

A BLUE RIDGE MOUNTAIN CHRISTMAS

Written by

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Based on the novel "A Christmas Bride" by Hope Ramsay

EXT. NEW YORK CITY - DAY

Over establishing shots of a snowy, Christmas decorated New York City we hear a group of people singing "We Wish You a Merry Christmas."

EXT. NEW YORK CITY HOTEL - DAY

The singing continues as we see an upscale New York City hotel that is completely decked out with holiday décor.

INT. NEW YORK CITY HOTEL - BREAK ROOM - DAY

The people we have been listening to singing are a group of employees of the hotel who have gathered in the merrily decorated break room for a Christmas party. One of the people is WILLOW PETERSEN (30s, passionate, a fixer, funny, All-American), who is enthusiastically leading the impromptu choir. They finish up and there is applause then Willow turns to face everyone.

WILLOW

Thank you everyone for agreeing to celebrate Christmas so early. I know it's still four weeks away but since I'm going to be on vacation...

A co-worker, TASHA, pipes up.

TASHA

No one can say no to you, Willow.

Everyone laughs - it's funny because it's true. The rest of the crowd starts mingling and chatting as Willow approaches Tasha with something behind her back.

WILLOW

I don't know if that's true, but I have found that a plate of Christmas cookies can make all the difference when asking for a favor.

Willow pulls out a plate of cookies from behind her back.

TASHA

I'm covering for you while you're gone, what else do you need?

WILLOW

Someone to water the plants in my office?

TASHA

Willow!

WILLOW

Tasha, please! I'm going to be out for a month. They need lots of Christmas love.

TASHA

That's so exciting that your sister is getting married. You're going to have a busy holiday.

WILLOW

True, but I think it'll be fun. And, it'll keep me from thinking about getting transferring again.

TASHA

(shakes her head)

Every two years like clockwork. Where do you think they're sending you this time?

WILLOW

We just invested in a ski resort in Colorado. That's my guess.

TASHA

(shrugs)

There are worse places to get transferred. Do you like to ski?

WILLOW

I guess I'll find out.
(looks at watch)
I need to hit the road. About those plants?

TASHA

I want more cookies.

WILLOW

Deal! Merry Christmas, Tasha.
Merry Christmas everyone!

Everyone waves and wishes Willow a Merry Christmas as she hurries out of the breakroom.

EXT. BLUE RIDGE MOUNTAINS HIGHWAY - DAY

As Christmas music plays, we see an establishing shot of a highway cutting through the gorgeous, snow-capped Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia. We see a car driving down the road.

EXT. SHENANDOAH FALLS - DAY

Establishing shots of Shenandoah Falls, a charming burg nestled in the mountains. The middle-America type main street of the town has a dusting of snow and is done up for Christmas, with lights, ornaments, wreaths on the lamp posts, and other festive decorations.

In the town square we see things being set up for a Christmas market - stalls, booths, vendors, games and the like, plus room for a big Christmas tree.

Willow's car comes down the street and pulls into a parking space along Main Street. She gets out and looks around, happy to be home.

EXT. JAYBIRD CAFE - DAY

Willow walks up to the Jaybird Cafe, a cute diner on the main street of Shenandoah Falls that is extensively decorated for Christmas, but that isn't stopping JUNI PETERSEN (early 30s, expressive, enthusiastic, cute) from adding more.

WILLOW

Juni, I'm not sure the building can take the weight of any more Christmas decorations.

Juni sees Willow, screams, and goes to hug her fiercely.

JUNI

Willow! You're here!

WILLOW

Where else would I be?. My little sister is getting married!

JUNI

Yeah, I am! In four weeks I will be Mrs. Austin Boyle. Juni Boyle. Juni Petersen hyphen Boyle.

WILLOW

You've been writing that on all of your notebooks, haven't you?

JUNI

Of course.

WILLOW

Well, I am here, reporting for
wedding duty and ready to work!

They hug again and Juni guides Willow toward the door.

JUNI

Come on. Mom's waiting. And if
you think there are a lot of
decorations out here...

The two of them laugh and head into the café.

INT. JAYBIRD CAFE - DAY

The inside of this small-town café has a classic lunch counter, booths, and tables with enough Christmas décor to call this a "wonderland." Holding steady over the place is LINDA PETERSEN (60s, colorful, energetic). Willow and Juni enter. Linda rushes them for a hug.

LINDA

Willow! Oh, look at you. You look
beautiful. Everybody look how
beautiful my daughter is! This is
the best Christmas present ever!

Everyone looks and smiles/toasts. Willow smiles, having known this was coming, but still a little embarrassed.

WILLOW

Mom, you're acting like you haven't
seen me in years. You were just in
New York a couple of months ago.

LINDA

That's not the same as having you
home. Always so busy.
(proud, to the diner)
She manages a big hotel in New
York. And before that she was in
Chicago and before that... where
were you?

WILLOW

Phoenix. And I'm the assistant
manager.

LINDA

Oh, please, you're the second most important person at the hotel and you oversee everything. So, manager, assistant manager, potato, tomato. Either way I'm very proud of you.

WILLOW

Thank you, Mom.
(to Juni)
How goes wedding prep?

LINDA

Snow.

WILLOW

(beat)
I'm gonna need more than that, Mom.

JUNI

Too much of it on the roof of the hall where we were going to get married. They think it might collapse and they say they can't do anything about it until it melts.

WILLOW

What? When did this all happen?

JUNI

Last week.

WILLOW

Why didn't you tell me? I could've helped.

LINDA

With the roof?

WILLOW

No, helped find a new venue.

JUNI

I didn't want to bother you. And we've been looking but none of the good places are available. We have a few possibilities that are okay.

WILLOW

Just okay? You can't get married in someplace just okay.

LINDA

It's better than no place at all.

WILLOW

Don't worry, I'm sure I can find
someplace spectacular.

JUNI

Everyone I've talked to says all of
the spectacular places are booked.

WILLOW

(with a glint in her eye)
They say that now, but they haven't
talked to me yet.

JUNI

Uh-oh. I know that look. Mom,
break out the Christmas cookie
ingredients.

LINDA

On it!

Linda heads for the kitchen. We can see Willow's gears
turning as she is considering the possibilities.

EXT. LINDA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Linda's house is a cozy traditional with lots of charm. Of
course there are roughly a million Christmas lights.

INT. LINDA'S HOUSE - WILLOW'S ROOM - NIGHT

Willow comes into her childhood bedroom lugging a suitcase
and talking on the phone.

WILLOW

And there's no wiggle room in that
schedule at all? No, I already
tried them, they're booked solid.
So are the other dozen places I've
called. No, I work at a hotel so I
get it. If something changes, let
me know? Thanks. Merry Christmas.

Willow disconnects the call, not pleased with how things have
progressed. As she takes off her coat, she looks around the
room smiling at memories. She examines several of them - a
trophy, a ribbon, some pictures of childhood friends.

Then she finds a larger framed photograph of Willow and Juni as kids in front a pretty building with a sign that says Eagle Hill Manor.

Willow looks at the picture with affection and then inspiration strikes. She takes the picture and exits.

INT. LINDA'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Linda is in her kitchen putting together a Christmas manger nativity scene on the table as Willow enters with the photo.

LINDA

Oh, good, you can help me with the nativity scene. We need twenty-four animals around the barnyard.

WILLOW

Mom, I had an idea about where to... twenty-four? Why?

LINDA

Because the coffee shop down the street from the cafe has a dozen on their nativity scene and I've always said the Jaybird is twice as good, so...

WILLOW

It worries me that you went there and counted, but listen, I might know where Juni can get married.

LINDA

Where?

WILLOW

(shows her the photo)
Eagle Hill Manor.

LINDA

They don't do weddings. David Lyndon owns it now, and he says there's no room at the inn, so to speak.

WILLOW

David Lyndon... isn't that the name of...

LINDA

Yes, Austin's best man. They work together at the law firm.

(MORE)

LINDA (CONT'D)

He wanted to help, and they actually have a room that would be perfect for the reception, but they don't have a space for the ceremony. And since he's selling the inn...

WILLOW

He's selling it?

LINDA

Austin says he has a buyer that's very interested.

WILLOW

I wish we could figure out some way of having the wedding there. Eagle Hill was such a great place to grow up.

LINDA

It was a great place to raise a family. We loved owning the inn.

WILLOW

(looks at photo)

It would be like coming full circle.

Willow looks at the nativity scene and has a thought.

WILLOW (CONT'D)

Hmmm.... No room at the inn, huh?

Willow's thought starts to bloom into an idea. She looks at the photo of the inn once again. We PUSH IN on it and...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. EAGLE HILL MANOR - DAY

It doesn't look exactly the same as in the photo but it's pretty close. The main house has a wide front porch, high-pitched eaves, stone chimneys, and classic shutters. A BARN sits off to the side, classic Americana style.

There are Christmas decorations adorning the inn, tasteful lights and garland.

Willow's car pulls up in front of the manor and she gets out to look at the place, nostalgic with memories. She looks at the adjacent barn and smiles - she walks toward it.

INT. EAGLE HILL MANOR - KITCHEN - DAY

Inside the sunny kitchen of the inn, NATALIE LYNDON (10, bursting with energy) is at the table working on handmade Christmas cards. PAM LYNDON (60s, gregarious) enters from the dining room carrying a tray. Through the door we see a handful of people at tables - guests of the inn. Pam enters the kitchen and puts down the tray.

NATALIE

Grandma, I need more glitter for Mrs. Jackson's Christmas card.

PAM

It's very sweet that you're making one for a guest.

NATALIE

She's a teacher. She helped me with my math homework.

PAM

Oh. Well, then yes, you definitely need more glitter.

DAVID LYNDON (30s, strong convictions, conservative good looks) enters the room. He kisses Natalie on the forehead and gives his mom a kiss on the cheek.

DAVID

Good morning.
(to Pam)
Where is he?

PAM

In the great room with Garrett.

DAVID

Okay. Wish me luck.

NATALIE

Dad, you still haven't found Henry.

DAVID

Natalie, I looked everywhere.
Where did you hide him?

NATALIE

I can't tell you that. You're supposed to find him. That's how hide and seek works.

DAVID

(smiles)

You forgot where you hid him,
didn't you?

NATALIE

No.

(beat)

Maybe. But it's still your job to
find him.

DAVID

Yes, that is true. But it's also
my job to not be late for work and
yours is to not be late for school.

NATALIE

Okay, but you're going to look for
him tonight after work, right?

DAVID

We'll look together.
(hugs her - re: card)
You need more glitter.

NATALIE

Exactly!

PAM

(to Natalie)

Go get your backpack.
(aside to David)
Go close the deal.

Natalie runs off and David nods. He heads for the door.

INT. EAGLE HILL MANOR - GREAT ROOM - DAY

David enters a room that could accommodate tables, a buffet,
and a small dance floor. There he finds ROBERT COLE (50s,
personable) talking to GARRETT MOORE (late 20s, laid back).

GARRETT

The wiring is in great shape.

ROBERT

That's good to hear.

DAVID

Robert... sorry to keep you
waiting. Ten-year-olds are on
their own timetable.

ROBERT

Say no more. I had a couple of those myself awhile back.

DAVID

Has Garrett been giving you the information you needed?

ROBERT

Yes, he's great. Does the purchase price include the handyman?

GARRETT

(laughs)
We'll talk. I'll leave you to it.

DAVID

Thanks, Garrett.

Garrett exits, leaving David and Robert alone.

ROBERT

What do you use this room for?

DAVID

Luncheons, receptions...

ROBERT

Wedding receptions?

DAVID

We don't do weddings. We talked about adding a chapel or something like that but we just... never got around to it.

ROBERT

We?

DAVID

My late wife and I. She had all sorts of plans for this place.

ROBERT

I'm sorry. You know, I never asked you, but why are you selling it?

DAVID

I'm up for partner at my law firm.

ROBERT

Congratulations.

DAVID

Thank you. But I'm already too busy to pay as much attention to the inn as it deserves and becoming partner is going to mean even more work, so... it's time to let go.

(looks at watch)

Speaking of work... Feel free to look around. Garrett can answer any other questions you have.

ROBERT

Will do. Thank you, David.

They shake hands and David heads for the door then stops and takes one more look at the room. He smiles and leaves.

EXT. EAGLE HILL MANOR - FRONT PORCH - DAY

Natalie comes bounding out the front door of the inn and almost collides with a couple coming up the steps with luggage. David and Pam come out in time to see it.

DAVID

Natalie, be careful.

(to the couple)

Sorry. Welcome to Eagle Hill. The front desk is to the right.

MAN

(smiling)

Thank you.

The couple goes inside.

DAVID

Mom, you're sure you're okay taking Natalie to school?

PAM

Partners need to be punctual.

DAVID

Prospective partners. Natalie? You have a good day at school.

NATALIE

Okay. Have a good day at work.

DAVID

(smiles and hugs her)

I will.

PAM
Come on, sweetie. Fifth grade
awaits!

Pam and Natalie go toward the small parking lot. David is about to do the same when he notices the door of the barn is open. He glances at his watch, sighs, and heads toward it.

INT. EAGLE HILL MANOR - BARN - DAY

Willow is looking around the barn and taking a few pictures of the space, which is a large, mostly empty room - there are some barrels and hay and assorted other junk. David enters.

DAVID
Hi. May I help you?

WILLOW
Hi. I'm looking for David Lyndon.

DAVID
In the barn?

WILLOW
No, actually, about what I want to
do to the barn.

DAVID
You... I'm sorry. Who are you?

WILLOW
Right. Skipped that part. I'm
Willow Petersen. I grew up here.

DAVID
(shakes her hand)
Petersen. Was your dad, Hank?
Your family used to own this place,
right?

WILLOW
Yes, my great grandfather built it.
And, my sister...

DAVID
Is marrying my friend Austin...
you're Juni's sister Willow. Okay,
it all comes together. Your family
did a remarkable job here.

WILLOW
Thanks. It was a great place for a
kid to grow up.

DAVID

(smiles - wistful)

Yes, it is. Anyway, what can I do for you? Something about the barn?

WILLOW

Yes, well... speaking of Juni and Austin, you heard that they lost their wedding venue, right? Well, I was thinking maybe they could get married here... at Eagle Hill.

DAVID

We talked about it, but we don't have a place for the ceremony.

WILLOW

(arms wide)

Sure you do.

DAVID

The barn?

WILLOW

There's plenty of room. With the right décor it could be beautiful.

DAVID

You know I'm selling the inn, right?

WILLOW

Right, but it's not sold yet...

DAVID

It could be at any minute. I have a potential buyer. He's kind of on the fence right now, but...

WILLOW

He could wait until after Christmas, couldn't he? I mean, it's only four weeks.

DAVID

Right. Only four weeks to plan and execute an entire wedding? Plus, the inn needs some work before we could have an event like that.

WILLOW

Which I'll oversee. I do events at my company's hotels all the time.

(MORE)

WILLOW (CONT'D)

This will be like staging the inn
for your sale.

DAVID

Staging it how?

WILLOW

By having a big event like a
wedding at Christmas. The holidays
were always so special at the inn
with the snow and the lights and
the decorations.

DAVID

We already have all that.

WILLOW

Not very much. You need to go
bigger if you want to get your
buyer off the fence. More
Christmas, a few improvements
around the inn, a big wedding
event. Those are the kind of
things that will get a buyer's
attention. Show them the
possibilities. And I'll do it all.
You don't have to worry about a
thing.

DAVID

The cost...

WILLOW

My family is paying for everything
related to the wedding. And with
anything else, you'll get a return
on your investment when you sell
the inn. And I'll keep costs low.
My mom knows everyone in this town
and they all owe her favors.

DAVID

Listen, I would love to help out.
I'm Austin's best man, but having a
wedding here... I've got so much
going on already... It's not a good
time. I'm sorry. I have to go.

David motions toward the door as if to suggest that Willow
needs to leave. She takes one more shot.

WILLOW

Do you like Christmas cookies?

David looks at her with confusion and she shakes her head and exits. He looks around the barn and then does the same.

EXT. LAW FIRM - DAY

Establishing shot of a law office in Shenandoah Falls.

INT. LAW FIRM - AUSTIN'S OFFICE - DAY

David is sitting in a chair in the wood-panel lined office belonging to AUSTIN BOYLE (early 30s, was probably a quarterback in high school), who is putting up garland over the doorway.

DAVID

Who wants to get married in a barn?

AUSTIN

Is this too low?

DAVID

I mean, it's a barn.

AUSTIN

This is too low. Somebody will run into it and sue me.

DAVID

It was just so out of the blue.

AUSTIN

Although that would be ironic.

DAVID

Austin, are you listening to me?
(off Austin's look)
The garland is too low.

AUSTIN

Then come help me.

DAVID

I need to go dazzle the partners with my brilliant legal mind.

AUSTIN

And how are you going to do that?

DAVID

I'll just say ergo and to wit a lot. They love that stuff.

AUSTIN

Shocking that you aren't partner
already. Ask about Secret Santa.

DAVID

What about it?

AUSTIN

I submitted a proposal to up the
maximum gift price to thirty
dollars.

DAVID

How much was that portable putting
green you wanted for your office?

AUSTIN

\$29.99. Coincidence.

David laughs and starts to exit, then stops.

DAVID

You know I would host the ceremony
in a heartbeat if I thought I could
make it work, right?

AUSTIN

I know. Don't worry about it.
We'll figure out something.

David nods, but obviously feels badly. He exits.

EXT. LINDA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Establishing shot of Linda's house.

INT. LINDA'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Willow, Linda, and Juni are working on a gingerbread house.

LINDA

Don't use too many jelly beans. We
need some for the second story.

WILLOW

Second story? Let me guess, the
gingerbread house at the coffee
shop down the street only has one.

LINDA

I'm simply showing that the Jaybird
Café is the place to go for the
true spirit of Christmas.

WILLOW

(laughs - to Juni)
You're awfully quiet.

JUNI

I'm thinking about how special it'd
be to get married at Eagle Hill.

WILLOW

I know. I'm sorry, sis. I tried.
He wouldn't even consider it.

LINDA

Give the guy a break. It must be
tough for him.

WILLOW

Selling the inn?

LINDA

Needing to sell the inn because you
can't do it by yourself anymore.
Never intending to do it by
yourself in the first place. I
know what that's like.

WILLOW

I guess I hadn't thought of that.

JUNI

How did you do it, Mom? You went
right from the inn to the
restaurant. And you raised two
kids while you were doing it.

LINDA

(shrugs)
It's like a gingerbread house. As
long as you have a solid foundation
you can make it be whatever you
want. Your dad built our
foundation.

The three of them take each other's hands and smile at the
fond memories.

LINDA (CONT'D)

(inspiration)
A gingerbread tree house!

Linda jumps up while Willow and Juni laugh.

EXT. EAGLE HILL MANOR - NIGHT

Establishing shot of the manor at night.

INT. EAGLE HILL MANOR - KITCHEN - NIGHT

David is in the kitchen looking through cabinets and drawers for something. Whatever it is, he obviously doesn't find it. He sighs, shakes his head, and exits.

INT. EAGLE HILL MANOR - NATALIE'S ROOM - NIGHT

David comes into the bedroom where Natalie is firmly tucked in.

DAVID

I'm sorry, Natalie, but Henry wasn't in the kitchen either.

NATALIE

But Dad...

DAVID

Sweetheart, we looked everywhere. I'm sure he'll turn up eventually, and until then, you have all your other stuffed animals right here...

NATALIE

But Henry is my favorite.
(beat - quiet)
Mom gave him to me.

DAVID

I know.

NATALIE

And since this is our last Christmas at the inn, I need Henry more than ever.

DAVID

We'll look tomorrow. I promise.

NATALIE

I still don't understand why we have to move.

DAVID

Honey, we've talked about this. My job is going to get a lot bigger, and I won't have enough time to devote to the inn.

NATALIE

But Grandma helps. And Garrett, too. And I can do more.

DAVID

Honey, do you remember last year when we donated some of your old toys to the church?

NATALIE

They were ones I didn't have time to play with anymore.

DAVID

Right. But there are kids out there who did have time to play with them, and toys need someone to play with them, right?

NATALIE

Right.

DAVID

That's kind of like the inn. It needs someone to pay attention to it in ways I just can't anymore. Someone who can care for it and love it the way we have.

NATALIE

That's a lot of love.

DAVID

Yes... it sure is.

NATALIE

I'm going to miss it here.

DAVID

(beat)
Me, too. Get some sleep.

NATALIE

Good night, Dad.

DAVID

Good night, sweetheart.

David tucks her in and goes to the door. He turns on a Christmas nightlight and starts to exit, taking one last look back at his amazing daughter. He smiles again and exits.

EXT. BOOKSTORE - DAY

Establishing shot of the Secondhand Prose bookstore on Main Street in Shenandoah Falls.

INT. BOOKSTORE - DAY

The charming bookstore has packed shelves, some cozy seating, and a warm ambience and is awash in Christmas decorations including a tree made of books. Pam and her husband MARK LYNDON (60s, cheerful, affectionate) are hanging up stockings with the names of famous characters from Christmas themed literature (Tiny Tim, Little Match Girl, etc.). David is looking around.

DAVID

The store looks great. Dad, I love the book tree.

MARK

Thank you. It took us forever to agree on which books to include.

PAM

It's a Christmas tree, it should have Christmas books!

MARK

There are only so many copies of Dickens around, my love.

PAM

There are other books than "A Christmas Carol," sweetheart.

The two smile and kiss, very obviously in love. The bell over the door jingles and Willow enters. David sees her, but she doesn't see him immediately.

MARK

Welcome to Secondhand Prose.

WILLOW

Thank you. I'm looking for a present for my mom.

PAM

We can help with that. What does she like?

WILLOW

Well...

(sees the Christmas books)
Maybe "A Christmas Carol?"

MARK

(pointedly for Pam)
Yes, it's a wonderful book.

WILLOW

It was my father's favorite. He read it to us every year. I don't know what happened to our copy.

PAM

I think we can probably spare one, don't you think, Mark? David, will you grab one from the back?

WILLOW

(sees David)
Oh, hi. I didn't see you there.

PAM

Do you two know each other?

DAVID

This is Juni's sister, Mom.
Austin's fiancé?

PAM

You're Willow! Linda talks about you all the time at the Jaybird.

WILLOW

Sorry about that.

PAM

No, don't be silly. Being proud of our kids is part of the job.
(points to David)
Like this one is about to become partner at his law firm.

WILLOW

I heard. Congratulations.

DAVID

Thank you. But I'm not partner yet, and so I shouldn't be taking long lunches. I better get back. Good seeing you again, Willow.

WILLOW

Actually, would you mind if I walked with you?

DAVID

Oh... uh, okay. Sure.

WILLOW

(to Pam and Mark)
I'll come back for the book.

PAM

We'll put a copy aside.

WILLOW

Thank you.

Willow and David exit.

EXT. SHENANDOAH FALLS STREET - DAY

Willow and David walk down the merrily decorated Main Street. Over at the town square we see the Christmas market, readying to open in just a few days.

WILLOW

Looks like they're almost ready with the Christmas market.

DAVID

It's one of my daughter's favorite things about the holidays.

WILLOW

Oh, yeah? It was mine, too. How old is she? What's her name?

DAVID

Natalie is ten.

WILLOW

That's a good age.

DAVID

They all have been so far. Fingers crossed we keep it that way.

Willow laughs, and then there is an uncomfortable silence. Willow breaks it.

WILLOW

Listen... About the wedding.

DAVID

Willow, I'm sorry, but...

WILLOW

No, I'm the one who's sorry. Eagle Hill meant so much to my family that I wasn't thinking about how much it's meant to yours... and how hard it must be to let that go.

DAVID

It is. If there was another way...

WILLOW

I get it... but can I just say one more thing about the wedding?

(off his nod)

I really think doing a big event would help sell the inn, but that aside... Christmas used to be incredible at Eagle Hill. We'd go all out with decorations and lights and we had carriage rides around the property.

DAVID

Carriage rides?

WILLOW

Like hay rides but with snow. It was the closest thing we could get to sleigh rides. People loved it.

(beat)

Don't you want one more really spectacular Christmas at the inn before you leave?

DAVID

(beat)

I know Natalie would.

(beat)

But I really don't have time...

WILLOW

I'll do everything. The wedding, Christmas. I'll even get a crew to do any repairs you want.

DAVID

I have a handyman, Garrett. He
could handle that part.
(beat - considers)
Why is this so important to you?

WILLOW

(shrugs)
My family built the place. My
sister and I grew up there. So
much of our lives... Eagle Hill is
important to me.

DAVID

(beat)
Me, too.
(considers)
I won't have to do anything?

WILLOW

I'll do all the work. You won't
even know we're there. Come on,
David... You'll make a lot of
Christmas wishes come true.

DAVID

I don't want to go too crazy...

WILLOW

Is that a yes?

David considers and then he sticks out his hand.

DAVID

To Christmas wishes.

WILLOW

To Christmas wishes.

They shake on it.

END ACT ONE

ACT TWO

EXT. JAYBIRD CAFE - DAY

Establishing shot of the diner.

INT. JAYBIRD CAFE - DAY

On the diner counter, Linda and Juni are assessing an array of Christmas-related food items - everything from candy canes to fruitcake and beyond. Willow is nearby typing on a laptop, attempting to stay uninvolved.

LINDA

It needs candy canes. All good Christmas drinks have candy canes.

JUNI

Exactly! So let's break convention and do the peppermint bark instead.

LINDA

There's a difference between convention and tradition. Willow, what do you think?

WILLOW

That we should all be focusing on planning Juni's wedding?

JUNI

This is for the wedding reception. Instead of a signature cocktail, we're going to have a signature Christmas drink.

LINDA

And if it happens to find its way onto the menu here at the Jaybird, then that's a Christmas bonus.

Willow laughs and shakes her head as David enters.

DAVID

So this is where all the Christmas decorations went. I thought the town looked a little bare.

Linda and Juni go to hug him.

LINDA

There he is. Our hero! Thank you!

JUNI

I can't tell you how much we appreciate you letting us use the inn, David.

DAVID

It's my pleasure. I just hope you can get it all done in four weeks.
(to Willow)
Are you sure you're up for this?

WILLOW

Absolutely. There is nothing to worry about.

DAVID

Garrett is meeting you at lunchtime to go over the to-do list.

WILLOW

Great, thank you.

DAVID

And you can do whatever you want to the barn, but just a reminder that we have guests so we need to keep the disruptions in the main house to a minimum.

WILLOW

Absolutely. They won't even know we're there.

David is leery about this.

EXT. EAGLE HILL MANOR - DAY

Establishing shot of the inn.

INT. EAGLE HILL MANOR - GREAT ROOM - DAY

Willow enters with Garrett, who is holding a clipboard.

WILLOW

And since we're having the reception in here, I think this is the room that needs the most attention. The floor needs a good polish and it could stand a new coat of paint.

David is walking by the door as she says this. He hears this and stops at the doorway.

DAVID

You're going to paint things?

WILLOW

Of course.

DAVID

I thought you were just going to clean it up a little. This room doesn't need to be painted.

WILLOW

We're just sprucing things up. We'll keep it simple, I promise. Here, let me show you some swatches.

DAVID

I just stopped at home for lunch. I need to get back to the office.

WILLOW

Five minutes, I promise.

She smiles at him hopefully - he looks at his watch and then reluctantly steps into the room.

EXT. EAGLE HILL MANOR - NIGHT

Establishing shot of the inn at night.

EXT. EAGLE HILL MANOR - ENTRY HALL - NIGHT

Willow comes in from the great room just as David is walking in the front door .

WILLOW

Oh, good. I was hoping I'd run into you before I left.

DAVID

I literally just walked in the door.

WILLOW

I only need five minutes. I promise.

DAVID

That's what you said this afternoon, and it was more like fifteen.

WILLOW

I know, I'm sorry. But this is really only five. It's about Christmas decorations.

DAVID

We talked about this. We have plenty already. We don't need any more.

Willow guides him back down the hall.

WILLOW

Okay, but what if we just added a few more lights?

DAVID

What is a few?

WILLOW

Like one strand. Or two. Maybe five. And I think we should reopen the discussion about paint...

David shakes his head as they exit the hall.

EXT. EAGLE HILL MANOR - BARN - DAY

Establishing shot of the barn the next morning, over which we hear.

WILLOW (O.S.)

And then we can put the altar here.

INT. EAGLE HILL MANOR - BARN - DAY

Inside the barn, Willow is reviewing plans in a notebook for the wedding with Juni and Austin while David stands off to the side on a call.

DAVID

Austin and I will be back in the office in thirty minutes, max.

Austin looks at David and shakes his head.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Or forty-five. Yes, go ahead and
read it to me.

David continues the call while the others talk wedding.

AUSTIN
Do you really think you can make
this place look good in time?

WILLOW
It's mainly just cosmetic. Some
chairs, some nice rustic light
fixtures, heat lamps so people
don't freeze. It'll be a snap.

JUNI
Great. Then you won't mind if we
add a few things?

WILLOW
Like what?

JUNI
The wedding is two days before
Christmas, so we want trees.

This gets David's attention. He puts his hand over the
phone's speaker.

DAVID
Trees. Plural?

JUNI
Yes. Five or six of them. And
lots of decorations. Garland and
wreaths and the whole nine yards.

AUSTIN
Oh, and don't forget the choir.

DAVID
Choir?

WILLOW
To sing Christmas carols as you
walk down the aisle. I love it.

Willow, Austin, and Juni walk off and David tries to follow
while also dealing with the call.

DAVID
Wait. I..
(into phone)
(MORE)

DAVID (CONT'D)
Hold on, I need to...
(to Willow)
Willow! Austin...

He chases after them.

INT. EAGLE HILL MANOR - GREAT ROOM - NIGHT

Natalie is looking around the room, in the boxes and under the dust covers on the furniture. Willow comes in.

WILLOW
Hi. Did you lose something?

NATALIE
Sort of. I hid something and now I can't find it.

WILLOW
What is it?

NATALIE
Henry.

WILLOW
Who's Henry?

NATALIE
My reindeer. He's my best friend. Except for Rona, she's like my best real friend. But Henry is like my best toy friend.

WILLOW
(smiles)
Got it. And you can't find him?

NATALIE
Huh-uh. Dad and I play hide and seek with him. It was my turn to hide him, and I came up with a really good spot... but now I don't remember where it was.

WILLOW
That happens. What does he look like? I'll be sure to keep an eye out for him.

NATALIE
Well, he's a reindeer, about this big...

David walks in and interrupts the conversation.

DAVID

Natalie, I looked in the kitchen again and...

(sees Willow)

Oh, hi. I didn't know you were still here.

WILLOW

Just finishing up and I ran into who I presume is Natalie?

DAVID

Yes. Natalie, this is Willow. She's the one I told you about who's working around the inn?

NATALIE

You're the Christmas lady!

WILLOW

The what?

NATALIE

The Christmas lady! Dad said you're doing all sorts of Christmas stuff around the inn and that it's making him crazy.

Willow looks at David.

DAVID

(forces a smile)

Crazy excited.

Willow nods and turns back to Natalie.

NATALIE

Is it true we're going to have like a million Christmas trees?

WILLOW

Oh, I don't know about a million, but we're definitely going to have a whole bunch of them. In fact I'm stopping by the tree lot tonight to pick some out.

NATALIE

Dad! Can we go?! I want to pick out a tree for us, too!

DAVID

Natalie, we were going to go this weekend.

NATALIE

But Dad, if Willow gets trees tonight and we get ours later, it won't match.

DAVID

I think they all kind of look the same, don't they?

WILLOW

What? No. Every tree is unique and special in its own way.

NATALIE

Yeah! Dad!

David gives Willow a "you're not helping" look.

WILLOW

(tries to fix it)

But once you get all the lights and ornaments on nobody will know the difference.

NATALIE

I will. Please, Dad?

David takes a moment and then puts on a smile.

DAVID

I guess we're going tree shopping.

Natalie cheers and runs toward the door.

NATALIE

I'll get my coat.

Natalie exits. David nods at Willow and they follow Natalie.

EXT. CHRISTMAS TREE FARM - NIGHT

Willow, David, and Natalie are looking through the trees, tagging ones they are planning to buy.

NATALIE

That one. And that one! Ooh, that one is pretty, too.

DAVID

Natalie, you've liked every tree in the entire lot.

NATALIE

They've all been good so far! Willow, can I help put the ornaments and the lights on?

WILLOW

Of course! I'm going to need all the help I can get.

NATALIE

Cool. I'm going to go look at these trees over here. I'll let you know if I find any good ones.

WILLOW

(smiles)
Okay.

Natalie rushes off to inspect trees. David turns to Willow.

DAVID

The trees are one thing, but we're not adding any more Christmas to the inn, right?

WILLOW

I think we should. And we could do the carriage rides, too.

DAVID

The trees are more than enough.

Down the aisle, Natalie waves and points at a tree. David smiles and gives a thumbs up.

WILLOW

Is she always this enthusiastic?

DAVID

Yes. It's hard to keep up sometimes.

WILLOW

I'll bet. I was just like her when I was a kid. Everything had to be turned up to eleven. Especially at Christmas.

DAVID

In other words, not a lot has changed since then?

WILLOW

I'm just trying to put on a great wedding and an amazing Christmas. That's what we decided was going to be good for everyone, right?

DAVID

Yes, right. I'm just wondering when we get to the part where I don't have to worry about anything?

WILLOW

(careful smile)
Tomorrow? Friday at the latest.

DAVID

Willow, I'm serious. I can't keep getting pulled away from work to help you give your sister her dream wedding... which apparently involves every Christmas tree in existence for some reason.

WILLOW

This is not all about the wedding. We're trying to get your buyer off the fence, remember? Fixing up the place and hosting a big event there is going to show how special Eagle Hill really is.

DAVID

I get that. And I do appreciate it, but the reason I'm selling the inn is so I can focus on being partner at the law firm. For right now, that has to come first.

WILLOW

What about Natalie and giving her one last Christmas at Eagle Hill?

DAVID

(beat)
Of course, that's important, too. Listen, all I'm saying is that you promised to handle everything and that hasn't been the case so far.

WILLOW

I know. And I'm sorry. From here
on out, you are off the hook.

Natalie comes running up.

NATALIE

Dad, come look at all the trees I
picked out!

Natalie takes his hand and starts to pull him toward the
aisle she was reviewing. David looks at Willow.

WILLOW

Tomorrow. Friday at the latest.

Natalie pulls him off, and Willow can't help but smile.

END ACT TWO

ACT THREE

EXT. EAGLE HILL MANOR - DAY

Willow pulls up in her car in front of the inn and gets out, talking on her phone.

WILLOW

No, the payroll company does all of that. All you have to do is approve the timesheets. Okay... Call me if you need anything. Thanks Tasha. Bye.

She starts to walk toward the porch, but Robert Cole, the prospective buyer we saw with David earlier, is standing on the walkway looking at the inn and blocking her path.

A reminder that the inn is decorated for Christmas, but it is mostly limited to some garland, some lights, and a wreath on the front door. It is simple and understated.

WILLOW (CONT'D)

Excuse me?

ROBERT

Oh, I'm sorry. I guess I was daydreaming.

WILLOW

That's all right. I hope it was a good dream.

ROBERT

It might be. I was just trying to picture what it would look like with more Christmas decorations.
(off her confusion)
I'm thinking of buying the place.

WILLOW

Oh! Well, I can tell you exactly how it would look.
(points as she talks)
Lights everywhere. Railings, windows, eaves, roof. Garland with bows every five feet. More wreaths. And on the front lawn? Light up snowmen.

ROBERT

Wow. You've thought this through.

WILLOW

Actually that's how it was when I was a kid. My family used to own Eagle Hill.

ROBERT

Really? What was it like growing up here?

WILLOW

It was... I was very lucky. Do you have kids?

ROBERT

Two daughters, but they are all grown up.

WILLOW

Grandchildren?

ROBERT

Not yet.

WILLOW

When you do? They will love it here.

ROBERT

(looks at inn)

I wish I could have seen it like it used to be.

(to Willow)

Sorry again for being in the way. I'm Robert.

WILLOW

Willow, and no trouble at all.

ROBERT

Nice meeting you. Take care.

They shake hands, and he leaves. Willow looks at the inn and pulls out her phone. She sends a quick text and goes inside.

EXT. LAW FIRM - DAY

Establishing shot of the law firm.

INT. LAW FIRM - AUSTIN'S OFFICE - DAY

David and Austin are at a conference table in Austin's office going over paperwork.

DAVID

Do you have the file on the
Harrison merger?

AUSTIN

I do. It's right... here.

Austin hands David the file just as David's phone buzzes with a text. He looks at it and a look of consternation passes over his face.

AUSTIN (CONT'D)

What's wrong?

DAVID

Willow needs me at the inn...
again.

AUSTIN

Don't worry. I can cover this.

DAVID

Thank you.

David hurries for the door.

EXT. EAGLE HILL MANOR - DAY

Establishing shot of the inn.

INT. EAGLE HILL MANOR - GUEST ROOM - DAY

Linda and Juni are waiting patiently, holding a floor length mirror, while Garrett has a conversation with Willow, who is unseen in the next room. Garrett is reviewing his checklist in his usual laid back manner.

WILLOW (O.S.)

Everything is on track?

GARRETT

Yes, it is.

WILLOW (O.S.)

Because it's three weeks until
Christmas Eve and the wedding.

GARRETT

Three and a half, more or less.

Willow peeks her head out of the adjacent room.

WILLOW

No, see, at the hotel I work with numbers and spreadsheets, and there is no such thing as "more or less" in a spreadsheet.

GARRETT

(joking)

Before I worked here, I was a contractor. We specialize in "more or less." Don't worry. It'll all get done. It's like Christmas. You just have to believe.

Garrett walks off leaving Willow to take a deep breath.

JUNI

Come out and let us see!

Willow takes a moment and then comes out of the room in her bridesmaid dress - she looks beautiful.

LINDA

Oh, I love it. Do you love it?

JUNI

It's perfect!

WILLOW

It is pretty, isn't it?

LINDA

Pretty? It's gorgeous.

There is a moment of them admiring the dress.

David enters.

DAVID

Willow, I got your text... Sorry, I didn't know you were all in here.

WILLOW

That's okay. Just modeling the maid of honor dress.

DAVID

It's... you look beautiful.

WILLOW

Thank you.

DAVID

What did you need to see me about?

WILLOW

Oh, right. Let me change. Give me five minutes.

David gives her a "really?" look.

WILLOW (CONT'D)

Six at the most.

Willow goes toward the adjacent room as David smiles awkwardly at Linda and Juni.

EXT. EAGLE HILL MANOR - DAY

Willow, having changed her clothes and put on a coat, comes out of the manor with David. They go to the front walk and turn to look at the inn.

WILLOW

Okay. What do you see?

DAVID

Is this a trick question?

WILLOW

No. Just look at the inn and tell me what you see.

DAVID

Willow, I don't have time...

WILLOW

Okay, I'll tell you what I see. We need more Christmas.

DAVID

Not this again. We have plenty of Christmas.

WILLOW

Not according to your prospective buyer. Robert? I ran into him earlier, and he was saying that he wished he could see the inn all decked out. Like, full on Christmas spectacular.

DAVID

And you think that'll convince him to buy it?

WILLOW

I think he wants to believe that the inn is special, but he hasn't found a reason why yet.

DAVID

But lights and garland are temporary. He can do whatever he wants when he owns the place.

WILLOW

For whatever reason he's having a hard time picturing it. He needs to see it, not just hear about it.

DAVID

Okay... what did you have in mind?

Willow smiles.

EXT. CHRISTMAS MARKET - DAY

The Christmas market is awash with the sights, smells, and sounds of the holidays with booths selling crafts, food, decorations, and more. Willow and David walk through the stalls as she points out things.

WILLOW

We can get those. Oh! Can't you just picture how amazing these would look on the front porch railings?

DAVID

All I can picture is my credit card bill getting larger.

WILLOW

I'm telling you, you will recoup your investment. Since you won't let me paint, this is the Christmas version of curb appeal.

DAVID

Okay, but if you start looking at live reindeer, I'm out of here.

Willow laughs, looking around and soaking up the holiday magic all around them. It is a festive sight with lights and people and even a Santa Claus walking through the crowd greeting people, shaking hands, and posing for photos.

WILLOW

I just love the Christmas market.
It was always one of my favorite
things about the holidays. I'd
forgotten how much I missed it.

DAVID

You don't come home for Christmas?

WILLOW

I usually only get a day or two
off. Between family and friends
and presents and food, I never seem
to make it down here.

She catches David looking at his watch. He sees her seeing
him.

DAVID

Don't say five more minutes. All
this work to sell Eagle Hill isn't
going to mean anything if I blow my
chance at the law firm.

WILLOW

It's kind of too bad, isn't it?
That you have to give up the inn to
become partner?

DAVID

I've been working toward this since
law school. I'm finally getting
things back on track.

WILLOW

How so?

DAVID

I had a plan, you know? Law
school, pass the bar, get married,
have kids, become partner... But
things got... derailed, I guess,
when my wife passed away a few
years ago.

WILLOW

I'm sorry. What was her name?

DAVID

Shelly. The inn was her passion.
Don't get me wrong, I love it, and
I know Natalie does, too...

(beat)

But, it's time to move on.

WILLOW

I understand.

DAVID

How did you deal with it? When your family had to sell the inn?

WILLOW

Not well. I was fifteen, and my father had just passed away so losing Eagle Hill felt like another huge loss.

DAVID

I'm sorry, too.

WILLOW

I think it's why I wanted to work in the hotel business. I wanted to try to recapture some of what I experienced as a kid.

DAVID

And have you?

WILLOW

(shrugs)

It's not the same. I have to move around a lot so I never get a chance to really get settled anywhere. Maybe when I'm managing my own property it'll be more... I don't know. Fulfilling? Someday.

DAVID

Why not today?

WILLOW

The corporate ladder is very tall.

DAVID

Tell me about it. I do corporate law, so my ladder is tall, too.

WILLOW

But, here's the thing... the only ladder involved in buying Christmas decorations is the one you have to climb to hang them.

David considers this for a moment, then looks at his watch one more time.

DAVID
(shrugs)
I can take a little longer.

They share a moment of connection for the first time since they have met. David backs away from it.

DAVID (CONT'D)
(points)
Hey! What about those wreaths for the doors of the barn?

WILLOW
(has to focus)
That's what I'm talking about!

They go off to inspect the wreaths.

EXT. EAGLE HILL MANOR - FRONT PORCH - NIGHT

Willow, David, Natalie, and Pam are all bundled up as they put the finishing touches on the exterior of the inn. There is a lot more garland with bows, wreaths, and lights, the latter of which are not turned on yet.

Mark comes up off the lawn onto the porch and points at the snowmen that have been installed.

MARK
What do you think?

NATALIE
I like them. I think we need to give them names.

PAM
I think so, too. Did you have anything in mind?

NATALIE
Hmmm... Prancer and Comet.

DAVID
Sweetie, those are reindeer names.

NATALIE
There can be more than one Prancer and Comet.

WILLOW
Good point.

NATALIE

Don't they light up?

WILLOW

Yes, they do.

DAVID

We're just waiting for Garrett to be finished with all the other lights and then we can turn them on.

NATALIE

Is this what Christmas was like when you were a kid here, Willow?

WILLOW

It was a lot like this, yes. The whole family would decorate. We'd have hot chocolate and sing carols.

PAM

Hot chocolate! I knew I was forgetting something.

MARK

As soon as we're done here, we'll go put a kettle on.

NATALIE

(to Willow)

Do you miss it? Having Christmas here at the inn?

David looks at Willow - this is obviously tricky territory to navigate.

WILLOW

I do. But, I miss it in a good way. My dad used to say that memories are the things we wrap ourselves up in to keep us warm at night. So, remembering this place... no matter where I am, it always makes me feel warm to remember special nights here.

NATALIE

Like this one?

WILLOW

Just like this one.

David and Willow share a smile. Garrett comes from around the side of the manor.

GARRETT

Okay. I think we're ready.

Everyone moves down off the porch.

EXT. EAGLE HILL MANOR - NIGHT

Willow, David, Natalie, Pam, Mark, and Garrett all gather on the front lawn and face the manor. Garrett hands David a small remote control.

GARRETT

I patched everything into a remote control plug so all you have to do is hit the button.

DAVID

Natalie, do you want to do the honors?

NATALIE

Yes, please!

David hands Natalie the remote.

DAVID

Okay... in three... two... one...

Natalie pushes the button and the Christmas lights on the manor and the snowmen all glow up to life. It's a remarkable sight, and everyone applauds and cheers in appreciation. Willow turns to David who is looking at the inn with a smile.

WILLOW

Now *that's* what I call Christmas.

David nods and joins the celebration with the family.

END ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

EXT. EAGLE HILL MANOR - DAY

Establishing shot of the manor and the barn, where work is obviously happening.

INT. EAGLE HILL MANOR - BARN - DAY

The interior of the barn is being transformed into a wedding chapel, with new lights, chairs, Christmas trees, and more. It's definitely a work in progress. Willow and Garrett are in the midst of it, looking around at what needs to be done.

GARRETT

It's looking pretty good in here.

WILLOW

Yes, it is. I mean, there's a lot left to do, but we've made remarkable progress in only a week.

A worker goes by with a Christmas tree.

GARRETT

How many Christmas trees did you get?

WILLOW

Santa's Village is going to be jealous. Oh, can you see about getting some extra ornaments? I think we're going to run out.

GARRETT

Sure.

WILLOW

(beat)

Do you want to maybe write it down?

GARRETT

(shakes his head)

I got it.

WILLOW

Garrett, we really do have a lot left to do and not much time to do it...

GARRETT

Three weeks until Christmas Eve.
More or less.

He smiles and walks away, leaving Willow behind to have to take another deep breath. She heads for the door.

INT. EAGLE HILL MANOR - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Willow enters the living room to find Mark looking in cabinets and under furniture.

WILLOW

Hi, Mark. What's going on?

MARK

The hunt for Henry continues.

WILLOW

Natalie's reindeer? Yeah, I heard about him. No sightings?

MARK

I'm afraid not. David is looking in the basement and I think Natalie is upstairs searching the utility room.

WILLOW

(laughs)
I'm sure it'll turn up.

David enters the room.

MARK

Any luck?

DAVID

I found the old winter coat I lost three years ago but no Henry.

MARK

Natalie is going to be heartbroken if we can't find it.

DAVID

We've looked everywhere twice. I need something to take her mind off of it. Willow, do you have anything she can do?

WILLOW

I might have something. Mr. Hill from the Shenandoah Stables is supposed to be here any minute with a horse and carriage.

(off David's look)

For the wedding! It'll take Juni from the inn down to the barn.

MARK

Didn't you used to have carriages here at Christmas? It was so much fun. David, you should bring that back.

DAVID

Dad, we've already put every last bit of Christmas ever made on the outside of the inn. Do we really need carriage rides?

MARK

Nobody *needs* carriage rides, David, but it's fun and everybody needs fun, especially at Christmas time.

WILLOW

You should listen to your father, David. He's a wise man.

DAVID

Yeah, but he's not paying for it.

WILLOW

Well, we're only talking about the wedding for now, so we'd take care of it. If we decide to expand the scope, then we can talk.

DAVID

(beat - considers)

Okay... a horse *would* take Natalie's mind off of Henry. What am I saying, a horse *will* take her mind off of everything.

WILLOW

Then why don't you come out and join us? And don't tell me you have work to do because it's Saturday.

DAVID

I wish that made a difference at my firm.

MARK

David, sometimes you need to stop and smell the Christmas trees, so to speak.

Willow puts her arm around Mark and smiles at David.

WILLOW

He's so wise.

David can't help but laugh. He nods.

DAVID

Okay. I'll go get Natalie.

David heads toward the door while Willow and Mark do a little fist bump of celebration.

EXT. EAGLE HILL MANOR - DAY

David and Willow are in front of the inn standing next to a horse drawn carriage that has been lovingly decorated for Christmas. Natalie is with an older man and his assistant who are showing her the horse at the head of the carriage.

WILLOW

I think it's perfect. Robert is going to take one look at this at the inn, and he's going to whip out his checkbook on the spot.

DAVID

I don't know about that...

Natalie runs over to join them.

NATALIE

Dad! I petted the horse.

DAVID

I saw that.

NATALIE

His name is Frosty, like the snowman.

DAVID

That's a great name.

NATALIE

Mr. Hill said we can go for a ride.

DAVID

Oh, honey, I don't think we have time to do that...

NATALIE

But Dad, the carriage is right there, and Frosty is all ready to go. I think he wants to give us a ride.

WILLOW

Come on. If Frosty wants to...

David looks at the two imploring faces.

DAVID

How can I say no to Frosty?

Natalie cheers and runs toward the carriage while David and Willow step off to the side to continue the conversation.

EXT. EAGLE HILL MANOR - MAIN DRIVE - DAY

While Mr. Hill and his assistant are getting the carriage ready, David watches as Natalie "supervises" and talks to Frosty. David smiles. Willow notices.

WILLOW

She's having fun.

DAVID

She is. And thank you for that.

WILLOW

You're welcome. It hasn't been easy. The guy that owns the inn has been resistant to everything I have wanted to do.

She smiles at him to let him know that she is kidding around, mostly. David gets that but grows serious.

DAVID

(beat - hard for him)

We celebrate - presents and lights and everything. But we haven't had a really big Christmas like this in a few years.

Willow gets that this is because of his late wife.

WILLOW

I understand. I didn't mean to...

DAVID

No, no. It's okay.
(looks at Natalie)
It's more than okay, actually.
It's time we had a really big
Christmas again.

David looks at her and smiles, and she smiles back.

WILLOW

What was the best Christmas present
you ever got?

DAVID

(beat - smile)
Roller blades.

WILLOW

(laughs)
What?

DAVID

I was nine. It was very important
to me at the time. And you?

WILLOW

Pink bicycle with rainbow tassels
on the handles. Similar age,
similar reasons. What was the best
Christmas you ever had?

DAVID

Oh, wow, uh... the one that's
popping into my head is when I was
six, I think? I had gotten it into
my head that I was going to stay up
all night so I could meet Santa
when he came to deliver the
presents. I just wanted to thank
him for all the great things he had
brought me over the years.

WILLOW

Makes sense.

DAVID

And my mom and dad decided they
would wait up with me.

(MORE)

DAVID (CONT'D)

So to stay awake we sang every Christmas song we could think of and played Christmas games and read stories and watched a movie and basically just soaked up every last bit of Christmas we could find.

WILLOW

And how late did you stay awake?

DAVID

(laughs)

I think I was out before 10:30. Still a great Christmas, though. How about you?

WILLOW

Fourteen. Our last Christmas at the inn. There wasn't anything specific about it that made it great - it was just your typical, wonderful, friends and family and food and presents type of Christmas - but I always remember that as being the best.

David looks up at Natalie, smiling and having a great time.

DAVID

Hey Natalie?

(when she turns around)

How about we have carriage rides at the inn for Christmas?

NATALIE

Yes! Yay! Did you hear that Frosty?

Natalie comes back to hug her dad and sit between him and Willow.

NATALIE (CONT'D)

We need a picture!

Willow digs out her phone and hands it up to Mr. Hill.

WILLOW

Mr. Hill? Would you mind taking our picture?

He takes the phone and Willow, David, and Natalie all climb aboard the carriage and squeeze in together for the photo. Willow and David glance at each other, perhaps the beginnings of feelings starting to emerge.

The camera flashes and captures the moment.

Willow, David, and Natalie get settled as Mr. Hill climbs aboard and carriage starts to pull away.

NATALIE

Now this is what I call Christmas!

Everyone has a good laugh about that and the carriage rides off.

EXT. EAGLE HILL MANOR - NIGHT

Establishing shot of the manor.

INT. EAGLE HILL MANOR - UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - NIGHT

David comes out of a bedroom into a hallway where Pam is waiting for him.

PAM

I'm heading home. Is she asleep?

DAVID

Out like a light.

PAM

She was very excited about that horse.

DAVID

I know. I have a feeling she's going to want to update her Christmas wish list.

PAM

(laughs quietly)

I have a feeling you're right. It sounds like you all had a good time, though.

DAVID

We did, yeah. Willow knows how to do Christmas.

PAM

Yes, she does. She's such a sweetheart.

Pam pats David on the back and walks off down the hall toward the stairs.

David considers what his mother just said, and even though it was an innocent remark, it seems to have had an impact on him. He agrees with what his mother said, which surprises him.

EXT. LINDA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Establishing shot of Linda's house.

INT. LINDA'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Willow is sitting at the table looking at the photo on her phone of her, David, and Natalie on the carriage. Juni comes into the room putting on her coat and looks at the picture over her shoulder.

JUNI

I am going to look spectacular arriving at my wedding in that.

WILLOW

Yes, you are.

JUNI

And, it means I can cross one more thing off my wedding to-do list.

WILLOW

A horse drawn carriage was on your list?

JUNI

It's a very long list that I'm never going to get through, so let's pretend it was, okay?

WILLOW

(laughs)

Wedding planning is fun, isn't it?

JUNI

Oh yeah. Not stressed out at all.
(looks at picture again)
I'm glad you're getting the two of them out to have fun. Austin has been worried that David was spending too much time working and not enough time on Christmas.

WILLOW

He's probably right, but I'm working on it.

JUNI

And, you're doing a great job. On the inn, the wedding, Christmas, everything. Have I told you how much I appreciate it?

WILLOW

Several times, yes.

JUNI

And, I'll tell you several more times. However...

WILLOW

Oh, can't we just leave it at "I appreciate it?"

JUNI

(smiles)

I just want to make sure that you're not getting too emotionally invested.

Willow thinks she means with David.

WILLOW

What? I'm not. What makes you say that?

JUNI

I know how much the inn means to you.

WILLOW

(relief)

Oh... the inn. Right.

JUNI

And, I remember how hard it was for us to leave it when we were kids. I don't want you to feel badly when Christmas is over, and you have to go back to New York. You're going to be leaving a lot behind.

WILLOW

(beat)

I'll be careful. Thanks, Juni.

JUNI

I'm heading home. Tell Mom to call me tomorrow.

WILLOW

I will. Good night.

Juni exits. Willow goes back to looking at the picture and thinks that Juni is right - she will be leaving a lot behind.

END ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

EXT. LAW FIRM - DAY

Establishing shot of the law office where David and Austin work.

INT. LAW FIRM - AUSTIN'S OFFICE - DAY

David and Austin come into the office carrying garment bags.

AUSTIN

Tuxes. Done! And with twenty minutes left to spare on our lunch hour.

DAVID

Except that we didn't actually eat.

AUSTIN

Details. All I care about is that Juni will be very happy that I've crossed something off our list.

DAVID

Don't you need an actual list to be able to cross things off of it?

AUSTIN

I let Juni keep that. For me, it's a mental list, my friend.

(taps head)

It's all up here.

DAVID

You sound like Garrett.

(points to Austin's head)

What else is on the list?

AUSTIN

(beat)

I probably should have made a copy of the real list, huh?

DAVID

I'm thinking yes.

AUSTIN

You're so wise. Speaking of which, will you impart some of your wisdom on me now?

DAVID

Only if you stop saying that I'm wise. It makes me feel old.

AUSTIN

Got it. So, Juni is getting a little overwhelmed by all the wedding stuff.

DAVID

That's natural. Aren't you?

AUSTIN

No, not really. I'm kind of having fun. It's like looking forward to a really cool party that you've heard about but never thought you'd get invited to.

DAVID

That is the wisest thing I have heard in a long time.

AUSTIN

I learned from the master. But what do I do about Juni?

DAVID

Hmm, well, maybe you can distract her with some Christmas cheer. Take her to the tree lighting tonight. Warm apple cider, a few Christmas carol sing alongs, she'll be good as new.

AUSTIN

That's a great idea. See? You are ... whatever the young version of wise is.

DAVID

Is there a young version of wise?

AUSTIN

(laughs)

I bet you'll be glad when all of this is done, and you can sell the inn and get on with your life.

DAVID

(beat)

Yes. Absolutely.

David doesn't seem as emphatic as one might expect. Is he having second thoughts?

EXT. TOWN SQUARE - NIGHT

The big Christmas tree in the town square is fully decorated (but not lit up yet) and there is quite a crowd surrounding it. Among them are Willow, Pam, Linda, and Natalie.

NATALIE

Where's Dad and Grandpa?

PAM

Grandpa had to close the bookstore and your dad got held up at work. But they're on their way.

NATALIE

They're going to miss the tree.

PAM

I'm sure they'll make it in time. Don't worry.

Natalie still isn't happy.

LINDA

I'll go get some apple cider to keep us warm while we wait.

PAM

I'll help. Willow, will you stay here with Natalie?

WILLOW

Of course.

Linda and Pam leave Willow and Natalie alone together.

WILLOW (CONT'D)

Are you excited to see all the lights?

NATALIE

Yes. But it'll have to be really something to be better than what we have at the inn.

WILLOW

I think they'll probably top us. Lighting the tree is the town's way of saying it's officially Christmas.

NATALIE

I think it should be Christmas all the time.

WILLOW

I don't know. I think having Christmas just once a year makes it much more special.

NATALIE

Really? How so?

WILLOW

Think of how much you look forward to everything about Christmas. The carols, the decorations...

NATALIE

The cookies!

WILLOW

Yes, definitely the cookies. You spend most of the year just waiting for the things like Christmas cookies, and when you finally get them, they are so delicious, right?

NATALIE

It's like all that waiting finally paid off.

WILLOW

Exactly. It's like a reward. But just think of if you had Christmas cookies every day, all year long. By the time Christmas came around, it wouldn't feel as special.

NATALIE

Huh. I hadn't thought of that.

(beat)

Okay, now I want to bake Christmas cookies.

WILLOW

You know what? Me, too! What else about Christmas is worth waiting for?

NATALIE

Everything! We have dinner at Grandma's house and call my other grandma and grandpa on the computer and talk to them and my aunts and uncles and cousins, but we always have Christmas morning at the inn... I mean, I guess we won't be doing that anymore after this year.

WILLOW

That's okay. It doesn't matter where you are, it just matters that you're with the people you love.

Natalie processes that as Willow sees Austin and Juni nearby.

WILLOW (CONT'D)

There's Juni and Austin. Let's go say hi, okay?

NATALIE

Okay!

They start toward Austin and Juni.

EXT. TOWN SQUARE - NIGHT

Christmas music plays over as we see Willow and Natalie join Austin and Juni with hugs and kisses.

David and Mark join next, the family starting to come together. David boosts Natalie up to hug her.

Linda and Pam come back with cups of apple cider and pass them around. It's a warm family moment with David, Willow, and Natalie at the forefront. There is much laughter and merriment, everyone greeting each other, shaking hands and hugging, the holiday spirit taking hold.

A group of people get up at a switch near the tree and we see what looks like a countdown. The switch is thrown, turning on all the lights on the tall tree. Everyone cheers and there are more hugs including one between Willow and David that leaves both of them looking at each other with warm smiles - something more than friendship starting to be more obvious.

EXT. EAGLE HILL MANOR - NIGHT

Establishing shot of the inn.

INT. EAGLE HILL MANOR - NATALIE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Natalie is all tucked into bed with David sitting beside her.

DAVID

You get some sleep, okay?

NATALIE

What about a bedtime story first?

DAVID

Natalie...

NATALIE

Oh, come on. Just one. A short one. A Christmas one.

Willow comes to the door holding a notebook.

WILLOW

I found it. It was in the kitchen. Have a good night.

NATALIE

Willow can read me a bedtime story!

That surprises both David and Willow, but in a good way.

DAVID

Oh... it's okay with me if it's okay with Willow.

WILLOW

Of course it's okay.

David trades places with Willow - she sits by Natalie and David goes to the door. Willow picks up a book - *A Visit from Saint Nicholas*.

WILLOW (CONT'D)

This is a good one. My dad read this and "A Christmas Carol" to me and my sister all the time.

NATALIE

Dad says I get to read "A Christmas Carol" next year.

WILLOW

That will definitely be something worth waiting for.

(opens the book)

Okay... ready?

NATALIE

Ready.

WILLOW

*'Twas the night before Christmas
and all through the house, not a
creature was stirring, not even a
mouse.*

NATALIE

That's good, because we don't want
mice in the inn.

WILLOW

No, we certainly don't.

Willow looks at David and they smile at each other. Willow
keeps reading.

WILLOW (CONT'D)

*The stockings were hung by the
chimney with care...*

David takes a moment then smiles again and leaves them to
have their story time.

INT. EAGLE HILL MANOR - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

David is standing appreciating the Christmas tree when Willow
comes into the room.

WILLOW

Okay, she's finally asleep.

DAVID

Thank you so much. You know, she
doesn't ask just anyone to read her
a bedtime story.

WILLOW

I am very honored.

DAVID

Well, I appreciate it. And, thanks
for suggesting we all go to the
tree lighting together. It was a
lot of fun.

WILLOW

It was, wasn't it? We used to do
that all the time when I was
younger.

(MORE)

WILLOW (CONT'D)

All the neighbors would get together, and we'd go to the Christmas market...

Willow is lost in the nostalgia for a moment. She shakes it off.

WILLOW (CONT'D)

I better get going. We have a lot of work to do tomorrow.

DAVID

Two weeks. Are we going to make it?

WILLOW

I think so. I hope so.

DAVID

Wait, Ms. Don't Worry About Anything only "hopes" so? Okay, now I'm going to worry about everything.

WILLOW

(laughs)
We balance each other out.

DAVID

Maybe we do.

The two of them have one of those moments but they both back away from it.

DAVID (CONT'D)

You know, I have to admit that this is shaping up to be a pretty spectacular Christmas. I know I was kind of... hesitant...

WILLOW

(with a smile)
Kind of?

DAVID

But, I'm glad it's all working out. I've been enjoying spending time with you... working on the inn.

WILLOW

Right, yes. Hopefully your buyer is impressed. Once you sell it, then you can... move on. Literally.

DAVID

And, you can get back to your regular life. How would you have been spending Christmas if it wasn't for all this?

WILLOW

I'd probably be coming up here Christmas eve and going back the day after Christmas. I never spend this long here, but I'm glad I am this time. I'd forgotten how much I loved it here.

DAVID

Would you ever consider coming back?

WILLOW

I don't know. If the right reason popped up, I might consider it.

DAVID

What would be the right reason?

Willow looks at David, and she has a moment where she considers saying "the right guy" but instead she says...

WILLOW

I'll know it when I see it.

They smile at each other for a moment.

WILLOW (CONT'D)

It's late. I should...

DAVID

Have a good night.

Willow leaves the living room. David has a smile on his face that indicates that he is feeling something more than just friendship for Willow. For the first time we see him considering that in a more meaningful way.

INT. EAGLE HILL MANOR - ENTRY HALL - NIGHT

Willow gets to the front door and pauses, a smile on her face as she looks back over her shoulder. We can tell that she too is having more than friendship feelings. She takes a beat, then exits.

END ACT FIVE

ACT SIX

EXT. BOOKSTORE - DAY

Establishing shot of the bookstore.

INT. BOOKSTORE - DAY

David, Pam, and Mark are near the front counter, all of them dressed very nicely except for Mark, who can't find his tie.

PAM

Mark, we're going to be late.
Can't you wear a different tie?

MARK

It's my Christmas tie! The one
with all the reindeer.
(remembers)
I left it in the office!

PAM

I'll go get it.

David looks at Mark skeptically.

MARK

I've chosen to believe that your
mother finds stuff like this
charming.

DAVID

You've been married for more than
forty years. You must be doing
something right.

MARK

Takes practice. And patience. A
lot of patience.

DAVID

I remember.

Mark sees that struck a chord - he changes the subject.

MARK

Now, what is this thing we're going
to again?

DAVID

It's Linda's Christmas party at the
Jaybird Cafe.

(MORE)

DAVID (CONT'D)

She does it every year to say thank you to her customers.

MARK

And, I have to wear a tie for that?

DAVID

You love excuses to wear your Christmas tie.

MARK

That's true.

DAVID

Can you bring Natalie back here with you afterward? She wanted to go early to help set up, but I'm going to need to get back to the inn to help everyone check in.

MARK

Oh, that's right. You're going to have a full house there tonight.

DAVID

Austin and his family are going to stay through the holidays. Some of Juni's friends, too. It's the most people we've had there in years.

MARK

You know, the place could've been full all the time if you just did a little more advertising. It's like you were trying to keep it secret.

DAVID

No, it's like I was too busy.

MARK

(gently)

Just busy? That's all it was?

DAVID

(beat)

I wasn't sure how to do it by myself. And I know it's time to move on, but it's been nice watching the inn sort of come back to life.

MARK

You've done an amazing job with the place.

DAVID
It was mostly Willow.

MARK
Will it be tough to say goodbye?

David is taken aback for a moment, then figures out what Mark meant.

DAVID
Oh... to the inn? Yes. It will.

MARK
It's not too late to change your mind.

Before David can reply, Pam comes back with the tie.

PAM
I found it.

MARK
Wonderful!

Pam and Mark head to the door. David takes a moment, thinking about what his father said, then follows.

EXT. JAYBIRD CAFE - DAY

Establishing shot of the cafe.

INT. JAYBIRD CAFE - DAY

Christmas music is playing, and the counter is full of food, hot chocolate, candy canes, cookies, and more. Willow, Austin, Juni, David, Mark, Pam, and Natalie are all helping with the big crowd that has congregated.

Linda comes out of the kitchen to join them and rings a Christmas bell to get everyone's attention.

LINDA
(to the crowd)
Okay! Everybody, attention please!
Thank you for coming out to the
Jaybird Cafe.

WILLOW
The best diner in Shenandoah Falls,
right?

Everyone cheers.

JUNI

Yeah, that coffee shop down the street doesn't do this!

There is warm laughter - they know Linda well.

LINDA

We really do appreciate each of you so much. Now... Who's ready for Christmas games?

Everybody cheers while David leans over to Willow.

DAVID

There are games, too?

WILLOW

My mother does not kid around when it comes to Christmas.

DAVID

So that's where you got it from?

Willow smiles as Linda pulls out a half dozen Christmas presents, small gift-wrapped packages, and sets them on the serving tables.

LINDA

Inside these are Christmas bells.
(shakes a package - ring!)
Two people will try to be the first ones to unwrap the package and ring the bell. But here's the catch... your hand is tied to your partner's hand! First ones to open the present wins free pie for a week! Okay, who wants to play? Raise your hand.

PAM

Austin and Juni should!

JUNI

No, that would not go well. I'm bad at unwrapping presents even with both of my hands.

AUSTIN

It's true. Paper flying everywhere. It's not pretty.

LINDA

Oh, come on you two. David and Willow are playing, too.

WILLOW

We are?

DAVID

I don't remember raising my hand.

LINDA

My game, my rules.

NATALIE

Grandma, can we play?

PAM

Of course!

Linda gently ties a Christmas ribbon around Juni's right hand and Austin's left hand, palms facing (they are standing side by side).

Willow and David glance at each other with awkward smiles and shrugs, then go to the table. Linda ties their hands together just like Austin and Juni. Pam and Natalie and a few other people we don't know all get set as well.

LINDA

Okay. Are we ready? Set? Go!

The teams scramble to get the boxes unwrapped, which is harder than it sounds with their hands tied together. But it is undeniably fun and everyone is cheering and laughing.

As the game progresses, Willow notices that Pam and Natalie are having issues with their box. Willow nudges David and he sees what she means. He purposely fumbles their box.

DAVID

Oh, no!

WILLOW

What happened? No!

As they "try" to pick up the box, Pam and Natalie figure themselves out, get the box open, and ring the Christmas bell. Everyone cheers.

Willow and David smile at each other and give themselves a subtle "high five" with the hands that are tied together.

Linda gives Natalie a big hug and hands her the "free pie for a week" certificate. David playfully grimaces as he sees the big smile on his daughter's face.

DAVID

That's a lot of sugar...

Willow laughs.

EXT. EAGLE HILL MANOR - NIGHT

Later, we see evidence of the full house at the inn, which is all lit up. We see people (including Austin and his family) on the porch and inside - it's very lively and festive. Out in front, people are getting into a carriage to go for a ride.

Willow and David are walking up toward the inn.

DAVID

That was very nice of you to let
Natalie and my mother win.

WILLOW

Let's just call it a Christmas
miracle and leave it at that.

DAVID

(looks at inn)
Look at this place.

WILLOW

It's pretty great, huh? Just think
of what it would have looked like
if you had let me paint.

David gives her a smile.

DAVID

I love seeing it like this. Full
of life and energy... It's like it
was when we first bought it.

WILLOW

David, are you sure about selling
the inn?

DAVID

(beat)
I am. I mean, I see it like this,
and it's tempting, you know? Just
chuck the nine to five and the
suits, and go run an inn. But I
didn't work as hard as I worked to
become partner to give that up when
I'm so close to it.

WILLOW

How did you describe it? Getting
back on track?

DAVID
Something like that.

WILLOW
Still... it's a nice dream, isn't
it?

DAVID
Yes, it is.

Austin waves at David to come up on the porch.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Sorry. Best man duty calls.

David goes to the inn and Willow stays behind, looking at the inn - and at David - with a fond smile.

EXT. EAGLE HILL MANOR - DAY

Establishing shot of the inn.

INT. EAGLE HILL MANOR - LIVING ROOM - DAY

David passes by the living room where several people are hanging out, reading and chatting. He stops and smiles, still appreciating having people fill the inn with life. He notices a smell and goes off in search of its source.

INT. EAGLE HILL MANOR - KITCHEN - DAY

Willow and Natalie are in the midst of an epic cooking baking session with ingredients, trays of cookies, decorations, and more strewn about the manor's kitchen.

NATALIE
Willow, you need more sprinkles for
that one.

WILLOW
Really? I don't know. Maybe you
need more sprinkles.

Willow playfully tosses sprinkles on a tray of cookies that Natalie is working on making her laugh. David enters.

DAVID
What's going on in here?

NATALIE
We're making Christmas cookies.

DAVID

I see that. They smell wonderful.

NATALIE

Let me get you one.

Natalie goes to get a cookie off a nearby rack, offering David a chance to have an aside with Willow. She leans in.

WILLOW

She was in the barn looking for Henry. I thought it was time for a Christmas spirit break.

DAVID

Thank you.

Natalie comes back with a cookie.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Thank you.

(takes a bite)

Mmmm. Delicious.

NATALIE

Totally worth the wait, right Willow?

WILLOW

That's right.

(to Natalie)

So, Natalie did you wish for something special this year?

NATALIE

I did. But I can't tell you what it is or it won't come true.

DAVID

It didn't have to do with a certain horse named Frosty, did it?

NATALIE

No. Willow explained that Frosty needs to stay with Mr. Hill.

David and Willow exchange smiles. David mouths a silent "thank you."

NATALIE (CONT'D)

(to Willow)

What did you wish for?

WILLOW

It's like you said, I can't tell you, or it won't come true.

NATALIE

Not even a hint?

WILLOW

I'll trade you one hint for a cookie.

NATALIE

These are really good cookies. They're worth at least two hints.

WILLOW

Oh, you think so? What if I just tickle you for a cookie?

Willow leans in to playfully tickle Natalie who loves the attention. David laughs and watches with appreciation. Willow looks up and sees him smiling - she matches it and nods for him to come join in the fun. He does and they look more and more like a family every minute.

EXT. EAGLE HILL MANOR - DAY

David comes off the front porch, eating a cookie, and smiling. A carriage pulls up and several people, including Robert, get off.

DAVID

Robert! I didn't know you were here.

ROBERT

I didn't want to bother you so I just looked around a bit on my own. I love what you've done here. The carriage rides are a nice touch.

DAVID

Oh, thank you. Yeah, it's turning out pretty great. We still have a week until the wedding so we're not quite finished. You're coming, aren't you? I want you to see the whole place in action with a big event.

ROBERT

I will be there, but I really don't need to. I'm ready.

DAVID

Ready... To buy the inn?

ROBERT

Yes. First thing Monday, I'm going to have my realtor call yours and we'll make an offer.

DAVID

(stunned)

Great. That's terrific. I... don't know what to say.

ROBERT

You can say where you got that Christmas cookie. It smells delicious.

DAVID

Oh, they're inside. Go on ahead... I'll be there in a minute.

Robert starts toward the inn, but David stops him.

DAVID (CONT'D)

And Robert, let's just keep this between us for now... until it's a done deal. Okay?

Robert gives David a nod and a small salute then goes into the manor. David hangs back for a moment, trying to absorb this development. Although he should be relieved and happy, it doesn't look like he is.

END ACT SIX

ACT SEVEN

EXT. SHENANDOAH FALLS STREET - DAY

David and Pam come out of a store carrying Christmas themed shopping bags.

PAM

You still haven't told anybody else? Like Willow?

DAVID

I haven't seen the offer. I don't know if I'm going to accept it or not.

PAM

Why wouldn't you accept it? Are you having second thoughts?

DAVID

No, I'm having... new thoughts.

PAM

I don't understand.

DAVID

Neither do I, really. All I know is that I'm starting to realize now that the inn is important. More important than I ever thought.

PAM

Is this about Willow?
(off his surprise)
I'm a mother, I pay attention.

DAVID

It's... complicated.

PAM

That doesn't answer my question. What do you want, David?

DAVID

It's not just about Willow or me and what either one of us wants. It's not just about selling the inn or making partner... I have a little girl who is counting on me. The decision I make here could affect her entire future.

PAM

So... as long as you're not putting
any pressure on yourself.

Pam smiles sweetly and puts her arm through David's.

PAM (CONT'D)

You're a wonderful father. When
you need to make the decision,
you'll know what to do.

DAVID

Thanks, Mom.

They walk off together.

EXT. JAYBIRD CAFE - DAY

Establishing shot of the diner.

INT. JAYBIRD CAFE - DAY

Willow is sitting at the counter, her phone to her ear but
relaxed, as if on hold. Linda brings her a mug of an
elaborate Christmas drink (candy canes, etc.).

WILLOW

(to Linda)

What is that?

LINDA

Jaybird Yuletide Peppermint Delight
Coffee.

(shakes her head)

Christmas Peppermint Java a la
Jaybird. I'm still working on the
name.

WILLOW

(into phone)

Yes, I'm still here, Tasha. Yes,
it's in the file cabinet. There's
a blue folder with all the forms
you need. Don't even worry about
it. I appreciate you holding down
the fort. Okay. Merry Christmas.

Willow disconnects the call.

LINDA

Problems?

WILLOW

Just work stuff.

LINDA

You're supposed to be on vacation.

WILLOW

I think they're regretting letting me be gone for this long.

LINDA

Well, of course. You're good at handling things. Your job, your sister's wedding, the inn...

WILLOW

That's different. That's a labor of love.

LINDA

You don't love your job?

WILLOW

I didn't mean that. All I'm saying is that the inn is special.

LINDA

Now *that* I will agree with. I think whoever buys it is going to be very lucky you were there. I also think the right, savvy investor could make a real go of it.

WILLOW

I think so, too.

LINDA

A person with a background in hotel management who really knew what they were doing. But someone who could be emotionally invested in the place as well...

WILLOW

Way to be subtle, Mom.

LINDA

Christmas is only a week away. I don't have time to be subtle. You should buy the inn.

WILLOW

I can't afford it. Besides, being assistant manager at a hotel does not make me qualified to run my own business.

LINDA

Honey, what have you been doing for the last three weeks?

WILLOW

I've been making to-do lists and schedules and pointing at things that other people need to do and worrying that it won't get done.

LINDA

That's what running a business is all about! I could crack open my retirement account...

WILLOW

Mom, thank you, but you're not doing that. Besides... what if I wasn't able to do it? What if I had to give it up? It was dad's dream... and I don't know if I could say goodbye again.

Linda puts her arm around Willow.

LINDA

It's too bad you don't know someone with deep pockets who could invest and let you run it.

This strikes a chord with Willow - an idea forming.

EXT. LINDA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Establishing shot of Linda's house.

INT. LINDA'S HOUSE - WILLOW'S ROOM - NIGHT

Willow is in her room at Linda's house, surrounded by papers and printouts. She is doing research and putting together a presentation and she looks happy about it. Her phone rings.

WILLOW

Tasha, hi. Did you find it? Yes, I want all of the information on the last ten hotels the company has invested in. Yes, great.

Willow nods and jots down some notes.

EXT. EAGLE HILL MANOR - NIGHT

Outside the inn, Willow is standing by an archway that marks the start of a path from the parking area over to the entrance of the barn. Along the path are several structures that we don't quite get a good look at yet.

David gets out of his car and approaches Willow, who is carrying a portfolio.

DAVID

What's all this?

WILLOW

Okay, picture it... the carriage with Juni pulls up here, she gets out, and walks down this path to the barn. And as she goes...

Willow pulls David onto the path...

EXT. LIGHT PATH - NIGHT

As Willow and David walk down the path the structures along it start to light up - they are displays of Christmas lights that are in different shapes - Santa, candy canes, presents, a big heart, etc. It's gorgeous and romantic.

DAVID

This is amazing. Did you do this?

WILLOW

Well, Garrett did most of it, but it was my idea.

DAVID

I can't wait for Natalie to see this. She's going to love it.

Willow takes a deep breath and grips the portfolio a little tighter - it's time to do what she came here to do.

WILLOW

(beat - deep breath)
So, any word from that guy who was interested in buying the inn?

DAVID

(evasive)
We've been talking.

WILLOW

You know, I've been thinking that maybe there's another way.

DAVID

Another way to do what?

WILLOW

To have your Christmas cookies and eat them, too.

DAVID

I don't understand.

WILLOW

I know... here's the thing. These last few weeks have meant a lot to me. Being here, working on the inn... It's like I got to get back a piece of the past. Does that make any sense?

DAVID

It makes a lot of sense. I've been feeling the same way.

WILLOW

Really?

DAVID

Yes. It's like I was waiting for a sign, and seeing the place like this was it.

WILLOW

I'm so glad you think so, too.

Willow raises the portfolio, preparing to show it to him.

DAVID

It's telling me that Eagle Hill has been around longer than either of us, and it'll be here long after we're gone.

(MORE)

DAVID (CONT'D)

It's not about who owns it, it's about the memories we made here. Bringing the inn back to life was the thing I needed to get closure... and move on.

Willow is very obviously disappointed.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Sorry... you were talking about Christmas cookies?

Willow thinks about it for a moment, then lowers the portfolio back to her side.

WILLOW

Just that... it was fun baking them with you and Natalie the other day.

DAVID

Another great memory to take with us.

WILLOW

(nods)

Yes. Well, it's getting late and I should probably head home. Good night.

Willow walks off down the path leaving David to stand there amidst the colorful lights.

EXT. LINDA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Establishing shot of Linda's house.

INT. LINDA'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Juni is at the table having a piece of holiday fruitcake when Willow enters. Willow puts the portfolio on the table and sits, taking the rest of the fruitcake and pulling it in front of her. She grabs a fork and digs in directly from the pan.

JUNI

What's wrong?

WILLOW

What makes you think something is wrong?

JUNI

You're eating a Christmas fruitcake directly out of the pan.

WILLOW

It's good fruitcake.

JUNI

No, it's not.

WILLOW

Then why are you eating it?

JUNI

Because it's comfort food. I'm getting married in a week. I need comfort. But not as much as you apparently, so what's wrong?

WILLOW

(beat)

Don't tell anyone this, but... I put together a proposal for my company to invest in Eagle Hill.

JUNI

Invest? Why?

WILLOW

I thought David really wanted to keep the inn... that he was only selling it because he was too busy. This would've allowed him to keep it, but the company would put money into it and I'd run it.

JUNI

That would be amazing! Would your company do that?

WILLOW

I'm not sure. But it doesn't matter. David wants to be done with the inn completely. He says he needs closure.

JUNI

Oh... I guess that's kind of understandable, right?

WILLOW

It's totally understandable. The inn represents his past. He's ready to move on.

JUNI

Couldn't you just buy it?

WILLOW

I can't afford that.

JUNI

Maybe you could get a loan?

(off her reaction)

Unless... you don't want to do it
without David?

WILLOW

Part of what made this whole thing
so much fun was him and Natalie...

JUNI

It sounds like your feelings about
the inn are getting all mixed up
with your feelings about David.

WILLOW

I just met him a few weeks ago. I
can't have feelings about him.

JUNI

Why not?

WILLOW

Because that's a problem that I
don't know how to fix. I'm always
good at solving problems... I'm the
one who can talk anyone into
anything, remember?

JUNI

Then why are you having such a hard
time talking yourself into
accepting how you really feel?

Juni gets up, kisses Willow on the forehead, and leaves her
there to try to figure out how to fix things.

END ACT SEVEN

ACT EIGHT

EXT. EAGLE HILL MANOR - DAY

While joyful Christmas music plays, we'll see a montage of scenes of the work on the inn being finished...

INT. EAGLE HILL MANOR - GREAT ROOM - DAY

The room is being set up for the reception, with tables and a piano while Willow supervises a Christmas tree being brought in.

EXT. EAGLE HILL MANOR - DAY

Outside, Natalie is helping David and Pam put more garland on the railings.

EXT. EAGLE HILL MANOR - BARN - NIGHT

From outside the barn, we can see workers inside doing last minute touches with lights and more - we don't get a good look at the transformation yet.

INT. EAGLE HILL MANOR - KITCHEN - DAY

Austin and Juni - with Linda and Willow "helping" - are doing some last minute sampling of Christmas-themed food for the wedding - there's even a drawing of a Christmas-themed wedding cake.

EXT. EAGLE HILL MANOR - BARN - NIGHT

As a last bit of holiday magic, David hoists Natalie up so she can hang a wreath on the door to the barn while Willow, Pam, and Mark applaud.

EXT. EAGLE HILL MANOR - DAY

Establishing shot of the inn - it looks beautiful, a postcard come to life. A sign welcomes guests to Juni and Austin's wedding.

INT. EAGLE HILL MANOR - BEDROOM - DAY

Juni, not even close to being ready for the wedding, is pacing in the room that is being used as a Bride's room. She looks more than a little anxious. Willow enters.

WILLOW

Hi. Mom said you needed me?

JUNI

(how did this happen?)
I'm getting married in a few hours.

WILLOW

(arm around her)
Okay. All right. Everything is going to be just fine.

JUNI

How?

WILLOW

I have an idea...

Willow smiles.

INT. EAGLE HILL MANOR - BEDROOM - DAY

Willow and Juni are both sitting up on the bed, wearing Christmas-themed pajamas, eating Christmas cookies and listening to upbeat Christmas music.

WILLOW

Sorry, we were all out of fruitcake.

JUNI

This is so much better.

They sort of "toast" one another with cookies and lean back in bed listening to the music.

EXT. EAGLE HILL MANOR - FRONT PORCH - DAY

Austin is on the front porch, dressed casually, looking out over the snowy scenery. David comes out to find him.

DAVID

Morning. Merry wedding day.

AUSTIN

Thank you.

DAVID
Everything good?

AUSTIN
Everything is great. It's almost
Christmas, and I'm getting married
today.

DAVID
No last minute jitters?

AUSTIN
Not a one.
(smiles)
Okay, maybe one or two, but only
because I hate wearing tuxedos.

DAVID
(beat)
You're always so... calm. How do
you do that?

AUSTIN
(shrugs)
I had a good role model.

DAVID
Who?

AUSTIN
You.

DAVID
Not the "David is wise" thing
again.

AUSTIN
No, that was just me goofing
around. This time I mean it.
(off his skepticism)
David, I know that I joke around a
lot, but you're like the wiser,
older brother I never had.

DAVID
First of all, I'm not that much
older, and second of all, you
already have an older brother.

AUSTIN
Yeah, but you've met him, right?
(laughs)
I'm kidding. David, look at
everything you've done.

(MORE)

AUSTIN (CONT'D)

The inn, raising Natalie by yourself, you're about to become partner. How you do all of that at once is just amazing.

DAVID

I guess it doesn't always feel that way. Sometimes it really feels like I'm just along for the ride.

AUSTIN

Everybody feels like that every now and then. But you figure it out. You always do. It's like all the work you did here with Willow. You saw an opportunity to make this place more attractive to the guy that wants to buy it. And, you said it's looking good, right?

DAVID

(beat)
Right. Very good.

AUSTIN

See? It's all coming together.
(off David's reaction)
Unless there's some part of it that isn't.

David has to think about that.

AUSTIN (CONT'D)

Listen, whatever it is, you'll figure it out.

DAVID

You think so?

AUSTIN

I didn't make you best man for nothing.

The two of them hug it out then Austin goes back inside the manor. David looks out at the snowy countryside.

INT. EAGLE HILL MANOR - BEDROOM - DAY

Willow and Juni are still eating cookies and listening to Christmas music.

JUNI

I still think you should talk to David about your proposal.

WILLOW

It's not that easy.

JUNI

It should be. Just tell him what you want.

WILLOW

What if I'm not sure what I want?

JUNI

You're always sure. Remember when we were kids and we'd be around the tree on Christmas morning and Dad would ask us which presents we wanted to open first?

WILLOW

You could never decide.

JUNI

Because I didn't want the first present I opened to be something like socks. I wanted it to be special. You always knew where the good presents were.

WILLOW

I don't this time. All the boxes look like socks to me.

JUNI

So, what are you going to do? You have to open something.

WILLOW

Do I? Can't I just sit here and eat Christmas cookies with you?

JUNI

(smiles - shrugs)

You could... except I kind of have to start getting ready. I'm getting married today.

WILLOW

(smiles)

Yeah, you are.

They hug.

EXT. EAGLE HILL MANOR - BARN - DAY

Willow comes down the path to the barn where Garrett, looking handsome in a suit and tie, is waiting.

GARRETT

We're finished. I know. We cut it a little close.

WILLOW

It's okay. You got it done before the wedding, that's all that matters. Can I see it?

GARRETT

It's all yours.

WILLOW

Aren't you going to come in?

GARRETT

(shakes head)

No... I know me and my crew have been doing a lot of the work, but this was your vision. I think you should do this on your own.

WILLOW

Thank you, Garrett. For everything.

She hugs him then turns to go into the barn.

INT. EAGLE HILL MANOR - BARN - DAY

Willow comes into the barn and stops, awestruck.

It is beautiful, with Christmas trees all lit up providing a backdrop to the altar. Rustic lamps are providing soft light and there are rows of seating all bedecked with garland and twinkle lights.

Willow is all smiles, holding back tears.

A few moments later, the door opens and David comes in. He is also stunned by the transformation of the place.

DAVID

Willow... this is...

WILLOW

I know, right?

DAVID

I don't know what to say.

(beat)

Yes, I do... your dad would be really proud.

WILLOW

(smiles)

Thank you for that.

(beat)

David, we need to talk.

DAVID

I know.

They look at each other, silent for a moment.

WILLOW

Why is it so hard to figure out what to say to you?

DAVID

I was wondering the same thing.

WILLOW

I think we just have to... we need to be honest with one another.

David nods and looks down.

DAVID

You heard I got an offer on the inn, didn't you?

That hits Willow hard.

WILLOW

You... was it Robert?

DAVID

Yes. I think it was the carriages that sold him.

WILLOW

(tries to joke)

Told you so.

(beat)

Are you going to take the offer?

DAVID

I think so. I think I have to.

WILLOW

Closure.

DAVID

Yes, but not just that. I've felt... stuck these last few years. Like I was up to my waist in snow and couldn't figure out how to get out of it.

WILLOW

And selling the inn would get you unstuck?

DAVID

I think so. I hope so. And, I have you to thank for it.

Willow thinks for a moment, summoning her courage.

WILLOW

David... if I'm being honest... I think you're making a mistake.

DAVID

What?

WILLOW

I don't think you should sell the inn.

DAVID

What are you talking about?

WILLOW

You love it here. I know you do. I can see it in your eyes every time you look at the place.

DAVID

Of course I do, but that doesn't mean I should stay.

WILLOW

Yes, it does! You should always stay and fight for what you love.

(beat)

David, I know you think that this is part of your past and that you need to put it behind you, but I think this is your future.

DAVID

What kind of future could I have here? I'm surrounded by memories.

WILLOW

There's nothing wrong with that!
Who said we need to let go of our
memories in order to create new
ones? There's always room in our
heart for more.

DAVID

I don't know if I can do that.

Willow reaches out and puts her hand on his arm.

WILLOW

But, don't you want to find out?

David puts his hand on hers.

DAVID

I'm sorry.

They look at one another, unable to move forward. Willow
pulls her hand back.

WILLOW

I need to go get everyone ready for
the wedding.

DAVID

Okay.

Willow goes to the door, stops, and turns back to look at him
one more time. She wants to say something, but can't quite
get to it. She leaves, and David turns to look at the
beautiful barn as Christmas music starts.

INT./EXT. EAGLE HILL MANOR - BARN - NIGHT

The barn is now filled with people including Austin with
David as his best man and some groomsmen plus a few
bridesmaids and a minister at the altar.

A couple of attendants open the doors to the barn and through
them we see the carriage pull up with Willow, Linda, and Juni
aboard. Willow climbs down and helps Juni, who is wearing a
beautiful gown, do the same, followed by Linda. They pass
through the gorgeously lit walkway into the barn.

Willow comes down the aisle, catching David's eye as she
does.

Behind her is Juni, accompanied by Linda who walks her down
the aisle.

Willow makes it to the altar and takes her place across from David. They smile at one another, a bit melancholy.

As Juni makes it to the head of the aisle, she steps up next to Austin, and everyone is seated.

MINISTER

Dearly beloved we are gathered here
today to join this man and this
woman in the bonds of holy
matrimony...

His speech fades out as the Christmas music fades up, swelling with emotion as David and Willow look at each other from opposite sides of the altar - close, and yet so far away.

END ACT EIGHT

ACT NINE

EXT. EAGLE HILL MANOR - NIGHT

Establishing shot of the manor.

INT. EAGLE HILL MANOR - GREAT ROOM - NIGHT

The reception room is also finished, a gorgeous space filled with Christmas decorations, a pianist is playing Christmas music, tables with Christmas centerpieces, and a Christmas tree in the middle of the dance floor. Some people are dancing, others are mingling, some are eating.

Willow is on the sidelines watching the merriment as Pam walks up to join her, handing her a glass of champagne and holding her own up.

PAM

To a job well done.

They clink glasses and drink.

WILLOW

Thank you.

PAM

Can I tell you a secret? I had my doubts.

WILLOW

I did, too. I'd never really done anything like this.

PAM

Oh, no. Doubts about the barn. Would it hold all the people you invited? Would it be warm enough? But, I never had doubts about you.

WILLOW

Really?

PAM

I knew from the moment I met you that you were the person who was good at taking care of things.

That hits a sore spot with Willow, but she smiles through it.

WILLOW

I'm happy it all worked out.

PAM

So, what's next for you? What big job are you going to tackle?

WILLOW

Oh, you know... back to New York. They might be transferring us to Denver. It'll be challenging...

PAM

But challenges are good. Right?

WILLOW

Absolutely... I'm not sure this was the challenge I was looking for.

PAM

I think you're probably more sure than you think you are. Is going back to New York or Denver or wherever they're going to send you what you really want?

WILLOW

(beat)

No.

PAM

Then for heaven's sake, why are you doing it?

WILLOW

Because I don't have a choice. David wants to let go of the past and...

PAM

Willow, I haven't seen David so engaged, so passionate, so... happy... as he has been these last few weeks in a long time, not since...

(beat)

The past isn't something you let go of... it's something you learn from, to build a future from. I think *that* is what you really want.

She clinks glasses with Willow again and walks away, leaving Willow to consider everything she has just heard.

INT. EAGLE HILL MANOR - ENTRY HALL - NIGHT

David comes out of the kitchen into the entry hall and finds Natalie sitting rather glumly on the stairs, which are festooned with garland and lights. David goes to sit down next to her.

DAVID

What's going on kiddo?

NATALIE

Nothing.

DAVID

Are you not having a good time?

NATALIE

No, I did. The wedding was really pretty.

DAVID

Yes, it was.

NATALIE

Was that what yours and mom's wedding was like?

DAVID

No, not exactly. We got married in a church, not a barn. And, ours wasn't at Christmas so we didn't have all the decorations.

NATALIE

But, it was still fun?

DAVID

It was. We had a great time. It was a wonderful way to start our lives together.

NATALIE

I wish I could have been there.

DAVID

It was a couple of years before we met you but the idea of you was there that day.

Natalie goes back to being glum.

DAVID (CONT'D)

What's wrong, sweetheart?

NATALIE

It's almost Christmas Eve, and we still haven't found Henry!

DAVID

I know, and I'm sorry. I'm sure he'll turn up eventually.

NATALIE

Well, if we can't find him then I guess we can't move.

DAVID

What do you mean?

NATALIE

We can't leave without Henry.

DAVID

Natalie, we can't stay here. Someone else is going to move in.

NATALIE

But... Mom, gave him to me. We can't just forget about him.

DAVID

We wouldn't forget. No matter where we went, we'd always have our good memories.

NATALIE

But why can't we have more good memories here? Did we use them all up? We can't make more?

David is a bit taken aback by how closely that mirrors what Willow said and doesn't know how to respond. He pulls his daughter closer to him.

INT. EAGLE HILL MANOR - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Willow comes into the living room and takes out her phone. She dials and waits for it to connect. As she leaves a message, she looks at the tall bookshelves, perusing titles and looking at covers.

WILLOW

Hey Tasha, it's late but I wanted to leave you a message to let you know that I'm probably coming back early - the day after Christmas.

She notices that several books on a lower shelf are sticking out a bit more than the other books. She goes to push them in...

WILLOW (CONT'D)

Things here have been...

She notices something. One of the books is Dickens' "A Christmas Carol." She pulls the book out and looks at it, opens the cover... it has her father's name in it.

WILLOW (CONT'D)

Tasha, I'll have to call you back.

She disconnects the call and looks at the book, stunned by its presence. She looks at the shelf again, seeing the books that were surrounding it still sticking out. She pulls the books out and discovers something behind it. She reaches in and pulls out a stuffed reindeer toy - Henry.

Willow laughs and looks at the book.

WILLOW (CONT'D)

Thanks, Dad.

She hears a gasp and turns to see David and Natalie in the doorway. She runs to Willow and takes the toy.

NATALIE

Henry! You found Henry!
Thank you, thank you.

Natalie hugs Willow.

DAVID

(to Willow)
Where was he?

WILLOW

In the bookshelf.

DAVID

What made you look in that specific spot?

Willow shows him the book - opens it and points to her father's name inside.

DAVID (CONT'D)

I don't believe it.

NATALIE

I do! I got my Christmas wish two whole days early!

DAVID

That's pretty amazing, sweetheart.

NATALIE

And see, Dad? We didn't run out of memories.

DAVID

No, we didn't...

He hugs his daughter and smiles at Willow.

EXT. EAGLE HILL MANOR - FRONT PORCH - NIGHT

Willow and David come out of the reception room to the front porch. They shut the glass doors but we can still hear the Christmas music and see colorful lights and the tree behind them. They are pulling on their coats as they do.

Willow hands him the portfolio we saw her with earlier.

WILLOW

I've been carrying this around for days. It's a proposal about my company investing in Eagle Hill.

DAVID

They would do that?

WILLOW

I'd have to present it to them, but I think I could talk them into it.

DAVID

You are pretty good at that, yes.

WILLOW

But, I only did it because I thought you really didn't want to leave.

David looks at a few pages.

DAVID

I appreciate you putting so much effort into this.

WILLOW

But...

DAVID

But, I can't let them invest.

WILLOW

David, I know that you want to forget the past and move on, but I think we should embrace the past. Not to live in it but to build on it. To create a future.

DAVID

I want that, too. We talked about all the memories that we have of this place and I was thinking that was all gone... behind us. But I thought of baking Christmas cookies in the kitchen and putting up lights on the manor and snowmen on the lawn and carriage rides in the snow... we're creating new memories all the time.

WILLOW

Then why can't you let my company invest?

DAVID

Because I'm keeping it. I called Robert and told him I was pulling it off the market.

WILLOW

What about your job? Becoming partner? Getting things back on track?

DAVID

I think it's time for a new track. I didn't realize that until you showed me.

David takes her hand - Willow smiles.

DAVID (CONT'D)

I'm thinking about hiring a new manager. I mean, I know you already have a job but...

WILLOW

I might be interested. On one condition.

DAVID

Name it.

WILLOW

You have to let me paint.

They laugh and they get closer to one another.

DAVID

You said you didn't know what a
good reason for moving here would
look like.

WILLOW

No... I said I'd know it when I saw
it.

They lean into each other and kiss - sweet and tender, a
lovely moment. As we PULL BACK, the party spills out onto
the porch and Natalie joins Willow and David, a new happy
family and we hear everyone wishing each other a Merry
Christmas.

END