

MERRY HAPPY WHATEVER

"December 21: Welcome Matt"

Written by

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In this series, each season is the holiday season.
Eight episodes, eight days.
One family.

October 31, 2018
KAPITAL ENTERTAINMENT
NETFLIX

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In 1963, songwriters Edward Pola and George Wyle wrote "IT'S THE MOST WONDERFUL TIME OF THE YEAR."

Apparently Ed and George never traveled home for the holidays.

EXT. PHILADELPHIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - EARLY MORNING

MATT ARNDT AND EMMY QUINN, MID TO LATE 20'S, EXIT THE CROWDED TERMINAL WITH SUITCASES. MATT ALSO HAS A GUITAR CASE. THEY ARE GREETED BY A FRIGID GUST OF WIND.

EMMY

Oh, yeah. There's the cold. Like death itself passing through you. (THEN, HAPPY) It finally feels like Christmas!

MATT

I can't believe you grew up with this. Is this Philly or the ice planet Hoth?

EMMY

Ha, yeah. Listen, I know you and my dad are gonna be total best buds? But when you first meet him maybe cool it with the Star Wars talk? Just until he gets to know you. And then, I dunno, maybe also after.

MATT

It's so cute how your nose gets all scrunchy when you're domineering.

EMMY

I just want him to love you as much as I love you.

EMMY GIVES HIM A KISS. AW. THEY'RE IN LOVE. A NICE BEAT.

MATT

But you like Star Wars, right?

EMMY

Ohh, so much! And there's just so many of them! (THEN) I'm going to run to the bathroom. Keep an eye out for him.

(MORE)

EMMY (CONT'D)

Sheriff's uniform. Probably telling somebody with an emotional support dog to grow a pair.

MATT

And if I see him I should just run up and give him a super long hug? Really get in there? (OFF HER LOOK) I'll be fine.

EMMY

I know. You're right. Just be yourself.

MATT

My non-Star Wars self.

EMMY

(LAUGHS, BUT THEN) Yes.

SHE CROSSES AWAY. MATT LOOKS AROUND AND, ACROSS THE BUSY WALKWAY, SEES... HIM. DON QUINN, IMPOSING IN HIS SHERIFF'S UNIFORM, LOOKING ASKANCE AT A 40-SOMETHING WOMAN DRESSED HEAD-TO-TOE IN JUICY COUTURE SWEATS.

DON

(TO HIMSELF) People used to get dressed up to fly. (OFF HER LOOK) Move along.

BACK ON MATT: HE TAKES A CALMING BREATH, THEN CROSSES.

MATT

Mr. Quinn!

DON

Matt! Hey! Nice to finally meet you in person. (SHAKING HANDS) Good hand-shake.

MATT

You, too!

DON

I know. (THEN) How was the flight?

MATT

Red-eyes are tough. It's always hard
to get much sleep.

DON

I can sleep anywhere. I trained my body
to sleep through airstrikes when I led a
platoon in Desert Storm.

MATT

Wow. I just take half an Ambien and
drink red wine. Your thing's cooler.

DON

You brought your guitar. You've got your
"axe", I've got my gun. We can do battle.

DON CHUCKLES, SO MATT CHUCKLES TOO.

MATT

Well, we're gonna be here ten days. I
couldn't keep my hands off it that long.
Same way I feel about your daugh...

HE TRAILS OFF AWKWARDLY.

DON

So where is Emmy?

MATT

Bathroom. It was funny, she was worried
about us meeting.

DON

("SHOCKED") No.

MATT

Oh, here she comes. (CONSPIRATORIALLY)
Watch this.

(MORE)

MATT (CONT'D)

(LOUDLY) I don't care what you say, man!
I'm in your daughter's life and there's
nothing you can do about it!

HE SMILES AT DON MISCHIEVOUSLY AS EMMY HURRIES IN.

EMMY

Dad, no! You promised me you'd give
him a chance!

MATT TURNS TO HER, SUDDENLY ALARMED.

MATT

Wait, what?

DON

Matt was pulling your leg, sweetie. We're
getting on fine. He was just telling me
how he mixes drugs and alcohol.

MATT

(TO EMMY) Does he have a problem with me?

A CAUGHT BEAT FROM EMMY, THEN, THINKING FAST, SHE SMILES --

EMMY

No! I knew you were messing with me so
I was just messing with you back! Yeah,
no, my dad's super psyched about you!
And us! Together! Ha ha! Got ya!

MATT

(STILL A BIT THROWN) Oh. Okay.

DON

Yep, good leg-pulling. Both of you.

A BEAT AS EVERYONE TRIES TO PUT THIS AWKWARDNESS BEHIND THEM.

CHYRON: "DECEMBER 21" A BEAT, THEN: "DAY ONE"

EMMY

Well, hi! Merry almost Christmas!

DON

(HUGGING HER) My baby girl. The only Christmas present I need. Well, and a belt sander. (THEN) Cruiser's this way.

THEY CROSS, A NOW SLIGHTLY UNEASY MATT TRAILING BEHIND DON AND EMMY AND TRYING TO BE A PART OF THE CONVERSATION.

EMMY

Thanks for picking us up.

DON

No problem. I had an early shift. I've already been in the ER with a mall Santa who lost a toe last night trying to break into Victoria's Secret.

MATT

Aw. Probably just trying to keep the romance alive with the mall Mrs. Claus.

HE CHUCKLES. DON GLANCES BACK AT THE INTERRUPTION. MATT STOPS.

DON

Anyway. This nurse? Nancy? She's a hoot. She looked at him and said "Somebody just made his own Naughty list."

MATT LAUGHS, TOO MUCH. DON AND EMMY LOOK BACK. EMMY SIGNALS TO MATT TO TAKE IT DOWN A NOTCH.

DON (CONT'D)

So how's work with you, sweetie?

EMMY

Good, actually. The firm just gave me a pay bump, ahead of schedule.

DON

My girl. I mean, you couldn't pay me
enough to live in L.A., what with all
the earthquakes and Californians...

THEY GET TO A PATROL CAR AT THE CURB AND LOAD THEIR LUGGAGE.

DON (CONT'D)

And how's your band, Matt? Any "gigs?"

MATT

A few. Mostly still paying our dues.

DON

So paying dues, not rent.

AN AWKWARD BEAT, THEN DON POKES MATT CHUMMILY.

DON (CONT'D)

I'm kidding! We're all just a bunch of
kidders today.

EVERYBODY LAUGHS. EMMY CLIMBS INTO THE FRONT. AS MATT STARTS
TO GET IN BACK, DON PUSHES HIS HEAD DOWN. MATT PLAYS ALONG.

MATT

Here we go! Like I'm a perp and you're --

DON SHUTS THE DOOR ON HIM. ON MATT'S FACE THROUGH THE WINDOW --

CUT TO TITLES:

AS "RIBBONS AND BOWS" BY KACEY MUSGRAVES PLAYS, WE PAN ACROSS
THIS YEAR'S HOLIDAY CARDS FROM EACH OF OUR FAMILIES:

MATT AND EMMY ON A BEACH. HAPPY, YOUNG, UNBURDENED BY KIDS,
MARRIAGE OR EXCESS BELLY FAT... TODD AND PATSY AND THEIR BABY
IN MATCHING CHRISTMAS SWEATERS THAT WERE, JUDGING BY HER SMILE,
PATSY'S IDEA... JOY AND SEAN AND THEIR BOYS SEAN JR. AND DONNY,
ALL WEARING EAGLES JERSEYS THAT WERE DEFINITELY SEAN'S IDEA...
KAYLA AND ALAN, POSED STIFFLY, LIKE IT'S A JUNIOR PROM PHOTO.
OH, AND ALAN'S FACE HAS BEEN SCRATCHED OUT...

AND FINALLY, A BEAMING DON SURROUNDED BY HIS ENTIRE BROOD
(EVERYONE ABOVE). AW. NICE. EXCEPT DON IS HOLDING A FRAMED
BLACK AND WHITE PHOTO OF A SEVERE LOOKING WOMAN. HUH.

CUT TO:

INT. PATROL CAR - LATER

DON AND EMMY ARE SEPARATED FROM MATT BY BULLET-PROOF PLEXIGLASS.

MATT

I've never been in the back of a
police car before. I feel tough.

DON

Careful what you touch. That Santa got
kinda spitty.

MATT IMMEDIATELY HOLDS HIS HANDS AWAY FROM TOUCHING ANYTHING.

DON (CONT'D)

Oh, Em, remember Ted Boseman? His son
was a year ahead of you? The one who
walked around with the iguana?

EMMY

Weird Doug, sure.

DON

Well, I ran into Ted at the Wawa and was
bragging about you. Like I do. Turns out
he's a big shot at Carlisle Financial and
would love to chat about opportunities
with them here in Philly.

MATT SCOOTs FORWARD.

MATT

Wait, you mean her move back here?

DON BRAKES AND MATT BONKS HIS HEAD AGAINST THE PLEXIGLASS.

DON

Seatbelt, please.

MATT SITS BACK, RUBBING HIS FOREHEAD.

EMMY

Dad, stop. You know I have a life in
L.A. With a job, and a guy, that I love.

MATT

(TO HIMSELF) Bullet-proof glass is hard.

DON

Okay. Just looking out for you. What a
dad does. Forget I mentioned it. (BEAT)
But keep it in mind.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. DON'S HOUSE - FRONT YARD - LATER

AS DON UNLOADS THEIR BAGS FROM THE PATROL CAR, MATT TAKES IN
A WELL-KEPT BUT UNADORNED SINGLE-STORY RANCH HOUSE.

MATT

Huh. I figured you'd be a big Christmas
decorations kinda guy, Mr. Quinn.

EMMY

Oh, he is. But not yet, right Dad?

DON

Lights go up today, then back down New
Year's Day. Ten days, that's it. This
ain't Las Vegas.

MATT

Mm, amen to that.

EMMY GIVES MATT A LOOK: "AMEN TO THAT?" HE SHRUGS.

DON

Emmy's mom always said it was a public
nuisance to put lights up too early or
keep 'em up too late. And she was right.

(MORE)

DON (CONT'D)

(NODS) Look at Gary Kim's place. Been lit up like a whorehouse for three weeks.

MATT

A reindeer-themed whorehouse, but okay.

DON

Not saying everyone has to do holidays like us. Although the neighborhood would be a lot nicer. No junking up Christmas. No fireworks on the third or fifth of July. No slutty costumes on Halloween. It's all in the Quinn Holiday Handbook.

EMMY

(ASIDE, TO MATT) Remember when you asked why I moved across the country?

DON

Anyway, Emmy's siblings are coming over tonight for the big house lighting. It's become a tradition.

EMMY

(TO MATT) My dad's big on tradition. It's number two for him, after bacon and before ham.

DON

With the way our country's changing, we have to hold on to the past. The house lighting, caroling, Christmas Eve Mass, our gift exchange, New Years Fancy Costume Mummies Parade. It's all vital.

HE ENTERS THE HOUSE. MATT TURNS TO EMMY, CONFUSED.

MATT

Fancy Costume Mummings Parade?

EMMY

Welcome to the jungle.

RESET TO:

INT. DON'S HOUSE - FAMILY ROOM

THEY ENTER A MODEST BUT WARM HOUSE DECORATED FOR THE HOLIDAYS.

EMMY

This is where it all happened, Matt. Bed wetting 'til second grade. Three years in a scoliosis brace. I'd go on but I don't want to get you all sexed up.

MATT CHUCKLES, THEN NOTICES DON HAS OVERHEARD THIS AND STOPS. HE LEANS AGAINST A TABLE AND A LITTLE SANTA FIGURINE JUMPS TO LIFE, SWAYING ITS HIPS WHILE *MELE KALIKIMAKA* PLAYS.

EMMY (CONT'D)

(RECOGNIZING) Hey, Hula Santa!

DON

Still the same battery from when your mom and I bought him back in '94.

MATT WAVES HIS HAND TO GET IT DANCING AGAIN.

DON (CONT'D)

Let's not set him off unnecessarily.

Let it be a delightful surprise.

MATT REACHES TO STOP IT, WHICH, OF COURSE, SETS IT OFF AGAIN.

DON (CONT'D)

Just back away from Hula Santa, Matt.

MATT DOES AS INSTRUCTED. DON GIVES HIM A LONG LOOK, THEN EXITS DOWN THE HALL WITH THEIR BAGS. MATT SIGHS.

MATT

I gotta get some sleep. I want to be on my game when I meet the rest of your --

PATSY (O.S.)

(HAPPY SHRIEK) Oh my god!!

THEY TURN AS PATSY, 34, ENERGETICALLY, ALMOST MANIACALLY, HAPPY, HURRIES TOWARDS THEM FROM THE KITCHEN, ARMS OUTSTRETCHED.

PATSY (CONT'D)

The prodigal sister returns! C'mere you! Gimme hugs! I want 'em!

SHE'S A LOT. TODD, 35, CONTINUOUSLY SWALLOWING FRUSTRATION, FOLLOWS, CARRYING A SWADDLED INFANT, MAGGIE.

EMMY

Matt, this is my sister Patsy and her husband Todd and, aww, sweet Maggie!

PATSY

Mr. Rock n Roller! Coming in for a hug! I'm a hugger! (HUGS HIM AGGRESSIVELY, THEN) Whoa, was that your back?

MATT

I think a rib. Whatever, I got a bunch.

PATSY LAUGHS. SHE FINDS MOST THINGS DELIGHTFUL AND SUPER FUNNY.

EMMY

Thanks for coming over to welcome us!

TODD

Your dad said we had to. (OFF PATSY'S LOOK) And I said "I want to!"

PATSY

So who's hungry? Look at you! You're starving! "Feed me!"

EMMY

Actually, we were gonna get some sleep.

PATSY

Oh. 'Cause I was gonna make eggies. Like Mom use to make. Not as good, but not bad if I do say so myself! And I do ha ha!

TODD

Please have an eggie.

EMMY LOOKS TO A WEARY MATT, AND WE...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. DON'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - A LITTLE LATER

MATT, EMMY AND DON EAT EGGIES (EGG SANDWICHES). PATSY REFILLS COFFEE. TODD HANGS BACK, ROCKING MAGGIE IN HER CARSEAT.

DON

...So Nancy looks at him and says

"Somebody made his own naughty list!"

THE OTHERS CHUCKLE POLITELY. MATT LEANS IN TO DON, CHUMMILY.

MATT

I bet he gets coal in his lace stocking.

(OFF HIS STARE) 'Cause Victoria's... they sell... (BAILS) Great eggie, Patsy!

PATSY

Oh, I wish you'd had one made by our mom. Then you'd be like "Uch, compared to hers yours tastes like actual garbage!"

DON

I dunno, Pats. I bet she's looking down and saying "Not bad, Patricia. Not bad."

PATSY IS TOUCHED. SHE STARTS TO SIT DOWN NEXT TO DON.

DON (CONT'D)

Probably also saying, "I hope she
doesn't let that pan sit too long."

PATSY JUMPS BACK UP.

EMMY

Want to go get some sleep, Matt?

MATT DOES. BUT JUST AS THEY STAND, SEAN, 38, BIG, BOISTEROUS
AND WEARING AN EAGLES JERSEY, ENTERS IN THE BACK DOOR.

SEAN

Well look who's here from Hollyweird!

HE IS FOLLOWED BY JOY, 38, QUIETLY SARCASTIC, SEAN JR., 14,
AWKWARD AND EARNEST, AND DONNY, 10, A LITTLE KNUCKLEHEAD.

EMMY

Matt, this is my brother Sean, his wife
Joy and Sean Jr. and Donny! And yes,
there'll be a test on all these names!

JOY

(WRYLY FLAT AFFECT) Mine's easy. You
look at me, what do you see? Joy.

LITTLE DONNY TAKES OFF HIS COAT. MATT SEES HE'S WEARING A YODA
T-SHIRT AND IS ABOUT TO SAY SOMETHING BUT EMMY SHAKES HIM OFF.

EMMY

So, Sean Jr., you're taller than me now!
You must be killing it with the ladies!

SEAN JR. JUST AWKWARDLY SHRUGS AND MUTTERS AND SLOUCHES AWAY.

SEAN

Congrats. He just said more to you than
either of us in the last month.

JOY

We think he might be a teenager.

SEAN

So, Matt. L.A. boy! You a Rams fan?

MATT

No, I grew up in Arizona, so Cardinals.
Although I don't really like football.

DON LOOKS UP FROM HIS COFFEE.

MATT (CONT'D)

I love it! Super Bowls, touchdowns, just
all of it. Tom Brady, is one of them...

SEAN

Ohh, you got me! I was like "uh oh. Em
got a dud." (THEN) Pats, we doing eggies?

PATSY GIVES HIM A THUMBS UP FROM THE STOVE.

MATT

(TO EMMY) Bathroom?

SHE POINTS INTO THE FAMILY ROOM AND UPSTAGE. AS HE EXITS...

DON

Don't use the decorative soaps!

THEY ALL WATCH HIM GO, THEN TURN TO EMMY.

PATSY

Okay. I'll go first. I love him.

SEAN

Yeah, he's a real cutie-patootie, Em.

DON

I just hope you're staying out in L.A.
for the right reasons. Cute patoot or
not. (OFF HER LOOK) This is your home.
You don't miss this? Being surrounded
by your loving family --

JUST THEN KAYLA, 34, EMOTIONAL AND DRAMATIC, AND ALAN, 36, A WEAK GUY TRYING TO ACT STRONG, ENTER, BICKERING. JUDGING BY OTHERS' LACK OF A REACTION, THIS IS EVERY DAY FOR THEM.

ALAN

I just wish you'd shown me the Christmas card before you mailed them out to everyone we know!

KAYLA

Fine! You can be in charge next year.

ALAN

Good.

KAYLA

Great.

ALAN

Fantastic.

SEAN'S WITH PATSY AT THE STOVE, USED TO THEIR BICKERING...

SEAN

Can you double cheese that thing?

KAYLA CROSSES TO EMMY AND GIVES HER A QUICK, STIFF HUG.

KAYLA

Sorry we're late. Someone only started caring about our Christmas card after I mailed them out this morning.

PATSY

(KEEPING IT LIGHT) Who wants an eggie?

Kayla? Alan, you want an eggie?

ALAN

I want a divorce.

THIS STOPS THE ROOM. EVEN ALAN SEEMS SURPRISED HE SAID WHAT HE SAID. KAYLA JUST ROLLS HER EYES.

KAYLA

Uch, I'm sorry I didn't show you the card.

ALAN

(EXHALES) No. Really. I'm leaving you.

KAYLA

What do you -- now?!

ALAN

Well there's not really a good time.

KAYLA

Yes there is! When you die! That's when you leave, Alan! 'Til death do us part!

DON

Death, Alan! Not Christmas!

ALAN SKITTERS AWAY FROM DON. MATT ENTERS, HAPPILY UNAWARE.

MATT

Oh, hey! Lemme guess. Kayla and... Alan.

Yes! I am cr-ushing the name test! (OFF STARES) I didn't use the fancy soap.

EMMY PULLS MATT AWAY FROM KAYLA AND ALAN.

ALAN

Kayla, we fight every day. We haven't had sex in a year.

SEAN

(TO SEAN JR.) Hey, bud, would you...

SEAN JR.

...take my brother to Poppy Don's bedroom and turn on the TV loud enough that we can't hear any of this okay.

THE KIDS EXIT. KAYLA TURNS BACK TO ALAN.

KAYLA

You're doing this in front of my entire family?! (RE: MATT) And that guy?

MATT

Matt. Hi. (THEN) We can do this later.

ALAN

I'm sorry, but you're with your entire family all the time! Everything happens in front of them! And because of them!

DON STANDS AND CROSSES TOWARD ALAN, WHO KEEPS MOVING TO STAY AWAY FROM HIM.

DON

Oh, we're the reason you've got a bad marriage? We're the problem? (SCOFFS)
See, Kay, this is what I keep telling you about this bozo behind his back.

PATSY CAN'T BEAR THE TENSION. SHE HOLDS MAGGIE OUT AT THEM.

PATSY

You two should have a baby! Have a baby!
These things are problem solvers!

TODD

Hon, I don't think that --

PATSY SHOOTS TODD A SMILE THAT'S WIDE TO THE POINT OF SCARY. HE GRABS AN EGGIE, TAKES A BITE, THEN GIVES HER A THUMBS UP.

ALAN

We don't have kids, Kay, we're both stable,
(OFF HER WILD LOOK) financially, so yeah I think it's best to just rip the bandaid off and move on and Don did you just unsnap the holster of your service revolver?

ALL EYES GO TO DON. HE RELAXES THE HAND HOVERING OVER HIS GUN.

KAYLA

If you want to leave, then go! Now!

DON MOTIONS FOR SEAN TO GET THE DOOR, WHICH HE DOES. ALAN STARTS OUT, THEN TURNS BACK AND WORKS UP THE NERVE TO SAY:

ALAN

Your mom's eggies were always too salty.

EVERY QUINN GASPS. ALAN EXITS QUICKLY. KAYLA CROSSES DRAMATICALLY INTO THE FAMILY ROOM. DON AND HER SIBLINGS FOLLOW, WHILE MATT, JOY AND TODD HANG BACK AT THE KITCHEN DOOR. KAYLA COLLAPSES ON THE SOFA. DON AND HER SIBLINGS SURROUND HER.

KAYLA

No wonder he didn't want our Christmas card to go out! "Happy Holidays from Kayla and Alan!" It was a lie!

DON

Happy Holidays? Not Merry Christmas? (OFF HER LOOK) Right, not the time. (THEN) I know this is hard, Kay, but it's for the best. Alan was too weak for you.

SEAN

I was always opening jars for that dude.

DON

Emotionally weak. Spiritually. (THEN) But yes, also physically. Arms like twigs.

PATSY

Remember I beat him arm wrestling? It was like gripping an uncooked chicken cutlet.

KAYLA

Where do I go? I can't go home!

DON

You can stay here as long as you want.

EMMY

And I'll be here! Like the old days!

PATSY

Ooh, count me in! We can watch Christmas movies! Home Alone, A Christmas Story...

SEAN

Die Hard. (OFF THEIR LOOKS) Look it up.

KAYLA PICKS UP A FRAMED PHOTO OF A STERN LOOKING WOMAN.

KAYLA

I'm sorry, Mom! A Quinn, getting divorced! (TO OTHERS) I'm embarrassing her in front of God and Abraham Lincoln and everybody up there!

MATT TURNS TO SEE HOW THIS IS PLAYING WITH JOY AND TODD... BUT THEY'RE GONE. HE LOOKS BACK INTO THE KITCHEN AND SEES THEY'RE IN THE BACKYARD... AND JOY'S POURING A CARTON OF EGG NOG ONTO THE LAWN. HMM. MATT LOOKS BACK AT THE FAMILY, BUT THEY'RE FOCUSED ON KAYLA. INTRIGUED, HE EXITS OUT BACK...

RESET TO:

EXT. DON'S HOUSE - BACKYARD

...AND STEPS UP BEHIND THEM, STARTLING THEM. TODD JUMPS, YELPS.

MATT

Sorry! What are you guys doing?

JOY

Nothing, just... this egg nog went bad.

MATT

Oh. Okay. 'Cause it looked like you were "pouring one out" to someone.

TODD LAUGHS, TOO MUCH. JOY SHOTS HIM A LOOK, LIKE, COOL IT.

MATT (CONT'D)

So. Wow. I feel so bad for Kayla.

A BEAT AS THEY NOD SOMBERLY, THEN JOY SPEAKS, CAREFULLY...

JOY

But, you know, two sides to every story.

Alan definitely has his issues, but

Kayla can be a bit of a... pill.

TODD

A big, like horse pill! A pill you gotta split in half just to get it down! (THEN) I have a highly developed gag reflex.

MATT

Okay. (THEN) Actually I like getting your take on this kinda stuff -- the in-laws' take -- 'cause I, uh... I might be one of you guys soon. (SOTTO) I'm gonna ask Emmy to marry me! Yep! Gonna do it Christmas morning! Got the ring and everything!

HE'S EXPECTING MORE OF A REACTION, BUT THEY JUST NOD AND SMILE. JOY THEN TURNS TO TODD AND THEY TALK "PRIVATELY."

JOY

We gotta tell him.

TODD

No! We can't trust him!

JOY

He needs to know! I'm telling him!

TODD

Fine! It's your ass if he squeals!

JOY TURNS BACK TO A NOW DISCONCERTED MATT AND PUTS ON A SMILE.

JOY

Hi. (THEN) Okay, look. Emmy's great. You should definitely get married. Have kids, a life, all of it. (INTENTLY) Just do it far away from here. L.A.'s good. Hawaii'd be better.

TODD

(SUDDENLY) Uhp uhp -- be cool, be cool!

THROUGH THE WINDOW KAYLA PASSES BY, CRYING AND RANTING. DON AND THE FAMILY FOLLOW, TRYING TO CALM HER. MATT, JOY AND TODD FREEZE, TRYING NOT TO CALL ATTENTION TO THEMSELVES. ONCE THE FAMILY HAS PASSED BY, JOY TURNS BACK TO MATT...

JOY

We were pouring one out. To Alan. We have a sort of... support group.

MATT

Support group for what?

JOY

The people who married into this family. (THEN) The Quinns can be great. They're kind, outgoing. I mean, Sean's my dude.

TODD

Yeah, Patsy's the best.

JOY

But when the family's all together, which, since we live within 3.8 miles of each other, is almost every single day...

TODD

Pizza Fridays. Sunday Brunch. Pop ins, stop bys, meet ups, hang outs.

JOY

They're like, and I mean this in the nicest possible way, a cult. Don has a saying: "There's the Quinn way, and the wrong way." How to raise your kids. How to spend your money. What to think about France.

TODD

What kind of soda to drink. (DARKLY)
Pepsi. Always gotta be Pepsi.

JOY

And we can only push back with our spouses so much because the Quinn way is all they know. They think it's normal. But it's not normal, Matt. Not normal at all.

TODD

(AGAIN, SUDDENLY) Be cool, be cool!

INSIDE, HISTRIONIC KAYLA PASSES THE OTHER WAY, THE FAMILY FOLLOWING, TRYING TO PACIFY HER. MATT, JOY AND TODD AGAIN FREEZE, WAITING FOR THE COAST TO CLEAR, THEN...

TODD (CONT'D)

(BLURTS) They worship their dead mom!

JOY

Easy. (THEN) Margaret died four years ago, and even though she was sort of un...nice, they've built her up to be this angel. None of us can live up to her fake memory.

TODD

There are photos of her everywhere. Patsy put one by our bed! It stares at me: "Get off my daughter! You're no man!"

JOY

Alan, Todd and I have been secretly meeting at this bar, Otto's, every week. It's like therapy. A safe space for us to decompress, devise coping strategies...

TODD

(MIMES DRINKING) Take medication.

JOY

And the family will never catch us there 'cause "Quinns don't drink." Don says alcohol's a crutch. Which I guess is true but also, you know, shut up.

TODD

Quinns don't drink, Quinns don't curse. But technically we're not Quinns. (THEN) We call ourselves the Outlaw In-Laws.

JOY

No, we don't. Todd does.

TODD

It's good. (COOL) Outlaw In-Laws.

MATT TAKES A BEAT -- THESE TWO ARE OBVIOUSLY OVERREACTING.

MATT

Okay, well, thanks, but Emmy's not like that. At all. She drinks alcohol. And Coke. Doesn't talk to photos of her dead mom. Doesn't even have a Philly accent.

JOY

That's 'cause she's been away too long. But she'll assimilate. It's the Quinn Way.

EMMY AND PATSY COME OUTSIDE. TODD STARTLES.

TODD

Just dealing with some bad nog is all!

EMMY

Dad's taking Kayla to pick up some clothes so it's safe to come inside.

AS THEY ALL CROSS INSIDE...

PATSY

So, Matt, these two filling you in on our wacky family?

EVERYONE CHUCKLES AT THE IDEA. TODD, AGAIN, WAY TOO MUCH.

RESET TO:

INT. DON'S HOUSE

THEY CROSS IN, MEETING BACK UP WITH DON AND SEAN.

DON

Okay. Kayla's in the bathroom, so listen up Quinns, Quinn-laws. Matt. I know we're all going to Christmas Eve Mass together, but I'd also like you to hit a service before then to pray for her.

KAYLA ENTERS. EVERYONE AD LIBS SUPPORT -- "THERE SHE IS! HEYYY, KAY!" -- BUT SHE JUST ZOMBIE WALKS OUT THE DOOR.

DON (CONT'D)

Yeah, let's get Jesus in on this.

DON FOLLOWS KAYLA OUT THE DOOR.

PATSY

I keep asking myself WWMD? (TO MATT)

What would Mom do?

JOY AND TODD GIVE MATT A LITTLE LOOK LIKE "YEP."

SEAN

Yeah, I was gonna kick Alan's ass but I knew Mom wouldn't approve. (ADMITTING)
Also Alan promised me his Iggles tickets and I still want to try to swing those.

EMMY

Hey, if you go, maybe you could take Matt to the Iggles game.

MATT

Iggles?

EMMY

Oh -- Eagles, sorry. I'm home ten minutes and I'm already talking like you guys.

JOY AND TODD GIVE MATT ANOTHER SUBTLE LOOK.

TODD

(SOTTO) It begins.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. DON'S HOUSE - EMMY'S BEDROOM - LATER

EMMY UNPACKS WHILE MATT STRUMS HIS GUITAR. HE SITS DOWN ON ONE OF TWO TWIN BEDS, CAUSING IT TO SQUEAK. DOWN THE HALL, WE HEAR DON CLEAR HIS THROAT... FOR A LONG TIME. EMMY SIGHS.

EMMY

My dad's way of letting us know he can hear whatever we do in here.

ANOTHER THROAT CLEAR.

EMMY (CONT'D)

Especially anything bed-related.

ANOTHER THROAT CLEAR.

EMMY (CONT'D)

(CALLING) Okay, Dad!

A CONCLUDING THROAT CLEAR, THEN SILENCE. MATT LIES BACK, CLOSES HIS EYES AND SIGHS, CONTENTEDLY. FINALLY, SLEEP. THEN --

KAYLA (O.S.)

Oh, look. The love birds.

MATT AND EMMY LOOK TO THE DOOR TO FIND KAYLA.

EMMY

Heyyy, Kayla. How you doing?

KAYLA CROSSES IN AND SITS DOWN ON MATT'S BED.

KAYLA

(RE: GUITAR) You know any Buffett?

MATT

Jimmy Buffett?

KAYLA

No, Warren Buffett.

MATT

Oh, yeah, of course Jimmy. Uhh, no.

KAYLA SIGHS IN DISGUST.

EMMY

So, Matt, Kayla and I shared this bedroom when we were kids.

KAYLA

And now it's her and you. I keep getting cut out of people's lives.

EMMY

You want to stay in here with me tonight?

Matt can take the spare room, right Matt?

BEFORE MATT CAN EVEN SAY "YES" KAYLA JUMPS UP AND HUGS EMMY, THEN TURNS AND STARES AT MATT. A BEAT.

MATT

Oh, you want me to go now?

KAYLA

(DUH) Yes please.

EMMY MOUTHS A "THANK YOU" TO HIM AS HE GATHERS HIS STUFF.

KAYLA (CONT'D)

Take the guitar. Don't play it, just
take it.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. SEAN AND JOY'S HOUSE - KITCHEN

JOY IS DOING DISHES AS SEAN FLIPS THROUGH CHRISTMAS CARDS.
SEAN JR. ENTERS, ANXIOUS, AND SITS AT THE TABLE.

SEAN JR.

Hey, can I talk to you guys?

JOY

A sit down talk? Are you pregnant?

HE DOESN'T SMILE. NOW ON GUARD A BIT, JOY AND SEAN SIT DOWN.

SEAN JR.

So... I know you've been wondering why I've
been all like quiet lately. And I've been
trying to figure out how to tell you... I,
um... (EXHALES) I have these... feelings.
In me. I tried to talk myself out of it,
feeling this way, but I... it's who I am.

ACROSS FROM SEAN JR., SEAN NERVOUSLY DOWNS AN ENTIRE GLASS OF
WATER. IT TAKES AWHILE. FINALLY, HE FINISHES.

SEAN

Sorry. Go ahead. Or we can do this
later. Up to you. Wanna do it later?

SEAN JR.

No, I need to get it out. I wanted you to
know I'm... (LONG BEAT) I'm an atheist.

JOY

Oh honey, we love you no matter -- what?

SEAN

(RELIEVED) An atheist! He's an atheist! Not a, uh... Oh lordy! (GETS UP) I'm having more water. Anybody else want water?

SEAN JR.

I was nervous to tell you because you guys raised me all Catholic and I didn't want to upset you.

JOY

Aw, sweetie, you're so thoughtful.

Right, Sean?

SEAN IS CHUGGING MORE WATER AND JUST GIVES A THUMBS UP.

SEAN JR.

Oh, so do I tell Poppy Don I'm not going to Church on Christmas Eve, or should you?

JOY AND SEAN LOOK AT HIM, CONFUSED.

SEAN JR. (CONT'D)

I mean, obviously I'm not gonna go and just pretend to believe in God. You know what? I'll explain it to him. Might even change his mind about some stuff!

SEAN JR. EXITS. SEAN GULPS DOWN HIS WATER, THEN:

SEAN

Okay. I'm gonna go pee and then we can start freaking out.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. DON'S HOUSE - SPARE BEDROOM

CLOSE ON MATT, EYES CLOSED. THEN WE HEAR A MECHANICAL WHIR AND THUMPING... MATT OPENS HIS EYES. REVEAL HE'S IN BED IN A ROOM CRAMMED WITH BOXES, JUNK... AND DON JOGGING ON A TREADMILL. HE GIVES MATT A S'UP NOD AND CONTINUES HIS WORKOUT...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. DON'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - LATER

PATSY ICES COOKIES WITH THE BABY. EMMY AND KAYLA ENTER.

PATSY

Hey, girls! How was your walk?

KAYLA

Bleak and endless. A taste of my future.

EMMY

And we saw a squirrel with a candy cane!

SHE IMITATES A NIBBLING SQUIRREL. NOTHING FROM KAYLA. PATSY SHOWS HER THE PLATE OF COOKIES.

PATSY

Look, Kayla, I dug out Mom's Christmas cookie cutters and... ta da!

KAYLA

(BEAT, EMOTIONAL) They remind me of Mom.

PATSY

Oh, sorry, I didn't think...

SHE STARTS TO PULL THE PLATE AWAY, BUT KAYLA TAKES IT.

KAYLA

I still want them. They'll just make me really, really sad.

SHE EXITS INTO THE LIVING ROOM. PATSY LOOKS HURT.

EMMY

You don't have to keep trying to be Mom.

PATSY SMILES A LITTLE AND NODS.

EMMY (CONT'D)

You gonna keep trying to be Mom?

PATSY

(INTENT) So much.

RESET TO:

INT. DON'S HOUSE - FAMILY ROOM

KAYLA STANDS BY THE SOFA, WHERE MATT SITS, DOZING, MOUTH AGAPE. SHE WATCHES HIM A BEAT, THEN NUDGES THE SOFA WITH HER KNEE. MATT STARTLES AWAKE. EMMY ENTERS FROM THE KITCHEN.

EMMY

Oh, hey, sweetie. We were gonna go binge some Gilmore Girls on my computer.

MATT

Okay. I could get my Gil Girls on.

KAYLA

That's not a thing. Nobody calls it that.

EMMY

Actually, it was just gonna be us sisters. Can you hang on your own a little longer?

MATT

Oh. Sure. If I can have a cookie.

KAYLA DOESN'T WANT TO GIVE HIM ONE, BUT EMMY GIVES HER A LOOK SO SHE RELENTS. AS MATT REACHES OUT, CHOOSING...

KAYLA

Not that one... No... No... Okay.

HE TAKES A COOKIE AND KAYLA EXITS.

EMMY

Thanks. I'm sorry. She's a bit of a...

MATT

EMMY (CONT'D)

Pill, yeah.

Raw nerve right now.

MATT

...Raw nerve, right. Raw nerve.

EMMY

A pill? She's getting divorced, Matt.

MATT

Sorry. I'm just tired. Like, I don't know where that Gil Girls thing came from.

EMMY

(SMILES) Sorry I snapped. But us Quinns gotta stick together. Eat your cookie.

SHE GIVES HIM A KISS AND EXITS. MATT SITS DOWN. BEHIND HIM, DON ENTERS WITH CHRISTMAS LIGHTS, BUT STOPS WHEN HE SEES MATT. NOT WANTING TO BE SEEN, HE TRIES TO TIPTOE THROUGH --BUT THEN HULA SANTA JUMPS TO LIFE AND *MELE KALIKIMAKA* STARTS UP. MATT TURNS AND DON HAS TO PRETEND HE SOMEHOW DIDN'T SEE HIM.

DON

Oh, hey! (ANNOYED ASIDE) Hula Santa.

MATT

Can I help you put up the lights?

DON

Thanks, but I like to do it myself.

MATT

Okay. Could I just come out and watch?

DON

You know we have TV, right? (OFF HIS PLAINTIVE STARE, SIGHS) Alright.

HE EXITS. MATT PUTS ON HIS COAT, THEN PULLS OUT A RING BOX. HE OPENS IT, STARING AT THE RING, PSYCHING HIMSELF UP. HE EXITS.

RESET TO:

EXT. DON'S HOUSE - FRONT YARD

DON IS SETTING UP A LARGE MANGER DISPLAY AS MATT COMES OUT.

MATT

This is going to look great.

DON

Yep. Simple, tasteful. Just strings of lights, a manger scene, and, this year...

HE REVEALS A LARGE, BEAUTIFUL, TRANSLUCENT ANGEL FIGURE.

DON (CONT'D)

...an angel for the roof. To represent Emmy's mom. Looking down on all of us.

MATT

Wow. I'd tear up but my eyes are frozen.

DON

We've been doing this house lighting for years. The grandkids flip on the lights, we sing carols, drink hot cider.

MATT PICKS UP A MANGER FIGURE AND GESTURES WITH IT AS HE TALKS.

MATT

I love hot cider. People are always like "Hot chocolate rules!" But I'm like, No way. Hot cider for me, thanks.

DON

We're gonna have hot chocolate, too.

MATT

Also really good. Anyway, speaking of tradition... (EXHALES) I'm in love with your daughter, Mr. Quinn. She is --

DON

Could you not wave baby Jesus around?

MATT REALIZES WHAT HE'S HOLDING AND CAREFULLY HANDS IT TO DON.

MATT

Tradition. Is what I was talking about.
And I thought you of all people would
appreciate this gesture.

DON GLANCES UP, LOOKING AT MATT WITH NEW EYES.

DON

You're asking me for my daughter's hand
in marriage, aren't you?

MATT

Oh. Uh, yes. I was. I am.

DON

Huh. You know you're the first of my
daughters' suitors to have the guts to do
this?

MATT

Really? What is up with that?

DON

I guess being a gentleman's a dying
art. Yeah, I do appreciate it, Matt.

MATT

Well, you are quite welcome.

DON

Which makes it all the harder to say no.

MATT OPENS HIS MOUTH TO RESPOND, BUT NOTHING COMES OUT.

DON (CONT'D)

This whole Alan thing made me realize I
gotta be more careful who I let into
this family. But thanks for asking. It
means a lot. Not enough. But a lot.

AGAIN, MATT STARTS TO RESPOND BUT NO WORDS COME OUT.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. OTTO'S BAR AND GRILL

A SHELL-SHOCKED MATT STANDS BEFORE JOY AND TODD.

TODD

New guy! Welcome to the club!

TODD PULLS UP A CHAIR TO THEIR TABLE AND MATT SITS.

MATT

He gave me an excuse, but he just thinks I'm a joke. That I'm no good for Emmy.

TODD

An unemployed musician from L.A.? If Don was president you'd be in Guantanamo.

JOY

Worst of all, you're the guy who's keeping his baby daughter from him.

MATT

I'm not "keeping" Emmy anywhere! She took a job out there way before she even met me. God, that's so sexist.

TODD

Have you met Don?

JOY

Look, what he thinks shouldn't matter. But it will. My advice: hold off asking Emmy to marry you on this trip.

MATT

But Christmas is the perfect time! I designed the ring, I wrote a song...

TODD

Aw, that's sweet. (THEN) You know Don keeps guns in the house, right?

MATT

He thinks he can intimidate me, but when I know what I want, I go for it. When I decided to be in a band I left everyone I knew and moved to L.A. No money, no connections. Just did it. And now I want Emmy. I just need to prove to him I'm good enough. No, not good enough. Perfect.

A BEAT AS JOY AND TODD TAKE IN THIS ROUSING SPEECH, THEN...

JOY

He's like a hurt baby duck. You want to help, but maybe it's best to let him waddle into the bushes and die.

TODD

Go into the light, baby duck!

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. DON'S HOUSE - ROOF/FRONT YARD - LATE AFTERNOON

DON IS STAPLE-GUNNING LIGHTS ON THE PITCHED, SINGLE STORY ROOF WHEN HE TURNS AND NOTICES MATT, ON A LADDER, STARING AT HIM.

DON

Don't creep up on a guy on a roof, Matt!

MATT

Just wanted to see if you needed help.

DON

No, I'm fine. But I don't have time to chat.

(MORE)

DON (CONT'D)

I had to help Kayla haul all her stuff over here, then drive her back, wait for her to cut up Alan's clothes with a garden shears... It's been a day.

MATT

Then let me help! I want to show you I'm a... a... vessel of dependability.

DON

(BEAT) Are you high, rock star? 'Cause I can still bust you. This ain't L.A. Or Colorado. Or Alaska. Or Maine or -- Good lord I'm starting to despise this country.

EMMY (O.S.)

What are you doing up there, Matt?

MATT AND DON LOOK DOWN TO SEE. EMMY AND KAYLA ARE STARING UP.

MATT

Helping your dad with the lights.

EMMY

Oh. (THEN) Do you want help, Dad?

DON

I sure don't.

EMMY

Matt, c'mon, I'm making a fire. Come watch Elf with me and Kayla.

KAYLA LOOKS AT EMMY LIKE "WHAT? NO!"

EMMY (CONT'D)

Just let my dad finish. Everyone's going to be here in forty-five minutes.

DON

Damn it. Is it that late?

KAYLA

He made Dad curse! Quinns don't curse!

Outside men are ruining everything!

PATSY CROSSES UP WITH A PLASTIC BIN FILLED WITH ENVELOPES.

PATSY

Kay! Look! I got your Christmas cards back!

Remember how mom would never take no for an

answer? Well, I went to the post office and

explained your, you know, sitch, and asked

for the cards back. At first they were like

"no way," but, thanks to my personality --

and I promised them Todd would whiten all

their teeth for free -- and... viola!

KAYLA

Wow. You did all that for me?

PATSY NODS HAPPILY.

KAYLA (CONT'D)

So you have no faith Alan and I will work

it out!

KAYLA RUNS INSIDE. PATSY WATCHES HER GO, THEN SIGHS.

PATSY

Frick.

SHE EXITS INSIDE AS MATT RELUCTANTLY CLIMBS DOWN THE LADDER.

EMMY

Thanks. He just has his way of doing

things. And the truth is, it works.

MATT

The Quinn Way. You were rolling your eyes at it when we got here this morning.

EMMY

(SHRUGS) Being home. It does stuff to you.

MATT STARES AT HER. SHE'S ASSIMILATING. DON CALLS DOWN.

DON

Okay, I'm gonna need help to finish in time. Get up here, Matt.

MATT LIGHTS UP AND CLAMBERS UP THE LADDER AND ONTO THE ROOF.

MATT

Great! Im here for you! (THEN) On the roof. Which is higher than you'd think.

DON STARES AT NERVOUS MATT A BEAT AND SIGHS.

DON

I've got a bad feeling about this.

MATT

Hey -- nice! (OFF DON'S CONFUSED LOOK)
Oh, it's a line from Star Wars.

DON

(SIGHS, THEN) Do musicians in Star Wars have paying jobs?

MATT

Actually, there is a cantina band that -- oh, you don't care.

CUT TO:

SEAN AND JOY'S HOUSE - KITCHEN

JOY, SEAN JR. AND DONNY ARE AT THE TABLE STARTING DINNER WHEN SEAN ENTERS, WAVING TWO TICKETS OVER HIS HEAD.

SEAN

Ho ho ho! Merry Early Christmas! Ho ho ho!

JOY WATCHES, CONFUSED, AS HE DROPS TICKETS IN FRONT OF SEAN JR.

SEAN JR.

Whoa! Tickets to the Philly Comic Con!

SEAN

Where they invite you to (OFF TICKETS)

"Get Ur Geek On!" which I guess is a
thing you do when you don't do sports!

DONNY

What do I get for Early Christmas?

THIS CATCHES SEAN OFF GUARD. HE PULLS OUT HIS WALLET.

SEAN

Uh... twenty...two dollars! Ho ho ho.

HE HANDS CASH TO DONNY. SEAN JR. CONSIDERS THE TICKETS.

SEAN JR.

Is this just to soften me up so I'll go
to church with Poppy Don on Christmas
Eve?

SEAN

What? No! No. (THEN) But if you feel
inspired to not cause a fuss with him, or
Him (NODS UP), I wouldn't stop you.

JOY

Sean, no! You are not bribing our son!

SEAN JR.

It's okay. I'll go to church and pretend
for Poppy Don. I don't even need the
tickets. I don't want to cause problems.

SEAN

Attaboy! And hey, you keep going to church, maybe you'll come to your senses on the whole atheism thing.

SEAN HAPPILY SITS DOWN TO EAT. JOY WATCHES SEAN JR., WHO NOW SEEMS DOWN. A LONG MOMENT AS SHE CONSIDERS THIS, THEN...

JOY

No! No. You shouldn't be afraid to be who you are! You shouldn't have to tip toe around Poppy Don! None of us should!

JOY EXITS. AS SEAN AND SEAN JR. WONDER WHAT GOT INTO JOY, DONNY SLIDES HIS CASH OFF THE TABLE AND POCKETS IT.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. DON'S HOUSE - ROOF - EARLY EVENING

MATT STAPLE-GUNS A STRING OF LIGHTS. DON'S ON THE LADDER.

MATT

It still looks crooked. Let me redo it.

HE PICKS UP THE ANGEL FIGURE TO MOVE IT OUT OF THE WAY.

DON

(SIGHS) We still got a lot left to do.

AS MATT RESPONDS, BEHIND HIM, THE ANGEL, WHICH WE NOW NOTICE HE HAS PLACED ON TOP OF THE CHIMNEY, BEGINS TO SMOKE.

MATT

I hear you, Mr. Quinn. But as an artist, I have an eye for these things and -- (OFF DON'S EYES GOING WIDE) I know, I know, you hate the term "artist" --

DON

(POINTING) No, you -- Look!

MATT TURNS JUST AS THE ANGEL BURSTS INTO FLAMES. PANICKED, HE SWATS IT OFF THE CHIMNEY, THEN BEGINS TO STOMP ON IT.

DON (CONT'D)

Don't stomp on her! That's my wife!

HE GRABS AT MATT, WHO TURNS, TRYING TO KEEP HIS BALANCE -- AND PRESSES THE STAPLE GUN INTO DON'S HEAD. KA-CHUCK. A SHOCKED BEAT. DON GRIMACES BUT REMAINS STOIC. MATT, LESS SO...

MATT

Oh my god IT'S STICKING RIGHT IN YOU

OHH LOOK AT IT LOOK!

DON

I'll have to take your word for it.

MATT FAINTS, FALLING OFF THE ROOF. DON LOOKS DOWN AT HIM AND SIGHS, THEN PULLS OUT HIS CELL AND DIALS.

DON (CONT'D)

Oh, hey, Nancy? It's Don. How's our nine-toed Santa? (CHUCKLES) Listen, would you have an ambulance swing by my place when you get a chance? Yeah, no rush.

MATT (O.S.)

(WEAKLY) Why am I in a shrub?

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. URGENT CARE - EXAM AREA - AN HOUR LATER

DON SITS IN A CURTAINED OFF STALL WITH NANCY, 50'S, AFRICAN AMERICAN, WHO APPLIES A GAUZE TO HIS DE-STAPLED HEAD.

DON

That's the nice thing about getting shot early in my career, Nanc. Any pain after that's just playing for second.

NANCY

My son weighed ten pounds at birth. Every pain since I'm like "If it ain't ten pounds being yanked out of me, bring it."

THEY CHUCKLE. SHE CROSSES OUT AND WE FOLLOW HER INTO ANOTHER STALL, REVEALING MATT AND EMMY. MATT'S GETTING OUT OF BED.

NANCY (CONT'D)

Hey -- what'd I say? You need to stay in bed 'til the doctor does your MRI.

MATT

I don't have a concussion! I'm just tired from a red-eye! Look, I'll touch my nose.

MATT HOLDS HIS ARM OUT, BRINGS IT BACK IN... AND POKES HIS EYE.

EMMY

(TO NANCY) So we'll just wait here for the MRI, thanks so much.

RESET TO:

INT. URGENT CARE - ADMITTING AREA

PATSY, TODD, MAGGIE, JOY, SEAN, SEAN JR. AND DONNY HANG OUT. NEARBY, KAYLA STARES AT AN AQUARIUM AND THE ONE FISH IN IT.

KAYLA

You're all alone on the holidays, too.

YOUNG DONNY, WHO IS CROSSING BY, CONTINUES ON TO JOY AND SEAN.

DONNY

Aunt Kayla is talking to a fish.

JOY

It's been a long day, kiddo.

SEAN NOTICES AN OLD MAN ACROSS FROM HIM HOLDING HIS BELLY.

SEAN

You okay, sir?

OLD MAN

I had some bad egg nog.

TODD AND JOY LOOK UP, SURPRISED TO HEAR THEIR EARLIER EXCUSE.

RESET TO:

INT. URGENT CARE - EXAM AREA

EMMY SITS WITH MATT, WHO LIES IN HIS HOSPITAL BED, STEWING.

MATT

Now I get why you had to put an entire country between you and him.

EMMY

Hey, I can say terrible things about him. He's my dad. You, what you're mad 'cause he didn't want your help with the lights? (RE: WHERE THEY ARE) He had a point.

MATT WANTS TO TELL HER WHY HE'S REALLY UPSET, BUT CAN'T.

EMMY (CONT'D)

You need to relax. (THEN) I'm gonna go get a Pepsi. You want anything?

MATT

Whoa! Wait! Why'd you say Pepsi? Instead of Coke? Or or or or or just soda?

EMMY

I don't know. I just feel like a Pepsi.

MATT

(BEAT, AGHAST) Who are you?

EMMY

I'm just me. A Quinn. Who loves her family. And doesn't like Star Wars.

MATT GASPS, THEN JUMPS OUT OF BED, YANKS BACK THE CURTAIN, RUNS THROUGH THE EXAM AREA AND PULLS BACK DON'S CURTAIN.

MATT

Look, Mr. Quinn -- Don -- I know you're used to getting your way but --

...TO REVEAL HIM GETTING HIS SCALP STITCHED UP BY NANCY.

MATT (CONT'D)

Ohh you can see in ohh is that brain?

AND AS HE FAINTS AGAIN, MATT PULLS THE CURTAIN DOWN FROM THE CURTAIN RINGS - POP POP POP POP - REVEALING THE QUINN FAMILY WATCHING THROUGH A WINDOW INTO ADMITTING.

DON

(TO NANCY) That boy's a bigger pain than
a ten pound baby.

NANCY LAUGHS.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. EMERGENCY ROOM/WAITING AREA - LATER

KAYLA SITS BY HERSELF, STILL STARING AT THE FISH.

KAYLA

There's other fish in the sea, but not
for you and not for me. (WEEPY) I'm a
poet and I don't even know it.

NEARBY, PATSY IS WITH TODD AND BABY AMY, WATCHING KAYLA.

PATSY

Everything I did made her feel worse.

TODD

Hey, Pats, listen. You don't have to be
your mom. (NODS TO BABY) You just have to
be her mom. And you're great at that.

PATSY SMILES. TODD GIVES HER A HUG. A NICE MOMENT AS THEY WATCH LITTLE AMY IN HER CAR SEAT, THEN...

PATSY

Kayla always liked our Mom's shape pancakes
as a kid. I'll try those tomorrow.

TODD JUST SIGHS. SEAN JR. CROSSES PAST AND SITS WITH JOY NEARBY.

SEAN JR.

(SOTTO) Hey, about me not believing in,
you know...? (NODS UP) I'm not gonna
bring it up around Poppy Don.

JOY

Sweetie, no, you don't have to do that.

SEAN JR.

I know. But I want to. He can be... a lot.
But all of us here, we're all he cares
about. So even if I don't believe in (NODS
UP) I can still go to Church with him on
Christmas Eve and be happy because I do
believe in our family.

JOY JUST LOOKS AT HIM, IMPRESSED. DONNY PASSES BY.

DONNY

Now Aunt Kayla's stealing the fish.

THEY LOOK. KAYLA'S USING A PLASTIC BAG TO TRY TO SCOOP OUT THE
FISH. JOY LOOKS BACK AT SEAN JR.

SEAN JR.

Nope. Still believe in our family.

THEY CHUCKLE. SEAN PLOPS DOWN NEXT TO THEM.

SEAN

I guess Dad's house lighting's cancelled.

AS JOY CONSIDERS THIS...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. URGENT CARE - EXAM AREA - LATER

MATT DRINKS A JUICE BOX AS DON ENTERS. MATT IS EMBARRASSED.

MATT

This is just... the nurse is making me.

DON

I see what you're trying to do. Fighting for Emmy. I'm doing the same thing. I'll do whatever I can to make sure she's with somebody stable. Somebody who won't keep her from the one thing she can count on. Her family. I know that makes me look over-protective and out of touch...

MATT

No. (THEN) I mean. (THEN) Eh. (BEAT, HOPEFUL) Hey, so we have loving Emmy in common. That's something, right?

DON

In that it makes us opponents? Okay.

MATT LOSES HIS HOPEFUL LOOK. NURSE NANCY ENTERS.

NANCY

Did you finish your juice?

MATT NODS. SHE STARES. CAUGHT, HE GRUDGINGLY GOES BACK TO IT.

NANCY (CONT'D)

When you finish you're clear to go. (TO DON) You, on the other hand. Your heart rate's still a bit elevated so I get to keep you a little longer.

DON

There are worse things, I guess.

SHE SMILES. DON SMILES BACK. MATT NOTICES. NANCY EXITS.

MATT

You, uh... you like her.

DON

Who? Nancy? What are you... I mean... I like her as someone I deal with on police matters but I don't like her like her. I mean, it's only four years since my... To start seeing another... And my kids, that's their mom. I'd never... you know... Even if I did... but I don't, so... Yeah, no, you're way off and and and and why am I even explaining myself to you? Let's go. Nanc said you could -- Nancy -- the nurse -- whatever her name is -- just go.

HE ESCORTS MATT OUT OF THE EXAM AREA AND INTO ADMITTING...

RESET TO:

INT. URGENT CARE - ADMITTING AREA

...WERE THEY ARE SURPRISED TO FIND THE FAMILY STANDING AND SMILING. JOY GIVES DONNY A CUE. HE PLUGS A CORD IN AND THE ROOM LIGHTS UP. STRINGS OF LIGHTS HAVE BEEN STRUNG AROUND THE ROOM. A CAROL PLAYS. IT'S BEAUTIFUL. PATSY HANDS DON A MUG.

PATSY

Hot cider for you, sir.

DON IS STILL JUST TAKING IT ALL IN.

SEAN

You can thank the Quinn-laws.

JOY

You couldn't be home for the lights, so we brought the lights of home to you.

DON KEEPS A LID ON HIS EMOTIONS, BUT JUST BARELY.

DON

I bet Mom's looking down and smiling.

DONNY HUGS HIM. AW. NEARBY, SEAN JR. LEANS IN TO JOY...

SEAN JR.

(SOTTO) Grammy doesn't really exist
anymore because there's no heaven.

JOY

Dude, let's choose our spots, okay?

SEAN JR. CROSSES AWAY AS MATT STEPS UP TO TODD AND JOY.

MATT

I can't believe you guys did all this.

JOY

Eh. This family's a pain in the butt. But
they're our pain in the butt. (THEN) But
god, yeah, they are a pain in the butt.

THEY WATCH THE FAMILY. EVEN KAYLA'S BRIGHTENED A BIT, SHOWING
OFF HER NEW FISH. EMMY AND DON CROSS OVER AND EMMY SLIPS HER
ARM AROUND MATT, AN OLIVE BRANCH AFTER THEIR TENSION.

EMMY

Look at you two. Matching bandages.

MATT

Bandage buddies!

DON

Don't ruin it. (TO EMMY) You know what'd
make this perfect? If you agreed to meet
with Ted Boseman. (OFF HER LOOK) Not to
take a job. Just chat. As a favor to an old
man who got stapled gunned in the head.

EMMY

Okay. Stop bugging me and I'll do it.

DON

Hey! An early Christmas for dear ol' dad!

HE HUGS HER AND CROSSES AWAY, JOINING THE CAROLING AS HE GOES.

DON (CONT'D)

(BOOMING) *Fa la la la la la, la la la la!*

MATT

Wait, you are gonna meet with that guy?

EMMY

I'm not taking a job here. It's just to get my dad off my back while we're staying with him. Seriously, don't worry.

EMMY GIVES HIM A KISS AND CROSSES OVER TO THE OTHERS, LEAVING MATT UNSETTLED. JOY AND TODD REAPPEAR BEHIND HIM.

TODD

Worry. Seriously.

JOY

Don always gets his way. The Quinn way.

THEY WATCH THE QUINNS CELEBRATE. MATT NOTICES DON SNEAKING LOOKS AT NURSE NANCY ACROSS THE ROOM ACCEPTING A COOKIE FROM PATSY. HE CONSIDERS THINGS A MOMENT, THEN...

MATT

I wonder what would happen if we could loosen Don up a bit. I mean, that'd be good for all of us, right? Quinns and Quinn-laws? If we could get him to, you know, open himself up?

JOY AND TODD CONSIDER THIS, THEN TODD LEANS IN TO JOY.

TODD

Is saying dopey stuff a concussion thing?

JOY

(TO MATT) Oh, baby duck.

BUT MATT JUST WATCHES DON WATCH NANCY.

MATT

Can we talk at Otto's tomorrow?

JOY AND TODD LOOK AT EACH OTHER AND SHRUG -- SURE, WHY NOT?
MATT SMILES TO HIMSELF, AN IDEA FORMING IN HIS HEAD.

ANGLE ON: DON, AS HIS CELL PHONE RINGS. HE STEPS AWAY FROM
THE FAMILY FESTIVITIES AND ANSWERS.

DON

(SOTTO) Hey, Ted. Good news. Emmy agreed
to meet with you. ...Now you just have to
make her a job offer she can't refuse.
...Right, and then no one finds out about
your drunk and disorderly. ...Yes, or the
public urination. ...Or assaulting the
police horse. Boy, that was a heckuva
Thanksgiving night you had there, Ted.

DON HANGS UP AND LOOKS BACK ACROSS THE PARTY. MATT CATCHES
HIS EYE AND GIVES HIM A HOPEFUL SMILE, RAISING HIS MUG OF
COCOA TO HIM. FEELING GOOD ABOUT HIS OWN SCHEME, DON RAISES
HIS MUG OF CIDER BACK.

AND AS THE RAMONES "MERRY CHRISTMAS (I DON'T WANT TO FIGHT
TONIGHT)" BEGINS TO PLAY --

CUT TO BLACK:

END OF EPISODE ONE