

CHRISTMAS IN CRYONIS

Written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. OUTER SPACE - NIGHT

A long flexible tube tethers a FUTURISTIC ASTRONAUT to a nearby space pod. The Astronaut frantically dodges flying space debris.

A SPACE ROCK bounces off the ASTRONAUT'S HELMET catapulting him into a tailspin. The Astronaut's utility belt falls into space. The tether stretches to its limits.

After a suspenseful beat, the EDGES of the ASTRONAUT'S SUIT begins to COLOR SPILL into the background.

We PULL BACK to reveal that we are on a film set watching a VIDEO MONITOR.

DIRECTOR (O.S.)

Cut.

INT. STUDIO - DAY

The DIRECTOR (60's, male) scans the room for someone to blame.

The Director of Photography (DP)(40's, male) yells across the room to EMERY (late 20's, female).

DP

Emery! The harness is showing.

Emery, clipboard in hand, lifts her head set.

EMERY

(defensive)

What?

DP

I showed you how to do it.

EMERY

I did it! Like you showed me.

DIRECTOR

Safety checks are your first priority.

EMERY

(glaring at the DP)

I was fixing the schedule to account for your color spill.

The Director and DP exchange knowing glances.

DIRECTOR  
You're done here.

Emery realizes she crossed the line.

EMERY  
I didn't mean...

DIRECTOR  
Now.

She looks for support from the crew but gets none.

EMERY  
(defiant)  
Fine!

Emery packs up her laptop, storms toward the door, and slams into a cheerful PRODUCTION ASSISTANT (PA) carrying a CARDBOARD COFFEE TRAY.

The PA, dripping in coffee, lets out a small WHIMPER. The room collectively shakes their heads with disgust.

STUDIO GREEN SCREEN

The Astronaut, dangling precariously, wrestles with his helmet to reveal a popular B-level actor -- think Jason Bateman.

JASON BATEMAN  
(looking for help)  
People?

EXT. LOS ANGELES - SIDEWALK - DAY

EMERY, dressed in her best androgynous business casual wear, exudes millennial confidence as she walks down the street and enters an office building.

INT. LOS ANGELES - TALENT MANAGEMENT OFFICE - DAY

Emery sits across from an empty desk. She scans the room. Headshots of actors and directors fill the walls.

GWEN, Emery's manager, bustles into the room. She sits down across from Emery and takes a deep breath.

GWEN  
We need to talk.

Gwen's face scrunches with exaggerated concern. Emery cringes.

GWEN (CONT'D)  
You know I'm rooting for you,  
right?

Emery sits up straight, bracing herself.

GWEN (CONT'D)  
I talked to the network and they're  
going in a different direction.

EMERY  
What?

GWEN  
It's just not the right fit.

EMERY  
Seriously? That prick's still  
blackballing me.

GWEN  
This is on you.

Emery looks out the window nonchalant.

GWEN (CONT'D)  
You can't be demanding they shoot  
exteriors at night. You know how  
expensive that is.

EMERY  
I had it budgeted fine, they just  
didn't know what the fuck they were  
doing.

Gwen cuts her off:

GWEN  
Emery. It's about relationships.  
You gotta pay your dues. I was  
lucky to get you that gig after the  
last one.

EMERY  
I'm sorry. I get it. I'll do better  
next time.

GWEN

If there's a next time.

EMERY

(desperate)

I can do anything. Writer's assistant. P.A. Hell, I'll even do catering.

Gwen leans in with motherly sweetness.

GWEN

Honey. No one wants to work with you.

EMERY

I just need a few more gigs to cover some bills while I finish up my next script.

Emery's suddenly animated.

EMERY (CONT'D)

"Escape from Cryonis." You're gonna love it! A gang of gender fluid vigilantes rescue male hostages who've been kidnapped by the evil planet Cryonis to spawn an army of semi-human sex slaves.

Gwen's not loving it.

EMERY (CONT'D)

Lots of sexy androgynous women kicking ass and drive'n souped up space bikes... Think "Mad Max" meets "Handmaid's Tale." But with more lesbians.

Gwen's not buying it.

EMERY (CONT'D)

I just need funders. I'll direct it myself.

GWEN

Emery, you know I'm your biggest fan.

Emery nods her head.

GWEN (CONT'D)

You're incredibly talented. And when you win, I win.

They nod in unison.

GWEN (CONT'D)

Okay. So I need you to listen. No one's going to fund your feminasty sci-fi movie. You need to think about what sells.

EMERY

Fine. I'll write, direct, AD, anything.

Gwen contemplates before reluctantly opening her laptop.

GWEN

I'm going out on a limb here.  
(stern look)  
You've got to take this seriously.

Emery nods earnestly.

GWEN (CONT'D)

The Comfort Channel's looking for an Assistant Director to start immediately on the set of "Christmas in Cranberry Falls."

EMERY

A made-for-TV Christmas movie?

Gwen musters up an encouraging smile.

EMERY (CONT'D)

Seriously?

GWEN

You'd be the go-to for everything. And it would be a great opportunity for you to see how a micro budget really works.

EMERY

But my brand...

GWEN

You don't have a brand.

EMERY

I'd have to read the script first.

GWEN

No. You don't. It's the Comfort Channel.

Emery rolls her eyes.

GWEN (CONT'D)

(flippant)

Job obsessed city girl meets cute boy in winter wonderland. Flirty banter. A Christmas crisis. An almost kiss. Ex boyfriend. Crisis averted. And finally...

(with romantic flourish)

They kiss in the falling snow. No tongue.

Emery throws up in her mouth.

EMERY

There's no bouncing back from that.

GWEN

Fine. But I can't promise there'll be anything else.

Emery grabs her bag defiantly before heading for the door.

EMERY

I'll take my chances.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

Emery talks to her cousin, CAITLIN, on the phone as she walks down the hallway of a sketchy apartment building.

EMERY

I can't move back to Wisconsin...  
No offense.

INT. MADISON, WISCONSIN - CAITLIN'S KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Caitlin nurses a BABY in one arm while stirring a pot on the stove. AMY, an unruly toddler, runs laps through the kitchen, BLANKET dragging.

CAITLIN

It wouldn't be so bad. There's plenty of creative types in Madison you could make movies with.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - HALL WAY - CONTINUOUS

Emery approaches her apartment door.

EMERY

I'd rather sit and spin on a bread  
knife...

A final EVICTION NOTICE is taped to her door. She tries her  
key but it doesn't work.

EMERY (CONT'D)

Caitlin, I gotta go.

She rips the notice off the door, and dials her phone.

EMERY (CONT'D)

Hey, Gwen. I've been thinking...

Emery heads back down the hallway.

EMERY (CONT'D)

I could learn a lot from the  
Comfort Channel.

EXT. VANCOUVER AIRPORT - DAY

A beat-up Subaru STATION WAGON sits in the airport pickup  
zone, two WOODEN CANOES strapped to the roof. JACKSON (late  
20s), sexy lumberjack vibe, tightens the rack straps.

Emery exits the airport wearing the same clothes as  
yesterday, computer bag over her shoulder. She spots the  
Subaru and looks down at her rideshare app with concern.  
Jackson comes from behind the vehicle with a curious look.

JACKSON

Emery?

EMERY

Yup.

JACKSON

I pictured an old dude.

EMERY

Sorry to disappoint.

Emery reaches for the door handle. Jackson jumps in front of  
her to protect her head from hitting the CANOE RACK.

She ducks into the backseat.

INT. SUBARU - MOVING

Jackson sneaks a glance at Emery from his rearview mirror. His eyes linger for a beat. She catches him. They quickly look away.

JACKSON  
Here on vacation?

EMERY  
Work.

JACKSON  
Let me guess. The dental  
conference?

Emery stares out the window at the snowy landscape.

EMERY  
Yeah.

JACKSON  
Just picked up another group.

Jackson sneaks another look.

JACKSON (CONT'D)  
Stay away from the dudes in the  
orange shirts. Especially the one  
with the hair plugs.

Emery leans forward.

EMERY  
Is there a dispensary on the way?

JACKSON  
Sky High's near the Grandview if  
you wanna stop.

Before Emery can answer, there's a loud BANGING coming from the roof. A loose STRAP FLAPS against Emery's window.

Emery jumps in her seat and looks nervously out the window toward the roof.

EXT. RURAL HIGHWAY

Emery stands on the shoulder watching Jackson expertly tighten the rack straps on the side facing her. He moves to the other side of the Subaru to investigate.

Emery looks around. She's lost in the gorgeous snowy mountains until Jackson appears holding a BROKEN BUCKLE.

INT. SUBARU - MOVING

Emery sits in the back seat with the window down. Her feet brace against the door as she holds the canoe straps tightly with both hands.

Jackson looks over his shoulder. He sees Emery struggling.

JACKSON

You could've waited for another driver.

EMERY

I'm fine.

She's not fine.

JACKSON

My cousin's just up the road a couple miles. We can drop the canoes there.

Emery catches Jackson smiling at her in the rear view mirror.

EXT. GRANDVIEW LODGE - DAY

The Subaru, minus canoes, pulls up in front of a rustic lodge that needs some sprucing up, but has lots of character.

Emery gets out of the car and shakes out her sore arms. Jackson leans out the window.

JACKSON

Thanks for helping out. I'll comp your ride.

EMERY

(annoyed)  
Great.

She shivers in the cold as she heads toward the lodge. Jackson yells out the window as he pulls away:

JACKSON

Gonna need a coat.

Emery looks back at the Subaru but it's pulling away. She takes a deep breath before heading for the door. A HANDWRITTEN SIGN reads "Closed to the Public."

INT. GRANDVIEW LODGE - LOBBY

Emery enters the lobby in awe of the surreal mix of Christmas decorations, dollies, cameras, lights, a giant dry erase board, wooden crates, clapperboards, etc.

A large Christmas tree sits in one corner near a cozy fireplace, comfy chairs, and couches. On the other side of the lobby, there's a concierge's desk, office, and small dining area.

COLLEEN, a glamorous middle-aged woman, snuggles on a couch, drinking coffee and writing in a journal.

CAMERON and DIEGO, two schlepmy men wearing baseball caps, huddle around a screen in the corner playing video games.

ALYSSA, a young woman in skimpy spandex, listens to music while doing mountain climbers on the carpet.

Emery walks up to the empty lobby desk and waits for someone to acknowledge her.

EMERY

Hello?

They can't be bothered.

EMERY (CONT'D)

Hello!

ROSEMARY (50s) wearing a hideous Christmas sweater, hustles from the office with a plate of cookies. She oozes sunshine and rainbows.

ROSEMARY

You must be Emery.  
(yelling into the room)  
She's here.

She comes from behind the desk, sets the cookies down, and hugs Emery. Emery remains in place, stiff armed.

ROSEMARY (CONT'D)

I'm Rosemary.

Rosemary passes Emery the plate of cookies.

EMERY

Nice to meet you.

Emery shoves an entire cookie in her mouth and pockets two for later.

Colleen looks up briefly from her journal, before sinking deeper into the couch.

ROSEMARY

Thank goodness you're here. There's so much to do. A week flies by so quickly.

EMERY

A week?

ROSEMARY

We've only got a week left to finish the film.

EMERY

(confused)

They said you were only half way there.

ROSEMARY

(squeezing Emery's arm)

Don't worry, dear, George's a genius. He's done this a million times.

(looking around)

He was just here...

Rosemary continues looking for George. No luck.

Rosemary leads Emery by the arm toward Alyssa and waves wildly to get her attention. Alyssa pulls out an ear bud and stops doing lunges just long enough to greet her.

ALYSSA

I'm Alyssa.

Emery approaches Alyssa to shake her hand, but she's back down on the floor in a plank.

ROSEMARY

(smiling proudly)

Isn't she lovely?

Rosemary approaches Cameron and Diego, simultaneously gaming and arguing.

DIEGO

So who'm I buying it from?

CAMERON

I told you man. It's a decentralized digital currency.

DIEGO  
But it tanked.

CAMERON  
That's why you gotta buy now.  
Cryptography. Secured transactions.

Diego shakes his head as he aggressively pounds on his controls.

DIEGO  
I'm not giving my money to that  
Doge motherfucker.

Rosemary nudges Diego.

ROSEMARY  
Language.

DIEGO  
Sorry, Rosie.

Rosemary points toward Diego and Cameron.

ROSEMARY  
This is our Camera Man, Diego. And  
our Key Grip, Cameron.

EMERY  
I'm Emery.

ROSEMARY  
She's the new A.D.

Cameron and Diego give Emery a skeptical once over.

Hey. CAMERON Hey. DIEGO

They resume Grand Theft Auto.

Rosemary pulls Emery toward the couch.

ROSEMARY  
Colleen, honey. This is Emery. The  
new A.D.

COLLEEN  
(salty)  
That was quick.

EMERY

The timing was perfect.

Colleen's not convinced. With dramatic flair and heavy sarcasm, she declares:

COLLEEN

Welcome to the Comfort Channel.  
(under her breath)  
Where dreams go to die.

ROSEMARY

Where's George wandered off to?  
We've got so much to do.

ALYSSA

He went to Mickey's for breakfast.  
So he's probably napping.

Rosemary shakes this off and turns back to Emery.

ROSEMARY

Well, let's get you settled. Where  
are your bags, dear?

Emery looks down at her disheveled clothes.

EMERY

(lying)  
Uh, they lost them at the airport.  
I may need to buy a few things.

ROSEMARY

That's horrible! You're welcome to  
raid my closet anytime. I'm right  
next door.

Emery glances at Rosemary -- ugly sweater contest winner.

Rosemary heads toward the desk.

ROSEMARY (CONT'D)

Let's find you a room key.

Emery follows Rosemary. As she walks past the LARGE CHRISTMAS TREE, she trips over a pair of FEET. LOUD CRUNCHY NOISES fill the room as she crashes into a pile of beautifully wrapped Christmas presents.

Emery lies on the floor in shock. Before she can react, there's a RUSTLING from under the tree.

GEORGE (late 50s), the curmudgeonly, alcoholic director rolls out from under the tree. He lands face-to-face with Emery on the floor. Emery winces as she gets a whiff of his breath.

Discombobulated, George sits up and looks around the room.

GEORGE  
(slurring)  
Lunch?

INT. LODGE - HALLWAY

Rosemary leads Emery down the hall, pointing at the doors.

ROSEMARY  
There's Alyssa. And Colleen. This  
is me.

They stop in front of a door at the end of the hallway.

ROSEMARY (CONT'D)  
Here we are.

Rosemary unlocks the door.

INT. EMERY'S ROOM

Emery looks around the small, but cozy room. There's a desk by the window, a lounge chair, mini fridge, and a small television mounted on the wall across from the bed.

ROSEMARY  
Get settled. We'll meet downstairs  
in an hour. There's a copy of the  
script on the desk.

Emery looks shellshocked. Rosemary reassures her.

ROSEMARY (CONT'D)  
Don't worry about George. We'll get  
some coffee and cookies in 'em, and  
he'll be good as new.

Emery struggles for words.

EMERY  
I'm sorry, but I... Uh, I think I  
think I made a mis...

ROSEMARY  
(cutting her off)  
You must be starving, poor dear.  
(MORE)

ROSEMARY (CONT'D)

I'll bring you up some wild rice  
soup.

Rosemary throws Emery the key like a hot potato and quickly closes the door behind her.

Emery falls onto the bed and stares at the ceiling.

INT. LOBBY - LATER

Emery descends the stairs. Alyssa stands in the corner by the tree, script in hand, reciting lines. Cameron and Diego are still gaming.

Rosemary drags chairs into a half circle across from a large WHITE BOARD -- DAYS 1-7 on the left axis, HOURS on the top axis, and COLOR CODED SCENE NUMBERS filled in.

Colleen talks loudly on the phone while pacing the room:

COLLEEN

They're reviving the show without  
me!... Who's playing Lauren?

Emery walks around Colleen gingerly and takes a seat on the couch.

Alyssa and Emery exchange glances as they watch Colleen.

COLLEEN (CONT'D)

Are you kidding me? Rachel fucking  
Ramsey on Broadway!

Colleen does an angry lap around the room before landing at the end of the couch opposite Emery.

COLLEEN (CONT'D)

I am not doing this again!

Colleen slaps her phone down on the couch. She looks across at Emery. Then Alyssa. Then back to Emery.

COLLEEN (CONT'D)

So what's your deal?

EMERY

I'm the AD.  
(questioning)  
I'm here to help.

COLLEEN

What've you done before? Anything  
I've seen?

EMERY

I've got some things in post.

Colleen smirks and nods - she knows.

EMERY (CONT'D)

I've been on a lot of sets.

COLLEEN

Ever been on a set where they dock  
you for every day you're over  
schedule?

Emery leans in, elbows to knees, puzzled. Colleen nods toward  
the WHITEBOARD.

COLLEEN (CONT'D)

We've got seven days left to finish  
this piece of shit or we start  
losing money.

EMERY

Is that why the others quit?

COLLEEN

That. And George.

EMERY

Is he always like that?

COLLEEN

Lately.

Alyssa joins the conversation and quietly adds:

ALYSSA

His ex cut him off from his kids.  
(sympathetically)  
He's not taking it well.

Rosemary hustles into the room and gently nudges Cameron and  
Diego on the shoulder.

ROSEMARY

C'mon boys. Time to get to work.

Cameron and Diego drag their feet as they pull up chairs  
around the couch.

ROSEMARY (CONT'D)

Where'd David and Ryan run off to?

ALYSSA

They went to town. Said it'd be quick.

Rosemary sits down in a chair at the center of the half-circle. There's an awkward silence.

Rosemary looks to Emery signaling -- it's go time. Emery asks nervously:

EMERY

Is George coming?

CAMERON

I just texted him. He's at Mickey's.

Emery sits up straight, mustering confidence.

EMERY

While we're waiting, can someone fill me in on where we're at with the schedule and how we can possibly wrap in seven days?

DIEGO

A lot of the scenes are shot here at the lodge. The ones in yellow. We've got the location through the week.

Diego motions toward the whiteboard.

DIEGO (CONT'D)

The scenes in blue are shot at Town Hall, which we've got on Wednesday. The exterior shots in green are on Main Street. The orange ones are exteriors here at the lodge. Weather permitting.

EMERY

Where's the rest of the crew?

CAMERON

You're looking at it.  
(spreading his arms)  
Diego's the DP. I'm the Key Grip. But since the rest of the crew bailed, I guess I'm the Gaffer too.

DIEGO

We've got a couple of townie PAs.

CAMERON

And the kid we promoted to sound.

Cameron and Diego share disgruntled looks.

EMERY

And the rest of the cast?

ROSEMARY

David and Ryan'll be here any minute. They'll send us a new mayor any day. And we've got some lovely extras lined up.

Emery looks around, shell-shocked.

EMERY

Hair and Makeup?

ROSEMARY

Wait till you meet David. He's really quite good.

EMERY

Wardrobe?

ROSEMARY

Not to toot my own horn, but I've got quite a knack.

Colleen gets impatient.

COLLEEN

Have you met Randall?

Emery stares blankly.

COLLEEN (CONT'D)

The Producer?

Colleen raises her eyebrows.

EMERY

There wasn't time. But I'm sure he'll be in touch.

COLLEEN

Have you read the script?

EMERY

I'll get through it tonight. But just so I'm clear, we're starting at seven A.M.

(MORE)

EMERY (CONT'D)

and finishing at seven P.M. with no  
buffer for reshoots?

COLLEEN

Bingo!

Emery flips pages in her binder before proceeding.

EMERY

Can someone give me a quick walk  
through the storyline?

No takers except Rosemary who's bursting at the seams. She  
begins with a grand gesture as if reading a Marquee...

ROSEMARY

"Christmas in Cranberry Falls" -  
It's a story about the power of  
love and the Christmas spirit...

LOUD VOICES ring out from the front door.

LOBBY ENTRANCE

DAVID (40s), tanned, coiffed, bursts through the door wearing  
an elegant white shirt and tight black jeans.

DAVID

What a morning! Our boy got his  
first proper manscaping. You  
wouldn't believe the jungle we were  
dealing with.

David and RYAN (early 20s), adorable, homegrown Canadian  
actor, approach the group. Ryan tries to hide his physical  
discomfort as walks, gingerly tugging at the crotch of his  
jeans.

David gives Emery a full once over.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Who do we have here?

EMERY

I'm Emery. The new AD.

DAVID

Aren't you cute.

Ryan smiles warmly and approaches Emery with his hand out.

RYAN

I'm Ryan. Welcome to Squamish.

Emery shakes Ryan's hand and sits back down. Rosemary pulls up chairs for David and Ryan.

COLLEEN

Rosemary's giving Emery a run down  
of the storyline.

Colleen gives David and Ryan a knowing glance -- Here she goes.

ROSEMARY

(rambling excitedly)  
It starts with Crystal, a beautiful  
architect from New York.

Rosemary steps closer to Alyssa and lovingly strokes her hair.

ROSEMARY (CONT'D)

She meets a handsome stranger  
putting up flyers to save the  
historic downtown. She tells him  
redevelopment is the only way to  
save Cranberry Falls from  
bankruptcy.

(mimicking a male voice)

"But you're a big city girl who  
doesn't know anything about small  
town business."

Rosemary hustles around the circle, grabs Ryan's hand, and pulls him out of his chair. She drags him to Alyssa.

ROSEMARY (CONT'D)

Then, when Crystal meets the  
mayor's smart and sassy wife,  
Sharon, at the old supper club,  
who's there but the handsome  
stranger.

(whispering a secret)

It's Drew, the Head Chef.

Rosemary sashays over to Colleen and suddenly becomes very serious.

ROSEMARY (CONT'D)

Then, when Sharon and Crystal leave  
the supper club, Sharon slips on  
the ice and sprains her ankle.

Colleen cringes.

ROSEMARY (CONT'D)

Crystal rushes into the supper club  
and who does she see?

Rosemary looks over at Ryan and clasps her hands to her chest. Emery notices David making air kisses at Ryan.

ROSEMARY (CONT'D)

Sharon's so upset. It's almost  
Christmas and who's gonna manage  
the tree lighting festival?

Rosemary smiles lovingly at Alyssa and Ryan.

ROSEMARY (CONT'D)

Thankfully, our lovebirds are there  
to save the day.

Rosemary picks up speed, pretending to decorate the tree,  
throwing tinsel, fussing with decorations...

ROSEMARY (CONT'D)

There's decorating. The ornament  
contest. Cookie baking. And, of  
course, the plans for the new Town  
Hall.

Rosemary stops in front of Ryan (Drew) out of breath.

ROSEMARY (CONT'D)

Good thing Drew's there to teach  
Crystal how to slow down and  
remember the importance of  
Christmas...

Emery looks around. Is she for real? The others are unfazed.

ROSEMARY (CONT'D)

But wait... Is Crystal falling for  
Drew? What about, Liam, her dashing  
fiancé, the investment banker who's  
financing the development?

David stands up and makes a dramatic hair flip and bow.

ROSEMARY (CONT'D)

She's gotta trust her heart because  
it's Christmas and the festival is  
just days away.

Emery watches Rosemary with eyes wide.

Colleen rubs her temples.

Cameron and Diego couldn't be less interested.

Rosemary grabs Alyssa's and Ryan's arms and swings them around so they're face-to-face, holding hands.

David stands behind Alyssa and makes suggestive glances at Ryan. Rosemary's oblivious.

ROSEMARY (CONT'D)

And then. Just as they're about to  
kiss...

David pops up between Alyssa and Ryan's arms. Rosemary claps with excitement.

Emery can't handle any more:

EMERY

I see where this is going. So what  
happens with the redevelopment?

ALYSSA

(matter of fact)  
Crystal uncovers an old painting in  
the Town Hall that's worth  
millions.

EMERY

Let me guess. She dumps the fiancé  
and saves Cranberry Falls just in  
time for the festival.

ALYSSA

Exactly!

EMERY

Then, there's twinkling lights,  
light snow, and a kiss in front of  
the old Town Hall.

COLLEEN

(sarcastically)  
You sure you haven't done this  
before?

Before Emery can answer, the front doors open and RANDALL (40s) enters. He sets his BRIEFCASE down and brushes snow off his tailored suit.

Rosemary ducks out of Randall's line of sight and quietly announces:

ROSEMARY

I'll go check on the pot roast.

Cameron and Diego exchange glances.

CAMERON  
Mmmmm - pot roast.

DIEGO  
Mmmmm - pot roast.

Randall approaches the group, chest puffed.

RANDALL  
Glad to see you're back at work.  
(scanning the room)  
Where's George?

The group avoids eye contact and says nothing.

Randall notices Emery.

RANDALL (CONT'D)  
You must be Emery.

Emery stands up to greet him.

EMERY  
Hello.

She starts to extend her hand but reads the room and pulls back.

RANDALL  
I've got some paperwork to go over.  
Let's go in the office.

INT. LODGE - OFFICE

The tiny office overflows with random Christmas decorations, costumes, and camera equipment.

Randall kicks a blow up Santa Claus before making his way to the desk. He motions for Emery to have a seat in a folding chair.

RANDALL  
I don't know how much your manager told you, but we're on a very tight schedule.

Randall hands Emery a THREE-RING BINDER.

RANDALL (CONT'D)  
We've wasted too much time already.

EMERY  
The crew mentioned something about fines?

RANDALL  
 It's all in there.  
 (pointing to the binder)  
 The terms of your contract. The  
 call sheets. The budget. The secret  
 sauce.

Emery flips through the binder apprehensively.

EMERY  
 But what am I actually doing here?

RANDALL  
 No reshoots. No new props or sets.  
 Stick to walking meals for the  
 crew, not more than a half-hour...  
 And be sure to schedule the extras  
 around meal times.

Emery's face says - WTF?

RANDALL (CONT'D)  
 Trust me. These Canadians'll eat us  
 out of business.

EMERY  
 So basically, I'm just here to keep  
 people on schedule and in budget?

RANDALL  
 Correct.

Randall pulls paperwork out of his briefcase and slides it  
 across the desk.

RANDALL (CONT'D)  
 If you agree to follow the plan to  
 the letter, sign these and we're  
 all set.

EMERY  
 (argumentative)  
 What if I'm no good?

Randall scoffs.

RANDALL  
 A monkey could do it.

Emery considers this for moment before signing the papers.

RANDALL (CONT'D)  
 There's one more thing. I need you  
 to keep an eye on George.  
 (MORE)

RANDALL (CONT'D)

I want notes every time he's late to set, drunk or both... Pictures would be great. Anything inappropriate or embarrassing.

EMERY

I'm not okay with that.

RANDALL

Really? I checked you out.

Emery shifts in her seat.

RANDALL (CONT'D)

Talented but difficult. Fired in the writers' room and on set.

Randall leans back in his chair with a sinister smile.

RANDALL (CONT'D)

You only get so many chances in this business.

EMERY

If he's a problem, why don't you just fire him?

RANDALL

Oh I will. But it's gotta be solid.

EMERY

I don't think I'm Comfort Channel material.

Randall slithers into salesman mode.

RANDALL

Look. I understand this may not be what you imagined when you went to film school. But if you get me dirt on George and keep this movie on schedule, I'll set you up. We've got twelve more movies lined up here. Easy money.

INT. LODGE - EMERY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Emery sits in bed, halfway under the covers. She flips through the screenplay as she takes a drag off a joint.

She puts down the script and turns her attention to the TELEVISION SCREEN.

We see the COMFORT CHANNEL HOMEPAGE with an array of Christmas movie options. Emery holds out the clicker and picks one.

ANNOUNCER 1 (O.S.)

In "Swipe Right for Christmas," a dating app developer must find her perfect match or lose...

She picks another one.

ANNOUNCER 2 (O.S.)

Mindy Fields from "The Facts of Life" reboot stars in "A Spicy Nut Christmas"...

And another.

ANNOUNCER 3 (O.S.)

Don't miss the Comfort Channel's newest holiday classic "A Very Puppy Christmas"...

Emery mutes the TV, picks up her phone, and dials.

INT. MADISON - EMERY'S PARENTS' HOUSE - SAME TIME

Emery's mom, ELLIE, sits around her kitchen table with MICHELLE, KATH, and SANDI (her gaggle, affectionately referred to as the "Council") drinking and playing cards. Ellie's PHONE BUZZES. She excitedly picks it up.

ELLIE

Emery! I'm playing Euchre with the Council. You're on speaker.

The Council responds in unison.

COUNCIL

Emery!

INTERCUT telephone conversation.

EMERY

(forced enthusiasm)  
Great.

ELLIE

I'm so glad you called. We've been worried. Your phone says you're in Canada.

EMERY

Yeah. I'm in Squamish, outside of  
Vancouver. I got a job.

Ellie exchanges glances with the Council excitedly.

ELLIE

(mouthing silently)  
A job!

Ellie turns her attention back to the phone.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

That's fantastic! Is it a real job?  
I mean, a real writing job?

EMERY

I'm an A.D. Assistant Director.

ELLIE

Impressive.

The Council CHEERS and WHOOPS in the background.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

(skeptical)  
They're paying you, right?

EMERY

Yep.

ELLIE

And it's not one of those  
experimental things no one  
understands?

EMERY

Nope.

Ellie takes a drink from her beer.

EMERY (CONT'D)

(sheepish)  
It's a movie with the Comfort  
Channel - Christmas in Cranberry  
Falls.

Ellie spits out her beer. The Council chuckles. Michelle  
claps excitedly.

MICHELLE

I love their movies! I musta seen  
ten of 'em this Christmas.

KATH

That's so exciting, Emery. Everyone loves a good Christmas movie. Even the Comfort Channel ones.

EMERY

But why do they love them?

MICHELLE

Gets your holiday cheer on, stress free. And those beautifully bland people help you forget about the freaks you meet on Bumble.

Emery tosses the script to the foot of the bed and lies down on her side, phone on the pillow next to her.

EMERY

But they're literally all the same movie. What's the point?

Ellie deals cards while talking.

ELLIE

They don't need a point. They're just fun. We used to watch them while we wrapped presents and made cookies.

EMERY

We never made cookies.

ELLIE

That's not true. We made those candy cane things and the chocolate Ritz crackers with the sprinkles.

EMERY

That was Grandma Mary.

Ellie rolls her eyes.

SANDI

Well I'm with ya, Em. They shouldn't be peddling those unrealistic expectations that women are made of fucking Christmas miracles. And why aren't there any movies with fat ladies over thirty? And where're all the Black people? Even Lifetime's got Black Christmas. Not the Comfort Channel.

Kath gives Sandi a shove and a stern look.

KATH

Seriously, Emery, this is great news.

ELLIE

We're proud of you. And if it doesn't work out, you can always come home.

EMERY

Not now, Mom.

Emery's Dad, BRIAN, walks into the kitchen wearing a Packers jersey and a "Schmitt Towing" hat. He opens the fridge and grabs a beer.

ELLIE

Em's on the phone. She got a job.

Brian SPEAKS LOUDER than he needs to in the direction of Ellie's PHONE.

BRIAN

That's great! You still doing that movie stuff?

EMERY (O.S.)

Yeah, Dad. I'm an Assistant Director.

BRIAN

Fancy.

Brian and Ellie exchange skeptical looks.

BRIAN (CONT'D)

Don't let those Hollywood pricks push you around.

(suddenly remembering)

Oh hey. Remember to check your oil. That car's a leaker.

Emery's face softens as she listens to her dad's voice.

EMERY

Yeah, Dad. But I'm in Canada now. I'll check when I get back to L.A.

BRIAN

Okay. Have fun, Sweetie. Game's on.

EMERY

I gotta go too. We start early tomorrow. Good night everyone.

ELLIE  
Bye, Hon. Love you.

COUNCIL  
Love ya. Good luck.

INT. EMERY'S PARENTS' HOUSE - KITCHEN

Ellie hangs up the phone, shuffles the cards, and deals.

ELLIE  
This one better stick. She can't  
keep playing around with this movie  
stuff. She could be a sub at school  
in a second.

MICHELLE  
We are desperate.

KATH  
She's so talented. She'll find her  
way.  
(encouraging)  
And at least this sounds legit.  
Like something we might actually  
get to see.

Sandi flips two cards over and nods to her partner, Michelle,  
from across the table.

SANDI  
Hearts are trump, we're in the  
barn.

The card playing and conversation are seamless.

ELLIE  
Even if this one works out, what's  
next? She's never going to set any  
roots.

Ellie looks to Kath.

ELLIE (CONT'D)  
Look at her cousin Caitlin. She's  
got two kids, an adorable husband,  
and a solid career.

KATH  
They're all on their own timeline.

MICHELLE

And she's gorgeous... When she's not doin that weird stuff with her hair.

Michelle makes some strange motions around her head. The Council nods in agreement.

KATH

She'll definitely find someone. She just hasn't met the right guy yet.

SANDI

Or girl?

Ellie shrugs -- anything's possible with Emery.

MICHELLE

At least she got rid of that guy with the porn-stache.

ELLIE

Cheers to that!

The Council CKINKS their beer bottles and wine glasses.

INT. EMERY'S ROOM

Emery takes another long pull off her joint before snubbing it out in the fake flowers on the bedside. She looks up at the television.

CLOSE ON TELEVISION

Two generic beautiful people sip hot chocolate and stroll down a heavily decorated main street.

Emery sighs deeply and turns off the TV before burying her face in the pillow.

INT. LODGE - EMERY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Emery sleeps.

DREAM SEQUENCE

Her dream starts Merry-n-Bright. Christmas trees, candy canes, presents, and other holiday paraphernalia dance through space to trippy Christmas music.

The music takes a sinister turn as Randall, dressed as an evil Santa with a Darth Vader vibe, comes into view. He's driving a beat-up sleigh pulled by half-alien reindeer. The reindeer begin eating the Christmas objects, which now appear to be made of flesh. Randall/Santa laughs crazily amongst the blood and gore.

INT. LODGE - EMERY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Emery's PHONE BUZZES. She wakes from her nightmare disjointed.

The ALARM CLOCK on the bedside table reads "2:30 AM."

EMERY

Hello?

JACKSON (O.S.)

Is this E. Schmitt?

EMERY

Who's this?

JACKSON

I'm calling from Mickey's Tavern.  
Do you know George Phelps?

EMERY

Maybe.

JACKSON

Can you come get him?

EMERY

Why are you calling me?

JACKSON

Rosie dropped off your card. She  
said you'd be looking out for him  
now.

EMERY

Is this the place across from the  
Grandview Lodge?

JACKSON

That's the one.

Emery pounds the bed.

EMERY

Fine. I'll be there in five.

EXT. MICKEY'S TAVERN - PARKING LOT

Emery shivers in the cold, no coat. She trudges through the snowy parking lot.

INT. MICKEY'S TAVERN

Emery enters cautiously. The bar's empty. There's a warm glow coming from the neon beer signs.

Emery scans the room. The bartender wipes down the counters. As he turns toward her, she recognizes:

EMERY

Uber guy!

Jackson pulls out a BUSINESS CARD from his pocket and reads.

JACKSON

E. Schmitt. Screenwriter. Director.  
Producer.  
(smiling smugly)  
Dentist?

EMERY

Where's George?

Jackson nods toward a booth in the corner. George lies on the bench passed out.

JACKSON

I would've just let him sleep it  
off but the last time he really  
freaked the owner out in the  
morning.

Emery gently taps George's shoulder - nothing. She lifts his arm and it thuds back down.

Jackson watches amused as she attempts to move the drunken sack of potatoes.

EMERY

Can I get a little help?

Jackson effortlessly lifts George over his shoulder and heads for the door. She follows.

INT. LODGE - LOBBY

Emery and Jackson carry George's limp body through the lobby doors. As they head for the stairs, they brush against the Christmas tree. ORNAMENTS DROP to the ground.

JACKSON

Damn.

Emery shushes him.

George stirs. He looks from Jackson, to Emery, to Jackson.

GEORGE

Stay away from this one. Evil  
Randall spawn.

Emery and Jackson struggle with the weight of George.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

Doesn't know shiiiiittt. Film school  
princess. Probbly thinks it's her  
big break.

George looks directly at Emery.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

This train ain't going nowhere.

INT. LODGE - GEORGE'S ROOM

Emery and Jackson struggle to carry George to his bed. As they lay him down, George makes a sudden turn to his belly, which flips Emery on top of Jackson. They butt heads.

They're momentarily startled and in pain, which turns to quiet laughter. They lock eyes before jolting apart.

INT. EMERY'S ROOM - MORNING

Emery wakes to a soft KNOCK at the door. The alarm clock reads "6:00 AM."

ROSEMARY (O.S.)

Good morning, Sunshine. We've got  
breakfast and coffee downstairs.

A PACKET OF PAPERS shoots out from under the door.

INT. LODGE - DINING AREA

Emery walks down the staircase into the lobby wearing the same clothes as yesterday. There's a bountiful breakfast buffet set up in the dining area.

Rosemary sits alone at a table heaping with CRAFT SUPPLIES.

Cameron and Diego scarf down food nearby.

George sits at a separate table with a squint of a headache, nursing his coffee.

Colleen's on the couch working on a laptop.

Alyssa and Ryan stand, scripts in hand, reading lines.

Emery walks past George with her plate of food. She starts to sit down but reads his face and joins Cameron and Diego instead. They give her a nod and continue debating.

CAMERON

A hundred percent you wouldn't want to hang out with your clone.

DIEGO

But what if he'd never met me before and he didn't work with you?

CAMERON

You'd still be in there somewhere. And you don't like people like you.

DIEGO

True.

(contemplating)

If he's an asshole and I decide to kill him, would it be murder or suicide?

George cuts them off and moves toward the whiteboard.

GEORGE

Okay, people. We're on the clock.

Emery gets up and empties her plate into a bus tub. She walks past Rosemary, who's busy assembling ORNAMENTS that appear to be old women wearing raggedy clothes and riding brooms. Emery stops, confused.

EMERY

Are those props?

ROSEMARY  
 Heavens no. These are Christmas  
 Witches -- La Befana.

Rosemary holds an ORNAMENT with pride.

ROSEMARY (CONT'D)  
 My darling Carlito used to make  
 these every Christmas. If you're  
 good, Befana flies into your home,  
 leaves candy for the kids, and  
 sweeps up all of your mess. Like an  
 Italian Santa.

Rosemary hands Emery the ornament with a wink.

ROSEMARY (CONT'D)  
 This one's for you.

Emery looks at the ORNAMENT briefly before putting it in her pocket.

EMERY  
 Thanks.

INT. LOBBY - WHITEBOARD

George moves scene numbers around on the whiteboard. The others join him clutching coffee mugs.

In the background, we see David saunter down the steps, MAKEUP CASE in hand. Emery's eyes pop at his over-the-top HAIR and MAKEUP.

DAVID  
 (all business)  
 Alyssa, we'll start with you. Then  
 Colleen.  
 (smiling at Ryan)  
 I'll finish with you.

David walks quickly past the group to a makeshift VANITY in the corner of the lobby. He flips on the lights, opens his case, and unloads the contents.

Rosemary hums to herself as she fills coffee mugs. George clears his throat, hoping to get everyone's attention.

GEORGE  
 Weather's coming. We need a buffer  
 on the exterior scenes.

George moves scenes around on the white board.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

We've gotta burn through scenes three through seven and twelve to fifteen today at the lodge. We'll try our luck with exteriors tomorrow.

Without looking at Emery.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

You'll need to organize the extras for the town square and ice rink shoots. Contact info's on the call sheets.

Emery flips through her binder.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

We need eight at the rink by six, and fifteen downtown by ten for the Meet Cute. Make sure they understand their blocking. We can't fuck around once we're rolling.

George turns to Rosemary.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

Rosie, can you line up lunch for the extras?

EMERY

Randall said no food.

George reaches into his wallet and hands Rosemary a credit card.

GEORGE

Fuck'em.

Emery makes a note in her binder. George turns to Cameron and Diego.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

Let's mark the couch and tree scenes.

Emery jumps in.

EMERY

Wait!

The group stops in their tracks.

EMERY (CONT'D)

If we switch the order and do downtown first, we can shoot scenes twelve, sixteen, and eighteen.

Emery approaches the whiteboard and moves scenes. George watches, arms crossed.

EMERY (CONT'D)

Then we can move scene twenty-two from interior to exterior. We'll save half a day on lighting set-up.

Cameron and Diego consider her proposal.

CAMERON

She's got a point.

They wait for George's blessing. He throws up his hands.

GEORGE

Fine.

George turns to Ryan, Alyssa and Colleen.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

We'll start with the almost kiss at the tree in ten. Then we'll move to the couch.

David yells and claps in the background:

DAVID

Hair and makeup. Come on people.  
Let's go!

Rosemary hums to herself as she walks past Colleen and hands her a MATRONLY OUTFIT.

COLLEEN

(under her breath)  
Lovely. Kohl's clearance.

LOBBY - CHRISTMAS TREE

Alyssa and Ryan stand by the tree, ornaments in hand.

Diego focuses the camera. Cameron adjusts lighting equipment as he motions to a PA, who looks about twelve, to move the lighting umbrella.

Emery stands nearby holding the SLATE.

George lounges on the couch, feet up.

GEORGE  
Roll sound.

PA  
Rolling.

GEORGE  
Action.

Emery CLAPS the SLATE.

Ryan, stiff and self-conscious, places an ornament on the tree.

RYAN/DREW  
"Looks like you're getting the hang  
of the Christmas thing."

Alyssa smiles sweetly at Ryan.

ALYSSA/CRYSTAL  
"I just needed someone to help me  
slow down and appreciate the  
moment."

Alyssa picks up a sparkly bell ornament and gazes at it fondly before looking for the perfect placement on the tree. She can't quite reach.

Ryan lunges toward Alyssa and aggressively takes the ornament from her hand.

RYAN/DREW  
"Let me help you."

Ryan and Alyssa stand face-to-face in front of the tree.

ALYSSA/CRYSTAL  
"I never really felt the Christmas  
spirit in New York, but here in  
Cranberry Falls..."

The CAMERA ZOOMS in on Ryan as he moves robotically toward Alyssa for the almost kiss.

RYAN/DREW  
(flat affect)  
"It's never too late to find what's  
really important."

GEORGE (O.S.)  
Cut!

George enters the scene and leans into Ryan:

GEORGE (CONT'D)  
She's not going to bite you.

Ryan tries not to look offended, but he's not a good actor. George scans the room.

GEORGE (CONT'D)  
(yelling)  
David, come here. Show Ryan how it's done.

David stops applying Colleen's make-up and struts across the lobby, pausing to ensure everyone's watching.

He moves gracefully toward Alyssa and takes her hand.

DAVID/DREW  
"It's never too late to find what's really important."

The "Almost Kiss" is breathtaking. Alyssa breaks character.

ALYSSA  
Wow!

DAVID  
(to Ryan)  
Now you.

David takes Ryan's hand and guides him toward Alyssa.

DAVID (CONT'D)  
She's like a fresh bloom yearning to open.

David wraps himself seductively behind Ryan and operates his body like a puppet. It's getting weird.

George rolls his eyes.

GEORGE  
Thanks, David. I think he gets it.

Emery looks on, amused, as David releases Ryan, dips Alyssa, and then kisses her gently on the cheek.

David looks up at Ryan and winks.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

George sits at the desk with his laptop open. On the SCREEN, we see CHARLIE REID (late 50s), a stylishly and charismatic Comfort Channel executive.

CHARLIE

Randall said you drove everyone away. Something about peeing on the Christmas tree.

GEORGE

(defensive)

One time. And you know that's not why they left. Fuck'n bean counter hates creatives.

CHARLIE

He said you're over budget again.

GEORGE

His budget is bullshit.

CHARLIE

I get it. He's a prick. But he's still pissed about you raising the pay issue for the crew.

George chuckles under his breath.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

Look, George.

(hesitant)

You should know. That deal. The one I didn't tell you about. It's gonna pop.

George leans back and soaks this in.

GEORGE

I'm happy for you. Really.

CHARLIE

Maybe it's time you think about moving on. Get back to what you really love.

George sighs deeply and runs his fingers through his hair.

GEORGE

The custody hearing's next week. I gotta be employed.

CHARLIE  
I'll keep you posted.

GEORGE  
Thanks, man.

George closes his laptop, deep in thought. After a beat, his PHONE BUZZES. His demeanor shifts immediately as he picks it up.

GEORGE (CONT'D)  
Hey, kids.

George listens and laughs. He stands up, heads for the door, phone to his ear.

GEORGE (CONT'D)  
Listen closely. I think I hear him.  
(scary voice)  
The swamp monster's coming...

INT. LOBBY - DAY

The camera and lights are set up between the entrance and the couch by the fireplace. Ryan paces back-n-forth practicing his lines. Alyssa slumps in a chair scrolling her phone. Colleen reads a book.

Emery turns impatiently to Cameron and Diego, who are debating.

CAMERON  
It's over. Not under.

Diego catches David's attention as he walks by, make-up brush in hand.

DIEGO  
David. Does the toilet paper go  
over?  
(arm roll gesturing over  
and then under)  
Or under?

DAVID  
Over.

CAMERON  
(call out to Ryan)  
Ryan. Over or under?

Ryan looks confused. David leans in and whispers to Diego:

DAVID

He's definitely an under. He just doesn't know it yet.

Emery throws up her hands in frustration and walks into the dining area. Through the window, she sees George smoking a cigarette. She pulls out her phone, takes a picture, and then looks around to see if anyone's watching.

Emery's PHONE BUZZES. She looks relieved when she sees who's calling.

EMERY

Hey.

INT. CAITLIN'S HOUSE

Caitlin sits on the couch nursing the baby. Amy naps on the couch next to her.

CAITLIN

How's Canada?

INTERCUT telephone conversation.

EMERY

The Council doesn't waste time, do they?

CAITLIN

I got a text from my mom last night. I didn't think you wanted the job?

EMERY

I don't, but I was evicted.  
(quickly)  
Don't tell Aunt Kath.

CAITLIN

Well, it's a job. Maybe you can save some money for your movie.

EMERY

If I make it out of this Christmas hellscape.

Rosemary walks by carrying a beautifully sculpted gingerbread house.

EMERY (CONT'D)

(hushed)  
And there's this strange lady.  
(MORE)

EMERY (CONT'D)

She's like a freaky fairy who thinks it's Christmas in January.

CAITLIN

It can't be that bad.

EMERY

They already hate me.

Emery looks over at Cameron and Diego, back at their gaming.

EMERY (CONT'D)

It's a skeleton crew. And the director's a drunk.

CAITLIN

No one's forcing you to do it.

EMERY

I'm not moving home. If I can stick it out, the Producer said there'd be more work and I can save for Cryonis.

CAITLIN'S POV

Caitlin looks around her living room littered with kid stuff.

CAITLIN

At least you're not spending your day scraping baby shit off diapers.

EMERY

(empathetic)

I thought you gave up on the cloth diapers.

CAITLIN

I did, but then that Kimberly bitch reminded me how self-righteous I was. Gotta see it through.

(deep sigh)

Besides, I go back to work next week.

EMERY

That's right. You okay?

CAITLIN

No. I am terrified. And thrilled.

Caitlin runs her hands through Amy's hair.

CAITLIN (CONT'D)  
And I hate myself.

                  EMERY  
Same.

                  CAITLIN  
We can do this.

                  EMERY  
          (not convinced)  
Absolutely.

Emery watches George enter the lobby.

                  EMERY (CONT'D)  
Gotta go. Say "hi" to Nate.

                  CAITLIN  
Yep. Love ya.

                  EMERY  
You too.

INT. LOBBY ENTRANCE - DAY

George and Emery watch from a monitor. George yells out:

                  GEORGE  
Let's check marks. We're going to  
shoot.

Cameron pulls Diego on a dolly as he films Ryan and Alyssa carrying Colleen through the entrance. Ryan stops suddenly, nearly dropping Colleen.

                  RYAN  
Sorry, George. I stepped on  
something.

George looks down at the BROKEN ORNAMENT near Ryan's foot. George and Emery exchange sideways glances but say nothing.

INT. LOBBY - COUCH - DAY

The crew films the couch scene.

CAMERA'S POV

Colleen sits on the couch with one leg on the coffee table wrapped in ice packs. Ryan and Alyssa look concerned.

COLLEEN/SHARON

"This is the last tree lighting festival before our beautiful downtown is demolished. It has to be perfect."

Colleen grimaces in pain.

COLLEEN/SHARON (CONT'D)

"How will I ever pull off the ornament contest with this bum leg? And what about the tree lighting ceremony and the Christmas feast?"

ALYSSA/CRYSTAL

"Don't worry, I'll handle the ornament contest."

RYAN/DREW

"And we can move the feast to the supper club. No problem."

Colleen dries her tears.

COLLEEN/SHARON

"You two are the best. What would I do without you?"

Colleen looks from Alyssa to Ryan with a sheepish grin.

COLLEEN/SHARON

"But you'll have to work very closely together. Timing's everything."

GEORGE (O.S.)

Cut!

The CAMERA PULLS AWAY to show George and Emery at the monitor.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

Nice work, Colleen.

Colleen stands up straight and walks past George and Emery.

COLLEEN

I was a real actor once.

Emery watches Colleen walk away. George addresses the others:

GEORGE

That's a wrap.

EMERY  
(tentative)  
I need everyone downtown tomorrow  
in hair and makeup by seven.

The cast and crew ignore Emery.

Rosemary props up a LARGE FLIP CALENDAR embellished with  
homemade Christmas decorations, and changes it from "Day 7"  
to "Day 6."

INT. MICKEY'S TAVERN - NIGHT

Emery sits at the bar, laptop open, with a half-finished pint  
of beer. Jackson walks over with a plate of food.

Emery attacks the burger. Jackson watches with interest.

JACKSON  
You don't seem like the Christmas  
movie type. How long you been doing  
this?

EMERY  
Two days.

Emery wipes her mouth with her sleeve.

EMERY (CONT'D)  
How long you been doing this?

JACKSON  
Two years.

There's an outburst of LAUGHTER at the end of the bar. Emery  
and Jackson turn to see George spinning stories with a group  
of LOCALS. A FLIRTY WOMAN (50s) calls out:

FLIRTY WOMAN  
Jackson, get George another round.

George looks down the bar at Emery with a snarky smile. Emery  
turns to Jackson.

EMERY  
Is he here every night?

JACKSON  
Yep.

Jackson washes glasses in the sink below the bar.

JACKSON (CONT'D)

He used to go back to Seattle  
between movies, but not lately.

When Jackson's back is turned, Emery pretends she's taking a selfie.

CLOSE ON EMERY'S PHONE - We see an image of George doing shots with the woman.

Jackson turns around, and Emery quickly puts her phone down.

JACKSON (CONT'D)

He's dealing with some stuff.

Emery watches as the flirty woman hangs on George's every word.

George approaches Emery and sits next to her. She looks down at her laptop.

GEORGE

Randall'd be so pleased seeing you  
here plug'n away.

EMERY

We lost time today. I don't see how  
we make it up if we don't have a  
mayor until day five.

George swirls his glass.

GEORGE

Yup. Gonna need an extra day.

EMERY

It doesn't bother you that we're  
gonna get dinged? Don't you need  
the money?

GEORGE

It's not worth the stress fighting  
it.

EMERY

What if the others quit?

GEORGE

They won't. They've got nowhere to  
go, or they would've already left.

EMERY

That's cynical.

GEORGE  
That's reality.

George taps his glass on the bar and motions to Jackson for another.

GEORGE (CONT'D)  
If you're serious about your  
career, you should leave now.

EMERY  
You're here.

GEORGE  
I need the job.

EMERY  
I looked you up on IMDb.  
(nods with appreciation)  
Your documentary about the dark web  
looks terrifying.

George grimaces.

GEORGE  
Lost a lot on that one.

EMERY  
And now this?

GEORGE  
Can't pay child support if no one  
sees your movies.

Emery considers this for a moment.

EMERY  
Well, I'm not taking a hit on this.  
There's gotta be a way.

Jackson clears Emery's plate and holds up the empty pint glass. She nods.

George watches Emery, as she watches Jackson -- busted. With a flushed face, Emery goes back to studying her laptop. George chuckles to himself.

After a beat, Emery perks up.

EMERY (CONT'D)  
What if we rewrite the Mayor's  
scenes and give them to Colleen?

GEORGE

No way.

EMERY

The mayor is irrelevant. Sharon does all the real work.

GEORGE

We don't have time for character development.

EMERY

I'll rewrite it tonight.

GEORGE

We'd still need a mayor for the closing scenes.

EMERY

Not if we cut the lines down. We could just use one of the extras.

GEORGE

Have you seen our extras?  
(shaking his head)  
Randall doesn't pivot. Ever.

AL (60s), a scruffy silver fox wearing a flannel and Mickey's Tavern baseball cap, comes from the back office and slaps Jackson on the back.

AL

I'm gonna need you to close tonight.

JACKSON

Sure.

Al nods at Emery and George as he walks past them to the end of the bar. He opens the cash register and empties the till. Emery looks on with interest as Al chats up the REGULARS.

She's got a plan. George shakes his head and downs his drink.

EXT. TOWN SQUARE - MORNING

The historic town square is dressed for filming with holiday wreaths and lamp posts strung with garlands.

Emery and George hover in front of a monitor. She wears a puffy green coat with a fur trimmed hood.

From a distance we see Alyssa, Colleen, and Al standing next to an enormous, beautifully decorated Christmas tree. Al cleans up nice in his long wool coat and shiny shoes. He watches Colleen closely as she leads him through his marks.

Diego makes camera adjustments. Cameron wrestles with a snow machine.

A small crowd of ONLOOKERS forms near the cameras. A NERDY PA attempts to control the crowd by zealously stringing YELLOW POLICE TAPE back and forth between benches and trees.

Rosemary approaches Emery and George, pushing a COFFEE CART. She wears the same coat as Emery but in red.

ROSEMARY

Who's ready for gingerbread spice lattes?

GEORGE

I'll just take a regular, black.

ROSEMARY

You bet.

Rosemary pours a steaming cup from a thermos and hands it to George. She turns to Emery.

ROSEMARY (CONT'D)

Gingerbread spice?

EMERY

Regular's fine.

ROSEMARY

I insist. These were my Carlito's favorite.

Rosemary pours a LARGE LATTE from a Christmas themed thermos. She piles it with whipped cream and sprinkles.

EMERY

Thanks.

Rosemary wheels the cart away. Emery takes a sip of her latte -- damn, that's good.

Emery calls out after her:

EMERY (CONT'D)

And thanks for the coat.

EXT. TOWN SQUARE CHRISTMAS TREE - CONTINUOUS

DAN, a Mickey's regular, watches from behind the police tape. Suddenly, he recognizes Al.

DAN  
Al!  
(waving)  
Hey, Al.

Al sees Dan, breaks character, and rushes over.

AL  
I'm da fuck'n Mayor!

George and Emery watch as Al and Dan do a running Milli Vanilli chest bump before high-fiving the growing crowd.

George warns Emery:

GEORGE  
This is on you.

EMERY  
He'll be fine.

GEORGE  
Have you told Randall yet?

Emery ignores the question.

EMERY  
We'll be back on schedule. What's  
not to love?

Emery heads toward Al and gently steers him away from his fans. George sighs and drinks his coffee.

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

Emery and George look on with concern as the CAMERA follows Ryan and Alyssa, zero chemistry, walking down Main Street holding CUPS of HOT CHOCOLATE like awkward strangers.

INT. TOWN HALL - DAY

Emery concentrates in front of a monitor.

David fixes Alyssa's hair as she stands by a PAINTING on the wall.

George huddles with Colleen and Ryan, scripts in hand, before approaching Emery.

GEORGE

We've only got time for a few more takes before they kick us out.

Emery shakes her head as she studies the monitor.

EMERY

Something's off here.

George joins her at the monitor.

EMERY (CONT'D)

Colleen's coming on too strong. We're losing Alyssa and Ryan.

GEORGE

Theater actors... You've gotta give them room. She'll emote to the rafters if you let her.

(yelling to Diego)

Diego. Pull back a few feet and angle in on Alyssa for the reshoot.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

(to Emery)

Nice catch.

INT. LODGE - LOBBY - NIGHT

Emery walks down the stairs into the lobby. Colleen stands by the window gripping her phone.

COLLEEN

So I'm the grandma in this scenario?

(agitated)

I'll think about it.

Emery catches Colleen's eye, but pretend not to listen.

Colleen hangs up and heads for the stairs. She angrily slaps the CALENDAR to "Day 5" as she passes.

Emery walks to the corner of the lobby where Cameron and Diego are huddled around a screen.

EMERY

Hey, guys. We gotta head back to the ice rink tomorrow...

Emery stops in her tracks as she sees a DIAGRAM of a FUTURISTIC MOTORCYCLE floating on the SCREEN.

EMERY (CONT'D)  
(excited)  
What's this?

CAMERON  
The Space Hog X.

DIEGO  
A prototype for his video game.

Emery points to the front of the motorcycle.

EMERY  
Are those heat seekers or missiles?

CAMERON  
Projectiles of doom powered by the earth's tears.

Emery nods with enthusiasm.

EMERY  
Nice.

DIEGO  
(surprised)  
You a gamer?

Emery looks at him like he's insane.

DIEGO (CONT'D)  
A biker?

EMERY  
No. But Dyonessa is.

Cameron and Diego look confused.

EMERY (CONT'D)  
The badass bitch who's gonna take down Cryonis.

INT. MICKEY'S TAVERN - NIGHT

Emery and George sit at the bar gesturing as they argue over something on Emery's laptop.

EMERY  
The ski resort said we could rent their snow machine for the day.

GEORGE

Watch the video again. It doesn't  
look that hard. Cameron can fix it.

Emery takes a sip of her beer and contemplates.

EMERY

How'd you fund your films?

GEORGE

Friends. Family. Fools.

EMERY

I'm serious.

GEORGE

Thousands of pitches. But mostly  
grants and self-funding.

EMERY

So it's possible?

GEORGE

If you want it bad enough.

Jackson approaches Emery with a plate of food. The sight of him distracts her. Jackson gives her a flirty smile. She tries to be nonchalant as she reaches across George to take the plate.

George gets a whiff of her armpit and makes a disgusted face. He slaps a twenty down and motions toward the MICKEY'S TAVERN SHIRTS hanging behind the bar.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

This girl needs a clean shirt.

Jackson and George muffle laughter. Jackson tosses her a shirt. Emery's embarrassed but touched.

INT. TOWN HALL - MAYOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Emery, George and Diego huddle around a monitor watching play backs. Their gestures are animated and engaged. Alyssa and Ryan look on as Colleen guides Al through his marks.

EXT. MAIN STREET - MURRAY'S SUPPER CLUB - DAY

David and Alyssa deliver their lines in front of the supper club window. The CAMERA ZOOMS in on Ryan watching David and Alyssa through the window. His face is filled with clownish despair.

INT. LODGE LOBBY - NIGHT

David juggles his MAKEUP CASE as he flips the CALENDAR to "Day 4." Makeup and brushes fall to the floor.

INT. MICKEY'S TAVERN - BAR TIME

Emery and Jackson shoot pool in the empty bar. He makes an impossible shot. She flips him off. He steps closer to lower her finger, his hand lingering as he walks away with a smirk.

Emery takes a moment to consider Jackson as she lines up her shot.

EMERY

You got family here?

She shoots and misses.

JACKSON

You met my cousin. The folks are in Vancouver and I've got a sister in school in Seattle.

EMERY

So why here?

Jackson leans into the pool table and shoots.

JACKSON

Why not?

EMERY

It's beautiful but not much to do.

He glides around the table for his next shot, but stops as he passes her.

JACKSON

We're doing this.

He smiles that smile. She moves closer.

JACKSON (CONT'D)

In your movie, is this where I'd charm the big city girl with my small town ways?

Emery tugs on his shirt. He leans in and kisses her softly.

EXT. ICE RINK - DAY

Alyssa stands behind Ryan, annoyed. A flock of TEENAGE GIRLS engulf him. A girl hands him a SKATE, which he happily signs.

Emery and George instruct a group of EXTRAS on skates. She begins to slip, he tries to catch her, they both go down.

INT. LODGE - OFFICE - NIGHT

Emery sits at the desk working on her laptop wearing the MICKEY'S TAVERN SHIRT. Rosemary enters with an ice pack and a plate of cookies.

ROSEMARY

That was quite a spill.

Rosemary sets the cookies down and hands Emery the ice pack. Emery winces as she rests her elbow on the pack.

EMERY

Thanks.

ROSEMARY

Carlito always said 'You gotta stare the ice down and shuffle, shuffle, shuffle.'

Emery notices a crack in Rosemary's sunny exterior.

EMERY

How long has he been gone?

ROSEMARY

Three hundred and eighty seven days.

Emery's PHONE BUZZES.

ROSEMARY (CONT'D)

You better get that, dear.

Rosemary exits. Emery sees who's calling, gets up, and closes the office door.

EMERY

Randall.

INT. COMFORT CHANNEL CORPORATE HEADQUARTERS

Randall sits at his desk in a stark office.

RANDALL

I got a call from casting. They said you cancelled the mayor's replacement.

INTERCUT telephone conversation.

EMERY

Yeah.

(nervous)

I made a few tweaks to the script. And we found a local guy who can act at half of the rate of the other guy.

RANDALL

Did George approve this?

EMERY

Yeah. And it works really well with the storyline.

RANDALL

I don't give two shits about the storyline. Changes like this go through me. Your little tweak is a breach of contract.

(condescending)

Do you understand what I'm saying?

EMERY

(caught off guard)

It won't happen again.

RANDALL

Let's hope not... What do you have on George?

EMERY

Um. Nothing yet. I'm working on it.

RANDALL

It wasn't a suggestion.

Randall hangs up the phone. Charlie Reid walks by Randall's office, joking with a small ENTOURAGE. Charlie pops his head in the open door.

CHARLIE

Sounds like things are straightened out up in Squamish.

RANDALL  
(annoyed)  
They're back on schedule, if that's  
what you mean.

CHARLIE  
He's going through some things, but  
George always comes through.

Randall scoffs.

Charlie turns to leave and then on second thought, calls out  
over his shoulder:

CHARLIE (CONT'D)  
You know, we're lucky to have him.

RANDALL  
(grinding his teeth)  
Right.

INT. LODGE - LOBBY - NIGHT

Emery enters the lobby and finds the cast and crew unwinding  
in front of the fire. George tosses her a BEER.

GEORGE  
Nice job today.

EMERY  
Could be better.

GEORGE  
Tomorrow, I'm gonna need you to run  
Camera B. Al's still struggling  
with his lines. We need as many  
safety shots as possible.

EMERY  
Colleen's got his back.

Colleen hears this and gives Emery a half-smile.

COLLEEN  
He's catching on.

CAMERON  
If we're running late, we could  
finish up outside. The Christmas  
lights on the patio give a nice  
glow.

Diego slaps Cameron on the chest.

DIEGO  
Look at you. Going all MacGyver.

GEORGE  
(to Cameron)  
If I get you a stick of gum and a  
safety pin, can you fix the snow  
machine?

They chuckle as Rosemary approaches wearing a SANTA APRON.

ROSEMARY  
Dinner's on.

Diego stands up, makes large wafting motions, and sucks in  
the air around him.

DIEGO  
Lasagna!

Rosemary pinches Diego's cheek. Cameron and Diego follow her  
into the dining area.

Ryan stands up and turns to Colleen before leaving.

RYAN  
Thanks for your help today.

Colleen smiles back warmly. When he's out of ear shot, George  
turns to Colleen and Emery.

GEORGE  
What do we do with that?

EMERY  
He's not really in it, in it.

Alyssa walks toward the trio in her workout clothes, and  
leans over to pick up her gym bag. George watches her  
intently. Emery and Colleen roll their eyes.

GEORGE  
It shouldn't be so hard. It's  
fucking acting.

EMERY  
I thought you didn't care about  
this piece of shit movie.

GEORGE  
I don't.

In an attempt to change the subject, George grabs a MANILLA  
ENVELOPE off the table and shouts:

GEORGE (CONT'D)  
Who's gonna drop off Al's call  
sheet?

Emery jumps up and grabs the envelope.

EMERY  
I got it. Be right back.

Colleen and George exchange knowing glances.

Colleen takes a sip of her wine.

COLLEEN  
She's full of surprises.

George chuckles quietly.

COLLEEN (CONT'D)  
You think she's legit?

GEORGE  
Maybe.

COLLEEN  
I'm happy to have more scenes,  
but...

GEORGE  
The more of you the better.

COLLEEN  
Is it worth pissing Randall off?

GEORGE  
Fuck Randall.

INT. MICKEY'S TAVERN

Emery approaches the bar. Al's telling the REGULARS about his  
day on set.

EMERY  
Good job today.

Al looks proud.

AL  
Thanks.

Emery hands him the manilla envelope.

EMERY

We need you at the lodge tomorrow  
by seven.

DAN

Yes Ma'am.

Emery looks around the bar.

EMERY

(nonchalant)  
Is Jackson around?

AL

He's out back in the garage.

EXT./INT. GARAGE

Emery approaches the garage apprehensively. MUSIC spills through the cracked door. She peers in and sees an impressive line of WOODEN CANOES on racks.

Jackson bends over a canoe on a low platform, sanding back-n-forth. He couldn't look better in his Levis and fitted t-shirt.

Jackson hears a RUSTLE at the door and turns. He sees Emery watching him and smiles. He knows.

EMERY

I'm looking for Al.

Jackson keeps sanding. Emery fixates on his TAUT ARM MUSCLES.

JACKSON

He's in the bar. Musta just missed  
him.

EMERY

Yeah. I'll go check.

Emery can't take her eyes off him. She begins slowly rubbing her outer thighs in time with his sanding. Jackson turns around, pleased with the intensity of her gaze.

JACKSON

You're welcome to help.

Emery moves towards him. He extends his hand. She accepts. Emery has second thoughts and starts to pull away. Jackson tugs her back towards him.

EMERY

I better get back.

Jackson leans in and kisses her gently.

JACKSON

Yeah. You better.

Emery can't take it any more. She's all in. They kiss passionately as they lower themselves into the bed of the canoe.

CANOE - MOMENTS LATER

Emery and Jackson lay naked in each other's arms surrounded by a pile of abandoned clothes. She runs her fingers over his calloused hands.

EMERY

You're good with your hands.

JACKSON

(with confidence)

That's what they tell me.

She jabs him with her elbow.

EMERY

The canoes. They're beautiful.

JACKSON

We're in Mike's.

EMERY

Mike?

JACKSON

The high school principal. Great guy.

Emery looks around and sees that each canoe has a sign with someone's name on it.

EMERY

You made all of these?

JACKSON

Not just me. They've gotta work for their canoe. Talk to it. Understand it.

EMERY

They're amazing.

They lie in the canoe, content until something jolts Emery back to reality. She scrounges for her clothes.

EMERY (CONT'D)

Shit! I gotta go.

Jackson watches her calmly. She gives him a quick kiss before rushing out the door half clothed.

INT. LODGE LOBBY - NIGHT

Rosemary and Alyssa clear dishes.

Cameron and Diego play video games.

David gives Ryan a shoulder massage.

Emery barrels through the lobby, discombobulated.

EMERY

Al's good. He'll be here by seven.

DAVID

Look what the cat dragged in.

Suddenly self-conscious, Emery smooths down her hair and straightens her sweatshirt. She looks around at the group and declares:

EMERY

I'm going up to work on the rewrites.

As Emery heads for the stairs, Alyssa calls out:

ALYSSA

You dropped something.

Alyssa tosses Emery her bra. Emery turns quickly and bounds up the stairs. Alyssa looks at the others and smiles. She walks past the CALENDAR and flips it to "Day 3."

INT. MICKEY'S TAVERN - NIGHT

George sits at the bar scrolling pictures of his kids on his phone.

MIKE, the very wholesome High School Principal, takes a seat at the bar.

Jackson approaches.

JACKSON

Hey, Mike.

MIKE

The canoe looks great. I'll be in on Saturday to help nail the yoke.

Jackson smiles to himself.

JACKSON

She's primed and ready.

Mike notices George.

MIKE

Hey, George. How're the kids?

George pulls out the phone BUZZING in his pocket.

GEORGE

(distracted)

Great, thanks.

George walks to the back of the room to take the call.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

(talking into phone)

Hey, Charlie... Congrats... Yeah... Okay... That was fast... Fuck Randall...

(wincing)

Thanks for the warning. I'll be fine. Really. It's all good... Yep. Okay.

He puts the phone back in his pocket.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

(to himself)

Fuck.

George makes his way back the bar.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

Jackson! Bourbon on the rocks. Make it a double.

Jackson notes the change in George's demeanor as he pours his drink.

INT. LOBBY - VANITY - MORNING

David and Ryan sit at the makeup vanity. David applies Ryan's makeup. Emery stands within earshot wearing an ATROCIOUS CHRISTMAS SWEATSHIRT.

RYAN

I'm just not good at this. Al's better than me and he's not even trying.

DAVID

Buck-up Buttercup. You're young and beautiful and the camera loves you.

RYAN

I should go back to the shop... I actually made things.

Emery pretends not to listen. David puts his hands on Ryan's shoulders and looks him straight in the eye.

DAVID

You can do this.

They share a tender kiss. Emery smiles and looks away.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Besides, even the worst day on a movie is better than a good day anywhere else.

Colleen approaches. Ryan greets her:

RYAN

Mornin'.

Colleen brushes his shoulder fondly as she takes Ryan's place at the vanity.

Rosemary rifles through costumes on a rolling clothes rack.

Alyssa practices lines.

Emery approaches Cameron as he adjusts the lights.

EMERY

You seen George?

Cameron rolls his eyes and points to the loveseat in the back of the lobby.

## LOBBY - LOVESEAT

George sleeps on his back with his coat pulled up like a blanket, mouth open, snoring. There's a half-eaten plate of cookies and crumbs resting on his chest.

Emery kicks his shoe. Nothing. She kicks again. George startles himself awake with a choke snore.

EMERY

We're filming at town hall in an hour.

George focuses on her briefly before closing his eyes again.

GEORGE

I'll catch up.

EMERY

And we need to reshoot the end of the Main Street scene.

GEORGE

(eyes still closed)  
I'm sure it's fine.

EMERY

(exasperated)  
There's an extra pretending to jack-off behind Alyssa.

GEORGE

(one eye open)  
I'm right behind ya.

She hovers, hands on hips.

George picks up a cookie off the plate and closes his eyes while he eats it.

Emery contemplates for a moment before pulling out her phone and snapping a picture.

## EMERY'S PHONE

We see an unsent photo and text to Randall. Emery's hand pauses for a moment before she hits send.

## INT. TOWN HALL - DAY

Emery looks around for George. No luck. She motions to Diego and Cameron to roll the camera.

Emery watches on a monitor as the CAMERA follows Ryan, Alyssa and Colleen through the hallway. Ryan pushes Colleen in a wheelchair. They stop in front of the PAINTING. Alyssa makes exaggerated gestures as she points out features of the painting.

EXT. TOWN HALL

Alyssa and Ryan stand on the Town Hall steps. Diego perches on top of a nearby monument and stabilizes the camera. Emery holds the SLATE.

EMERY

Shot three, scene fifty-two, take twelve.

Emery CLAPS the SLATE.

CAMERA'S POV

EMERY (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Action.

ALYSSA/CRYSTAL

"I've done the research and it's the real deal. It's worth millions."

RYAN/DREW

"It's still not enough to save downtown."

ALYSSA/CRYSTAL

"But it'll bring people here. And they'll spend money in the shops and restaurants and raise the tax base."

RYAN/DREW

(talking fast and stiff)

"What about your fiancé?"

ALYSSA/CRYSTAL

"It's not what you think."

RYAN/DREW

(flat)

"I know what I saw."

EMERY (O.S.)

Cut!

Colleen and Emery exchange cringy glances.

Emery approaches Ryan.

EMERY (CONT'D)  
 (encouraging)  
 Just slow it down a bit. And look  
 her in the eye.

RYAN  
 Got it.

The PA hands Emery the SLATE.

EMERY  
 Shot three, scene fifty-two, take  
 thirteen.

CLOSE ON the slate - CLAP.

INT. MICKEY'S TAVERN - NIGHT

The tavern's nearly empty. George sits at the bar navigating his drink with some effortful coordination. Jackson cleans tables nearby.

Emery bursts through the front door.

EMERY  
 We've got two days of filming left!

GEORGE  
 Better get back to work.

EMERY  
 (sympathetic)  
 Look. I know you miss you're kids,  
 but...

GEORGE  
 Come on, this is your moment.  
 (exaggerated enthusiasm)  
 Git-r-done. Save the day. That's  
 what Randall hired you for, right?

Jackson looks at Emery questioning.

EMERY  
 You're the fucking Director!

GEORGE  
 Not anymore.

Emery looks to Jackson for answers. He shrugs, unsure what's going on.

GEORGE (CONT'D)  
That was a lovely photo by the way.

EMERY  
(shocked)  
He fired you?

GEORGE  
Technically, I quit.

EMERY  
(angry)  
You gave up on us!

George nearly falls off his stool as he turns to look Emery in the eye.

GEORGE  
You know, we're not that different.  
You'll see. Settle in. Make a  
little money. Then one day...

George points his finger in Emery's face.

GEORGE (CONT'D)  
Poof!  
(exploding hand gesture)  
The pieces of your shitty life that  
mattered are gone. All. Gone.

EMERY  
I'm not a fucking sell out.

GEORGE  
You sold me out.

Emery looks from George to Jackson, at a loss.

GEORGE (CONT'D)  
Just don't fuck it up for the rest  
of 'em.  
(motioning to the door)  
Go.

Emery looks to Jackson as she fights back tears. He provides no comfort.

George slams the rest of his drink. Jackson shakes his head. After a long, morose beat, George motions to Jackson for a refill.

JACKSON  
Sorry, man.

George buries his head in despair. Jackson looks on with concern. George stands up slowly and struggles with his coat.

GEORGE  
Close me out.

George slaps money on the bar.

JACKSON  
Where are you going?

George swats his hand and ignores the question.

JACKSON (CONT'D)  
Can I call someone?

On his way out the door, George declares:

GEORGE  
You're a good kid, Jackson.

INT. LODGE - LOBBY

Emery barrels through the lobby and heads for the stairs. As she walks by the CALENDAR, she aggressively slaps it to "Day 2."

INT. LOBBY - MORNING

The cast and crew gather around the couches and chairs. The mood is somber.

ROSEMARY  
(near tears)  
He didn't say goodbye.

CAMERON  
That cranky bastard knew his shit.

COLLEEN  
Does Randall actually expect us to finish filming by tomorrow?

Emery raises her eyebrows -- yes.

DIEGO  
We've still got the supper club scenes. The ornament contest. And half the scenes we've already got are shit.

Diego turns to Ryan.

DIEGO (CONT'D)

Sorry, Man.

Ryan accepts the criticism. David squeezes Ryan's knee.

ALYSSA

(defeated)

This is the best job I've ever had.

COLLEEN

(to Emery)

You know what this is about, right?

Emery stares blankly.

CAMERON

They were paying us less than all their other productions and he called Randall out.

COLLEEN

Randall tried to can him then, but George's buddy Charlie stepped in.

Emery hangs her head in shame.

DAVID

We gotta find him and change his mind.

Colleen looks at her phone.

COLLEEN

He's not picking up.

The group collectively sighs.

RYAN

Maybe we should just walk away.

They look to Emery for direction. She soaks in their dejected faces. After a moment of deep thought, she sits up defiantly and declares:

EMERY

We're not walking away. I say we finish this movie on our terms.

They're not convinced.

EMERY (CONT'D)

I've been playing around with the script.

(MORE)

EMERY (CONT'D)

What if, instead of Liam coming to town to whisk Crystal away, he comes to tell her the engagement's off because he's gay? He only loves her as a friend?

David's ears perk.

EMERY (CONT'D)

Then he meets Drew at the supper club and they fall in love.

Alyssa looks out of sorts. Emery reassures her:

EMERY (CONT'D)

Crystal still saves the day, of course. But she gets promoted and moves back to New York.

Ryan looks enthusiastic.

EMERY (CONT'D)

And then, Liam decides to stay in Cranberry Creek and help Drew run the supper club and save downtown.

DAVID

I like the way you think.

EMERY

We'll make a better movie and we'll finish on time.

COLLEEN

What about the rewrites?

EMERY

I started last night and we'll revise as we go.

Cameron and Diego shrug.

DIEGO

Why not.

CAMERON

Why not.

Emery turns to Colleen.

EMERY

Colleen?

Colleen shrugs.

COLLEEN

What's one more bad career decision.

Alyssa looks unsure.

EMERY

Alyssa?

ALYSSA

I'm good with it, if the group is.

EMERY

Rosemary, what do you think?

After a thoughtful pause, Rosemary looks at David and Ryan and puts her hands to her heart.

ROSEMARY

No Christmas gift is greater than the gift of love.

The cast and crew turn back to Emery with anticipation.

EMERY

Let's do this!

INT. SUPPER CLUB - DAY

The crew films David and Alyssa sitting at a table. Ryan stands before them explaining the menu. David and Ryan exchange flirty glances.

EXT. TOWN SQUARE - PARK BENCH - DAY

Alyssa and David have an emotional heart-to-heart. David talks while Alyssa listens. They hug tightly and smile at each other with affection.

EXT. MAIN STREET - AFTERNOON

The CAMERA follows David and Ryan as they walk blissfully down the street. Ryan points to various businesses. David nods enthusiastically. Emery follows closely, script in hand.

INT. LODGE - DINING AREA - NIGHT

The cast and crew share food and drinks. They're exhausted, but the mood is upbeat.

Ryan walks toward the CALENDAR with confidence and flips it to "Day 1."

INT. LODGE- EMERY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Emery and Jackson lie in each other's arms looking up at the ceiling. After a long pause, Emery rolls over and looks at him with concern.

EMERY

Still no word from George?

JACKSON

I checked every bar in town. No one's seen him.

EMERY

There must be someone I can call.

JACKSON

This isn't your problem to fix.

Emery rolls over on her side, away from Jackson.

EMERY

We wrap tomorrow.

Jackson spoons Emery. She snuggles in. They look content, but sad.

LOBBY - FIREPLACE - DAY

The cast and crew gather near the fireplace to film the final kiss scene.

Emery gives David and Ryan a look -- you got this. She turns around and looks to the others with anticipation. She takes a deep breath before calling:

EMERY

Action!

RYAN

"Your investment's going to make all the difference."

DAVID

"Maybe, but there's still so much to be done."

RYAN

"From New York?"

Colleen, Rosemary and Alyssa exchanging nods of approval.

EXT. LODGE - SAME TIME

A black SUV pulls up in front of the lodge.

LOBBY - FIREPLACE

David turns to Ryan with genuine love in his eyes.

DAVID

"I've been to a lot of small towns  
before, but somehow this one's  
different."

RYAN

"Sometimes you end up exactly where  
you're supposed to be."

David and Ryan share the picture perfect kiss.

RANDALL (O.S.)

What the hell!

Randall rushes toward the group. Emery intercepts him.

EMERY

We're just finishing the final  
scene. On schedule and in budget.

RANDALL

This...

(motioning to David and  
Ryan)

Is not happening. We're the fucking  
Comfort Channel.

EMERY

Just take a moment. We've got  
something really special here.

RANDALL

You're serious?

EMERY

You said you didn't care about the  
storyline. Just stay on schedule  
and in budget.

Randall shakes with anger as he scans the group.

RANDALL  
You're all in breach of...

Randall stops when he sees Rosemary coming from the dining area wearing her best CHRISTMAS APRON and carrying a large plate.

ROSEMARY  
Who's ready for a fresh crumpet...

Rosemary freezes in her tracks.

RANDALL  
Who the hell are you?

CAMERON  
(defensive)  
That's Rosie.

DIEGO  
Our Lead P.A. For like, ever.

Randall glares at Cameron and Diego.

RANDALL  
She's definitely not on the payroll.

The group watches Rosemary in stunned silence. Rosemary slowly sets down the plate and unties her apron. She walks up to Randall with tears in her eyes and a fierce determination.

ROSEMARY  
Befana's watching you.

Rosemary carefully slips a BEFANA ORNAMENT into Randall's coat pocket before walking, chin up, out the door. Randall shrugs her off.

RANDALL  
(to the group)  
You've got one more day to finish the script. As written.

Emery reads the room before responding:

EMERY  
We're not doing it. We made our movie, and it's good.

Randall looks at Emery and laughs.

RANDALL  
 That's sweet.  
 (still laughing)  
 You think that matters.

The others stand behind Emery in solidarity. Randall, caught off guard by the determined looks in their eyes, takes a few steps back before declaring:

RANDALL (CONT'D)  
 We're done here. I want you all out  
 by noon.

Randall SLAMS the door on his way out. The group is stunned.

INT. MICKEY'S TAVERN - DAY

Cast and crew sit around a table with a pitcher of beer and glasses. SUITCASES and TRAVEL BAGS are lined up behind the table. Al's behind the bar.

Cameron studies his laptop and shakes his head.

CAMERON  
 I can't find any Rosemary that fits  
 her profile.

EMERY  
 No one ever saw her full name  
 anywhere?

They shake their heads.

DIEGO  
 She just showed up one day and  
 started cooking.

Jackson walks in and sits down.

COLLEEN  
 George?

Jackson shakes his head.

Emery buries her head in her hands. Talking to no one in particular:

EMERY  
 I'm sorry...

DAVID  
 (wistful)  
 We made a great movie.

Emery pours herself another beer from the pitcher.

EMERY

That no one's ever gonna see.

Alyssa consoles Emery.

ALYSSA

You couldn't have known.

Emery jumps up, stumbling slightly.

EMERY

But I did!

They look at her surprised.

EMERY (CONT'D)

I knew Randall was going to fire George. He asked me to help.

JACKSON

Did you?

Emery looks out at the group, guilty.

EMERY

I had to do it my way, and I fucked it up for everyone.

COLLEEN

You will be fine. You're young. You'll go back to LA.

Emery looks to Jackson for answers.

JACKSON

It's not like you were ever gonna stay.

Jackson's comment sets Emery off.

EMERY

This isn't a fucking Christmas movie!

Emery cries angry tears.

EMERY (CONT'D)

I'm not getting your jobs back.  
(to Jackson)  
(MORE)

EMERY (CONT'D)

And I'm not falling in love and  
moving to some simple little  
fucking town and whittling canoes  
the rest of my life.

Jackson's wounded. The others look on, unsure how to respond.

Emery gathers her things and pulls out her phone and dials.

EMERY (CONT'D)

This was a mistake.

We hear a MUFFLED RING TONE. Jackson pulls his PHONE from his pocket and holds it out -- Uber driver.

Emery's frustrated, sad, and angry. She looks from person to person and lingers on Jackson before storming out the door.

EXT. ROADSIDE - DAY

Emery walks along the highway carrying her computer bag and a GROCERY BAG with her CHRISTMAS SWEATSHIRT and MICKEY'S TAVERN T-SHIRT spilling out.

A car pulls up alongside her. The window rolls down to reveal Colleen.

COLLEEN

It's a long way to the airport.

Emery walks to the passenger side and gets in. They drive on in silence.

INT. MADISON - EMERY'S CHILDHOOD BEDROOM - MORNING

Emery wakes thinking it was all a dream until the room comes into focus. Her childhood bedroom is frozen in time from the day she graduated high school.

EMERY'S POV

She locks in on the RETRO "ALIENS" MOVIE POSTER on the wall. Sigourney Weaver stares into her soul. Emery sighs deeply and pulls the covers over her head.

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

Emery pours herself a cup of coffee and sits down at the table.

Ellie hustles around the kitchen getting ready for work. As she heads for the door, she kisses Emery on the head.

ELLIE

It's great having you home.

Brian enters the kitchen, fills his coffee mug, and sits across from Emery.

BRIAN

What now?

EMERY

Mom wants me to be a sub at school.

BRIAN

Do you wanna be a teacher?

EMERY

No.

BRIAN

Then don't.

EMERY

(apologetic)

I can't live here.

BRIAN

You can't afford the rent.

(joking)

Unless you work the tow.

Emery scrunches into a ball at the table.

Brian stands up and scratches his beard.

BRIAN (CONT'D)

You gotta figure this shit out.

EMERY

(defensive)

I just got here!

Brian nudges Emery affectionately before leaving the room.

BRIAN

Don't get too comfortable.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Emery sits at a small table by the window with her laptop open and a notebook.

COMPUTER SCREEN shows a title page - "Escape from Cryonis by Emery Schmitt." She begins typing but is quickly distracted by a YOUNG WOMAN nearby pouring over HUGE MEDICAL TEXT BOOKS.

She tries again and thinks for a moment until a trio of CORPORATE TOOLS start talking loudly in line at the counter.

The CAMERA ZOOMS IN on their MOUTHES:

CORPORATE TOOL 1  
He's such a thought leader.

CORPORATE TOOL 2  
But how do we leverage his  
competencies to get to the next  
level?

CORPORATE TOOL 3  
We need an ideation sesh.

CORPORATE TOOL 2  
Let's get in a room and whiteboard  
it.

CORPORATE TOOL 1  
Ping me after you circle back.

Emery flexes her hands a few times before placing her fingers on the key board. She stares out the window. A BOY (6) walks by with his MOM. When the boy sees Emery watching him, he plasters his face to the GLASS like a blow fish. His CHEEKS explode and he licks the window with his TONGUE.

She crosses her eyes and sticks out her tongue. The mom sees Emery and quickly pulls the boy away from the window.

Emery tries to focus on her laptop. After a long pause, she SLAMS the laptop down, packs up, and leaves.

INT. BRIAN'S TOW TRUCK - DAY

Emery stares out the window while Brian fiddles with the radio.

BRIAN  
While you're home, maybe you can  
help with my website.

EMERY  
Sure.

BRIAN  
Maybe a Facebook page.

EMERY

It's a little late for that.

BRIAN

Your mom says I gotta do the social media stuff.

They pull up behind a Honda Civic.

BRIAN (CONT'D)

Get the paperwork going while I rig the tow.

EXT. ROADSIDE

Emery approaches the vehicle and sees an IMPECCABLY DRESSED MAN digging in his glove compartment. She catches her REFLECTION in the car window and takes off her "Schmitt's Towing" baseball cap. Her stomach drops as the man turns towards her -- MATT, high school crush and debate partner.

MATT

Emery!

EMERY

Matt!

MATT

(smiling)

It's been years.

EMERY

(nervous energy)

Yeah. Uh, you look great... All dressed up like you're going to court.

MATT

Actually, I am. The debate team paid off. I'm two years in with the County. Assistant Corp Counsel.

Emery nods, fake smiling.

EMERY

Well done.

Brian approaches the car in earshot.

MATT

So I guess the rumors aren't true.

EMERY

Rumors?

MATT

That you're out in L.A. making movies.

Emery looks down at her feet.

EMERY

Guess not.

Brian interrupts the conversation:

BRIAN

That'll be two-fifty for the tow to the courthouse.

MATT

(confused)

On the phone, I thought you said my insurance would pick it up.

BRIAN

Guess not.

INT. EMERY'S BEDROOM - DAY

Emery lies in bed wearing her MICKEY'S TAVERN T-SHIRT. She stares at the ceiling. After a beat, she pulls out her PHONE.

EMERY'S PHONE

Emery texts George -- "Just let me know if you're okay." We see multiple texts from Emery to George without responses.

Next, Emery texts Jackson -- "Hey." She deletes the message before sending.

She rolls onto her side and stares at her desk. The LA BEFANA ORNAMENT hangs from a lamp.

INT. - EMERY'S PARENTS' HOUSE - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Emery sits at the dining room table with the Council. Drinks and snacks abound.

KATH

It's so fun to have you here. I can never get Caitlin to play.

Emery tries to look enthusiastic. Sandi shuffles. Ellie turns to Emery:

ELLIE

We're playing Oh Hell. Remember, no leading trump until it's played and you have to follow suit.

Emery gulps her beer. Sandi deals. As they sort their hands, Michelle turns to Emery.

MICHELLE

How's the writing coming?

Ellie kicks Michelle under the table.

EMERY

I'm taking a little break.

The doorbell RINGS. Emery puts her cards down.

EMERY (CONT'D)

I'll get it.

ENTRYWAY

Emery opens the door to find Rosemary wearing her red puffy coat and holding her arms out -- surprise!

EMERY

Rosemary! Oh My God.

ROSEMARY

Hello, dear.

Emery recovers from the shock and motions for her to come in. Rosemary looks around approvingly.

ROSEMARY (CONT'D)

What a beautiful home.

Ellie appears from the kitchen.

ELLIE

Thank you.

Rosemary looks Ellie up and down.

ROSEMARY

You must be Emery's mom.

Emery watches uncomfortably as Ellie puts out her hand.

ELLIE

I'm Ellie.

ROSEMARY

I'm sorry to intrude. I was hoping to talk to Emery for moment.

ELLIE

Of course. Come on in. We're playing cards. We've got drinks and snacks.

Rosemary follows Ellie into the dining room. Ellie introduces her to the Council.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

This is Rosemary.

(unsure)

Emery's friend.

(pointing to the Council)

This is Sandi, Kath, and Michelle.

COUNCIL

Nice to meet you.

Rosemary smiles warmly at the group. There's an awkward silence as they wait for Emery to explain. Emery looks around trying to avoid the inevitable.

EMERY

We worked together in Canada.

ROSEMARY

(to Ellie)

You must be so proud. Such talent.

Emery wrings her hands and turns to Rosemary.

EMERY

Let's go in the other room, we can talk.

ROSEMARY

No! My therapist says I need to open up to people.

Rosemary looks around the room.

ROSEMARY (CONT'D)

You seem like lovely people.

Ellie offers Rosemary a seat at the table. She accepts.

ELLIE

Would you like something to drink?

ROSEMARY

Just a smidge of wine, please.

Ellie pours Rosemary a small glass of wine from the bottle on the table. Rosemary accepts it and then grabs the bottle and fills her glass to the brim. She takes a gulp before sharing.

ROSEMARY (CONT'D)

My beloved Carlito died last Christmas.

The Council gasps. Surprise quickly turns to sympathy. After a beat:

ROSEMARY (CONT'D)

Every year, he found the perfect tree. We'd watch Christmas movies together while we wrapped presents and decorated the tree... He always made it special.

Rosemary begins to weep. Michelle hands Rosemary a napkin. She grabs it and squeezes Michelle's hand.

ROSEMARY (CONT'D)

We had a beautiful Christmas. Caroling. Cookies. Presents. And then the day after Christmas, he was gone. An aneurysm in his sleep.

Rosemary turns to Emery.

ROSEMARY (CONT'D)

I didn't mean to hurt anyone, but I didn't know what to do without Carlito. And then when I saw the crew in Squamish, they looked so helpless. I just started showing up with food and fixing costumes.

The Council tears up.

ROSEMARY (CONT'D)

As long as I was surrounded by Christmas, he was still with me.

Rosemary looks to Emery, not sure how to proceed.

EMERY

They needed you.

ROSEMARY

It was wrong. I know that now. But I wanted to thank you, Emery. If you hadn't stood up to Randall, I'd still be there living a lie.

Emery shakes her head, ashamed.

EMERY

I ruined everything.

ROSEMARY

You have nothing to apologize for. You were true to yourself and they believed in you. You've got a gift.

Rosemary's words resonate with Ellie. She thinks hard for a moment before turning to Emery.

ELLIE

You need to get it together. Take some chances.

The Council nods in agreement.

EMERY

It's done. I've got nothing.

KATH

What about that sci-fi movie Caitlin told me about? She said you've been working on it for years.

EMERY

No one wants it.

ELLIE

Then make it for yourself.

EMERY

I've got no funding. No cast. And no crew.

Rosemary jumps out of her seat.

ROSEMARY

I've got money. Carlito had lots of life insurance. And I've got a crew.

Emery looks at Rosemary like she's insane.

ROSEMARY (CONT'D)  
Cameron and Diego. They're living  
in my basement.

Rosemary's wheels start spinning.

ROSEMARY (CONT'D)  
And Alyssa's waitressing in LA.  
David and Ryan are still in  
Squamish looking for work.  
Colleen's back in New York  
auditioning. I'd bet they'd all  
love to help.

Emery perks up.

EMERY  
George?

Rosemary shakes her head.

The Council studies Emery as she considers Rosemary's  
proposal. Ellie gives her an encouraging nod. Emery shrugs.

EMERY (CONT'D)  
Let's make a movie!

They cheer and clink glasses. Emery smiles broadly.

MONTAGE - THE MAKING OF "ESCAPE FROM CRYONIS"

A series of scenes show Emery and the others hard at work.  
The weather outside and the clothes they wear indicate the  
passing of time from winter/spring/summer/fall.

A) EMERY'S BEDROOM - DAY

Emery sits at a tiny desk pounding away on her laptop with  
complete focus.

B) INT. EMERY'S PARENTS' BASEMENT - NIGHT

Emery, Diego and Cameron sit in front of multiple monitors  
spread across a long makeshift desk. They're animated and  
engaged as they manipulate images of space craft and aliens.

## C) INT./EXT. - SCHMITT TOWING GARAGE - DAY

Emery and Brian lead Cameron and Diego to a metal building with a "SCHMITT TOWING" SIGN across the front. Brian lifts the garage door to reveal a large, mostly empty space.

## D) INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Emery and Colleen sit at table. Emery types on her laptop. Colleen flips through a script filled with highlights and sticky notes.

## E) INT. DINING ROOM - DAY

Mounds of fabric and sewing supplies are strewn across the table. Michelle works busily on a sewing machine. Emery, Rosemary, and David swap images of badass women warriors in a variety of costumes.

## F) INT. SCHMITT TOWING GARAGE - DAY

Brian and Ryan build a structure that looks to be the front of a space ship.

## G) EXT. EMERY'S PARENTS' BACKYARD - DAY

Brian flips burgers. Cameron and Diego eat at a table. Rosemary approaches them with a plate of lemon bars. Ellie clears empty plates and cups. In the distance, we see Emery, Colleen, Alyssa, Ryan and David with scripts in hand. Emery directs them through their marks as they mimic battle scenes.

## H) INT. SCHMITT TOWING GARAGE - DAY

Diego films cast members moving in front of a green screen: Colleen looks amazing in a fitted jump suit, heavily armed, she sits on a tricked out motorcycle; Alyssa's barely recognizable in a large Jabba-the-Hut style costume and makeup; and finally, Amy (Caitlin's toddler) runs past the green screen in a Cryonis costume, dragging her BLANKET.

## J) EXT. WOODS - DAY

Cameron blows beautifully colored fall leaves across a wooded path. Emery directs while Diego films Colleen leading the band of vigilantes (the Council in full costume and makeup) into battle.

I) EXT. UW-MADISON MEMORIAL UNION TERRACE - DAY

The cast and crew sit at a table by the lake drinking pitchers of beer in full costume and make-up. Passersby stare. Emery looks sad as she watches a couple paddle by in a canoe.

END MONTAGE

EXT. EMERY'S PARENTS' HOUSE - DECEMBER - NIGHT

We see the front yard covered in snow. The trees are lit with Christmas lights and there's a wreath on the front door.

Through the windows we see a celebration. They're all there -- Emery, Rosemary, Alyssa, Colleen, Ryan, David, Cameron, Diego, Al, Ellie, Brian, Caitlin, her husband Nate, Amy, baby, and the Council. They hug, laugh, eat, and drink.

INT. EMERY'S PARENTS' HOUSE - LIVING ROOM

Rosemary looks up at the Christmas tree and sees the LA BEFANA ORNAMENT hanging from a branch. Her face lights up with a wicked smile.

INT. RANDALL'S OFFICE - SAME TIME

Randall works at his desk. The lights of the city shine through his window. An ASSISTANT walks in his office and sets down a beautifully wrapped square BOX.

ASSISTANT

This just came.

Randall opens the package to find a Christmas themed JACK-IN-THE-BOX. He looks around suspiciously before turning the crank. An eerie version of "Jingle Bells" PLAYS until... Out POPS a LA BEFANA CHRISTMAS WITCH wearing a SANTA HAT. A CLOUD OF DIRTY DUST covers him and suddenly, the electricity goes out in Randall's office, but only Randall's office. He looks around nervous in the dark.

INT. EMERY'S PARENTS' HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - SAME TIME

Emery sees Rosemary admiring a LA BEFANA ORNAMENT on the tree. She approaches her from behind with a hug. Rosemary hugs her back and kisses Emery on the cheek.

The door bell RINGS.

## ENTRY WAY

Emery opens the door to find George with his kids, NOAH (6) and STELLA (4). George looks healthy and happy.

EMERY

I can't believe you came.

GEORGE

Wouldn't miss it.

EMERY

This must be Noah.

Noah waves. Stella hides behind George's legs. George scoops her up and tickles her.

GEORGE

And this is Stella.

Stella laughs and gives Emery a shy smile. Emery looks from Stella to Noah.

EMERY

My friend, Amy, has been waiting  
for you guys to get here. She needs  
help decorating cookies.  
(pointing into the house)  
She's back there in the kitchen.

The kids look to George. He nods encouragingly.

GEORGE

Make mine with extra sprinkles.

The kids run into the house.

EMERY

You look good.

GEORGE

I feel good.

Emery smiles broadly and motions for him to come in. George hesitates, looking over his shoulder.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

I hope you don't mind, I brought a  
friend.

Emery's jaw drops as she sees Jackson walking up the driveway, hands in his pockets.

Emery and Jackson lock eyes but neither says a word. Jackson follows George into the house.

We hear people greet George and Jackson with enthusiasm. Emery closes the door and leans against it, mouth open.

INT. LIVING ROOM

The group crams into the living room, huddled on couches and chairs around a LARGE TV SCREEN. Noah, Stella, and Amy sit on the floor in the front row covered in frosting and sprinkles. Sandi sees Al approaching and makes room for him on the couch next to her.

Emery stands in front of the group. Ellie and Brian look on from the back of the room, they couldn't be prouder.

EMERY

When I showed up in Squamish a year ago, I had no idea what the hell I was doing.

Emery looks around the room with affection. She struggles for words.

GEORGE

You still don't know shit.

There's laughter.

EMERY

And yet, here we are.  
(choking back tears)  
We made a fucking movie!

Cheers - GLASSES CLINK.

Emery eyes Cameron and Diego standing in the background.

EMERY (CONT'D)

And thanks to Cameron and Diego's magic, we've got a kick ass trailer ready for the festival circuit.

Emery flips off the lights and turns on the screen. She sneaks a nervous peek at Jackson from across the room. He smiles shyly.

SCREEN - ESCAPE FROM CRYONIS TRAILER

Dramatic music plays as we whirl around in the vastness of space.

COLLEEN/DYONESSA (V.O.)  
 "When mankind is on the brink and  
 no one's coming..."

Stars and planets swirl into a black hole until... Dyonessa (Colleen looking amazingly fierce and sexy in her jumpsuit) and her gang of gender fluid vigilantes explode across the screen on their souped up space bikes.

COLLEEN/DYONESSA (V.O.)  
 "Think again."

We see a series of battle scenes and explosions as Dyonessa and her gang fight the Cryonians.

Dyonessa races through the woods on her motorcycle with a small half human/half Cryonian child (Amy) strapped to her back.

Amongst the back drop of a desolate hellscape, the evil Cryonian queen (Alyssa, barely recognizable in a massive, fleshy costume) runs her tentacled hands across the glass of a chamber holding two scantily clad male prisoners (Ryan and David).

The Cryonian queen (Alyssa) hollers with her whole body, shaking the universe.

David and Ryan are chained to their beds as a group of sexually aroused Cryonians close in on them.

We jump to images of Dyonessa and her gang. If we you look closely, we see familiar faces (Rosemary and the Council) under the costumes and makeup.

COLLEEN/DYONESSA  
 "We're the ones we've been waiting  
 for."

Letters swirl through space into a black hole and then explode out the other side onto the screen - "Escape from Cryonis."

Finally, on a black screen -- "Coming Soon."

INT. LIVING ROOM

The room erupts in cheers, high-fives, and hugs. George looks at Emery with approval. Jackson's impressed.

Emery makes her way around the room, talking excitedly, never losing sight of Jackson from the corner of her eye.

EXT. BACK YARD

The backyard looks straight from a Comfort Channel movie, only better. The patio and trees are lined with twinkling lights. A light snow falls.

Emery and Jackson warm their hands around a fire pit. They avoid eye contact. Emery breaks the silence:

EMERY  
George looks great.

JACKSON  
Yeah. The kids are really helping.

Emery gives Jackson a nervous half look.

EMERY  
He didn't tell me you were coming.

JACKSON  
I didn't think I would.

EMERY  
Why did you?

Jackson considers this before taking a playful tone.

JACKSON  
Madison's on an Isthmus, right?

EMERY  
(nodding to the right)  
Lake Mendota's six blocks that way.  
(nodding to the left)  
Monona's four blocks that way.

JACKSON  
I heard there's a canoe shortage  
and I thought I could help.

Emery laughs. Jackson moves closer and holds out his hand. Emery takes it and they slowly swing their arms like love sick teenagers. Emery turns to face Jackson to confess.

EMERY  
I'm sorry about what I said.

JACKSON  
I know.

EMERY  
I don't know what's wrong with me.

JACKSON  
You're perfect.

Emery and Jackson melt into a passionate kiss.

In the background we see George open the sliding glass door. The party spills out into the yard. There's CHEERING and CAT CALLING.

Emery and Jackson smile coyly as they watch their friends and family play in the snow. After a beat, they resume kissing amidst the snowy chaos.

From the CAMERA'S POV, we see George packing a giant snow ball. He winds up for the pitch and SPLAT - the screen goes white.

FADE OUT.