

SCRIPT TITLE

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CARLA

You know, your grandfather offered your Mom \$300 to turn around and not marry you dad.

LYNNE

Mom. Is that true?

KATHLEEN

It was \$100.

CARLA

My mistake. Ruthie must have changed it for dramatic value. See? Balance.

CARLA and KATHLEEN exchange a smile.

KATHLEEN

But I got you out of the deal. And *that* is worth everything.

CARLA

Sure is. Ruthie loved you more than anything in this world. And so do I.

LYNNE

Except your own grandkids?

CARLA

They're a close second.

KATHLEEN

I want so much more for you, Lynne. You deserve the world.

LYNNE

Do I?

LYNNE takes the final drink from her coffee. She looks at a picture on the wall. Camera zooms in to show her Grandmother, RUTH BEAL and her in the photo.

LYNNE

I miss her.

KATHLEEN

So do I honey, so do I.

CARLA

We all do. The whole town, truly.

LYNNE

I just...I really need to talk to her. (beat) Not that I can't talk to you...both Of you

KATHLEEN

Sweetheart, we both know the relationship you had with her.

LYNNE

She just...

KATHLEEN

She understood you.

CARLA

There is a long weighted pause as LYNNE looks out the window.

LYNNE

It was my fault.

KATHLEEN

Lynne. No.

CARLA

Honey...

LYNNE

It was. I was supposed to pick her up. It was my birthday. Our tradition. I was coming to pick her up.

KATHLEEN

Your work scheduled changed. We all know that happens.

LYNNE is quiet and keeps looking out the window.

LYNNE

It wasn't work. (beat) Peter. It was Peter. He...

LYNNE is having trouble saying the words...

LYNNE

He asked me to stay. Said he had something planned for us. He never plans anything. So I stayed. And told you it was work. (beat) He lied. Didn't plan anything. And then you called to tell me...

KATHLEEN

Honey. She called me. I wasn't home.

CARLA

And I can't drive anymore.

LYNNE

But if I had come, she wouldn't have had to get in the car with Frank. Why did she get in the car with him?

KATHLEEN

I don't think he gave her a choice.

CARLA

He never did.

LYNNE

Never?

CARLA

He always pushed her around. Told her what to do when she dated him.

LYNNE looks at CARLA confused.

CARLA

Ruthie dated that numbskull before your Pap. I would have thought she told you. Kathleen, you didn't tell her?

KATHLEEN

I tried to talk about him as little as possible.

LYNNE

Mom never liked him.

CARLA

Well, your mom is a rarity. Most people loved him. At least at first.

LYNNE

How long did they date?

CARLA

About a year. He never did anything overtly awful to her. That was the thing.

(MORE)

CARLA (CONT'D)

He would be a little rude sometimes, but he didn't hit her, or make her feel too bad, publicly. And he left her, pretty abruptly too. So when he came back into her life, we all thought it was nice for her to have someone again. Unfinished business and all. Plus she was so sad when Richard died.

LYNNE

Yeah. I liked him when I first met him too.

CARLA

Turns out he tricked us all. He was smart. Crafty. Taking pieces of Ruth away so she didn't even notice. I didn't even notice. Not until this time around. Keeping her to himself. Isolating her from us. Slowly, bit by bit.

LYNNE

But when she looked in the mirror there were no marks, no bruises, so she couldn't tell.

CARLA and KATHLEEN look at each other. LYNNE starts to let the tears flow.

LYNNE

It's not fair. He was the one driving. He was the one who was drinking. It should have been him. Why did she marry him? He was so horrible to her.

CARLA and KATHLEEN.

LYNNE

I hate him. I hate him so much, but the truth is, it's my fault. She wouldn't have gotten into that car if I would have been here like I promised. Like she always was for me.

CARLA

I wish more than anything in this world she had never let him back into her life. She deserved better.

KATHLEEN

Yes. She did. But it's not your fault. It was an accident.

CARLA

A horrible accident.

LYNNE

Why do I let him dictate what's important in *my* life?

This is not a question for them to answer. It is for LYNNE to answer. CARLA holds her hand and KATHLEEN kisses her daughter's forehead.

LYNNE shakes her head

LYNNE

(to herself) Grammy would know what to do. She'd know what to do.
(beat) I don't know what to do...

KATHLEEN and CARLA look at one another helpless.

LYNNE wipes away her tears and takes a big breath in. A fake smile to appease her family crosses her lips.

LYNNE

Sorry. I just miss her. Probably gonna be like this for a while.
(beat) I'm gonna head to town and walk around a little. Is the theater open?

CARLA

It is. It's playing (beat) Want any company?

LYNNE

No. I think it's best to pull the bandage off alone.

KATHLEEN

Okay. Call if you change your mind.

LYNNE

Showtime still at 7?

KATHLEEN

Yep. Nothing really changes here, you know that.

LYNNE

I need that right now.

LYNNE gets up and grabs her coat.

KATHLEEN
We have a big day tomorrow.

CARLA
Cookies to make and a big soiree to
throw.

LYNNE
Christmas Eve. My favorite. I won't
be out too late.

LYNNE kisses her mom and gives CARLA a hug, grabs her scarf,
and walks out the door.

CARLA
I wish your Mom was here. Ruthie
always knew what to say to her.

KATHLEEN
I know.

CUT TO:

EXT. GREEN ARROW RESTAURANT - FRONT STEPS - NIGHT - PRESENT

LYNNE wraps her scarf around her neck and walks into the
brisk night air. The stars are shining brightly and there are
so few cars on the street, sidewalks are unnecessary. She
walks towards Main Street.

CUT TO:

EXT. MOUNTAIN RIDGE, MD - MAIN STREET - MOMENTS LATER

The lights of Main Street sparkle as LYNNE makes her way down
the sidewalk. Most of the shops are closed/closing and the
shoppers have headed home.

The windows are decorated for the Holidays. Painted with
sayings and traditional Christmas scenes. One catches LYNNE'S
eye. She reads it aloud:

LYNNE
"Traditions keep us alive after
we're gone."

She looks up to the sky and breaths in the town. The stars
twinkle above her.

One, in particular sparkles brightly, as it does, the marquee on The Palace Theater blinks on, like the star itself flipped the switch. It reads "It's A Wonderful Life December 23.

LYNNE walks up to the theater. In the Box Office, there is an older gentlemen standing there who she doesn't yet notice. His nametag reads CLEMENT, 60's/70's. He has a kindness that radiates from within. He makes you instantly at ease, like you have known him your whole life.

LYNNE (CONT'D)

I would give anything for just one more Christmas with you, Grammy.

CLEMENT hears her and smiles. There is a some magical music beginning.

CLEMENT

What's that young lady?

LYNNE

Oh, just talking to myself.

CLEMENT

One?

LYNNE nods. CLEMENT hands her a ticket.

CLEMENT (CONT'D)

There ya go, Lynne

LYNNE

How did you know my...

CLEMENT interrupts her. He points to his nametag.

CLEMENT

Name's Clement.

He tips his hat, as his eyes sparkle. She smiles at him.

LYNNE

How much?

CLEMENT

My treat.

LYNNE

Well, thanks. It was my Grammy's favorite movie. We came here every year to see it before...

CLEMENT

I know. Maybe it's time for you to be together again.

CLEMENT gestures toward the door and the door to the theater magically opens. LYNNE looks at it, confused, then back to CLEMENT. She smiles a half-hearted smile.

CLEMENT (CONT'D)

Enjoy.

LYNNE

Thanks. And Merry Christmas.

LYNNE smiles and walks into the theater. The lobby is worn, showing signs of age. It needs to be restored, but it has been taken care of.

The smell of popcorn fills the air. Sitting on the concession stand is a single bag of popcorn and a soda. In front of it, a note "For Lynne". She picks it up and looks around. To no one.

LYNNE (CONT'D)

Um, Thank you.

LYNNE opens the doors to the auditorium and walks in.

INT. PALACE THEATRE AUDITORIUM - PRESENT

LYNNE walks into the empty theatre. The reel has started. As she takes a seat, the title of the film comes across the screen.

"IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE"

LYNNE takes a huge breathe and lets out an audible, trembling sigh.

LYNNE settles in her seat and we see tears welling in her eyes already, the memories of this tradition flooding her.

The title music begins to play. LYNNE closes her eyes as the emotions flood her.

The camera cuts back to CLEMENT in the box office. He looks directly to camera, smiles, and winks. This causes a rush of air and magic to woosh through the theater.

INT. PALACE THEATER - CHRISTMAS 1956

There is a flash of bright light and a gust of wind that catches LYNNE'S hair. When the lens focuses again, the color has changed slightly.

There is a minimal sepia filter over everything including her, giving the world that "Golden Era" feel. LYNNE hasn't noticed yet, but everything is brand new.

LYNNE opens her eyes, overwhelmed.

LYNNE

I can't do this...I can't

LYNNE gets up from her seat and rushes out of the auditorium.

She runs to the lobby. Now, brand new, but she doesn't notice. She is overcome with emotion. Grief, fear, overwhelms her as she tries to escape it.

The doors of the theatre open and a steady stream of patrons begin to enter the lobby. LYNNE, taken aback, begins to fight her way out of the horde, trying to get outside.

She can't breathe.

LYNNE looks at the people around her. The hats, the dresses. She sees. It doesn't sink in.

She is now outside. A 1950's sedan drive by.

She takes a big audible breathe and sigh.

LYNNE (CONT'D)

Ahhh...

LYNNE composes herself for a moment. She turns right, take two steps, and slips on a thick patch of ice. She falls back on the ground and hits hard. The crowd has disappeared inside the theatre. One young woman, RUTH MACHIN, 30's, a kind smile and a twinkle of mischief in her eye, dressed to the nines in her 50's attire, hat and all, running late to the movie, sees LYNNE fall and hurries to help her.

RUTH

Heavens to Betsy, are you hurt?

LYNNE checks for injuries, and seems okay, shaking her head...

LYNNE

Just my pride.

Ruth smiles. LYNNE sees something familiar in her smile. Ruth helps LYNNE to her feet, but she can't put full pressure on her ankle.

LYNNE (CONT'D)
Ow. And maybe my ankle.

LYNNE looks at her swollen ankle.

LYNNE (CONT'D)
Just a little sprain.

RUTH
I'm surprised that's all in those shoes.

LYNNE looks at her heeled boots.

RUTH (CONT'D)
They're darling, but pretty impractical for a Mountain Ridge winter.

LYNNE
I...

RUTH
Listen, you don't have to make excuses for shoes. I never do.

RUTH points to her own, impractical shoes and smiles.

LYNNE smiles back as RUTH places LYNNE'S arm around her own neck to help her walk.

RUTH (CONT'D)
I just speak from the exact same experience. But it doesn't stop me. If your shoes aren't cute...

LYNNE chimes in.

LYNNE
What's the point?

RUTH (CONT'D)
What's the point?

LYNNE stares at her. Her mouth drops open. That was exactly what her Grammy always said. She looks at her face, her eyes, and is in absolute disbelief.

LYNNE begins to look around. She sees the cars now. The people walking by in their 1950's attire.

LYNNE (CONT'D)
What the...???

LYNNE scrambles to her feet. Her ankle buckles under her weight. RUTH catches her.

RUTH
Are you alright? You look like
you've seen a ghost.

LYNNE looks right at RUTH.

LYNNE
Something like that.