grab Audrey by the teat.

Audrey lets go of Maxine and backs off, clutching her aching boob.

They come at each other kicking fast and furious.

It looks like some bizarre Russian folk dance.

Then, like rams vying for superiority, they charge each other.

Audrey grabs Maxine around the waist and tackles her to the ground.

The two "pals" roll, kicking, scratching and screaming, around on the ground.

The sun has set.

The stage is empty.

Rehearsal is over and everyone has gone home.

Suddenly, from around the back of the stage, Audrey runs being chased by Maxine.

81 INT. SORENSON'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

81

Jane and Bill are sitting at the kitchen table playing Scrabble while "The Christmas Song" plays in the background.

JANE

Jostulate is not a word.

BILL

The hell it ain't. It's right there in front of you.

JANE

Use it in a sentence.

BILL

When you come near me you make my heart jostulate.

JANE

Flattering, but not a word.

Audrey comes barreling through the back door.

She's more than disheveled and less than clean.

She tries to get through the kitchen without being stopped.

JANE (CONT'D)

Audrey.

Too late.

JANE (CONT'D)

Your father and I would like to have a word with you.

Audrey doesn't turn around.

AUDREY

Now is not a good time.

JANE

Carol called. She said you and Maxine were fighting? Were you picking on her?

Audrey spins around.

AUDREY
Picking on her? What the hell is
this, second grade?

At the sight of her bludgeoned daughter, Jane careens into
mother mode.

JANE
Is that blood?!

AUDREY
Yeah,
(proudly)
But it ain't mine.

Jane gets up from her chair.

JANE
You won't be such the braggart when
that leaves a stain.

She drags Audrey over to the sink.

BILL
Honestly, Audrey, I expect this
kind of behavior from your brother,
heck I probably even encouraged it
back in the day, but you're my baby
girl.

Jane is trying to clean Audrey's sooty face, but Audrey is
putting up a fuss.

JANE
I think you should call Maxine and
apologize.

AUDREY
(defiantly)
I will not.

BILL
Don't talk back to your mother.

AUDREY
(defiantly)
I'm not.

JANE
Don't talk back to your father.

AUDREY

Jesus.

JANE

Don't bring him into this. He didn't do anything.

BILL

This is ridiculous. Just swallow your pride, call Maxine and apologize.

Audrey pulls away from her mom.

AUDREY

Dad, I've been swallowing my pride for so long, I'm choking on it.

Audrey storms out.

82

INT. DEEP LAKE LODGE - BAR - NIGHT

82

Zach and Jimmy are playing pool.

ZACH

This whole thing has gotten out of hand. I'm fighting with Audrey, Audrey's fighting with Maxine, Maxine is fighting with Audrey.

JIMMY

Quit your belly-achin'. You got two chicks fighting over you. Roll with it.

ZACH

Well, one of those "chicks" happens to be your sister.

JIMMY

Yeah! And I heard she kicked some mighty ass.

ZACH

They're not really fighting over me.

Jimmy lines up the six ball and shoots.

ZACH (CONT'D)

They're just fighting.

JIMMY

I saw it coming a mile away. This thing has been brewing since the Malibu Barbie incident. Maxine got the Malibu Barbie. Audrey got the Malibu Skipper.

ZACH

So what?

JIMMY

Since the Corvette belonged to Barbie, Skipper never got to drive it. Skipper always had to ride shotgun to Barbie.

ZACH

I always thought Skipper was a lot hotter than Barbie, anyway.

JIMMY

Skipper was younger than Barbie. That's jailbait, Elvis.

Jimmy lines up the four ball and shoots.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

You played with girl dolls?

ZACH

Well, when GI Joel went on shore leave.

JIMMY

(knowingly)
Oh, yeah.

ZACH

Barbie and Skipper aside, it doesn't help the current situation. I'm not an action figure.

JIMMY

Zach, pal, bud, pay attention. We're talking about two girls here that have been friends forever. We can never begin to understand the brotherhood of sisterhood so we're better off letting them do whatever it is they do and stay the hell out of their way.

83

EXT. SORENSON'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

83

Audrey is sitting under the Christmas tree curled up on the couch checking out the scratches she has from scrapping.

Jane enters carrying two steaming mugs of the classic Christmas City hot cocktail, the Tom and Jerry.

She hands Audrey a mug.

JANE

Tom and Jerry?

AUDREY

Wow. I haven't had one of those since I threw up four of them.

JANE

(shocked)

Four Tom and Jerry's? That's a lot of booze. Did you lose a bet?

They each take a sip.

They both wince a bit from the sheer strength of the warmed brandy.

AUDREY

I'm sorry I wasn't a better daughter.

Jane is genuinely stunned by that statement.

JANE

You are a great daughter. You never got in trouble, you always had a job after school and, look at you, you made something of yourself.

AUDREY

Yeah, but I'm sorry I wasn't a better daughter. I never wanted to be on the cheerleading squad. I hated ballet class. And when it came to the pageant, I was probably the only one who was in it for the cash.

JANE

(joking)

Yep, you were pure evil.

AUDREY

I'm sorry I wasn't more like Maxine.

JANE

Before you were born I had an idea of what I thought a daughter should be. But as I watched you grow, you kept changing the mold. And I am happy you did. All of these years I have been living vicariously through you, watching what this woman, my daughter, can do. And I've been having the time of my life.

AUDREY

Thanks, Mom.

JANE

Now, about Maxine...

AUDREY

I'll go apologize.

JANE

I don't want you to apologize just to get it off my chest. There are things that you have done in your life that I don't know about and, quite frankly, I don't need to know about. Like your first sexual experience. I'm sure you've had one, but I really don't want to hear the details. That is something you share with your sister. Of course you didn't have a sister so, you shared it with Maxine. You and Maxine have grown up together. Now is not the time to stop. So grow up.

AUDREY

(sincerely)

This is a very "Terms of Endearment" moment.

Jane puts a comforting arm around Audrey.

JANE

The daughter dies at the end of that movie, doesn't she?

AUDREY
Yeah. Breast cancer.

A long pause.

JANE
You're not keeping something from
me, are you?

AUDREY
Mom.

JANE
Mammograms aren't scary, you know.

AUDREY
Mom. I don't have cancer.

JANE
Shall we check for lumps together?

AUDREY
Let's bond another way, shall we.

84 INT. MAXINE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

84

Maxine is sitting on her couch nursing a swollen jaw by holding a pint of peppermint stick ice cream up to it.

She removes the ice cream, takes a spoonful from it, then puts the container back up to her cheek.

The doorbell rings.

She gets up to answer it feeling every bruised muscle in the process.

She opens the door. This is Christmas City. You don't have to ask who's there.

Audrey is standing on her front porch.

AUDREY
Hi. Can we talk?

MAXINE
Will there be slapping involved?

AUDREY
(nervously)
Only our knees when we're laughing
about this later. Ha, ha?

Maxine's not laughing, but she lets her in anyway.

85

INT. MAXINE'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

85

Maxine leans up against a counter still clutching and eating her ice cream.

MAXINE

We'll talk in here. I'll feel safer surrounded by knives.

AUDREY

Maxine, this has gone too far.

MAXINE

Yes it has. So apologize and we'll forget it.

Audrey knows what she has to do and for the first time she doesn't mind doing it.

AUDREY

I'm sorry.

Maxine throws her spoon down.

MAXINE

Oh, that is so typical of you.

AUDREY

What are you talking about?

MAXINE

You always have to take the high road, always have to be better than me.

AUDREY

I'm not trying to be better than you. I'm just trying to do the right thing.

MAXINE

You make me sick.

AUDREY

What did I do?

MAXINE

You did everything, Audrey. You left town, you risked everything and came up the big winner.

(MORE)

MAXINE (CONT'D)
 I stayed here and played it safe,
 and all I'll ever be is Miss
 Christmas City. And now I'm not
 even that.

She storms out of the room.

AUDREY
 Wait a minute.

86 INT. MAXINE'S HOUSE - BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

86

Maxine is washing her face.

Audrey stands in the doorway.

AUDREY
 You have always been the "it" girl.
 You've always had friends, fans,
 following. You have it all.

MAXINE
 Well, whatever I had, I'm running
 out of it.

AUDREY
 No you're not.

MAXINE
 Look at me, Audrey. I'm running on
 fumes. I didn't get the promotion
 at the Christmas City Tourism
 Office I wanted. I'm not good at
 relationships.
 (a beat)
 Do you know why my engagement was
 called off?

AUDREY
 You said Joel was smothering you.

MAXINE
 I lied.

Maxine has a seat on the toilet.

MAXINE (CONT'D)
 He said he was allergic to my cat.
 And because Mistletoe and I had
 been together longer, he couldn't
 bear to split us up. So, he did the
 "noble" thing and bowed out.
 (MORE)

MAXINE (CONT'D)
Have you ever heard a bigger load
of crap in your entire life?

Maxine starts to break down.

MAXINE (CONT'D)
And then Mistletoe dies. And he
doesn't come back.

She starts to sob.

MAXINE (CONT'D)
The truth is I wasn't good enough
for him.

Audrey kneels down beside her.

AUDREY
Now that's a load of crap.

MAXINE
I tried to be like you.

Audrey starts laughing hysterically.

MAXINE (CONT'D)
That's not funny.

AUDREY
Oh, that's funny. Because all I
ever wanted was to be like you.

Maxine stares at her and starts to laugh through her tears.

MAXINE
(self-mocking)
Well, I am Miss Christmas City.

AUDREY
Maxine, you have always been more
than just Miss Christmas City and I
have always been more than just the
first runner-up.

The two hug.

AUDREY (CONT'D)
And besides. You always said Joel
was boring.

MAXINE
He was. All he did was talk about
tacos. And he hated guacamole.

AUDREY

Well, babe. Just like guacamole:
you are extra.

87 INT. MAXINE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

87

Maxine and Audrey are sitting on her couch passing the ice cream back and forth while watching "A Christmas Story".

MAXINE

I hope we never fight again.

AUDREY

Oh, we're gonna fight again. Things can't be perfect and peaceful all the time. We're not Quakers.

MAXINE

Actually, I wouldn't mind another crack at you. I have my period and feel a little sluggish.

AUDREY

I think our hellcat days are over.

MAXINE

Yeah, but at least we'll have the memories.

AUDREY

And the police report.

MAXINE

Oh, yeah. I should tell you: I have a restraining order against you.

88 INT. STOFER VETERINARIAN CLINIC - DAY

88

Zach is at the front desk, looking over the day's schedule.

Maxine runs in, out of breath.

She's on her way to the pageant and is decked out in her Miss Christmas City sash and tiara.

ZACH

You are way too overdressed for spay and neuter day.

MAXINE

I'm not here for that. I'm her
because there is someone we need to
talk about.

89 EXT. HOLIDAY FESTIVAL PARK - STAGE - DAY

89

Two young women, ALAINA and JESSICA, stand on stage clutching each other.

This is the final moment of the Miss Christmas City Pageant.

The tuxedoed host reads the list.

HOST

And the first runner-up is....
(pause)
Alaina Enoch.

Jessica's hands shake as they come to her mouth.

HOST (CONT'D)

That means Jessica Duffy is our new
Miss Christmas City.

Alaina is handed her candy cane and escorted to stage left.

Jessica is given a lush bouquet of poinsettias.

Maxine walks out to the new Miss Christmas City.

She removes the crown from her head and places the twinkling rhinestone tiara on the head of her successor.

Jessica takes off down the runway.

Maxine watches her go. She lets out a deep sigh. You could say it's a sigh of relief or regret, but it's not. It's a breath of fresh air.

Audrey is watching from the judges table. She isn't watching the winner. She is looking at the girl standing in the shadows.

She recognizes that "smile".

Audrey looks to Maxine.

Maxine gives her a wink.

90 EXT. HOLIDAY FESTIVAL PARK - NIGHT 90

After the crowning, Holiday Festival Park turns into a party with live bands, food huts, drink carts, bonfires and warming houses.

91 EXT. HOLIDAY FESTIVAL PARK - STAGE - CONTINUOUS 91

Maxine and Audrey are sitting at the edge of the stage.

AUDREY
He didn't show.

MAXINE
Oh, he'll show.

AUDREY
No. I messed up. I messed up big.

MAXINE
You know what the best part of making a mess is?

AUDREY
What?

MAXINE
You can always clean it up.

Audrey nods.

MAXINE (CONT'D)
Of course, you might have to get down on your knees to do it properly.

Maxine accompanies her double entendre with a devilish grin.

AUDREY
No wonder you were so popular.

Alaina walks by still carrying her candy cane.

She stops in front of the two women.

ALAINA
(to Audrey)
Aren't you Audrey Sorenson, the last first runner-up?

AUDREY
The one and only.

Alaina looks around and then whispers.

ALAINA

Do you have any advice for me?

The young woman is eager for some inside information.

AUDREY

You're going to accomplish much more than this in your life and you can't allow yourself to be defined by this one moment in time.

Audrey smiles at the girl. She thinks to herself: Man, that's good.

Alaina looks at Audrey with disgust.

ALAINA

Well, no duh.

(a beat)

What I need to know is how I can get her to screw up so I can get the crown.

AUDREY

Sweetheart, if I knew that...

She looks at Maxine. Then back to Alaina.

AUDREY (CONT'D)

... well, I don't.

Alaina stomps off.

Audrey looks over to Maxine who is staring at her.

MAXINE

(mockingly)

Allow yourself to be defined by this one moment in time?

(a beat)

What sappy self help book did that come from?

AUDREY

Actually, I read it on the inside of a Snapple cap.

They laugh.

92 EXT. HOLIDAY FESTIVAL PARK - LATER THAT NIGHT

92

The day's festivities are coming to a close with a dazzling fireworks display. The explosives colors reflect off the snow on the ground.

Audrey and Maxine stand together watching the show.

Audrey looks into the crowd. All of the faces are staring at the sparkling sky. Except one.

Zach is looking at her.

She gestures for him to meet her away from the activity.

93 EXT. HOLIDAY FESTIVAL PARK - CONTINUOUS

93

Zach and Audrey move to an empty area of the park away from the ooh's and ah's of the crowd.

The fireworks explode around them.

AUDREY

It's too bad you had to miss the pageant.

CROWD (O.S.)

Ooooooh!

ZACH

Yeah, I had to deliver the Henderson's puppies.

The crowd reacts, as if on cue.

CROWD (O.S.)

Aaaah!

AUDREY

I'm really sorry for the way I acted.

CROWD (O.S.)

Ooooooh!

AUDREY

The last thing I wanted was to make you angry.

CROWD (O.S.)

Aaaaah!

He hasn't said anything.

She's growing nervous.

AUDREY
I have to leave tomorrow.

CROWD (O.S.)
Ooooooh!

ZACH
Are you coming back?

AUDREY
Do you want me to?

CROWD (O.S.)
Aaaaah!

Zach smiles.

ZACH
I asked you first.

Audrey smiles back.

AUDREY
I asked you second.

CROWD (O.S.)
Oooooooh!

Zach steps toward her, ready for the "confrontation".

ZACH
I asked you first, infinity.

CROWD (O.S.)
Aaaaaaah!

Audrey has an ace up her sleeve.

AUDREY
I asked you second, infinity plus
one.

CROWD (O.S.)
Ooooooh!

Zach grabs her.

He dips her into a passionate kiss.

CROWD (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Aaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaah!

From the crowd a single voice stands out.

MAXINE (O.S.)

Yes!

Audrey and Zach ignore the fireworks going on around them, and concentrate on the fireworks inside.

Aaah.

94

EXT. HOLIDAY FESTIVAL PARK - PARKING LOT - NIGHT

94

The crowd is filing out of the park.

Audrey and Zach hold hands as they walk Maxine to her car.

MAXINE

I can't believe it's over.

ZACH

(to Maxine)

So, now what are you going to do?

MAXINE

Hell, I don't know. My job is going nowhere. I'm not Miss Christmas City anymore. I think I need something new.

AUDREY

When I get back I'll help you with a resume and we'll get you on track for your next chapter.

MAXINE

Resume? The only skills I really have are looking good in front of a camera, composure in front of a crowd, smiling at all costs, answering all kinds of questions and constantly promoting Christmas City. What job can I possibly get?

95

INT. HOTEL BALLROOM - ONE YEAR LATER

95

The room is festively decorated with red, white and blue balloons, streamers, banners and posters.

Red, white and blue confetti is falling like rain.

The crowd that fills the room is cheering wildly.

Andy is on stage, standing at a podium. He quiets the crowd.

ANDY

As the campaign manager for this dedicated & wonderful woman, it is my pleasure to introduce the new Mayor of Christmas City, Maxine Rumson.

Maxine steps out on the stage to a thunderous roar.

Smiling broadly, she takes her spot at the podium.

She pulls out her acceptance speech.

Maxine winks at Audrey who is standing on the far side of the stage with Zach.

Audrey winks back.

Maxine quiets her adoring constituents.

MAXINE

I have a speech written for this occasion. But, before I get to that I need to introduce someone. Without her friendship and support I would not be here. Ladies and Gentlemen, my speech-writer and very best friend in the world, Audrey Sorenson-Stofer.

She motions for Audrey to join her on the stage.

Audrey kisses Zach and steps up to the podium.

The two friends hug.

They turn to the crowd.

And with the applause growing and cameras flashing they share the spotlight.

Together.

Karli Kloss, Brandon Maxwell and Nina Garcia are seated alongside each other.

KARLI

Designers, please welcome guest
judge, designer of The Dozen Dress,
Design Consultant to J. Crew and
Project Runway alumni, Audrey
Sorenson-Stofer.

Audrey smiles and waves.

AUDREY

Hi designers!

FADE OUT.

THE END