

The Perfect Christmas

By Sophie Borthwick

Characters

Stella : Stella is a 17 year old girl that blames her problems on the world and believes that nothing ever works out in her favour. She is constantly pitying herself for not having the life she wants and she subconsciously takes her unhappiness out on those around her. Deep down, Stella is an ambitious, creative person but she is stuck in her mindset of negativity and self doubt.

Tristan : Tristan is Stella's best friend. He loves to joke around and laugh (especially at Stella), he has a strong love of science and animals, and he is a pushover. Tristan is laid back and contrasts Stella's cynicism well. He sees Stella as more than a platonic best friend and he plans on eventually telling her when he finally "gets the chance".

Dwayne : Dwayne is constantly seeking validation from Josie because he bases his self worth on Josie's opinion of him. He would do anything to please Josie because he does not have an identity outside of this friendship and he has severe codependency issues which are reflected in his gay best friend stereotype hallmark character (note: Josie and Dwayne are platonic).

Josie : Josie is very insecure, she will take any opportunity to dominate over others. She is frequently irritated by Dwayne despite his extreme loyalty to her. Josie likes to verbally abuse him and make him feel inferior because she only sees him as someone to use. Josie sees Stella as an easy target because of her visible insecurities.

Dad : Stella's dad still feels the loss of Stella's mother who died years ago. He sees how unhappy Stella is but he has no idea what to do to help, he feels that Stella's mother would know what to say, though he does not. Stella's dad is oblivious to all social cues making it difficult for the both of them to communicate. He wishes he could mend his connection with Stella.

Ben: A classmate acting in the nativity play.

Ms Peters: Shakespeare obsessed and pretentious British Arts teacher.

Stella – **Holly** (stereotypical main blond hallmark woman)

Tristan – **Chad** (stereotypical plaid wearing small town love interest)

Dwayne – **Dominick** (stereotypical gay best friend)

Josie – **Mary** (stereotypical sweet old lady who runs the diner, mother to everyone, Chad's aunt)

Ben- **Simon** (stereotypical big city fiancé, selfish and snobby)

Dad – **Santa Clause** ("movie extra", festive old man wandering the town bringing Christmas spirit for no apparent reason, repeats the same sentence)

Scene 1:

A school bell rings and Deck the Halls begins to play. The lights come up to reveal a teacher holding a clipboard facing Stella, Dwayne, Josie and Ben. She paces back and forth glancing at the students. Tristan sits on the stairs of the stage waiting for Stella.

Tristan: When will you be done again? I wanna go home.

Stella: Soon, believe me I'm not dying to be in this nativity play but you gotta do what you gotta do.

Tristan: I guess it could be worse. You could be in a one act hallmark special called Mistletoe Mischief or Christmas in Sugarville or Merry Magic or something!

Stella: Yeah yeah. *Count your blessings I know (rolls her eyes).*

Teacher: Alright, it is done. I have managed to find each of you a role that suits you best in both appearance and personality for our nativity play. Josie! You will be our Mary.

Josie: What did I tell you Dwayne? I can't even help it I'm just literally always the main character!

Tristan: *(Whispers to Stella)* It's okay! There's still... Joseph?!

Teacher: HUSH. Now Dwayne, you will be our Joseph!

Tristan: *Damn.*

Teacher: Ben, you will be one of the three wise men. And... Stella, you will be the um.. the... uh... the donkey! Aha! Yes. Our donkey! That will do quite nicely. Lovely! Now everyone make sure to pick up a script on your way out and learn your parts by next Thursday!

Teacher exits stage.

Stella: **What.**

Stella stands in shock and Dwayne and Josie burst out laughing, Tristan hurries over to Stella.

Stella: *(Looking up at sky)* A farm animal? Really? Of all the things she could have picked. What about the little drummer boy- or the guy who gives them the stable or one of the other TWO wise men. OR one of the millions of other little cartoon characters we've seen movies about who were apparently important on Christmas Day- but the FRIGGIN DONKEY!

Tristan : Hey! He has a name you know, AND he is one of those important animals, he has his own stop motion and everything.

Stella: Oh yeah? What's his name ?

Tristan: Nestor.

Stella : And who's donkey is he?

Tristan: ... Esther.

Stella: I KNEW this was going to be a joke. It was written in the stars I'm sure! Alongside all the other worthless achievements in my destiny. Well farm animal my ass!

Tristan : (*Snickers*) Literally... Get it?

Stella walks away.

Tristan : Hey hey hey it's ok! We can get you a little pink bow- it'll be adorable. You'll blow the audience away with your talent!

Stella rolls her eyes.

Josie: Aw Hun, you'll probably get a cute little leash tied around your neck! You'll be my scruffy little buddy!

Dwayne: Heh yEah!

Tristan: Actually, the leash would go around the muzzle and the-

Stella: Well Josie this wouldn't be the first time you'd settled for an ass as a partner would it?

Tristan: *Ok never mind then...*

Josie scoffs and Dwayne walks up to Stella.

Dwayne: You know what Stella? You're just-

Josie: Shut up *Dwayne*. *I got this*. Stella, I'm not the one whining and praying or should I say *braying* for a better life all the time am I?

Tristan: (*Snickers*) I'm so sorry...

Stella glares at Tristan then he stops laughing.

Stella: At least I recognize that my life is a failure. I could strut around here like I just walked straight out of Disney channel but I leave that to you.

Josie: Oh you want to go there? I'd take Sharpay over *Gabriella* any day.

Stella: Yeah but I bet Dwayne wouldn't.

Josie snaps in Dwayne's face and he picks up her backpack for her.

Josie: We're leaving. See ya later, pet.

Josie exits stage and Dwayne follows after. Stella and Tristan exit down stairs and slowly walk through blackout.

Scene 2:

Stella and Tristan continue walking home together around the stage.

Stella: You know, if Josie was a little nicer she could actually be likeable but she's just so self centred and rude. If she would put her confidence and natural leadership to use, she could be so accomplished but noooo, instead she thinks it's a better use of her time to stomp on everyone around her, including her only friend!

Tristan: I know right! I feel so bad for Dwayne. The poor guy can't get a word in without getting bitten. Now that I think of it, Josie totally would have made the perfect donkey! She's always loud and snapping her finger in people's faces and donkeys are widely known for their excessive use of body language and vocalizations.

Stella: (*Laughs*) If only things could work out that way. You know, maybe it wouldn't be so bad to live in a Hallmark movie. If I was one of those main Hallmark girls, not only would I have gotten Mary, but Joseph would ever so coincidentally be the most unrealistic guy you've ever seen with a conveniently toxic girlfriend!

Tristan: No no no no if you were a hallmark girl you wouldn't be in highschool! You would be some big city journalist or a baker or something, and you would be on some mission. (*Snickers*) You would need some reason to return home to your small town roots for Christmas where you would then run into the caring come-over haircut flannel wearing Chad guy who literally refuses to move anywhere else and gives everything to his town! AND he has *tortured past* so you guys can bond over your problems. Oh and we can't forget about the orphans! He **always** volunteers in the soup kitchen. Because everyone knows nothing says romance like a man who helps the orphans!

Stella: *100%*! Also, poor Chad got dumped on Christmas Day, it's part of his tragic story!

Tristan: But he'll be okay cuz you'll leave your innocent big city boyfriend who's done absolutely nothing wrong the whole movie for good ol' Chad because HE understands the value of community.

Stella: Uhuh and I'll do it with perfectly curled blond hair, early two thousands skinny jeans, an infinity scarf, some tall brown boots and red lipstick. Happily ever after!

There's a pause between them.

Tristan: Okay but in all seriousness... are you okay with the whole donkey thing- I mean I know you were only doing Ms Peter's nativity play to make up for the fact that you butchered her Shakespeare unit this semester but still...

Stella: Yeah, you know what? I think I am. It's fine. It's ok! I'm so okay- I've never been more...fine. I didn't really care about this stupid little play anyways so everything's FINE. This was just the cherry on top of a PERFECT season!

Tristan: Right...

Stella: I guess I just wish my life could be like one of those movies where absolutely everything works out perfectly and the hardships are just for character development. If I lived in that sort of world, everything would have a purpose and it would always work out for me in the end.

Tristan: You know, there's nothing stopping you from being the hero of your own story. Just because we don't live in a fairytale doesn't mean that good things won't happen, or that your life doesn't have purpose- or that things won't work out the way they're supposed to.

Tristan puts his hand on Stella's shoulder, they have now stopped in front of Stella's house.

Tristan: Okay Stella look. You're going to go so far and become so accomplished, I have no doubt at all. But you gotta stop with the negativity! All you every talk about is how much you wish you could change your life and all that you hate about the world. As your... *friend*- I can't let you give up on yourself before you've even tried!

Stella: You think all I do is feel sorry for myself? That I'm just stuck in a loop of self pity?

Tristan: Seriously? That's all you retained from that?

Stella: Great. Even my best friend is sick of me. Well maybe I'm getting a little sick of your sloth memes and your animal facts of the day and your lectures on the difference between coal and charcoal, like who actually cares! I'm sick of everything I just-

Stella/Tristan mocking: *(in unison)* hate everything!

Tristan: Yeah so you've said. You know what? *(Takes deep breath)* I don't even know what to say anymore. You won't listen to me. I'm just out to ruin your fairy tale like everyone else right?

Stella remains silent not knowing what to say. Tristan starts to walk off stage but turns back.

Tristan: And by the way, charcoal is a manufactured product obtained from wood and coal is what Santa's probably given you for the past four years... so yeah.

Tristan exits leaving Stella down stage.

Scene 3:

Stella walks into her house to see her dad sitting at the table looking sad and spaced out.

Stella: *(Waves hand in front of face)* Hey dad... what are you doing?

Dad: Oh! I was wondering when you would be coming home CinderStella. So, how was your day today Stella Ella?

Stella: Please *stop* with the names I've asked you so many times...

Dad: I don't know what you're talking about Steller.

Stella: Dad.

Dad: Starla

Stella: **Dad.**

Dad: (*Amused*) Estella Bella

Stella: UGH. I am so done with today.

Dad: (*Laughs until he realizes she's upset*) What's wrong Stel? C'mon you know I love to kid. I thought we could maybe watch our BBC Christmas show tonight! We've both been a little tense and busy lately but I miss our little holiday tradition... we gotta keep it up.

Stella: (*Sigh*) You know, I've seen box of delights many times and I've had such a long day...

Dad: Aww couldn't we just watch one episode? It's already midway through December.

Stella: I don't want to.

Dad: You used to love it when you were little, you would get so excited-

Stella: No! Please just listen to me.

Dad: What?

Stella: All you care about is keeping up traditions, doing anything to pretend like everything's perfect like mom's still here. But I'm not her and I'm sick of forcing these stupid traditions! Why don't you save yourself the trouble, put the dvd back and get some sleep. We aren't some happy go lucky little small town family. I've accepted that my life will never be some happy little fairytale, you should do the same. I'm going to bed, I'll see you in the morning.

Stella's Dad slowly gets up and grabs the dvd, walks over to a box at the corner of the stage and drops it in, cueing a magical twinkling sound effect. He then returns to his original seated position.

Scene 4:

Stella wakes up in Hallmark Merryville wearing a blond curly wig with perfect makeup and has no idea where she is or how she got there. Her Christmas themed room is projected on the projection screen.

Stella: (*Sits straight up*) What the hell?! (*looks all over at her room*)

Stella: Oh no. Oh no no no no no this is NOT real.

Stella: (*Feels her hair and looks at it*) AHHH! NO! NO NO NO! Not the perfectly curled hair! Anything but the perfectly curled *blond* hair?! Is this...*hell*?

Dwayne enters as Dominick.

Dwayne/Dominick: I wouldn't say *perfectly* curled hair, ugh and that makeup! Darling.. m m m you'd have to look hotter than that to be in hell. (*Scoffs*) What a complete *disaster*.

Stella: WHO THE HELL ARE YOU? WHAT ARE YOU DOING IN MY HOUSE? *Is this even my house?*

Dominick walks in and places a cup of tea on her bedside table humming to himself acting as if everything is normal.

Stella: Wait a second.. I recognize you- (*gasp*) Oh my god. DWAYNE? Is that you? What on earth are you doing and how did you get here? Where are we? Did you murder me in my sleep?

Dominick blinks and stairs judgmentally.

Dominick: Uhhh babe, I'm D o m i n i c k , your a s s i s t a n t and number one bestie. Girl, I think it's time to cut back on the late night partying. I know you're a big city gal but damn I haven't seen you this loopy since last year's office Christmas party. You're in a small town now hun, things are different here. They're all so *wholesome and hospitable*. (*Sigh*) But don't worry darlin, we'll be back home in no time.

Stella: But- I- wha- Big city party girl? Small town? Did you say *small town*? (*Realizing*).

Dominick: Darlin, please. No more of your playing around. We both know that today is the big day and you do NOT want to be late for Mr. Stevens, he's expecting your report in two days latest. So let's just get this business trip over with shall we? I'm sure Simon's dying to see you.

Stella: Report to mr Stevens? What am I supposed to report and WHO'S SIMON?

Dominick: You tell me girl, he's *your* fiancé. I've barely spoken to the guy he's so high up in management you lucky duck!

Stella: He is? Ohhhh of course he is, he's my big city fiancé... It's all making sense- and you're my gay best friend!

Dominick: Um DUHHH. Now sit your ass down for a makeover. I'm going to turn you, miss Holly, into Merryville or should I say this *whoville's* shining star. You'll be all they want for Christmas It'll be a Holly night- we'll have a Jolly *Holly* Christmas this year!

Stella: (*Cringing*) Righhht...

Dominick: Now just to quickly recap the plan, corporate sent you here to find some dirt on Merryville so that we can steal their charm and run their paper out of business. They have been our competitors in the printing world for years now so it's time to finally defeat them and get our magazine to the top of the charts in our region. Mr. Stevens is counting on you to report back to him on every weakness you can find and every hack we can steal. So, you better make the most of today and find the town journalist. The most important thing to remember is that you are **not** Holly the journalist here, you are

Holly the **baker** as in *sugar and spice makes Christmas nice*. You can not let anyone know who you are or everything will be ruined! It's a wonderful lie, sugar!

Stella: Okay, got it. Find newspaper writer guy and defeat Merryville. Thanks...friend.

Dominick: Now be off and call if you need anything.

Stella: Wait but I don't have a phone!

Dominick: Oh I don't mean *call* call. Just yell! And I'll come running from wherever I am at any given time. (*Smile's creepily*) I'll be there in an **instant!**

Stella: Yeah I believe that, thanks um... Dominick?

Dominick: Tata!

Stella: So I'm Holly the journalist disguised as Holly the baker on a business trip to steal small town Merryville's newspaper charm and destroy them. Great. Okay, yeah. this is definitely a fever dream...or a comma. Why else would I be trapped in my subconscious's horrible attempt at generating a hallmark movie with all the people in my life? Oh wait... I know what to do. I just need to play along! I'll make it to the end of the movie, then my brain will run out of ideas. Maybe that will cause me to wake up!

Stella exits stage.

Scene 5:

A decked up small town appears on the projection screen. Stella wanders through the town looking around with no idea where she's going. She sees a man that resembles her dad dressed as Santa Clause walking around jingling bells. She approaches him.

Stella: Excuse me sir would you be able to tell me where- (*sees her dad's face*) **Woah-** uhh would you be able to direct me to the local journalist if you know them?

Dad/Santa Clause: Ho ho ho! Merry Christmas!

Stella: Yeah Merry Christmas, Happy New Year and yadayadayada. Could you please tell me where they are?

Santa Clause: Ho ho ho!

Stella: Sir?

Santa Clause: Merry Christmas! Ho ho ho!

Stella: Ok then, have a nice day.

Santa Clause: Ho ho ho-

Stella: Let me guess, Merry Christmas?

Santa Clause: Merry Christmas!

Stella: Yeah, thought so.

Santa Clause exits stage repeating same line over and over.

Stella: No offence dad but you are the creepiest extra I have ever seen.

Stella is looking back when she bumps into Tristan entering as Chad.

Stella: Whoops!

Tristan/Chad: My bad.

Stella: This is the most cliché thing ever, gee I *wonder* what character you'll be.

Chad: What was that?

Stella: Nothing, nothing. (*Recognizes him*) You're kidding, Tristan? Oh my gosh it is you! You're brainwashed like the rest of em right?

Chad: Uh.. Sorry ma'am, I'm not Tristan. The name's Chadwick, but the folks 'round here call me Chad.

Stella: Hah, right. So what's your *real* name?

Chad: That is my real name!

Stella: Oh! Sorry! I mean I'm sorry for asking, not that I'm sorry your name's Chad! Chad is a really great name... Like if I went to the country club and married a guy playing golf with a white shirt and a blue sweater tied around his neck I would definitely name our son Chad...

Chad: You're not from around here are you?

Stella: No, I most definitely am not. That's why I need help.

Chad: Well you've come to the right place, here in Merryville we're like one big family. In our small town, community is all that matters and we would do anything to-

Stella: Yeah yeah small town, family, peace and love got it. So here's the thing, I'm a baker trying to find work but I want to advertise myself so **that's** why I need to find the local journalist. Do you know where I could find them?

Chad: Say no more, I know exactly where you need to go. Follow me.

Stella and Chad exit stage together.

Scene 6:

An old fashion diner appears on the projection screen. Chad has taken Stella to Mary's Merry Diner where they are just entering. Josie enters as Mary.

Josie/Mary: (*Southern accent*) Well hi there Chad, come in from the cold! And who might this be? I don't believe we've met! Welcome to Mary's Merry Diner, own and run by Mary! You both must be freezin and starvin to death. What can I get ya?

Chad: Well aunt Mary, I don't know about this lady here but I'd love myself a cup of hot cocoa.

Stella: (*Mumbles*) Oh god this is worse than the crap my grandma watches.

Chad: What did you say your name was?

Stella: Holly, I'm Holly the baker.

Chad: Well Holly, this here is my aunt Mary. She knows everyone in Merryville and everyone knows her. If anyone could help you with your baking it'd be her.

They sit down at the diner bar.

Stella: Well you see, I don't need help with my baking so much as I need to publicize it so really the only thing I need to do is find the journalist around here. Thank you though! Mary seems... merry! And I'm happy to have met you both. I'll just be off now if you could just point me in the direction of the journalist's office or a printing press or... *something*?

Chad: Now now sit down. I'll show you to the journalist but first have some food and take a breath.

Stella sighs, gives him a death glare then fake smiles.

Stella: *Fine.*

Mary: What can I get ya dearie? Something all day breakfast, my signature omelette, champion waffles, tater tots.. Mary's malt or macaroni?

Stella: Wow that is quite the selection, I think I'll just take some coffee.

Chad: Ahh big city folks... never got time for a home cooked meal.

Stella: (*Eye roll*) Yep that's me, the big city girl with no sense of home or morals.

Chad: I didn't mean no offence, I just think there's nothing like the small things in life to remind you of what Christmas is all about.

Mary: Chad! Leave the poor girl alone, *she's not Sarah*, and it's not a crime to work and live in the city.

Stella: Who's Sarah?

Chad: No one. Uh- I'm going to go get some more uh...firewood.

Chad exits stage.

Mary: Sarah is Chad's ex girlfriend. She left him last year on Christmas day, broke his heart. She was a big city girl. He wanted to stay here, run his paper company and help the orphans but all she cared about was money and status.

Stella: *(Snickers to herself)* That's tragic but did you say paper company? He's the town's journalist?

Mary: Yes! He didn't tell you?

Chad enters stage.

Chad: Well I was about to but word travels like wildfire in this town of ours. I would like to propose a deal. I'm in need of volunteers to help out with tomorrow's party to fundraise money for the orphans. If you help me out, I'll advertise your baking business in next week's paper free of charge!

Stella: Ah the orphans, of course. Yeah sure I'll volunteer tonight in exchange for you showing me your office... So that I can advertise my baking!

Chad: Sounds like we have ourselves a bargain. After all what is Christmas all about if not helping our neighbours and-

Stella: Yep! What a wonderful town, Christmas is a jolly time. Anyways, I'm gonna go. I'll see you tonight at what time?

Chad: Be at the town centre by 7 o'clock!

Stella: Got it, bye!

Stella runs down the stairs, she breaks out of her hallmark character to eavesdrop on Chad and Mary.

Chad: She is different than anyone I've ever met...

Mary: Uhuh, she sure is a nice girl...

Stella: *(Whispers)* How?! I was literally so rude.

Chad: Ugh it ain't like that aunt Mary, I'm just helping her out in the Christmas spirit.

Mary: I know, but it would be nice for you to find someone again. Not everyone is a Sarah. I'd just like to see you let go and live for a change instead of helping everyone else in town.

Chad: Aunt Mary, you have nothing to worry about. I love helping the orphans and keeping up the legacy of our town in the paper. Maybe I'm just a small town guy, but there's nothing I'd rather do than help everyone else for the rest of my life, and there's nowhere I'd rather be than here in Merryville.

Stella: Oh PLEASE.

Chad: What was that?

Stella runs away without being spotted.

Scene 7

Stella arrived in the town hall after getting ready with Dominick. A decorated Christmas party venue is projected on the projection screen. Chad is setting up a party table, Stella walks over.

Chad: Hey there party girl!

Stella: (*Cringes*) Hey there... lumberjack!

Chad looks at his plaid shirt insecurely.

Chad: Why don't you help me finish setting up this table, people will be arriving any minute!

Stella: How many people are coming exactly?

Chad: Why, the whole town of course!

Stella: Right right. Can't forget about the one big family thing.

Lights turn to pink with disco ball. Dominick spots Stella standing by a table.

Dominick: I spy with my little eye a QUEEEEN!

Stella: (*Mumbles*) Not again. Also this is over the top stereotypical. How did he get here so fast, I just got away! Ugh let me out let me out let me out!

Dominick sprints over to Stella.

Stella: Oh hiiiiiiii, I didn't um see you there.

Dominick: Girl, WHERE is your pearl necklace, I told you to remember it otherwise your fit looks incomplete. We TALKED ABOUT THIS. As your number one bestie I MUST retrieve it for you. You BETTER be here when I come back. I will run and get it for you. *Stay here or else.*

Stella nods really fast, she is scared but fake laughs.

Stella: *Th-Thanks Dominick...*

Dominick runs off stage and Chad walks up to Stella.

Chad: Sooo, how are you enjoying the party? I really appreciate you helping out.

Stella: It's going fine, and you did say you would help *me* in return so... Yeah! You're welcome!

Chad: It's just so kind of you. You're not who I thought you'd be, big city girl and all. I guess I've just been scared to let the past go and... open up to people.

Stella: *(Mumbles)* Oh no it's starting...

Chad: *(Cheesy voice)* Would you like to dance?

Stella: *(Mumbles)* Ugh if it'll get me out of here. Yeahhhhhh sUreee!

Chad and Holly awkwardly dance. Chad is sincere but Holly just has a fake smile and wants it to be over. A few seconds later, Dominick sprints into the scene with Holly's pearl necklace.

Dominick: I FOUND IT- What in Gaga's name is going on here?

Dominick walks up to Holly and Chad.

Dominick: Sorry Brad-

Chad: It's actually Chad.

Dominick: Same thing, I just need to borrow miss Holy for a moment...

Chad: Sure...

Dominick pulls Holly aside.

Dominick: WHAT do you think you're doing? Cavorting with the peasants like this! What would Simon say? Holly, darling, we have no time for dancing or participating in their culty family traditions. I need you to focus on the task at hand: *destroying Merryville's paper by stealing their charm for ourselves*. Look at this place, we don't belong here. So let's just find that journalist and get the job done so that we can leave. Don't worry babe, I'll be by your side *the whole time*. Now let's use this pathetic excuse of a party to find our guy shall we?

Stella: Yep sure, I'm actually working on it...

Stella starts to walk away.

Dominick: Remember to call me if you need ANYTHING! I am with you *always!*

Stella: Uhuh! Yep, thank you Dominick... *oh my god how am I going to sleep tonight knowing he's probably outside my window.*

Stella walks over to Chad standing by the party table and Dominick exits stage.

Chad: Holly! You're back! Everything ok?

Stella: Yep I'm all good.

Chad : Great, because I need your help handing out Christmas cards, follow me.

Stella follows Chad off stage.

Scene 8

Stella and Chad enter stage tired from helping out. The party venue remains on the projection screen. The lights return to normal.

Chad: Well I'd say that was a success.

Stella: Yeah thanks to you!

Chad: No... thanks to *you*.

Stella: (*Mumbles*) Oh help.

Chad: What do you say I walk you home?

Stella: You really don't have to, you're probably tired I mean you've done enough-

Chad: It's not a problem!

Stella: (*Sigh*) Okay then.

Lights go dark. Stella and Chad walk down the stairs, circle around and walk back up the stairs on the other side of the stage. The projection image is changed to a big white house. They walk downstage and sit on the "porch" stairs.

Chad: You know, I haven't been able to run the orphan fundraiser since Sarah. She would always volunteer with me every year until... last Christmas. I really appreciate your contribution.

Stella: You're welcome! Anyways I should-

Chad: Ever since last year, I've felt broken, but thanks to you, I've been able to find the light of Christmas and see that there are still people who care...

Stella: Aw stop it, no seriously stop-

Chad: A small town boy like me is no match for the big city. Seems money is all that matters to people these days, forget about tradition and *the small things in life*.

Stella: Pfff who needs money when you could have a small town life!

Chad: *Exactly...*

Stella: I'm just gonna go now-

Chad: Wait you're just going to leave me in my time of need?

Stella: Yep!

Stella exits stage and leaves Chad sitting alone on the steps. Blackout into next scene.

Scene 9

Stella wakes up in the exact same state as the last morning, her festively decorated room reappears on the projection screen. She picks up a mirror from her bedside table and looks at her reflection.

Stella: That's it! I'm getting out of here.

Stella hears Dominick from a distance.

Dominick: Oh Stellaaaaaa

Stella: NO! OH NO.

Stella jumps out of bed and tries to find a way to hide and avoid Dominick when he makes his "grand entrance".

Dominick: Rise and shine! Never fear, Dominick is here!

Stella: What I wasn't afraid why would you think I was afraid?!

Dominick: It's time to slay another day! Now, up up up we have work to do before you leave this house.

Stella: You know what Dominick, I think I'm actually good. I don't really want the whole makeover, I think I'm just gonna stick with my natural beauty... today?

Stella tries to slink away.

Dominick: (*Scoffs*) Natural beauty? Nonsense!

Dominick sits Stella down and starts to fix her hair and makeup.

Stella: Oh! I just remembered! I left my new lipstick downstairs, I'm just going to go grab it!

Dominick: But I have one right here.

Stella looks at Dominick pleadingly.

Dominick: Fine, get it but be quick. And I'll decide if it's your colour or not!

Stella bolts off stage. A minute passes.

Dominick: Alright Holly, get back here... Holly?...COME BACK I WASN'T FINISHED! HOLYYYYY!

Dominick runs off stage.

Scene 10

The decorated small town returns to the projection screen. Stella runs on stage and bumps into Chad.

Chad: Whoops! We really have to stop meeting like this. I was just on my way to the soup kitchen!

Stella: Of course you were.

Chad: About last night, I'm sorry for dumping all of that on you, Christmas just makes me *emotional*. Anyways, did you want to come by my office and help me advertise your baking? You deserve it!

Stella: Look, Chad, I should probably tell you something even if you are just some deranged figment of my imagination.

Chad: Huh?

Stella: Just shht. My secret plan has been to steal your newspaper's thunder for my own big city company. I'm not Holly the baker but I'm not Holly the journalist either. This whole place is fake! I don't know how or why I'm here but my real name's Stella and yours is Tristan. We've known each other for years and we go to school together. You're my best friend. Maybe we're supposed to here but we don't end up together in the real world. I know this is the part where I'm supposed to break up with my big city fiancé and confess my love for you but if I'm being completely honest...I do NOT love you...like at all.

Chad stares in confusion.

Stella: Soooo *yeah*. Just thought you should know...

Stella runs off stage then lights turn to blackout.

Scene 11

Stella returns on stage, the small town projection returns and Santa Clause is wandering the streets.

Dad: Hohoho Merry Christmas!

Stella: NOT NOW!

Dad: HOHOHO MERRY-

Stella: SHUT UP!

Dad: CHRISTMAS!

Stella: I'm gonna lose it.

Ben enters as Simon.

Ben/Simon: Babe! Where have you been? I've been trying to get a hold of you all weekend! Remember you were supposed to come to the Christmas party tonight, the press wanted to get a photos of us.

Stella: Big city fiancé, there you are!

Dad: Hohoho Merry Christmas!

Stella: Oh yeah, by the way I'm breaking up with you um... yeah. Sorry 'bout that!

Simon: What? This is ridiculous, I bought you everything you ever wanted! What else could I give to our relationship?

Stella puts her hands over her ears to drown everyone out.

Stella: Okay, think think. How do I get out of here?

Mary enters stage.

Mary: Holly, there you are! I was wondering if you would like to use your cooking skills at the soup kitchen today! Help give back to the community! What do you say?

Stella: Not now merry Mary lady! *Think, what do I do what do I do.*

Simon: Ugh! I'm going to be late! The least you could do is come with me to one last party. Hey I'm talking to you! We're leaving! Now!

Mary: Dear, I really need your help, *Chad* will be there! Couldn't you spare the time?

Dad: Hohoho Merry Christmas!

*Simon, Mary and Santa Clause all talk to Stella at once and she covers her ears.
Suddenly, the crowd goes silent and the lights go dark except for one spotlight on Stella.*

Stella: I never should have wished my life away! I've learned my lesson.

In our small little world we all fit together like a puzzle, helping each other in ways we don't even know. I'm my own main character, so is Josie and Dwayne and Tristan. We all write our stories every day. No one's story is more important than mine and no one's story is more important than yours. No matter

how successful you are or how many mistakes you've made, we're all necessary pieces of each other's reality. From different perspectives I've played the villain, the side character, a best friend, a daughter, and it **all** matters. We all long for the perfect "fairytale" until it comes true, because given the choice between perfect and real, we will always choose real. I know that now. Why else are we all here? If you could chose to a live a life full of **everything**; pain, joy, sadnesss, excitement, fear, freedom, love, hate, success, failure, inspiration, wouldn't you? That's what it means to be alive. Perfection, infinite ease and simplicity, that's not living. So thank you "Merryville" and all my other delusions (*gestures to characters standing in the darkness*) for showing me that I wouldn't have it that way.

Stella pauses

Stella: But dear god I physically can NOT last another day in this hell hole!

Chad emerges from the darkness and walks up to Stella in the spotlight, he is holding the Christmas dvd.

Tristan: Hey...it's ok. You can go home now.

Chad hands Sella the dvd and this cues the magical twinkling sound effect.

Stella: (*Looks at dvd and smiles*) Wait but I thought you were-

Dominick is running toward Stella from off stage.

Dominick: WAIT! WHERE ARE YOU GOING? TAKE ME WITH YOU! WHO AM I IF NOT YOUR BEST FRIEND TO TEND TO YOUR EVERY NEEEEED-

Blackout with blue lights and Dominick exits off stage. Stage is set for Stella's room.

Scene 12

Lights come on and Stella is back in the real world. She looks at her hands and all around her to make sure it's real. The dvd is on her bed.

Stella: I'm back... I'm really back! THANK GOD!

Stella grabs the dvd and Dad enters stage.

Dad: Knock knock. Hey Steller, oh sorry old habits die hard I mean S t e l l a. I just wanted to apologize for last night. I know you've been down lately and I just want to help you in any way I can. I'm always here for you and all my joking has just been my terrible attempt at making us both feel better. Truth is, your mom always knew what to say and no matter how hard I try I just...

Stella runs up to her dad with the dvd and gives him a hug.

Stella: I'm so sorry dad. I was just sad and I always took it out on you even though I knew you were trying. I promise I'll never do that again... and I did kinda like those stupid traditions. Like watching box of delights at Christmas.

Stella hands her dad the dvd.

Dad: I knew it!

Stella: I need to go, I gotta find Tristan.

Dad: What do I always say! A good night's sleep works wonders!

Stella grabs her backpack and starts to hurry off stage.

Stella: You have no idea...

Scene 13

Stella runs on stage to meet Tristan who's walking with his backpack.

Stella: Tristan! Tristan!

Tristan: *(Startled)* Woah. Hello?

Stella: Tristan *(catches breath)*... wait, you don't help the orphans do you?

Tristan: No... what orphans?!

Stella: Ok good!

Stella gives Tristan a hug.

Tristan: What was that for?

Stella: It's just, I'm so sorry! For everything. I promise to not be selfish, to listen to what you're saying, I promise to be the best friend you deserve.

Tristan: And?

Stella: And to support you in everything?

Tristan: aNd?

Stella: Ugh fine. And to listen to all your fun facts.

Tristan: THERE IT IS!

There is a pause between them.

Tristan: Listen Stella... I was wondering if-

Dwayne and Josie enter the stage together.

Josie: Well look who it is! Our prize pet. I thought I heard your whining and braying.

Dwayne: Yeah like HEEHON HEEHON! Heh you're so funny Josie.

Josie: *(Whispers)* Shut up you moron I haven't made the joke yet!

Dwayne: *(Whispers)* I'm so sorry.

Josie: We kindly send you our *Mule Tide greetings!* *(Whispers)* Laugh.

Dwayne: Oh- HAHAHAHAHAHAAH!

Stella: Oh Josie. You're like this now but I hope you'll be that sweet old lady one day.

Josie: Huh? What the heck are you talking about?

Stella: And Dwayne, you need some serious help with your codependency issues, in both worlds. *(Gestures to Josie)* you don't have to live this way you know!

Dwayne: W-What? Pff you don't even know what you're talking about. You don't know me...

Josie: Have you been telling people I'm mean to you? I swear to god I have had it up to here with you!

Dwayne: You know what Josie? I'm done with YOU!

Josie: How DARE you say that to me!

Dwayne: I didn't do anything wrong, it's time to live my best life!

Dwayne runs off stage.

Josie: Get back here!

Dwayne: *(From off stage)* LET ME LIVE MY LIFE!

Josie follows off stage.

Tristan: I think you may have just ruined their friendship.

Stella: Well, I think it's about time that Dom- *Dwayne* focus on himself for a change. We both know it's long overdue.

Tristan: True. Anyways, what I was saying before was that uh maybe...

Stella: Yeah?

Tristan: We could go out to that new diner together this weekend?

Stella: NO! I mean YES! Just not to a diner...

Tristan: Then how about we see that new Christmas movie?

Stella: Yeahhhhh how about we just walk to school together and we'll figure it out later.

Stella grabs Tristan's hand.

Stella: Wanna tell me about that article you've been reading?

Tristan: *You really wanna hear it?!*

Stella: Yeah!

Tristan: So I read that there's enough oxygen and hydrogen in moon rock to support human colonists for hundreds of thousands of years and there's also an abundance of hydrogen isotope called deuterium that can...

*Stella and Tristan walk off stage holding hands.
Holly Jolly Christmas plays as lights go down.*

The End 