

Carol For Another Christmas

Written by

R. L. Riley

&

A. V. Cox

May 7, 2023

Reginald,riley@yahoo.com
Copyright © 2023

FADE IN:

EXT. MANHATTAN - DAY

Downtown blanketed with snow, decorated for the holidays.

A CHILDREN'S CHOIR stand behind a sign: "*Father Dowling's Ministries*" singing; "*Hark! The Herald Angels Sing.*"

SHOPPERS parade the sleet-soaked sidewalks, A sea of boots and coats, placing cash into donation containers.

EXT. MACY'S - DAY

A morbidly obese SANTA jingles bells, chants "*oh, oh, Merry Christmas.*" As the final cord of "*Hark! The Herald Angels Sing*" comes to an end --

SANTA

...I'm checking my list. You're
all on it. Every one of ya...
(singles out Magdalene)
...especially you.

That's when a well-dressed MAGDALENE HAMMOND, pushing 40, comes out. A shrewd businesswoman disenfranchised from her own humanity.

She turns to him with a glare that would make Hannibal Lecter shiver, tosses her scarf over her shoulder, heads--

EXT. FIFTH AVENUE - DAY

On her cell, Magdalene passes a BANNER advertising the annual "LIGHTS BEFORE CHRISTMAS PARADE" -- sponsored by Macy's. Eyes her ROLEX. *Shit, running late.*

MAGDALENE

You're missing the point, George.
It's a golden opportunity to make
an unholy shit-ton of money. It's
there for the seizing, getting
gnawed away at piecemeal by the
piranhas... and you're giving me
some bs about goodwill. I will not
allow the Grinch to steal my
Christmas. I want that contract
signed by close of business or
else.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SCARECROW, a rail thin Homeless man, covered in layers of rags, approaches, pushing a cart.

She waves a dismissive don't-mess with-me finger at him. He registers her rudeness, undaunted. Tips his hat.

SCARECROW

Merry Christmas.

Magdalene stops, doesn't share his sentiments.

MAGDALENE

Do you not have a brain? What reason do you have to be Merry?

SCARECROW

'Cause Christmas is the spirit of giving without a thought of getting. It is happiness because we see joy in people. I see joy in you.

She scrolls through her iPhone, holds it up to his face. VIDEO; *an ugly MOB storms Wal-Mart, trampling hapless employees, fights break out. Yelling and screaming.*

MAGDALENE

Do you see joy in them pretending they care about love, happiness, compassion, etc... when they just finished stomping on people on Black Friday?

That gets a snicker from Scarecrow.

SCARECROW

Mom always said, *"watch how you treat people. You could be entertaining angels."*

MAGDALENE

(correcting him)
"Be hospitable for you may be entertaining angels unaware."
And you're no angel. What you are is a public nuisance! Good day!

SCARECROW

There's two sides to every story.

MAGDALENE

What--? Life stinks. You stink. No, keep your Merry Christmas. And I'll keep mine.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SCARECROW

But you don't keep it.

She laughs, but there's no humor in it. Waves him off.

MAGDALENE

Bah, humbug!

INT. DOWLING MINISTRIES - SHELTER - DAY

A cafeteria line is set up with VOLUNTEERS dishing out food to HOMELESS. Find one of the volunteers who is dishing out potatoes.

KATIE, a young 40, Latina, still quite nice-looking. A seriousness about her, a gravitas - that's hard to miss. Yet, her smile is a killer

Greeting BETTY, 50s, a homeless woman.

KATIE

Betty, you look different today,
did you change your hair?

And she pulls out her new teeth...

BEATRICE

Nope. It's these...

KATIE

Wow. They make a world of
difference.

She winks at Katie and goes.

INT. BALLET STUDIO - DAY

BAILEY, 11, pale, adorable and other BALLERINAS of various ages train under the unforgiving scrutiny of the FEMALE BALLET TEACHER, 50s, with a severe bun and even more severe expression.

BALLET TEACHER

...To the front and jete, and
back, fondu.

(snaps her fingers)

One and two, and one and two, and--
pick it up, Natalie. Jane, watch
your timing. Push yourself, Tawny--
this isn't a grade school recital.

A packed area of PARENTS and KIDS watch the rehearsal. .

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PETER SODERFIELD, 40s, handsome in a nerdy way, and his wife ALICIA, goes by Ali, 30s, she's maternal and warm.

The dancers are sweating, nervous as the Teacher picks them apart. Only Bailey remains laser-focused on her movements.

Bailey does a grand pirouette. The teacher nods.

BALLET TEACHER

Excellent, Bailey.

Bailey gives her parents a wave and a smile. *Peter and Ali smile, wave back.* Ali causally looks around.

BALLET TEACHER

Perfection is not something you're born with. It takes practice, devotion... pain.

REVEAL Magdalene seated a few rows behind them. Her eyes are on Bailey. *Is that a hint of a smile on her face?*

Ali gives Magdalene a look. *Subtle.* Ali pivots, looking for someone else in the crowd.

Next up is Jane. She does a grand pirouette. The teacher shakes her head, dismissive.

BALLET TEACHER

Weak.

EXT. CHRISTMAS TREE FARM - DAY

Peter and Ali, laughing and smiling. Ahead of them, Bailey sees a patch of evergreens, excited, running.

PETER

What am I suppose to do, throw a rope around her?

ALI

Oh, sweetheart, be careful.

BAILEY

Don't you like it, Mommy?

ALI

Of course I do. Mommy's just tired, that's all.

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

MATTHEW, 20s, stressed, slings his duffle bag over his shoulder. People jostle past him but he just lifts cash out of his pocket and counts.

Just a few bills and some change. He stares at what lies before him... skyscrapers, noise. He flags down a taxi.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD - NIGHT

Snow falls on a modest, working class street with *the best Christmas lights and awesomely decorated homes.*

EXT. SODERFIELD'S HOME - NIGHT

A modest, working-class HOUSE. The front of the home lights up. It looks great. Bailey and Emily "ooh" and "aaah" appreciatively.

Peter climbs down from the ladder.

INT. SODERFIELD'S HOME - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Well lived-in, warm, comfortable. Family photos. Stockings hang from the fireplace.

Peter and Bailey - in cardigan with reindeers, totally in the Christmas spirit, decorating the tree.

PETER

I did not. Mom wants to leave New York and move to Connecticut. What say you?

BAILEY

I say "no."

PETER

How come?

BAILEY

Dad, all my friends are here.

PETER

You can make new ones. Besides, you can call, and keep in touch on social media. And the best part, Connecticut is close enough to where you'll be able to visit them. So, what do you think?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BAILEY

Nope.

INT. SODERFIELD HOME - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Ali, in a "KISS THE COOK" apron, is baking a batch of CHRISTMAS COOKIES. Cookies are everywhere, and she's covered in FLOUR and FOOD COLORING.

Bailey and Peter come in.

BAILEY

Mmmm. Something smells good.

Peter and Bailey help themselves to milk and cookies.

BAILEY

Dad is being silly.

ALI

Daddy's do that.

HEATHER, 17, enters, a willowy beauty with jaded New York, and a lot smarter than she lets on.

PETER

Hi, Heather.

ALI

Heather.

HEATHER

Hello. Ugh. What a day. It's been a bit crazy since Mom's been away. I'm trying to do three things at once.

Drops her book bag. Baily, cheeks full of cookies, MUMBLES AN UNINTELLIGIBLE hello as well.

Heather picks up a Christmas cookie. Takes a bite.

HEATHER

Mmm. Hey, Bailey. I love your sweater.

ALI

Oh, Heather. What are you doing Saturday night?

HEATHER

Me? Oh, um, nothing. Annual Christmas party?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Ali smiles, confirming her answer.

HEATHER
Yeah, sure, I'll just let my
grandfather know.

PETER
Your grandfather is senile.

HEATHER
He's just eccentric.

BAILEY
He still thinks Elvis is alive.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD - NIGHT

A sleek BMW cruises through one of New York's richest neighborhoods. Everyone home is decorated for Christmas, except for one.

EXT. MAGDALENE'S ESTATE - NIGHT

The richest of them all, but it's dark, chilly. Quiet. The BMW pulls into the garage.

INT. MAGDALENE'S ESTATE - VARIOUS SHOTS - NIGHT

The elegance is overwhelming. Goddamn immaculate. No family photos. No personal mementos whatsoever.

INT. MAGDALENE'S ESTATE - FOYER - NIGHT

Magdalene leafs through a stack of mail. Music emanates from the living room; Burl Ives singing "*Holly Jolly Christmas.*"

Magdalene scoffs at it. Her housekeeper appears. It's Katie. Katie helps Magdalene out of her coat and scarf.

MAGDALENE
I see you've been spending more
time at Father Dowling's.

KATIE
I should be so fortunate.

MAGDALENE
You should be so fortunate I don't
fire you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Magdalene gestures towards the music.

MAGDALENE

Why do you insist on torturing me?

KATIE

Ugh, why do you always have to be a scrooge this time of year?

Katie hangs her coat up on a rack.

MAGDALENE

That's a presumptuous question. It's not so much Christmas that bothers me, but what it represents. The stress and turmoil. The anxiety-induced shopping frenzy. God forbid we shoot for a little peace on Earth, Goodwill towards Men.

KATIE

Ah hah. And we'd all be a lot better off if we just forgot all the commercialism and looked for a little more inner peace.

Magdalene knows her well enough to recognize that something is very wrong.

KATIE

Dinner will be ready soon. Oh. I'll be going out again. I have some Christmas shopping to do.

MAGDALENE

What happen to forgetting commercialism and the search for inner peace?

KATIE

You silly? This is Christmas in New York.

MAGDALENE

You know how I hate dining alone.

KATIE

You won't. Matthew's here.

Katie shoots Magdalene a look: *"make an effort."*

INT. MAGDALENE'S ESTATE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

A nervous Matthew paces, sipping a hot cup of chocolate. Magdalene breezes in, not happy. Shuts off the stereo.

MATTHEW

How's it going, sis?

Matthew crosses and hugs Magdalene. She doesn't move an inch. Her lack of warmth is not lost on him or Katie.

MATTHEW

Don't worry, I won't overstay my welcome.

MAGDALENE

Too late for that.

MATTHEW

You use to call me Matt when we were kids.

Magdalene gives him a hard stare.

MAGDALENE

I see you fell off the wagon again, too. Yes, I heard, you left rehab.

MATTHEW

I couldn't afford it anymore.

MAGDALENE

The job, the one Arthur got you. What happened?

MATTHEW

It was a suck job.

Magdalene's about ready to blow a fuse.

INT. MAGDALENE'S ESTATE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

A heady mix of granite and chrome. Top of the range appliances.

Katie makes dinner. Matthew enters through the kitchen door, brushing off his hands.

MATTHEW

I was shoveling the walk and I noticed a nasty patch of ice by the garage door.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MATTHEW (CONT'D)

I didn't want anyone to slip, so I put some rock salt down.

KATIE

Thanks.

He opens and shuts a closet door. It makes a little SQUEAKING sound.

MATTHEW

Mmm. Does this squeaking bother you? 'cause you know I could take care of it with a little oil.

KATIE

Well sure. If you want to.

MATTHEW

Katie, she hates me.

KATIE

No, she doesn't.

INT. MAGDALENE'S ESTATE - STUDY - NIGHT

A charming office. A prominent ARCHITECTURAL MODEL of a shopping center project. At a drafting table, Magdalene sketches out floor plans for a house.

Looks up to find Katie, standing in the doorway.

MAGDALENE

I know, you think I was a little too hard on him.

KATIE

The thought had crossed my mind.

Katie considers her for a few beats, thinking it over.

KATIE

Dinner is getting cold.

MAGDALENE

I lost my appetite.

KATIE

I spent most of the day, slaving over a hot stove to make your dinner.

A tense beat of silence as Magdalene removes her glasses searching for a response. Katie stands there unyielding.

INT. MAGDALENE'S ESTATE - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Magdalene, Kate, and Matthew have dinner. The conversation is scant.

EXT. ALI'S PRECIOUS GEMS - DAY

A charming cafe. Emblazoned on its window: *A SMALL SLICE OF HEAVEN*, and no outside food or drinks allowed.

INT. ALI'S PRECIOUS GEMS - DAY

A bustling antique/bagel/sandwich shop. Christmas lights. People dine at tables, enjoying the warmth, pastries and sip espresso.

Ali walks around, ad-libbing greetings to customers. JEN, 20s, not the brightest bulb on the tree, pulls Ali aside.

JEN

Hammond Enterprise just seized Sampson's bakery. This is the fifth shop since she's took over Johnson's realtors. What's going on?

ALI

This is, without a doubt, a hostile takeover. Forcing people out of their homes and shops to make way for some "high dollar, legacy-creating" real estate project.

JEN

Anyone approach you yet?

ALI

No. I've got too much invested in this place, and I'm not giving it up without a fight.

Ali gives Jen a smile -- a glimmer of hope and we go...

INT. SODERFIELD'S HOME - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Peter's passed out in a chair. Bailey looks at him, not surprised. Shakes him awake, ready with a cup of coffee.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BAILEY

Dad, c'mon. Where going be late.
Here you go.

PETER

Oh, hey, sweetheart. I don't need
that. I'm fine. I was uh, just
trying to catch up on some work.
I guess I fell asleep. Work's
kind of a mess right now.

BAILEY

You're a mess right now.

He playfully starts rough housing Bailey. She giggles.

INT. PETER'S SUV - DAY

Peter drives through rush hour traffic. Bailey rides
shotgun, with a backpack and playing a computer game.

BAILEY

(re:game)
Ugh, not again.

INT. SODERFIELD'S HOME - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Ali and her parents, CHARLES and GRETCHEN WELLS, both in
their sixties - are wrapping presents. Well they are,
he's sips coca, supervising them.

GRETCHEN

Where are they?

ALI

I dunno, Mom, they should have
been here an hour ago. Maybe the
traffic's bad.

CHARLES

Lemme know when you finish. I'll
toss you another one.

GRETCHEN

Oh, know you don't. You are not
getting out of this that easily.

Gretchen tosses him a present. He grins.

A cell phone chimes. Ali answers the beckoning call.
Suddenly light-headed, she balances herself on the wall.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GRETCHEN

Ali, you okay?

Ali drops the phone and her world goes silent.

CHARLES

What is it?

ALI

There's been an accident.

INT. HOSPITAL - EMERGENCY ROOM - DAY

The ER is packed. Ambulance lights flash in the background;

PARAMEDICS wheel Bailey's unconscious body into an operating room, nurses working feverishly on her vitals, threading catheters, trying to stabilize her...

She's in real bad shape. FEMALE PARAMEDIC's bag ventilates Bailey.

FEMALE PARAMEDIC

She brady-ed down en route.

INTERN

Where's the father?

INT. TRAUMA RESUSCITATION UNIT - DAY

A trauma beehive, anchored by a central NURSES STATION, surrounded by an open ward. The HUB is ringed by CURTAINED AREAS and individual TRAUMA BAYS.

BAY 1 - The bays are mini-ORs, packed with high-tech resuscitation gear.

A lifeless Peter, a sheet is brought over his face.

INT. HOSPITAL - WAITING AREA - DAY

Charles pacing in the purgatory of a hospital waiting room; plastic flowers in a vase, magazines, the blur of nurses, the old man combing the Bible for answers.

Ali, weeping, emotional, a mess. Gretchen comforts her.

In blows DR. LONDON WARNER, 45, Top Gun Surgeon, cool under pressure - with a SURGEON in scrubs behind her.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

They have that 1,000 yard stare, the bearers of bad news.

DR. WARNER

Mrs. Soderfield. I'm Dr. Warner.

ALI

How is he?

Dr. Warner shakes her head. She stares. Then pure animal grief as she knows. Her husband is dead. Gone.

ALI

My daughter?

DR. WARNER

She's sustained abdominal trauma. Both kidney's were damaged, one beyond repair. We had to remove it, but the other won't last long.

ALI

She needs a kidney transplant?

DR. WARNER

And blood transfusion. Were looking at a twelve day window. Give or take.

ALI

Ok, Bailey goes on some type of priority list, right?

Dr. Warner levels with them. Calm, but direct.

DR. WARNER

It's not that simple. Your daughter's a Rh-null carrier which compounds the problems. In a nutshell, her blood lacks an antigen present on the red cells of the majority of the population. So trying to locate a donor will be difficult. You see -- it's the rarest blood type on Earth. Sometimes referred to as 'golden blood. Only forty-three people on Earth have ever been reported to have it, even fewer donors. And none of the blood banks in the state have it.

Dr. Warner notes how panicked Emily is. Gretchen and Charles exchange a look.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DR. WARNER

But there's a small network of regular Rhnull donors around the world, and we're checking it now. But blood is notoriously difficult to transport internationally. It's hereditary. Was your husband her biological father?

ALI

Yes, why?

DR. WARNER

He didn't have it.

Ali is surprised at this. They all are. A beat, then:

GRETCHEN

Oh God.

ALI

Okay, me.

DR. WARNER

From what I gather you're not the biological mother. So it's unlikely you're a match.

Silence, but she's not done.

DR. WARNER

By the way, you wouldn't happen to know who the birth mother is?

ALI

No, he never talked about her. And I never asked.

DR. WARNER

Then find her, She's a carrier. In the meantime we'll group you of course and we'll do a blood workup on you to screen out any infectious agents, ok? With any luck, a Christmas miracle.

ALI

Can I see her?

INT. HOSPITAL - BAILEY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Bailey, in bed. If it weren't for the steady beat of the heart monitor, you'd think she was dead.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Ali sits in a chair across the room, eyeing the machines. She turns away from them, and stares at her daughter.

She sobs quietly.

Finally, Ali gets up, climbs into bed with Bailey -- it might be her last chance to be with Bailey. She whispers:

ALI

Please don't leave me too.

With that, Ali closes her eyes to sleep beside her...

INT. MAGDALENE'S ESTATE - KITCHEN - DAY

Magdalene walking in, while Katie is making breakfast, scrambling eggs and cooking bacon.

MAGDALENE

Hmmmm! Any Danish this morning?

KATIE

No, you ate the last one the other day. I can get you a pomegranates Danish, if you like.

MAGDALENE

Katie, who in the hell eats pomegranates Danish? Who even makes pomegranates Danish?

KATIE

Um... bakery.

MAGDALENE

Smarty pants.

Katie pours coffee, hands it to Magdalene.

KATIE

How about, I make you some Mexican lasagna with a bottle of wine tonight?

MAGDALENE

Sounds good.

KATIE

I remember when you were randy.

Magdalene looks up, almost too afraid to ask the question.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAGDALENE

I guess you'll be wanting to spend the holidays with your family.

KATIE

I'd like to. It's been five years.

MAGDALENE

Would you be mad if I said no?

Katie takes a moment before answering.

KATIE

Not at all. And, um... why would you ask me that?

Magdalene's cell rings. She picks up, takes the phone with her into the hall.

EXT. STRIP MALL - DAY

ROSEMARIE, 30s, Italian-American, good-natured, hits the very CHRISTMASSY street. She's on her cell, tapping away as she approaches a shuttered Sicilian bakery.

Chains and locks on the doors. Final eviction notice.

Rosemarie is crying now, she puts her hand to her mouth. She can't speak, she can barely even breathe.

INT. HAMMOND ENTERPRISES - DAY

A sleek, modern high-end architectural firm. The name "*Magdalene Hammond*" is beautifully carved in gold and silver lettering everywhere.

Magdalene heads for her inner sanctum -

An ENTOURAGE OF SUITS and SKIRTS, and other EMPLOYEES scramble to look busy and inconspicuous.

INT. HAMMOND ENTERPRISES - MAGDALENE'S OFFICE - DAY

An executive office inside an architectural firm with an amazing view of the Manhattan skyline.

Pigeonholes for tubes of plans, shelves with sample books of materials, a few scale models.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MS. HATTENBARGER (aka Ms. H), 40, hair is pulled back tight. She's attractive, with a studied seriousness, unwilling to drop her guard.

She hands banking records to -- Magdalene who sits at her desk. Rosemarie stands there.

MAGDALENE

I made you a fair offer. You refuse to take it.

ROSEMARIE

I'm not looking for a hand-out. Just a little more time.

There's a slight air of desperation in Rosemarie's voice.

MS. HATTENBARGER

You've got more cash flow problems than you know what to do with. You can barely keep the doors open.

ROSEMARIE

It's just -- it's been hard, since Rico got sick and, then all this--

Magdalene really couldn't give a shit -

MAGDALENE

I understand. It's a crappy thing, and I hate having to do it.

ROSEMARIE

No you're not.

Rosemarie can barely keep her emotions in check.

ROSEMARIE

You think everything's just black and white, don't you? Do you have any idea how many people you're kicking out on the streets?

MAGDALENE

Ms. H, escort her out.

INT. HOSPITAL - BAILEY'S ROOM - DAY

Bailey sleeps. Heather nearby, text books open. Can't focus on her homework. Holds up her iPhone, eye-balling a photo of herself, at 50.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She snaps a pic of Bailey, clicks Apps. Finds what she's looking for. Words pop up; *"Initiating age-progression software."*

INT. SODERFIELD'S HOME - ATTIC - DAY

Ali rummages through packing boxes, finds Peter's high school yearbook. Flips through it, nothing.

She searches more boxes. Her parents come up.

CHARLES

Any luck?

ALI

No.

Gretchen and Charles, each grab a box, starts searching.

CHARLES

What makes you think she's alive?

ALI

I'm not sure of anything, but I've got to try.

Just then, screaming from below.

HEATHER (O.S.)

Ali? Ali?

ALI

Up here, Heather.

Heather comes up, out of breath, but beaming.

HEATHER

I got it.

ALI

What?

HEATHER

I got bored one day, so I downloaded this cool App.

She holds up her iPhone; the photo of her at 50.

HEATHER

Recognize her?

ALI

That you?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HEATHER

Bingo. It's an age-progression software. Basically it generates images of a child's face as it ages through the years. I know it's a Hail Mary, but they use it to find missing children all the time.

As Heather scrolls through her iPhone, searching.

HEATHER

To tell you the truth, it's kinda spooky. Anyway, I took a photo of Bailey then ran it through the program. You know, to give us an idea of what her biological mother may look like today.

Heather hands her phone to Ali. ON IT: the photo of Bailey bares an eerie resemblance to Magdalene.

ALI

Oh my God!

The first signs of hope. Ali gives Heather a hug.

CHARLES

Brilliant.

HEATHER

Well, If saw my last report card, you'd think otherwise.

The face looks familiar. Ali thinks about it, then...

ALI

Wait. I've seen her before.

GRETCHEN

What? Where?

ALI

I don't know.

EXT. CONSTRUCTION SITE - DAY

A HAMMOND ENTERPRISES TAHOE pulls up to an OFFICE TRAILOR. A sign reads "*Hammond Enterprises, since 2011.*"

Magdalene and Ms. Hattenbarger exit, wearing HARD HATS. They look over floor plans. Workers greet them.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

On of them is GARY, 40, good-looking in a rugged, somewhat broken way, with the type of hands that built this country.

A charged beat as they look at each other, unsure what to say. The tension-- and longing-- between them is palpable.

GARY

Miss Hammond, what do you want done with this extra sheet metal?

MAGDALENE

Get it over to the Keyhole property ASAP. We on schedule?

He gives the thumbs-up.

INT. MOBILE OFFICE - DAY

A chaotic mess of equipment, hardware, ect. On a sofa is RICHARD NEVINS, mid 40s, curled up asleep.

Magdalene kicks over the drawing table. He jolts awake.

RICHARD

I'm awake. Oh, Miss Hammond.

MAGDALENE

I can see that. Glad, you could join us, Richard.

Magdalene speaks with an authority we have not yet seen -

MAGDALENE

Ms. H. The minutes will reflect that Mr. Nevins arrived late for the meeting. And sleeping on the job.

(to: Richard)

The Lancelet development in Seattle.

RICHARD

Yes.

MAGDALENE

Ms. H.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MS. HATTENBARGER

I ran a cost and profit for it.
Based on these numbers no way
we're going to underwrite fifty
percent of it.

RICHARD

I know, they're small, but have
done well.

MAGDALENE

Too risky. I want you to go down
there, and step it out. Re-design
it if necessary. Do whatever you
have to do.

RICHARD

Can't you find someone else? The
kids are at home sick, and
Thelma's working double shifts.

His eyes begging her not to.

MAGDALENE

Something else on your mind?

A long beat as Richard gathers his courage.

RICHARD

To answer your question, I'm going
to miss another Christmas with my
family.

MAGDALENE

So the cowardly lion finally found
courage to speak his mind.

(then)

Cheer up, you get time and a half.

Magdalene heads out, Ms. Hattenbarger turns to him.

EXT. ALI'S PRECIOUS GEMS - DAY

Sunlight fading. Ali exits, sad and lost, and finds a
small battalion of REPORTERS camped out waiting for her;
photographers, television news crews.

Cameras FLASH, microphones are thrust into her face,
she's surrounded, jostled. Voices fling questions.

EXT. TIMES SQUARE - DAY

A homeless man with dark glasses and a tin cup waits near a building entrance, the occasional grim-looking shopper dropping in a coin.

Magdalene, cradling Starbucks, walks past him, as the homeless man peek over the top of his glasses, it's Scarecrow.

SCARECROW

Remember me?

Magdalene fixes him with a look.

SCARECROW

I believe the Grinch and Scrooge didn't care much for Christmas.

MAGDALENE

Scrooge and the Grinch were weak - they caved in.

She spots a newsstand. Lays down cash, picks up a paper. Takes in the awful news; *"A life Hangs In The Balance."* There's a photo of BAILEY.

INT. MAGDALENE'S ESTATE - SITTING ROOM - DAY

Katie vacuums while concentrating on a flat-screen TV;

A tearful Ali. A photo of Bailey, and one of our Jane Doe who bares a resemblance to Magdalene, appears. The CHYRON HEADLINE: *"Who is Jane Doe."*

INT. DOWNTOWN HOTEL - COCKTAIL LOUNGE - DAY

A beautiful downtown hotel. Moneyed elegance.

Magdalene, alone, polishes off a tumbler of whiskey and ice.

BRIDESMAIDS, GROOMSMEN drink in the backdrop-- tipsy, the remains of a wedding: one taps a spoon against his glass.

GROOMSMAN

Remember "It's a Wonderful Life?"

Cheers. Magdalene glares, annoyed. Ribs her temples, a stress headache coming on.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Magdalene rises to leave when EVE and LOUISE, 52 and 50, respectively, comes her way.

She stops to engage, albeit begrudgingly. Eva goes to shake her hand, Magdalene does not take it.

EVA

There you are -- I've been trying to reach you. Louise, Miss Hammond is the epitome of class and style. There's not a lady alive that's done half of --

MAGDALENE

-- save it. Eva. Is there anything else you need?

EVA

Okey-doke, well, I'll be honest--

MAGDALENE

How refreshing.

LOUISE

Yes... So, by any chance you'll be donating to the Children's center.

MAGDALENE

No. Terrible. I know.

LOUISE

I'm... really sorry to hear that.

EVA

You're so cold. What happened to you?

MAGDALENE

(offended)

"What happened to me?" Well, I'll tell you, Eva.

Magdalene pauses, a memory genuinely difficult to share. Instead, she brushes past them.

EXT. HOSPITAL - WAITING AREA - DAY

JAMMED PACKED. People fill out forms and wait their turn to be tested. MEDIA news outlets are here.

INT. HOSPITAL - BAILEY'S ROOM - DAY

Christmas cards hang on a ribbon, strung along the wall. Some generic, mostly get well wishes. The wreathed door.

Bailey rests peacefully.

Ali kisses Bailey, starts singing, softly, *"Silent Night, Holy Night... all is calm, all is bright..."*

INT. HAMMOND ENTERPRISES - MAGDALENE'S OFFICE - DAY

The dimly lit outer office. The building is deserted.

Magdalene, sick to her stomach, drops a couple Alka-Seltzers into a glass of water.

Through the glass wall, across the way, a tall building. A vibrant, office Christmas Party in full swing.

ARTHUR ALDRICH, a graying-templed 50's, but a handsome son-of-a-bitch, looks on.

Magdalene gestures towards the newspaper on her desk. Arthur picks it up, studies it.

ARTHUR

Yes, so sad. If you don't mind me asking, what's your interest in this?

MAGDALENE

I do mind... Arthur.

Magdalene - tensely - agitatedly pacing. Arthur watching her. She returns his gaze evenly. With no preamble --

ARTHUR

Maggie, we've never asked each other questions before --

MAGDALENE

-- that's all right with me. Let it stay that way, Arthur.

ARTHUR

I think I'm entitled to some answers. Don't you?

MAGDALENE

No.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Arthur shifts through pages and pages of legal documents. On every one, *Magdalene Hammond* sprinkled liberally.

He fixes himself a drink, sits across from Magdalene.

MAGDALENE

Find out what you can. Use the utmost discretion.

ARTHUR

Why all the cloak and dagger?
(off her stern look)
You told me once you were engaged but he died. I never asked any questions about that, or how you felt about him.

MAGDALENE

That's all in the past.

ARTHUR

Well, the past just walked in.

MAGDALENE

It'll walk out again.

ARTHUR

Will it, Maggie?

INT. MAGDALENE'S ESTATE - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Katie makes her way to the living room, where a soft light flickers. As she reaches the doorway we see...

Magdalene sits on the love seat, *Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto, softly* serenading from a stereo.

She sees Katie and manages a smile, and we glimpse the woman beneath the scrooge, some one warm and maternal.

KATIE

I was hoping you and me could talk.

MAGDALENE

It's late, Kate, and I'm not in the mood.

INT. MAGDALENE'S ESTATE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Kate saunters in, joins Magdalene on the love seat. They're awfully close.

KATIE

You want to talk about it?

MAGDALENE

Now you've really lost me.

KATIE

You don't have Alzheimer's.
The eight-hundred pound elephant
in the room.

MAGDALENE

Pity's sake, Katie, not tonight.

KATIE

We have to.

MAGDALENE

So we're on the record now, are
we?

KATIE

If you don't mind.

MAGDALENE

Why should I mind. My life's been
an open book to you all these
years. What do you want to know?

As the two women exchange a grim smile, we...

EXT, MANHATTAN - DAY

An aerial view of the city that sprawls into forever...

INT. MAGDALENE'S ESTATE - KITCHEN - DAY

Katie grills pancakes and bacon. Magdalene enters. She smells the pancakes and fresh strawberries.

MAGDALENE

(delighted)

Mmm. I thought we were out of
strawberries.

KATIE

Matt picked 'em up this morning.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She kisses Katie on her cheek, how thoughtful.
Magdalene's getting the plates out.

MAGDALENE

He's an addict. A liar. You think
it's an accident he comes back
now? - just for a handout.

KATIE

He's just out of rehab.

A preoccupied Matthew walks down the stairs in time to
hear:

MAGDALENE

Rehab? REHAB? You know how many
times he's 'just out of rehab?'
Sober means nothing. He's lazy,
not sick. Pathetic not sad. If he
could just control himself - but
he can't.

They turn and see him standing there...

KATIE

I think if you just heard him out,
you might change your mind.

MATTHEW

Look... I screwed up, Mags. I did
some things, I'm not proud of. I
just, I was stupid, okay?
Everyone deserves a second chance.

Magdalene studies him - skeptical.

MAGDALENE

So you need money?

MATTHEW

Don't try and make it about that.

MAGDALENE

So you don't need money?

MATTHEW

Yeah, I need money, but... that's
not... that's beside the point.

MAGDALENE

Name one person whose life you've
changed.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Matthew takes a seat in a chair, thrown. Katie sees the vulnerable look on his face, can't help but feel for him.

Magdalene glares at him. Shakes her head.

KATIE

Mathew's flesh and blood. You know.

MAGDALENE

I've given him enough!

She looks at him, about to say something again, but she doesn't. She walks away.

INT. NEW YORK TIMES - DAY

The Bureau is bustling. Reporters trying to keep up with a busy news day. An EDITOR looks over the shoulder of --

ZOE PARKER, 26, African-American, chic beauty reporter with a quick wit seated at her cubicle. Staring at her story on the screen. It's about Bailey.

ZOE

It's a human interest piece. It's that time of year, miracles do happen.

The Editor exits. We hold on a conflicted Zoe.

EXT. CEMETARY - DAY

A cold chill in the air. MOURNERS have gathered. The family watches as Peter's casket is lowered into the ground. Ali's grief is palpable.

INT. TOWNCAR - DAY

Ali rests in the backseat. She looks tired, bags under her eyes.

Gretchen and Charles up front, driving slowly towards downtown Manhattan which spans up and out in front of them through the windshield.

ALI

He didn't suffer, he's better off where he is... it's so hard, you can do everything right, and still.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GRETCHEN

We never really part. Not from
those we love.

INT. HOSPITAL - NURSES STATION - DAY

Nurse HOPKINS, 50s, a no-nonsense woman whose cardigans
and kooky glasses on a chain hides an iron will, eyes a
chart when -

Nurse BELLA, 20, kinda cute - in a geeky way, runs past.

NURSE HOPKINS

Bella, why are you running?

NURSE BELLA

Um, Dr. Green wants coffee.

NURSE HOPKINS

No need to run.

Bella nods, walks away, as Zoe, carrying a tot bag,
approaches the desk.

ZOE

Bailey Soderfield's room, please.
I'm Zoe Parker.

NURSE HOPKINS

Yes, I know who you are, but
you're not family. Sorry.

ZOE

It's about Jane Doe.

INT. HOSPITAL - BAILEY'S ROOM - DAY

Bailey sleeps like a baby. Ali - in a chair beside her.
Zoe enters, takes a beat, hesitant to speak at first --

ZOE

Mrs. Soderfield, I'm Zoe Parker,
from the times.

ALI

Yes, I know.

ZOE

I may have a lead on Jane Doe.

She pulls out a magazine, hands it to Ali; Magdalene on
the front cover of FORBES.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She studies Ali's face; there's a desperation there.

ZOE

Don't get too excited. I mean I could be wrong. I need to do a bit more digging.

INT. MAGDALENE'S ESTATE - GUEST HOUSE - DAY

Katie enters an impressive guest house. Place must cost a fortune. Matthew stuffs clothes into his duffle bag..

KATIE

Leaving?

MATTHEW

I don't stay anywhere I'm not wanted.

KATIE

She didn't mean it.

MATTHEW

She doesn't care if I live or die.

He zips his bag, smiles warmly at Katie.

MATTHEW

Why you stay I don't know.

KATIE

Sometimes I wonder myself. But then I remember why I do.

MATTHEW

I'll miss you Kate.

Katie pulls a wad of cash out of her pocket and hands it to him.

MATTHEW

I can't take this.

KATIE

Yes you can. A Christmas present.

Matthew hugs Katie warmly -

INT. ALI'S PRECIOUS GEMS - DAY

Ali and SUSAN, 40s, a waitress, uniquely beautiful, with a disarming tendency to speak the unvarnished truth.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALI

I don't know. But I can't say it's not her, right?

SUSAN

You insane, that woman is a barracuda?

ALI

I believe there's good in everyone. You just have to care enough to look for it.

EXT. MAGDALENE'S ESTATE - DAY

A weathered Range Rover pulls up and parks.

A nervous Ali climbs out, anxious. Ali knocks.

INT. MAGDALENE'S ESTATE - DAY

Magdalene is pouring herself a glass of wine as Kate makes a lavish dinner.

MAGDALENE

Where's Matthew?

KATIE

He left.

MAGDALENE

So, he didn't say where he was going?

KATIE

No. Do you care because you're worried about him or because you're afraid he'll come back?

- her remark. Like the slamming of a door. And it hurts -

MAGDALENE

(covering)

Of course not - I was just saying -

A tense beat, interrupted by the doorbell.

INT. MAGDALENE'S ESTATE - FOYER - DAY

Katie opens up, not surprised to see Ali standing there. Delighted to see her.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALI

Um, I was --

KATIE

Please to meet you, Mrs.
Soderfield, I'm Katie.

They shake hands, then awkwardly drift into a hug.

MAGDALENE (O.S.)

Katie? Who is it?

INT. MAGDALENE'S ESTATE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Ali takes in the place, struck by the loneliness of the room. Magdalene walks in. Eyes Ali with a disturbingly blank expression.

MAGDALENE

Mrs. Soderfield? Why don't you
tell me why you're here.

ALI

Bailey.

Magdalene just stares at her, apparently unmoved.

MAGDALENE

I'm sorry, but you must have me
confused with someone else --

ALI

-- You gotta be kidding me.

A tense beat. She brandishes a photo of Bailey.

ALI

Are you going to just stand there
and pretend that you don't know
what I'm talking about?

(then)

She's got a rare blood condition.

MAGDALENE

I'm sure she has a father.

Ali suddenly explodes in anger -- and it's scary:

ALI

Had. He wasn't a match. Which
means you're probably the only one
who can save her life.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAGDALENE

You're free to believe what you like. Now were there any more questions for me?

ALI

How can you be so cruel?

MAGDALENE

You should probably go.

ALI

For god's sake, Miss Hammond, Please.

Ali's eyes pleading with Magdalene.

MAGDALENE

If you come back, I'll consider it trespassing and have you arrested.

ALI

What kind of mother would I be if I didn't, huh? I'll get it out on social media. I'll shame you.

Magdalene doesn't like threats. Finally...

MAGDALENE

The truth is I could give a damn whether that kid lives or dies.

Ali snaps, smacks her face, hard. It rocks Magdalene.

INT. MAGDALENE'S ESTATE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Katie and Magdalene have a hushed but heated conversation.

KATIE

Really, Maggie. Was that necessary?

MAGDALENE

Please, don't patronize me. I just wanted to teach her lesson.

Magdalene grabs the bottle of vodka, pours herself another drink.

MAGDALENE

Must we have this conversation again now?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KATIE

Oh, did we have it already this week? Did I blink and miss that?

MAGDALENE

I thought we agreed to stay out of the other's personal affairs.

KATIE

I've got to live my own conscious.

Magdalene flings her tumbler at a wall, glass shatters.

MAGDALENE

Then live it, if you prefer it to me.

Katie storms out. Magdalene regrets it almost immediately.

INT. MAGDALENE'S ESTATE - MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Magdalene slides open a drawer, takes an old scrapbook, flips through photos of her younger self and a baby girl, presumably Bailey.

She stares, melancholy, reflective.

INT. COUNTY JAIL - DAY

Ali lies awake, her eyes are wet. The other women in the cell are a motley crew of hookers. A FEMALE GUARD appears, keys jingling.

FEMALE GUARD

Ali Soderfield?

INT. COUNTY JAIL - WAITING AREA - DAY

Ali comes out into the lobby, looking a bit rough. She's greeting by -- her parents, and Arthur.

ALI

How's Ali?

CHARLES

Waiting for you.

ALI

Who posted bail?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ARTHUR

Mrs. Soderfield, I'm Arthur Aldrich. I represent Miss Magdalene Hammond. She's not pressing charges. With a caveat; stay away from her.

ALI

I can't do that.

ARTHUR

I thought you might say that. Can we talk?

Gretchen and Charles nod in approval.

ARTHUR

Would you excuse us.

GRETCHEN

Absolutely.

ALI

So now we're supposed to just move on. No questions asked.

ARTHUR

No, of course not. We've got global resources searching for possible donors.

ALI

We have one right here.

ARTHUR

It's a bit more complicated than that.

ALI

I'm listening.

ARTHUR

It's a private matter.

ALI

I will go public.

ARTHUR

Rest assured that won't be necessary, Mrs. Soderfield.

ALI

Bailey is her daughter, isn't she?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Arthur hands Ali his business card.

ARTHUR

All parties involved wants what's best for your daughter. Call me day or night. I'll be in touch.

INT. MAGDALENE'S ESTATE - KITCHEN - DAY

A frazzled Katie, a cordless between her chin and shoulder, makes breakfast.

KATIE

No, I told you. I can't. She needs me. I can't leave her. I won't. I don't know why that's hard for you to understand. You sound like your mother, you know that?

INT. MAGDALENE'S ESTATE - SECOND FLOOR HALL - DAY

Magdalene comes out of her bedroom, shrugs on a long silk robe. Down the hall, Katie approaches with a breakfast tray; bacon, eggs, toast, coffee.

MAGDALENE

Listen, there was a little tension between us yesterday and I hate to let things fester, so maybe we should get it out in the open.

KATIE

Sunlight is the best disinfectant.

Magdalene takes the tray off Katie's hands. Katie bits into a slice of bacon, then feeds the rest to Magdalene.

KATIE

Oh -- I'm gonna be bringing some old clothing down to the local shelter today. Spread a little Christmas warmth. Is there anything you may want to donate?

Magdalene politely gives her the brush off.

EXT. FATHER DOWLING'S MINISTRIES - DAY

A shabby neighborhood. There's a line clear out the door of HOMELESS PEOPLE, FAMILIES with children.

INT. FATHER DOWLING'S MINISTRIES - KITCHEN - DAY

FATHER DOWLING, 50's, moves through amidst a handful of VOLUNTEER WORKERS busily preparing meals.

FATHER DOWLING
Lord Jesus, thank you for all
these fine people.

JOE (O.S.)
Father Dowling -

JOE TROUT, 30s, a seedy Lawyer in a great suit, pulls a document from his briefcase.

FATHER DOWLING
Tommy Specter sent you to do his
dirty work?

JOE
My client has made a reasonable
offer -- and there will be no more
request. If you could just sign
this --

FATHER DOWLING
-- get that thing away from me.

Everything stops and all eyes are on them.

FATHER DOWLING
Were would they go, Mr. Trout,
huh? There's no room in the other
shelters. I will not put them back
on the streets.

JOE
I'm sure your Lord will provide.

There's an audible gasp from the Volunteers.

JOE
Look, we don't want to go to
court, but we will. Perhaps the
health inspector will have better
luck. Lord knows what would
happen if they were to shut down
your place.

Father Dowling nervously paces back to his office.

INT. HAMMOND ENTERPRISES - LOBBY -DAY

Magdalene comes flying out of the elevator, clearly in a hurry and pressed for time. Employees bustle about.

Ms. Hattenbarger races to catch up.

MS. HATTENBARGER
Would you please slow down.

MAGDALENE
Run.

MS. HATTENBARGER
How do you want this handled?

MAGDALENE
Discreetly.

MS. HATTENBARGER
And there's still the matter of
that cafe - Precious gems.

MAGDALENE
Hold off for now.

EXT. HAMMOND ENTERPRISES - DAY

Magdalene exits the revolving doors, takes a deep breath, soaking in the winter air. Ali runs towards her, out of breath, irate.

ALI
Miss Hammond?!

A delayed shock. Magdalene sighs --

MAGDALENE
You're really treading on thin ice
today, Mrs. Soderfield.

ALI
It's your fault. We weren't
finished with our last
conversation.

MAGDALENE
Owww. Stop it.

ALI
Sure, soon as you do. Spare me the
BS. You didn't want a kid, fine.
I could never have any.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The enormity of that remark isn't lost on Magdalene.

ALI

Listen, my child is going to die
if she doesn't get the blood and
kidney she needs.

MAGDALENE

My problem wasn't with the --

ALI

No, your problem is you suffer
from tin man disease. No heart.

Ali stalks off. Magdalene isn't a woman who cries, but
tears are starting to form.

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - EXAM ROOM - DAY

DR. WEISS, 40's, is in his office, going over test
results with Magdalene, who finishes dressing.

DR. WEISS

Nothing's changed since your last
visit. Two months ago.

MAGDALENE

Everything's changed. Let's have
it, the bad news.

DR. WEISS

What did you expect?

She takes this in. It's overwhelming, to say the least.

DR. WEISS

You okay?

She doesn't respond, just walks out --

EXT. MID-TOWN - DAY

Magdalene passes a SALVATION ARMY SANTA CLAUS when her
cell rings. She checks. Almost stumbles with surprise --
and not a pleasant one either.

MAGDALENE

What do you want, Gary?

Intercut with...

INT. GARY'S APARTMENT - DAY

It's a pretty small, unimpressive, very single man's apartment. Gary's on the phone, takes the plunge.

GARY

Exciting news! I left Brenda. I thought you might like to grab some coffee.

MAGDALENE

Don't call again.

Magdalene hangs up but there's something in her eyes that tells us she wishes she hadn't.

INT. HOSPITAL - BAILEY'S ROOM - DAY

Bailey lies unconscious in bed. The only sound is the beeping of a heart monitor. Heather is camped out in a chair, starts to sing.

HEATHER

(singing...)

*Said the night wind to the little
lamb/Do you see what I see/
Way up in the sky little lamb/
Do you see what I see/A star, a
star Dancing in the night/
With a tail as big as a kite/
With a tail as big as a kite...*

As she continues, she hears a voice join in, singing the next verse melody. Ali standing in the doorway.

HEATHER

I know I'm here a lot.

ALI

Oh, Heather, don't ever think that. She loves that song.

HEATHER

*Said the little lamb to the
Shepard boy/Do you hear what I
hear Ringing through the sky
Shepard boy/Do you hear what I
hear/A song, a song...*

INT. HOSPITAL - CORRIDOR - DAY

On the move, Nurse Hopkins sighs. Bella comes running from the opposite direction.

NURSE HOPKINS
Is it an emergency?

NURSE BELLA
Nurse Hopkins. I... ah... was going on my lunch break.

NURSE HOPKINS
No need to run.

Bella nods, walks away. Nurse Hopkins shakes her head.

INT. SANDWICH SHOP - DAY

Gary and Magdalene eat lunch. The conversation is a little forced-- like any old, married couple.

MAGDALENE
I'm only staying ten minutes.

GARY
God you look great. Can't tell you how glad I am you changed your--

MAGDALENE
Shut up and hand me my drink.

A small smile crosses his lips.

GARY
Is there a chance?

MAGDALENE
It's best if you don't talk.

GARY
We've been doing this dance for a year. Do you have any idea why?

MAGDALENE
You should ask yourself that question, not me.

GARY
I do it because I love you.

MAGDALENE
Please.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GARY

It's completely true and you know it. On that I have always been clear. I even thought, naively, that you loved me, too.

Stalemate. Magdalene opens her mouth. Stops herself.

GARY

This is the only chance we get on this earth. The time is now.

MAGDALENE

It's too late.

GARY

It's never too late.

MAGDALENE

It is for me.

GARY

Then why did you come here?

MAGDALENE

I guess I came to say goodbye.

She gets up to go. Gary takes a last look at Magdalene, panic and sadness rippling across his face.

GARY

If I don't see you again, have a Merry Christmas.

She laughs a little. A beat, then;

MAGDALENE

It's a farce --just a massive shopping spree -- a time for shops and businesses to sell of their junk at inflated prices to gullible fools.

GARY

I find it comforting to get into the "Christmas spirit" whether pumping an elderly woman's gas in the cold of winter, or other small gestures of kindness whether you like it or not, I think its a smart idea to be a blessing rather than a nuisance, to not spoil it for those who do like it.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

GARY (CONT'D)

Maybe it helps me sleep at night,
or feel good knowing I've made the
world a bit nicer today.

Her eyes flash with anger for a sec then she leaves.

EXT. SAINT MARY'S CONVENT - DAY

Magdalene drives her BMW through the gate, and pulls up to the front doors. She exits, looks around. Nostalgic.

Now rings the doorbell. SISTER FRANCIS, 30, answers. Recognizes Magdalene.

SISTER FRANCIS

Sister Magdalene. I can hardly believe you're here. It's been what, fifteen years?

MAGDALENE

Sister Francis.

INT. SAINT MARY'S CONVENT - WAITING ROOM - DAY

Sister Francis escorts Magdalene into a grilled waiting room. She steps aside, Magdalene alone.

Magdalene takes it all in, it brings back memories.

MOTHER MIRIAM, 60s, steps from behind the grilled door, sees Magdalene, and enters. They embrace.

MOTHER MIRIAM

I'm sorry. I hoped and prayed that I was a match.

MAGDALENE

Yes, mother. I know.

MOTHER MIRIAM

You got it from your father, Lord rest his soul.

She nods, suddenly scared and overwhelmed. Her mother gives a grateful hug. Mother Miriam's clearly Magdalene's savior right now.

MOTHER MIRIAM

What about Matthew?

MAGDALENE

No.

INT. TOWER - DAY

Mother Miriam leads Magdalene enter the bell-tower. It brings back memories to Magdalene immediately.

MOTHER MIRIAM
You use to love this place.

MAGDALENE
Still do.

MOTHER MIRIAM
How is Matthew?

MAGDALENE
I've done all I can.

MOTHER MIRIAM
Have you my child?

MAGDALENE
I don't know, mother. I can't just make him go to rehab. I've tried that twice. And I can't keep giving him money for another failed venture -- I don't know what to do.

Almost as an afterthought she turns to Miriam.

MAGDALENE
I have spent so much time thinking about how I affect others with my actions that I have never considered how I would affect them by what I did *not* do.

MOTHER MIRIAM
What a humbling and beautiful thought.

Mother Miriam cups Magdalene's face lovingly. She kisses her sweetly on the lips.

INT. BMW - DAY

Magdalene drives, the lights of New York reflected on her windshield... solitary. She's thinking about Bailey.

INT. HOSPITAL - BAILEY'S ROOM - DAY

A wheelchair-bound JORGE, 7, enters the room, glasses to big for his cute face. In the bed is Bailey, half-awake. She smiles at him. Vice versa.

BAILEY
Hi, I'm Bailey...

JORGE
I'm Jorge.

The moment is slightly awkward. Jorge looks around.

JORGE
Cool room.

BAILEY
Thanks. You can come closer

JORGE
I'm gonna see Santa for Christmas.
You wanna see Santa?

BAILEY
I want to.

EXT. FATHER DOWLING MINISTRIES - DAY

There's a long line of freezing, low-income families and VAGRANTS watch in horror as a HEALTH INSPECTOR finishes putting up "closed signs."

Father Dowling and Katie rush over.

FATHER DOWLING
What's going on, Ed?

INSPECTOR
Father Dowling. City health
Department shut you down. Too many
violations.

FATHER DOWLING
What? You were just here three
months ago and gave it a clean
bill of health.

INSPECTOR
I'm sorry, don't shoot the
messenger. Just following orders.

The Inspector hands him a form, pushes past the crowd.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Father Dowling turns to the people, heart-broken. He's at a lost for words.

Katie crumples up the notice, throws it away.

INT. SODERFIELD HOME - KITCHEN - DAY

In a hurry, Ali writes a note on a post it. It says "Don't leave! Back soon. -Ali" She sticks it on the fridge.

Heather bursts in, excited, drops her bookbag on the table, fires up her laptop.

HEATHER

You're not going to believe this.
But I set up a go-fund-me page
this morning.

ALI

You shouldn't have.

HEATHER

Look at it.

Heather swivels her laptop around. On screen: a Go-Fund-Me page: \$6,000,000.00. Ali's jaw drops.

Then Ali begins putting two and two together.

ALI

Oh God. I need a drink.

HEATHER

Can I mix it?

ALI

Um, no!

EXT. IRISH PUB - DAY

Snow flurries. Magdalene sits at a table near the window of a tiny Bristo resplendent with Christmas decorations.

INT. AN IRISH PUB - DAY

After work crowd. Lively, cheerful, save for...

Magdalene. Her drink untouched, ice melted. She watches the snowfall. The BARTENDER lays down a fresh drink.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BARTENEDER

Don't let the ice melt this time.
It's no way to treat a premium
vodka.

She pushes the drink away. At the same moment, Zoe comes in, slides onto the tall stool across from Magdalene.

ZOE

Thanks for seeing me.

MAGDALENE

You're the wrong color to be
plying white knight, don't you
think?

ZOE

Ouch. You are the girl's mother,
for God's sake!

MAGDALENE

I never said that.

ZOE

You didn't deny it, either.

MAGDALENE

Everything is not black and white.

The irony in this isn't lost on Magdalene, either.

ZOE

Then add some color.

MAGDALENE

It's complicated.

ZOE

Magdalene, just trying to help.

MAGDALENE

You better be prepared to defend
yourself in a slander suit.

EXT. BROOKLYN BISTRO - NIGHT

A chill in the air. Magdalene comes out, sizing up the slushy streets and sidewalks. Zoe hurries out.

Magdalene fumbles on her gloves. There's a softness to her in this moment, a vulnerability not seen before.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAGDALENE

Obviously this meeting never happened. I'm only here because I owe you from that other thing. What do you need?

ZOE

A story. Big, exclusive.

MAGDALENE

After this we're even.

ZOE

Fine.

MAGDALENE

Now if you don't mind, I'll excuse myself.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Magdalene walks, not really knowing where she's going, just walking, absorbing the city. Until she reaches the --

"ST. FRANCIS CATHOLIC CHURCH."

INT. ST. FRANCIS - NAVE - NIGHT

She sits in a pew in the deserted church. Hands not folded in prayer. Face expressionless, she just sits there taking in the ICONOGRAPHY and the STAINED GLASS WINDOW behind the altar, when --

SCARECROW (O.S.)

I wondered when I'd see you.

Scarecrow appears at her side - sips piping hot coffee.

MAGDALENE

Oh, just go away.

SCARECROW

Lookee-lookee... I'm tired and cold. I have no money and I'm still hungry. But I feel wonderful.

He sits down in back of Magdalene. Slurps his coffee.

SCARECROW

If I didn't know any better, I'd think you were depressed.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SCARECROW (CONT'D)

There's medication for that sort of thing nowadays. So you shouldn't be embarrassed. Changed my life. Half the people I know are on zoloft.

She stares at him coldly, but when she looks into his eyes something comes over her...

...and we see for the first time the effect Scarecrow has on people: Almost magical.

MAGDALENE

(shakes her head)

I'm fine. I'm considering something unforgiveable. And because of it, a child is going to die.

SCARECROW

Can you tell me about it?

She looks at him. Shies away, changes the subject.

MAGDALENE

What are you doing here, anyway?

SCARECROW

I sleep here.

A crack in her resolve.

MAGDALENE

A woman has to pay for what she has done, has to be what she becomes. Always. I don't know. Can a woman undo what she's done. Can she not be what she is. I don't know. I can wish a lot. But I really don't know if wishes come true.

Magdalene shakes her head; doesn't need to say it. Then, as if waking from a dream...

MAGDALENE

I'm sorry. I don't know why I'm telling you all this.

She stands, pulls her coat around her and continues walking.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SCARECROW

Like Dorothy in the Wizard of oz.
She always had the ability to get
back to Kansas. She just didn't
know how.

Magdalene pauses, takes this in.

After an eternity of silence his grin evaporates.
Scarecrow grabs a blanket to cover himself.

EXT. MAGDALENE'S ESTATE - BACKYARD - NIGHT

Magdalene trudges through the snowy backyard, towards a
greenhouse. Katie rushes to catch up with Magdalene.

KATIE

There closing down the shelter.

MAGDALENE

Excuse me?

KATIE

Father Dowling's ministries.
They're closing it down.

MAGDALENE

And you're telling me this, why?

KATIE

I thought you might like to know.

MAGDALENE

I care not to.

KATIE

It matters to me.

Magdalene notices a certain, agitated sadness in Katie's
eyes as she walks off, leaving Magdalene standing there.

INT. GREENHOUSE - NIGHT

It's warm in here. Magdalene shrugs off her coat, looks
at some dead rose vines cling to a rotted trestle. She
stares, reflective.

MAGDALENE

(under her breath)
All you had to do was water them.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She shakes her head and what she said hits her and Magdalene's face transforms - an embarrassed smile, followed by guilt and sadness.

INT. MAGDALENE'S ESTATE - MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Expansive, vast swathes of marble, jetted tub, chandelier. Magdalene, in bra and pants, stands in front of the mirror, running a hand along the surgical scar on her abdomen, wiping tears.

INT. ALI'S PRECIOUS GEMS - DAY

Only a handful of people. Susan finishes a sale, watches Magdalene who peruses antiques. Jen appears.

JEN

Is that-- her...? Son-of-a-biscuit.

SUSAN

I think so.

JEN

What the hell she doing here?

SUSAN

Maybe she got us confused with Macy's.

JEN

If she orders anything, should I spit on it?

SUSAN

No.

Magdalene notices them whispering to each other as she approaches the counter.

MAGDALENE

Just a bagel... please.

JEN

Coming right up.

Magdalene fishes for cash, sees the dirty look Susan is throwing her. Magdalene manages a half-hearted smile.

JEN

There you go.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Magdalene lays down a \$100 bill.

MAGDALENE

Keep the change.

INT. HAMMOND ENTERPRISES - MAGDALENE'S OFFICE - DAY

Gary pokes his head in. Nobody home. Ms. Hattenbarger stops wheeling a cart nearby.

MS. HATTENBARGER

Are you looking for Miss Hammond?
She's out sick today... I heard
she hasn't missed a day in like
fifteen years. Can you believe
that?

GARY

Yup. Sure can. Thanks.

He walks over to Magdalene's desk and writes on a post-it: "Call me. - Gary" He sticks it right on a photo of Katie beside one of Bailey.

INT. MAYOR'S OFFICE - DAY

MAYOR BURNS, 50s, his face betrays a little surprise as Magdalene sits down in his Christmas decorated office.

MAYOR BURNS

You're a hard woman to refuse. I
was on a plane before I could
think, but --

MAGDALENE

Burns. Sorry to shanghai you, but
I've decided our business won't
wait for the morning.

MAYOR BURNS

So what do you want out of me?

MAGDALENE

What did I tell you about
opportunity? City politics,
favors, a little pragmatic grease.
I need you to pull a few strings.
Father Dowling Ministries.

MAYOR BURNS

Yeah yeah, it's kinda complicated.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAGDALENE

Lean on the council, or whatever
you have to do, but I want it
opened back up by close of
business... today.

A strange beat. Magdalene fills the silence --

MAGDALENE

Miss Colette is a highly
qualified, gifted lawyer, more
capable of handling troubled
cases, not unlike some. I'm ready
to throw my support around her for
Mayor. And so are all my friends.

On second thought -

MAYOR BURNS

I... uh... can handle it.

And with that, Magdalene is showing herself to the door.

MAYOR BURNS

Just wanted to thank you again and
say that I look forward to our
continued working relationship.

INT. NEW YORK TIMES - DAY

Zoe is walking and runs into LUTHER, 60's, the New York
Times Bureau Chief and her boss.

ZOE

I was just coming to see you.

LUTHER

You redacted it?

ZOE

Not like it's an exact match. As a
reporter I must show humility
here. I mean, I could be wrong.

LUTHER

You? Winner of the Pulitzer. Some
people might think you're running
away from something.

ZOE

They'd be right.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

A lions den of sorts.

TOMMY SPECTER, 52, a human pit bull, is addressing a table where several well-dressed gentlemen sit, briefcases open with paperwork. One is RYAN, 50's.

TOMMY

I'm not afraid of her.

RYAN

Well, I am. She's got tons of money and power and friends. The banks. Why would you think you could go up against her?

There's a commotion in an outer office.

Suddenly, Magdalene barges in with his BOTTLE BLONDE SECRETARY, mid 30s, on her heels.

Before his secretary can speak, Tommy dismisses her.

TOMMY

Miss Hammond. To what do we owe this pleasure?

All of a sudden, Joe rushes in, out of breath.

JOE

I apologize for the delay.

MAGDALENE

Very classy.
(re: ticket)
That better be a note from your mother.

JOE

Believe it? A coupla lousy parking tickets.

MAGDALENE

Don't take me for granted, Mr. Trout. That spot you were in at City Hall. It's reserved for me.

Well that sort of takes the wind out of Joe's sails.

MAGDALENE

Father Dowling ministries is one of the city's historical landmarks.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAGDALENE (CONT'D)

It's been there for years.
Hundreds of families depend on it
for food and shelter.

TOMMY

Whoa, whoa, wait a minute. All my
nearby properties are going down
because of his orphanage. Not my
problem.

MAGDALENE

No, but I am! Funny, I'm looking
to expand myself.

TOMMY

That's not going to happen. Y'know
I already have the permit.

MAGDALENE

Hush. Look around, who's name's
all over this town. With so little
time and so much to do... it's
about time I start cashing in some
of their IOU's. It's been revoked.

TOMMY

You don't need that property.

MAGDALENE

No, just so I can watch your
property values plummet. To the
point you'll have to sell or get a
loan.

The men take in this surprising turn of events. Before
Tommy can retort:

MAGDALENE

It's no secret most, if not all
American big banks have
blackballed you. Mind you, I
happen to be a major shareholder
of your lender... Deutsche Bank,
which you owe two hundred million.
And for the amount of money you're
going to need, nothing gets the
okay without my approval. And
bankruptcy is not an option
because I don't think the Russian
Oligarchs will take to kindly to
that. If you know what I mean.
But being tis the season to be
jolly.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Joe clears his throat.

JOE

Uh, I don't mean to be rude, but you said over the phone you had an offer to propose.

MAGDALENE

Build him another. Once it's complete, you can start tearing down.

A nervous laughter among the men.

RYAN

Why didn't you say that? We'll get the ball rolling.

MAGDALENE

Get with Ms. H. Gentlemen, it's been a pleasure.

INT. ALI'S PRECIOUS GEMS - DAY

Almost closing time. Jen is cleaning up.

Ali and Susan count cash after the day's work, zips it up in a bank bang. Ali rubs her neck a little.

SUSAN

Is something wrong with your neck?

ALI

It's just been a little stiff lately. You know, sleeping in that chair at the hospital.

JEN

I can't imagine what you've gone through. Losing a loved one.

Ali manages a half-hearted smile.

JEN

Do you believe that people live on after they die? That their souls are with us?

ALI

Yes, I do.

The bell above the door chimes as Katie walks in.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KATIE

It smells good in here.

SUSAN

Which in and of itself is a success.

MOMENTS LATER...

Katie sits across from Ali.

KATIE

I know this is unexpected -- I shouldn't even be here. I feel like I'm betraying her trust.

This is a really hard moment for Katie and it's not lost on Ali either.

ALI

Huh. What are you saying?

KATIE

I came here illegally. I use to work the streets. Practically lived there.

ALI

What happened?

KATIE

Something wonderful. I got arrested. They were going to deport me, but Maddie pulled a few strings. Offered me a job. The thing is, I see what she doesn't allow other's to. I've seen into her heart.

ALI

What is she afraid of?

KATIE

She only has one to give.
(off Emily's look)
You see -- five years ago Matt, her brother. He was a heavy drinker. Both his kidney's failed. He was on dialysis for awhile but it was unsustainable.

Ali's thunderstruck, she struggles under the weight of her emotions and attempts to speak.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ALI

Sorry, I...I didn't know.

KATIE

She's going through a lot at the moment, just trying come to terms with it all. It's been difficult.

ALI

Oh God, I feel just terrible, the way I've been.

KATIE

Don't. I'd imagine If I were in your shoes I would have done the same. When the time comes I'm sure she'll do the right thing.

They inter-lock hands, Ali smiles, chokes back tears.

Scarecrow sits nearby, devouring a pastry. He's been listening the whole time.

Ali approaches him. He notices a worried look in her eyes. Ali asks kindly:

ALI

Is something wrong?

SCARECROW

Have you prayed?

She looks on defensively, but when she looks into his eyes something comes over her. Ali nods.

SCARECROW

Good. It's more important than you know. It will help her. And it will help you more.

She looks at him; his confidence somehow gives her hope.

ALI

You should try crème brûlée.

SCARECROW

I don't have any money.

ALI

Don't worry about it, okay?

INT. MAIN CABIN/GULFSTREAM G550 - DAY

Magdalene sits, rocks glass in hand, wearing a silk bathrobe, eyes downcast, waging an emotional war in her head.

Arthur sits across from Magdalene, nursing a drink.

ARTHUR

The news is not good. That network is not just broken but it hasn't been updated in a few years.

A beat, then -

ARTHUR

The four names on the list are outside of the country. Moscow, London, Iran...

MAGDALENE

That isn't going to work. And the other?

ARTHUR

Juan Robles. He resides in Cuba. He wants money. Fifty grand.

Magdalene doesn't blink.

MAGDALENE

Ang here I thought it's a season for giving.

ARTHUR

You realize, of course, all the risks and dangers transporting blood from overseas?

MAGDALENE

No problem, take the jet and go pick him up -- he can do it when he gets here.

ARTHUR

He's got two good kidney's.

MAGDALENE

No! It's taken care of.

Arthur looks puzzled by her response.

Sexy FLIGHT ATTENDANT enters, holding a Armani pants suit on a hanger. Magdalene takes it off her hands.

INT. MAGDALENE'S ESTATE - MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Magdalene opens a beautiful antique music box to reveal a TOY BALLERINA. Her face lights up - like she's seeing some long lost treasure.

Katie is watching Magdalene through the open doorway, when she looks up. There's this moment between them - a closeness - a connection. An attraction between the two.

She snakes her arms around Magdalene's neck.

KATIE

Thank you.

MAGDALENE

Just doing the right thing. For once.

There's a real moment between them. In a different story, they'd share a passionate kiss. Instead, they share a sweet kiss.

A beat. Katie slips out of Magdalene's arms, lifts the toy ballerina.

MAGDALENE

It belonged to my grandmother, it hasn't worked in years.

KATIE

Maybe you should get it fixed.

INT. MAGDALENE'S ESTATE - SITTING ROOM - NIGHT

Once again, Magdalene listening to *Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto...* serenading from the stereo.

Magdalene relaxes on the sofa, melancholy, reflective, and for the first time in a long while...content.

She drinks a tall glass of ice tea. Eyes the wall clock expectantly. It reads 6:12.

The sound of the front door closing.

Moments later, Katie walking in, surprised to find her waiting. Magdalene sips her drink, then:

MAGDALENE

Where have you been?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KATIE

Last minute shopping.

Magdalene shoots an *I'm-not-buying-it* look to Katie.

KATIE

You missed me?

MAGDALENE

No, I'm starving.

KATIE

Oh, I see. My mistake.

MAGDALENE

Shouldn't you be packing?

KATIE

I called, told them I wasn't coming this year.

MAGDALENE

Why do you stay?

KATIE

Why don't you fire me?

They stare at each other for a long moment - something unspeakable passing between them.

A beat, Katie sets down her things...

KATIE

That's an interesting piece.

MAGDALENE

Tchaikovsky Violin Concerto from 1878. It's one of his best known pieces. Tchaikovsky wrote it in a somewhat tumultuous time in his life. After experiencing relationship issues and a crisis of confidence in his previous work.

Katie takes off her coat, absorbs all this.

MAGDALENE

Yeah. I love how you can hear his roller-coaster of emotions in the concerto. His extreme highs and pensive lows, culminating in an uplifting ending. Signifying him coming to terms with his feelings.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Katie leaves the room.

MAGDALENE

Hey, where are you going?

Katie returns with a Tympanic thermometer. She inserts it into her ear. Magdalene's confused. Katie takes it out and looks at it.

KATIE

Ninety nine. I should call Dr. Weiss.

MAGDALENE

Ninety nine is normal, too.

KATIE

That's what worries me. A fever would at least explain why you're acting this way.

MAGDALENE

Just being me. I'm still myself, but a better part of myself.

KATIE

Really. Or just being completely out of your mind.

MAGDALENE

I feel great. In fact, I feel more alive than I have in years.

Magdalene utters the truth that terrifies them both:

MAGDALENE

We can't postpone it any longer.

Katie stops, fighting off emotion... this is way harder than she thought it would be. Magdalene comforts her.

INT. MAGDALENE'S ESTATE - KATIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Katie sits on the edge of the bed, who holds her head in her hands, her world spins, emotions boil over.

INT. SODERFIELD'S HOME - BAILEY'S ROOM - DAY

A shrine of family and school photos. Stuffed animals. There's a doll house made from Leggos. A soccer ball.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Ali stares at a kid's colored drawing of a woman's face tacked upon the wall.

Ali can't explain why she is drawn to it, but she is. Ali takes it down, studies it some more.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - BAILEY'S ROOM - DAY

On TV; *"It's a Wonderful life."* Up in bed, Bailey rests comfortably. Ali sits in a chair nearby, still studying the drawing.

Charles and Gretchen enter.

GRETCHEN

What is it?

ALI

Bailey's accident. Three years ago.

GRETCHEN

She was skating in the park when she fell through the ice. Why?

ALI

When she was well enough. She set down to draw this. I didn't think much of it at the time.

GRETCHEN

Who is she?

ALI

I think the lady from the lake. She was drawing her face from memory.

Suddenly, something seizes Ali...

WHAM! A BLINDING FLASH OF LIGHT and Ali finds herself --

EXT. PARK - DAY

Ali's memory: In the dead of winter.

Sunlight flashes on the rippling ice water of a pond.

A PANICKED WOMAN attempts CPR on a eight year-old Bailey. She's wet, cold, clearly just pulled from the icy pond.

A terrified Ali is running towards them:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Bailey comes back to consciousness, her eyes fly open, chokes out water -- looks straight at the faceless woman. It's Magdalene.

Magdalene steps back, also wet and cold.

Emily's face flood with relief. Cradles Bailey. Tight. Fights back the tears.

Ali turns back to Magdalene walking away.

INT. HOSPITAL - BAILEY'S ROOM - DAY

RESUME SCENE: Ali knows, she just knows.

Bailey slowly wakes up, smiles to see everyone there.

ALI

Hey, baby, can mommy ask you something?

Bailey just nods, Ali shows Bailey the drawing.

A beat, Bailey's eyes light up, she reaches out, touches the drawing.

BAILEY

It's the lady from the lake.

ALI

The woman who saved her.

BAILEY

I don't want to die.

ALI

Oh sweetie, you are not going to die.

Ali kisses her sweetly, smiling.

ALI

Everything's going to be alright.

INT. HOSPITAL - CORRIDOR - DAY

Ali crosses path's with Dr. Warner, who's looking through lab results.

ALI

He have a donor.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Big smile from Dr. Warner.

DR. WARNER

I know. Hammond's doctor sent over her test results. We've scheduled it for the day after tomorrow. With any luck she should be home for Christmas.

Dr. Warner goes, Charles, and Gretchen joins Ali. The tension is so thick you would need a hacksaw to cut it.

ALI

Dr. Warner showed me the statistics. We have a better chance of hitting the powerball. A long shot at best.

GRETCHEN

Still a shot.

CHARLES

I'm sorry, but you're putting a lot of faith into a woman whose known for ruining other people's Christmases! I bet Peter's rolling around in his grave right about now.

Ali looks to Gretchen -- *"Help me out here."*

GRETCHEN

Charles, please. Shut.

He, his mood fracturing.

GRETCHEN

You trust her?

ALI

On Bailey's life.

INT. HAMMOND ENTERPRISES - MAGDALEN'S OFFICE - DAY

Magdalene and BART, 20s, arrogant as he is handsome, in a closed-door "meeting."

MAGDALENE

Bart, I understand you're up to speed on the Lancelet account.

BART

Yes, ma'am.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAGDALENE

Good. Get out to Seattle. I need
Richard back ASAP.

Bart looks to Magdalene, surprised.

BART

It's a fifty million dollar
account.

MAGDALENE

Yes... So don't disappointment me.

INT. SHOPPING CENTER - DAY

The mall is packed. A group of Christmas Carolers sing
SLEIGH RIDE as they ride up the escalator with Magdalene
and Heather, carrying a book bag.

HEATHER

You don't know me but --

MAGDALENE

It's Heather, isn't it? You're
Bailey's babysitter.

Heather's surprised to say the least as they step off the
escalator, and keep moving.

MAGDALENE

Is there something I do for you?

HEATHER

You don't seem so tough. Bailey's
tough.

MAGDALENE

Yes, indeed. She gets it from her
mother.

HEATHER

Um, I was... I was just... wanting
you to know that Bailey is not
just not another kid I babysit.
She's more than that. She's the
little sister I've never had. And
to see her...

Heather glances at Magdalene, who nods in agreement.

MAGDALENE

Hungry?

INT. FANCY RESTAURANT - DAY

Expensive, white table clothes. Magdalene sits across from Heather, who's enjoying, no, relishing a huge meal.

HEATHER

Yes, my grades aren't half bad. The prospect of after high school is totally terrifying to me. It feels like just yesterday I was in 7th grade.

MAGDALENE

What are your plans?

HEATHER

Most of my friend have dreams of going to an elite college, earning multiple degrees, and making six figures. That's not my dream, well it is. I mean I want to go to college. Not just any college, but a great college. I read a lot of business, finance and entrepreneurship books. Yeah, I want to start my own company and make a difference in the world and make other people's life easier.

Magdalene smiles, clearly impressed, and it's not hard to see herself in this kid.

HEATHER

But we can't afford it. So, I'm going to get a job to pay my loans. I'll either head off to community college or a very cheap four-year school. When I relocate from New York to Massachusetts, I'll take a gap year to assimilate and earn my residency. This will make my college tuition even cheaper.

Heather avoids her gaze, ashamed. Magdalene smiles.

HEATHER

You're really pretty.

MAGDALENE

Thanks. So are... you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HEATHER

Bailey's had quite a day, this is the first time anything like this has ever happened with her.

Heather shakes her head, gets a little quiet.

HEATHER

She's fine, just - keep your eyes open. I'm counting on you to... I dunno. Is there a - where's the bathroom?

Magdalene points down the hall.

MAGDALENE

Second door on the left.

Heather nods, grabs her backpack, disappears down the hall. Magdalene looks after her.

INT. FATHER DOWLING MINISTRIES - CAFETERIA - DAY

Mostly empty. Find Katie seated across from Zoe. Katie's body language tell us she's is uncomfortable.

ZOE

I'm... uh...doing a story on Miss Hammond and...um, I'd just like to ask you a few questions.

Katie takes a moment to process this.

KATIE

You're not planning --

ZOE

No, not until, well you know...

INT. ALDRICH & KNOWLES LAW FIRM - DAY

The law practice is small but respected -- a few ASSOCIATES. Magdalene and Arthur walk. They look great together.

ARTHUR

I hate to bring this up, but it's time we start thinking about final preparations.

MAGDALENE

I'm way ahead of you, Arthur.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She hands him a leaf of papers.

ARTHUR
Changes to your will I see.

MAGDALENE
I've took care of who I need to.

INT. ARTHUR'S OFFICE - DAY

Magdalene stares out the window while Arthur looks over the changes to her will.

ARTHUR
Ah, leaving Katie the house.

MAGDALENE
It's the only real home she's ever known. She loves that place. She gets a third of everything.

ARTHUR
Bailey?

MAGDALENE
Everything else goes to her and Ali once I sell the company.

ARTHUR
You spent years building it. Why not leave it to her?

MAGDALENE
Maybe she wants to be a nurse, or a doctor. No pre-conditions.

ARTHUR
Did you know she likes to draw? Yes. She built a tree house. Of course, with Peter's help.

This comes as news to Magdalene.

ARTHUR
And Matthew?

MAGDALENE
A monthly allowance of one hundred thousand on one condition he stays clean.
(he nods)
How's the family, Arthur?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ARTHUR

Andy is doing well. Grades are up. For the first time in years.

MAGDALENE

And Vicky?

ARTHUR

All these years later. And she still reminds me of our indiscretion.

MAGDALENE

I'm sorry. You've been a good to me all these years. Putting my needs before yours. Now I need you to do the same for Bailey.

ARTHUR

You know I will. Want to grab some lunch?

MAGDALENE

Can't. I'm, uh, meeting someone.

Magdalene's cell phone rings. She picks up.

MS. H (V.O.)

She's been moved to I.C.U.

INT. HOSPITAL - ICU - DAY

A NURSE changes out a comfortably resting Bailey's antibiotic's. She's surrounded by Ali, Heather, Charles, and Gretchen.

She's also being observed behind glass by, Magdalene.

Ali sees Magdalene, excuses herself, comes out.

They stand there, it's an emotionally charged moment.

MAGDALENE

Dr. Warner briefed me.

ALI

Katie told me about your brother and what you did. I'm sorry, I just feel terrible. If I had known.

MAGDALENE

I'm sorry to hear that. Genuinely.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALI

I thought you'd appreciate the irony.

MAGDALENE

That may be the meanest thing you've ever said about me.

ALI

You've been there the whole time. Haven't you? Bailey's recital's, school plays. Her soccer games. That day in the park.

They share a knowing look. Magdalene turns back to the I.C.U.

ALI

She's beautiful, isn't she?

MAGDALENE

An angel. You and Peter did such a wonderful job of raising her.

A sad beat, then -

MAGDALENE

Peter was a good man, he just fell in love with the wrong woman. I could barely take care of myself, let alone her. But the truth of the matter I didn't want to be tied down. I couldn't. There was so much I wanted to do. Yeah, I know it was selfish of me, but I wanted to do what was best for Bailey, too. Believe it or not, I spent time in a convent for awhile. I could give my life to my own daughter, so how could I give it to God. Looking back on it, it was the hardest decision I ever made.

Magdalene takes a sec to chew on this.

MAGDALENE

I scheduled the surgery for the day after tomorrow. I don't want her spending her Christmas in here.

Ali takes a moment to comprehend the enormity of this.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

In the b.g., Heather, Charles and Gretchen have been watching the whole time.

INT. SODERFIELD'S HOME - BAILEY'S BEDROOM - DAY

Magdalene looks around, thoughtfully. Lays down a gift wrapped Christmas present with Bailey's name on it.

Ali indicates a wall of *Architectural Drawings* with Professional sketches for an eleven year-old. Magdalene is moved.

ALI

You've got to admit our girl has talent. I often wondered where she got it from.

Magdalene smiles sadly, nods.

MAGDALENE

I never stopped loving her.

ALI

I know.

MAGDALENE

She must never know. Promise me?

ALI

I can't. She's a curious girl.

The memory is almost too much to bear.

Magdalene looks back at the drawings; fights her tears.

Ali squeezes Magdalene's hand.

INT. HAMMOND ENTERPRISES - MAGDALENE'S OFFICE - DAY

Magdalene having a heart to heart with a nervous Richard.

RICHARD

Retire? You? That wouldn't be such an easy matter... do you have any idea how much money you've got floating around the world?

MAGDALENE

Perhaps a trip around the world. It would take me six months to liquidate.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAGDALENE (CONT'D)

I could give you power of attorney. You could do it for me.

She opens a safe and pulls out documents.

RICHARD

I wouldn't know what to do with it.

MAGDALENE

It's here, all laid out for you. Only to be opened if something were to happen. What to hold, what to sell. And where the money goes. Think on it over the holidays. Go home to your family.

He looks stunned.

MAGDALENE

I'm fine. Go before I change my mind.

INT. ALI'S PRECIOUS GEMS - DAY

Ali sits across from Arthur, who's devouring a bagel and coffee while he goes over legal documents with her.

ARTHUR

Miss Hammond has made some recent changes to her will that requires your signature.

ALI

Do we have to do it now?

ARTHUR

I'm afraid so.

She hesitates. The pain in her face is overwhelming.

EXT. SAKS - FIFTH AVENUE - DAY

Magdalene exits, fights with a briefcase and wrapped gifts. A box falls to the ground. Then -

A scruffy Rosemarie and her TEN YEAR-OLD SON grab the gift and hands it back. She stares at them for a long beat.

Then places her hand upon her son's head. And quietly pulls her hand away.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAGDALENE

Come by my office in the morning.
To pick up the Bill of Sale.
We'll talk on how to expand your
small business.

A stunned Rosemarie nods in appreciation, she is near tears.

MAGDALENE

I know it's last minute, but I
don't have a lot of time.

In the b.g., Scarecrow witnesses the entire thing. He watches after her, unable to hide the smile on his face.

EXT. PARK - DAY

Fires burn from barrels. Lots of HOBOS.

A bundled up Magdalene slouches on the bench with two take-out coffees, searches their faces, clearly looking for someone, but not seeing them.

Scarecrow shows up. It's an awkward moment. She hands him a coffee, he smiles in appreciation.

Magdalene hands him a business card wrapped around a \$1000 bill. It's a touching moment for them both.

MAGDALENE

That's my address. Katie, a dear friend, she'll have a job waiting for you. If you want it.

SCARECROW

I have one. Just odds and ends.
Sometimes they work out. Sometimes they don't.

(switching gears)

I see you found your way home.

MAGDALENE

If you don't mind me asking. How --

SCARECROW

--Did I end up on the streets? For thousands of years... they've existed among us.

She smirks. Is this guy for real?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAGDALENE

So you're telling me you're an
Angel.

Scarecrow smiles; even he can see appreciate the
awkwardness of the moment.

SCARECROW

Thanks for, uh, the coffee.

MAGDALENE

I should go.

She looks back, though she keeps her poker-face, she
seems shaken, he's gone without a trace.

INT. MAGDALENE'S ESTATE - DAY

Magdalene gets in and looks around, but the house seems
empty. Still holding the presents.

MAGDALENE

Katie?

She continues throughout the house.

MAGDALENE

Katie?

INT. MAGDALENE'S ESTATE - DINING ROOM - DAY

Katie is alone at the table, drinking wine and lost in
her thoughts. Magdalene appears in the doorway.

MAGDALENE

Didn't you hear me calling?

KATIE

Matt needs to know.

MAGDALENE

I've called. Text. He hasn't
returned any of them.

And it sounds like a lie.

KATIE

Keep trying until you get him. Go.

MAGDALENE

I'm having this big fund-raiser
for Mayor Burns.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAGDALENE (CONT'D)

More or less a Christmas wing ding. There's gonna be a band and lots of fancy food and drink. Maybe you want to go with me.

There is an awkward silence. Then:

KATIE

It's black tie. I have nothing to wear to that. But thank you.

MAGDALENE

I went through your closet the other day, found some little black dresses I thought would look killer on you tomorrow night. With all the things you do around here. I figured you wouldn't give yourself time.

KATIE

I'm not even sure I still fit in those.

MAGDALENE

Just pick one out.

KATIE

Um, they're a little inappropriate for the occasion, don't you think?

MAGDALENE

Hey, here's an idea. Why don't you try one of these on for size.

Magdalene hands her the boxes from earlier.

KATIE

What happen to forgetting commercialism and the search for inner peace?

MAGDALENE

Hush! Under the given circumstances, Merry Christmas.

Katie is noticeably touched. She opens a box, pulls out a stunning designer gown.

KATIE

It's beautiful. Maddy, it must have cost a fortune.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MAGDALENE
\$22,000,00. I hope it fits.

Magdalene turns, heads out...

EXT. HOUSE - DAY

A tool bag landing in the bed of a construction pick-up truck. Matthew eyes his cell. A list of missed calls and texts. From Magdalene.

They read: *MATT, WHERE ARE YOU?: WE NEED TO TALK: MATTHEW?: HEY, CALL ME: MATT? YOU OK? WORRIED?:*

He grabs his cell, it rings. KATIE CALLING. He answers...

KATIE (V.O.)
Matt?

MATTHEW
Kate. Everything all right?

INTERCUT with...

INT. MAGDALENE'S ESTATE - KITCHEN - DAY

A light snow falls outside the window.

Katie on the phone, leafing through a bunch of Christmas cards and stuffing them into envelopes.

MATTHEW
Just been busy. New job and all.

EXT. BRYANT PARK - NIGHT

It's almost dusk now. A Christmas tree twinkles in the park. A plethora of FAMILIES and KIDS gliding across the ice-rink.

Find Magdalene lacing up her skates. She sips from a cup of hot chocolate.

Joins in on the fun, moves with style and grace... a real pro. She's having the time of her life, and yet, there's a certain sadness in her eyes.

Just then, Ali glides onto the ice, heads towards Magdalene, who looks surprised.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAGDALENE

Shouldn't you be with Bailey?

ALI

My parents and Heather practically kicked me out. Katie told me you might be here. I hope it's okay.

An infinitesimal pause -- but that's all Magdalene needs.

MAGDALENE

You know what I wish?

ALI

What?

MAGDALENE

That Bailey were here, with us holding her hands, teaching her how to skate.

ALI

Will you settle for mine?

Magdalene extends a hand, they skate together.

INT. MAGDALENE'S ESTATE - MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Magdalene, who is already in bed, reading a kindle book. A knock on the door. Katie, in a silk nightgown and robe comes in.

MAGDALENE

Any word on Matt?

KATIE

He's been busy, he'll be there. He's doing the eulogy.

MAGDALENE

To bad I won't be around to hear what he has to say.

Magdalene sets the kindle aside, as Katie sits on the edge of the bed.

KATIE

On a happy note.

She fishes for a gift-wrapped box from her robe's pocket, hand sit to Magdalene, and waits with baited breath.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KATIE

Something to take with you.

Magdalene tears open the package, her eyes widening. It is a beautiful, delicate gold heart necklace.

MAGDALENE

It's beautiful.

Magdalene opens it, there's a photo of them both. At this moment Magdalene's world is near perfection.

Her eyes seem to brim with tears as she looks at Katie. She pulls Katie down onto her chest, they lie together.

KATIE

When I was a kid, my Mom always did Christmas. She'd start planning the day after Thanksgiving. By Christmas Eve, she was a puddle of tears. I guess the expectations always exceeded the reality. But it was always okay because we were all together.

KATIE

You know, this marks the first time we've ever exchanged gifts.

Magdalene bites her lip, a bit guilty.

MAGDALENE

I never felt there was a need to -- we have each other. Love, happiness, friendship -- all through the years.

KATIE

Still it's nice to.

MAGDALENE

Promise you'll visit me.

KATIE

I promise.

Katie hugs Magdalene hard. Trying to fight back tears.

And she's gone. Suddenly alone - she's really going to miss Katie - doesn't know quite what to do with herself.

INT. GREYHOUND BUS - MOVING - DAY

A solemn Matthew stares out the window, forehead pressed to the glass, watching the lights of the city stream by.

He settles back in his seat, with a heavy heart.

EXT. FATHER DOWLING MINISTRIES - DAY

It's re-opened. A jubilee Father Dowling stands at the door, ushering the families in. Christmas music plays.

His eye catches Magdalene, she's standing in the backdrop, watching. Father Dowling heads her way.

FATHER DOWLING

Magdalene, it's so good to see you. I can't tell you enough how thankful we all are.

They hug uncomfortably, too long. She clears her throat. On the break.

FATHER DOWLING

All anybody ever talks about is your ambition -- they never talk about your heart -- I don't know why they don't see it. It's all I ever saw.

MAGDALENE

If it isn't too much to ask, I have one last request.

The question hits Father Dowling on a deep level.

INT. ALI'S PRECIOUS GEMS - DAY

Busy. Matthew goes to town on pastries like a man on death-row, devouring his last meal.

In from the cold, Scarecrow sits at a table next to him, enjoying the warmth. He sips his coffee.

SCARECROW

How about you? Where you headed?

MATTHEW

Me? Home. I just come for the funeral.

Matthew sips his coffee.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SCARECROW

Oh boy, sorry to hear that. I'm a firm believer that all of society's ills could be quelled if everyone just humbled themselves with apple pie.

MATTHEW

Wouldn't that be nice.

Matthew finishes his coffee and rises.

MATTHEW

So long.

He zips his coat and pulls up his collar as he heads out, sunlight hits his face. The bell above the door CHIMES.

Further back, a MOTHER and her six-year-old DAUGHTER go to leave.

LITTLE GIRL

Look, mommy, the bell. Every time one rings, another angel gets his wings.

Scarecrow smiles, as he looks away from the girl.

MOTHER

Yes, Pumpkin. C'mon.

EXT. MAGDALENE'S ESTATE - DAY

Katie and Magdalene play in the snow, tossing snowballs at each other.

INT. MAGDALENE'S HOME - KITCHEN - DAY

Magdalene, in an elegant dress, is at her laptop, day-trading stocks.

Katie enters, putting an earring on, magnificent in every way, wearing a black cocktail dress...

MAGDALENE

Ooh, what smells so nice?

Katie smiles, shuts Magdalene's laptop.

MAGDALENE

You look absolutely divine, as always.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KATIE

I didn't think you noticed.

Magdalene shrugs on her coat, then helps Katie into hers.

KATIE

Gary stopped by. You haven't returned his calls or messages.

This catches Magdalene off-guard.

MAGDALENE

Right, I was hoping he'd get a clue.

Katie gives her a sympathetic look, just now realizing --

KATIE

After all this time. You're still in love with him.

MAGDALENE

No. No I'm not.

KATIE

Be real with me, Maddy. He broke your heart, and I get that. But you can't do this. You have to tell him.

MAGDALENE

Come on, we're running late.

INT. RITZY HOTEL - BALLROOM - NIGHT

A black tie fundraiser for a CHILDREN'S CHARITY is in full swing. A string quartet plays. New York's elite in attendance, mingle over drink and finger foods.

Magdalene escorts Katie through.

MAGDALENE

Save your appetite, I'm taking you to dinner. Yes. This is our last night, I'm not spending it here.

Katie's forced smile covering any hint of sadness.

KATIE

But first, I made reservation for David Geffen Hall. Show starts at 8:00.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KATIE (CONT'D)

Tonight is the last night to see
the Amazing Violinist Leonidas
Kavakos.

Katie plucks a glass of Champagne from a passing waiter.

MAGDALENE

I'll catch up to you.

Everyone turns, the guests have the upmost respect for
Magdalene as she mingles her way through the crowd,
making small talk, but never staying long.

Magdalene runs into Eva and Louise.

EVA

What are you doing here? I know
you were invited, but I didn't
think you'd come.

Magdalene reaches into her coat pocket and withdraws a
check, holding it out to Eva.

MAGDALENE

Please accept this donation on
behalf of Hammond Enterprises.
Fifty thousand dollars, along with
my thanks for the terrific job
you're doing.

Eva and Louise are speechless, but grateful.

INT. HOSPITAL - NURSES STATION - NIGHT

Nurse Hopkins and Nurse JONES, 30, hard at work when an
alarm goes off, someone's coding! Bella appears.

NURSE JONES

Room 427.

They head that way. Nurse Hopkins grabs Bella.

NURSE HOPKINS

Get Dr. Warner.

Nurse Hopkins sees Bella walking down the corridor.

NURSE HOPKINS

Bella.

Bella looks back.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NURSE HOPKINS

Run!

And Bella takes off, sprinting.

EXT. COLUMBUS CIRCLE - NIGHT

Beautifully lit at night. A busy traffic circle.

Magdalene leads Katie by the hand, as they serpentine through the heavy holiday crowd.

MAGDALENE

God, it's beautiful out here.

KATIE

Mmm hmm.

Katie - a mischievous grin, holds a Mistletoe over their heads. They laugh, then kiss. It's bittersweet.

MAGDALENE

What are you going to do without me?

They approach a CHILDREN'S CHOIR singing a *beautiful but haunting RENDITION* of "We wish you a Merry Christmas..."

Magdalene deposits cash into the donation container.

A cell phone rings. Magdalene answers, concern on her face. She abruptly ends the call.

MAGDALENE

It's Bailey. Come on.

Magdalene takes Katie's hand, they run, Sees a couple by a TAXI, waiting on the corner for the light to turn. But in her haste she doesn't realize that's what they're doing. Pushes past them -

And the moment her foot hits the street -- HONNNNKKK!!!!

A car strikes her!

She hits the pavement. Unconscious. Katie races to her side. She's motionless. Shit.

KATIE

Maddie?

No response. The DRIVER gets out, in shock --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DRIVER

She came outta nowhere --

KATIE

Call 9-1-1.

The Driver nods. Katie in tears, checks her pulse -- doesn't feel one.

KATIE

Oh, no... she's not breathing..

Katie looks back to Driver --

KATIE

What the hell's taking so long?!

DRIVER

I'm on hold.

And that's when it happens. A homeless man pushes through the gathering crowd REVEALING --

It's Scarecrow. WTF?! As Scarecrow kneels next to her, starts to check on her, he says --

SCARECROW

Move.

KATIE

She got hit. She needs a doctor.

SCARECROW

I am a doctor. Well use to be.

Katie snaps out of it, backs off as Scarecrow begin to perform CPR. Tension mounting. Katie watches as her checks her pulse. Nothing.

The seconds feel like minutes. And then Scarecrow feels it -- the faint beat of her heart under his fingertips.

SCARECROW

I've got a pulse.

Katie exhales, relieved. In the background we begin to HEAR the sound of SIRENS fast approaching. And off this -

EXT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

An ambulance pulls up, a police car close behind. The ambulance doors swing open and two PARAMEDICS unload Magdalene.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She's back from the dead, barely, mumbling... Katie holds her hand...

MAGDALENE

Oh Lord, your help and mercy I
have found my way back home. We
saw your will be done. Keep watch
and guide her growing years. For
her life has just begun...

...as she slips towards unconsciousness...

INT. HOSPITAL - CORRIDOR - NIGHT

A SURGICAL TEAM are wheeling Bailey to the operating room. She looks scared. Ali holds her hand to distract her.

BAILEY

Did she come?

Ali smiles. Before she can reply, a NURSE stops her:

NURSE

Ma'am, you can't go back there.

INT. HOSPITAL - NURSES STATION - NIGHT

Katie is filling out paperwork. Ali approaches, feeling incredibly awkward.

ALI

Hey. Katie.

KATIE

She seemed okay and then all of a sudden.

They embrace. Gretchen, Charles, and Heather rush in.

INT. HOSPITAL - WAITING AREA - NIGHT

Among the sick and injured, they're all here. Gretchen, Heather, Katie, too. A bunch of nervous people.

Charles makes his way toward the vending machines.

Arthur arrives, goes to Katie. They hug briefly.

Father Dowling comes in, adjusts his collar, it's tight.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KATIE

Father Dowling, what are you doing here?

FATHER DOWLING

Last rites. At Magdalene's request. Lordy, I hope I'm not late.

Everyone freezes. Turns, ever so slightly, and there is Mother Miriam, gracing them with her presence.

Everyone rises, respectful, acknowledge her. Mother Miriam offers up a warm smile, nods back.

A MAN, still with his hat on until Heather nudges him. *Oh. Right.* He yanks it off, very apologetic.

Father Dowling goes to her.

MOTHER MIRIAM

Ah, Father Dowling.

FATHER DOWLING

Mother Miriam.

MOTHER MIRIAM

Would you be so kind to direct me towards the chapel.

FATHER DOWLING

I'll do one better. Follow me.

INT. HOSPITAL - CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Mother Miriam is watching a SURGICAL TECH through the small window, removing an organ from its obscured donor as fast as they can.

She kisses the rosary in her hand and starts chanting a prayer in hushed but urgent whispers...

MOTHER MIRIAM

Hail Mary, full of grace. Our lord Is with you. Blessed are you among, and blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now at the hour of our death. Amen...

She continues to recite it, *INTERSPERSED* with shots of...

INT. OPERATING ROOM ONE - NIGHT

The beep-beep-beep of EKG's -- Warner and her SURGICAL TEAM are mid-surgery, operating on Bailey.

NURSE
Defib at 200, everybody off!

Warner grabs paddles, puts them on Ali's chest zap!

NURSE
Still in fib. 300-

Zap. After a pregnant beat, a reassuring beep, beep.

DR. WARNER
Amiodarone, 250, hang a drip.

Instruments slap into Dr. Warner's hand from a Nurses.

INT. OPERATING ROOM TWO - NIGHT

Dark, silent. A sheet covers a body lying on the gurney.

Mother Miriam stands nearby, weeps quietly.

INT. HOSPITAL WAITING AREA - NIGHT

In the wee hours of the morning. Dr. Warner comes out, exhausted, bloody, looks up. A hesitant moment, then -

Ali crosses to her - tentative -

DR. WARNER
She did great. She'd doing fine.

Everyone breathes a sign of relief, tears of joy.

DR. WARNER
But whenever her vitals would drop... and it was tough and go there for awhile... we had a nurse sing a Christmas song and they would pick right up again.

ALI
Do you hear what I hear.

DR. WARNER
Yes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALI
May I see her now?

DR. WARNER
Of course, but only for a few
minutes.

Ali - a big, genuine, warm smile --

INT. HOSPITAL - BAILEY'S ROOM - DAY

Bailey's up in bed, weak but in good spirits. Ali, Gretchen, Charles, and Heather are huddled around her.

We can't make out the conversation, but it's animated.

INT. HOSPITAL - RECOVERY ROOM - NIGHT

Magdalene wakes up disoriented after surgery and sees Katie hovering over her. She talks in that soft, whispery way you talk to people who are in the ICU and seem really fragile.

MAGDALENE
Bailey?

KATIE
She's fine.

MAGDALENE
What happened?

KATIE
Matthew, he gave it back.

A stunned silence. Katie takes her hand, Magdalene holds tight, overwhelmed with emotion, the tears finally come, tears of joy and sadness.

A long beat. A knock on the door, Ali pops her head in.

ALI
Got room for one more?

Ali reaches for Magdalene, takes her hand.

ALI
I know. It seems we have more in
common than either of us would
care to admit. Perhaps there are
ways we can help each other from
time to time --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAGDALENE

I'd like that.

ALI

Have Christmas with us.

MAGDALENE

I can't make that promise.

Ali nods, understands - hugs Magdalene before leaving.

INT. MAGDALENE'S ESTATE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Katie and Magdalene pull up to the mansion. Both climb out. Magdalene looks at it. All lit up for the season. It's beautiful. Then she spots the glow of a tree in the living room.

MAGDALENE

Are you sure we're at the right house?

KATIE

Funny. Very funny.

Gary comes out, smiling.

GARY

Welcome home.

Magdalene gives him a strained smile.

GARY

I spent two nights in the hospital.

MAGDALENE

So I heard.

GARY

Why didn't you tell me?

He searches her eyes for sincerity. And finds it. They fall into each other for a tender kiss.

Gary gets down on one knee and takes her hand... pulls out a ring, looks kinda cheap.

GARY

I know it isn't much, but --

MAGDALENE

Don't.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GARY

Yes, that's obvious.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

Father Dowling is leading the small service. A few MOURNERS. Magdalene waits her turn to pay her respects. Katie, Gary, and Arthur close by.

FATHER DOWLING

As we grieve we must remember death is not the end but the beginning. And so we commit the body of Matthew Hammond to the earth and release his soul to heaven. May his heavenly father hold him and love him for eternity. Amen.

He nods subtly to Magdalene, who approach with a rose.

MAGDALENE

Matthew was my brother. So it's my honor to say a few things about him. Matt was a good man, a caring man, but an often troubled man. But these last twenty-five days I was amazed by the unselfish way he lived her life. He owned little material possession but he was rich in many other ways... that only a loving human being can be. He saw the best in people, so he embraced it. He made people feel special. I'll think of you often and I'll love him forever. Sweet dreams... Matt.

She lays a rose on the casket. Katie follows suit. Mourners stream away from the funeral.

MAGDALENE

Arthur, the property in Miami. I'm going to turn it into a rehab center.

KATIE

The best part, she's going to name it after Matt.

Arthur nods his approval.

INT. MAGDALENE'S ESTATE - FOYER - NIGHT

Back from the funeral, Katie comes in. A LOUD SURPRISE!! All of Katie's family, well most of them, swarm her... ad-lib greetings.

Magdalene shuts the door behind them.

MAGDALENE

Merry Christmas.

KATIE

You shouldn't have, really.

Magdalene can't tell if Katie's being sarcastic until she gives Magdalene a grin, like the cat who ate the canary.

EXT. MANHATTAN - DAY

A cold but sunny morning. Snow glistens on trees. A jingle bell rings in the distance. Christmas is in the air.

INT. SODERFIELD HOME - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Post presents bliss. The floor is a mess with wrapping paper. Gretchen and Charles sit on the couch on either side of Bailey, looking through the scrapbook, pictures of her when she was a baby.

From our advantage point, we can see Heather and Ali making Christmas dinner.

Ali comes in from the kitchen.

ALI

You know who that beautiful little girl is?

BAILEY

Duh. I wish she could've been here.

Bailey - slightly disheartened.

The doorbell rings. Emily goes to answer it. She opens the door to find a MESSENGER holding a large envelope.

MESSENGER

Hi, sign here please.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Ali signs and takes the envelope. It's light. The card on it says: FOR HEATHER. She closes the door and studies it.

ALI

It's for you.

HEATHER

Who's it from?

ALI

Magdalene.

Heather opens the envelop. She stands there a moment, blown to bits. Looks over. It's an official scholarship.

HEATHER

This is incredible. A four year scholarship.

ALI

Oh, Heather, that's wonderful.

CHARLES

Well, this calls for more celebration.

Its not that she's smug about this - it's the best moment of her life. She just mustn't leap up and scream. She tries to play it cool.

HEATHER

Excuse me a sec.

She struts into the hall, screams silently and jumps up and down hysterically, then gestures to God in prayer.

Of course, they call all see her, and laugh.

She re-sorts herself and goes back into the room coolly. The doorbell rings.

Ali looks out the window.

ALI

(mischievously)
Ugh, I wonder who that could be.

EXT. SODERFIELD'S HOME - DAY

Magdalene nears the front door. The emotion of the day bubbles, the terror, the uncertainty.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She takes a breath then knocks, timidly on the door.

Ali opens the door, smiles.

MAGDALENE

Hello. I hope I'm not too late.

INT. SODERFIELD'S HOME - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Magdalene enters, ad-lib greetings. Heather hugs Magdalene.

HEATHER

Thank you.

MAGDALENE

You graduate in five months. We have an internship program. Come see me.

Bailey can't help it. She smiles. Magdalene smiles back. A moment of connection.

Magdalene moves forward to Bailey, gently touching her cheek, her brow, her hair, like she's re-memorizing it...

Then she's pulling Bailey close like she'll never let her go, wetness streaming down their faces, sobbing, these aren't quiet reserved tears, these are ugly, racking sobs, it's so intense it's actually hard for us to even watch so we drift to the other's undeniably touched too.

Magdalene hands her a present.

MAGDALENE

Oh, this is for you.

Excited, Bailey rips off the wrappings. Opens it up to reveal that antique music box. She lifts the lid, the ballerina spins to music.

Her eyes light up...

BAILEY

It's wonderful. Thank you.

MAGDALENE

It's been in my family for generations, now it's yours.

Off this emotionally intense reunion.

INT. SODERFIELD'S HOME - DINING ROOM - DAY

They're gathering around the table enjoying a traditional Christmas feast. We experience this M.O.S. No words needed to communicate their joy and happiness.

EXT. SKATING RINK - DAY

"Have Yourself A Merry Little Christmas," begins, the SHOT PUSHES ACROSS a rink, Not a soul in sight, except...

Bailey's sandwiched between Ali and Magdalene, each with a hold of her hand, ice skating. We can't make out their conversation but it's animated.

And we're left with this Hallmark moment as...

FADE OUT: