

## **Sawbones 257: A Sawbones Special Presentation: A Medicine Called Christmas**

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[audience cheers]

**Rachel:** Hi.

[scattered whoops]

**Rachel:** I'm Rachel McElroy.

[audience cheers]

**Rachel:** And I am pleased to be the narrator for this upcoming production.

[scattered cheers]

**Rachel:** From the Hallmark Channel and *Sawbones*—

[audience cheers loudly]

**Rachel:** —a marital tour of misguided medicine, we're very proud to welcome you to the world premier reading of a new original film for Candlenights, written by Justin and Sydnee McElroy.

[audience cheers and applauds loudly]

**Rachel:** *A Medicine Called Christmas.*

[audience laughs and cheers]

[music plays in the background]

**Justin:** [singing] Come and sit baby now in the candlelight. Yeah, this Christmas we're gonna do right. Hang some lights on the tree. Yeah, that's-a Christmas to me! Put your arm around the fire—

[someone laughing]

**Justin:** —[singing and playing guitar] yeah, I don't want any more nog! Yeah, you're callin' me a liar! But I'm gonna go out for a jog!

[music swells]

That's-a Christmas to me! You and me and her and a tree... learnin' about birds and the bees. That's-a Christmas to me!

**Rachel:** Interior.

[audience laughs]

**Rachel:** The medical office of the most prestigious doctor's office in all of New York, Daniel Bigcity Partners in Health.

[audience laughs]

**Rachel:** We find young, business-minded doctor, Tabitha Bigcity, as she and her father Daniel discuss a new assignment for Tabitha.

**Daniel:** I'm sorry, Tabitha. There's just no way around it! This is the way it has to be.

**Tabitha:** Explain to me one more time why I'm spending Christmas in the middle of nowhere, instead of how I spend every holiday: reading medical journals and watching CSPAN on mute while I eat leftover Chinese food?

[audience laughs]

**Daniel:** For hundreds of years, the men and women physicians of the Bigcity family have participated in a holiday doctor exchange program, which, as I've told you multiple times, is—

**Tabitha:** Is a real thing that exists and people do.

[audience laughs]

**Tabitha:** Right, no, I heard that part.

**Daniel:** You're going to take your Bigcity attitude and fancy medic—medical degree to a place where you can learn about the true meaning of Christmas, and help a few people along the way! In exchange, we'll be taking on their town doctor, who'll be teaching us how to be more... folksy and approachable, I guess.

[audience laughs]

**Tabitha:** Dad, I know everything I need to know about Crittenmond.

[audience laughs loudly]

**Daniel:** *Christmas*, Tabitha. It's called *Christmas*.

**Tabitha:** Right, Christmas, whatever, fine. What's name of this quaint village you're banishing me to, again?

**Daniel:** Well, the locals call it Poinsettia Point.

[audience laughs]

**Tabitha:** Is that what it's really called? Or..

**Daniel:** No, it's—it's really called that. [laughs nervously] Now, have a good trip.

[audience cheers loudly and applauds]

**Rachel:** Smash cut to the beautiful, picturesque town of Poinsettia Point. It looks like if Thomas Kinkade drew the North Pole while high on ecstasy.

[audience laughs]

**Rachel:** Holy crap, is it ever beautiful. Snow is everywhere, and the houses look like they're made of candy, and there are, like, three trains. Trains for days.

[audience laughs]

**Rachel:** We see the exteriors of local businesses, like Wiseaux Family Wreath Shop, Garlands and More Garlands, even Charlie and Pat's Soda Fountain. Did I say Soda Fountain? I did. How quaint is that?

[audience laughs]

**Rachel:** Pretty quaint! Anyway, Tabitha Bigcity has just arrived in town, and she's struggling to get her huge, fancy suitcase up the stairs. It's probably full of issues of The New Yorker and fair trade coffee.

[audience laughs]

**Rachel:** You know how these city types are. Anyway, she's having a hard time getting it up the stairs, until Phil Pibbles, proprietor of the Pibbles Bed and Breakfast—

[audience cheers loudly and applauds]

**Rachel:** —rushes to her aid.

**Phil:** Oh, hey, uh, let me help with that.

[audience laughs]

**Sydnee:** [quietly] I'm missing a page, let me borrow this real quick.

[audience laughs]

**Sydnee:** Just missing a page, no problem. [chuckles]

**Tabitha:** It's okay, I've got it, I've got it.

[pauses]

[audience laughs]

**Rachel:** Tabitha drops her suitcase down the stairs.

[pauses]

**Tabitha:** I don't got it.

[audience laughs]

**Phil:** Please, Madam, allow me. Here at the Chateau Pibbles—thank you, Paul—

[audience cheers loudly and applauds]

**Sydnee:** Thank you, Paul.

**Phil:** Here at the Chateau Pibbles, we pride ourselves on providing only the highest level of service.

**Tabitha:** Well, I appreciate it. I'll be sure to pass on my compliments to the Chateau Pibbles management.

**Phil:** Oh, that's not the real name of it. It's—it's really called the Pibbles Brea—Bed and Breakfast.

**Tabitha:** Oh, I know, I was—

**Phil:** I was just kidding.

[audience laughs]

**Tabitha:** Oh—okay!

**Phil:** Well, let me give you the rundown. Breakfast is served from 7 AM to 7:45. Now, before that, we have caroling practice that starts at 5:30 AM, and garland tying club at 6:15, and—

**Tabitha:** Whoa, whoa. Lemme stop ya there, Phil. I'm not much of an early riser. I'm afraid the carolers will have to do without an extra alto.

**Phil:** Well... that's not very festive of you, but...

[audience laughs]

**Phil:** ... if you're willin' to take your health into your hands like that, you're a grown woman.

[audience laughs]

**Tabitha:** Well, um, funny you should say that! I'm actually a physician.

**Phil:** Oh, you're the one filling in for Dr. C! Well, welcome. You got some mighty big boots to fill. He's really turned this whole town around!

**Tabitha:** Well, I—I'll do my best. Say, you sure you don't need some help with that bag? You look like you're really struggling.

**Phil:** Oh, not at all! I'm just movin' a little slower, thanks to the near-debilitating arthritis in my hands and arms and also legs!

[audience laughs]

**Tabitha:** Oh, God...

**Phil:** Yeahhh, those know-it-all eggheads in the city called it "super-arthritis!"

[audience laughs]

**Phil:** Back when I was still listenin' to what *they* had to say. [laughs]

**Tabitha:** Well... please stop by the clinic tomorrow. I'm sure there's something we can do to help.

**Phil:** Oh, that won't be necessary, Doctor..

**Tabitha:** Bigcity. Tabitha Bigcity.

**Phil:** Yeah, that sounds about right.

[audience laughs]

**Phil:** Christmas is just around the corner, so I don't think the arthritis is gonna be an issue for me much longer.

**Tabitha:** Uh, I don't see what that has to do with—

**Phil:** Listen, why don't you go in and get settled? I'll take the bag up to your room, then lie perfectly still on the floor for three hours and sob silently to myself on account of the super-arthritis, then I'll finish gettin' ya checked in. Did ya leave your wreath in the cab, or what?

[audience laughs]

**Tabitha:** My... wreath?

**Phil:** Left it at home, huh? I don't blame ya. I try not to carry anything over 18 ounces if I can avoid it! I'll have Mrs. P send up a few options, and you can choose one for your door.

**Tabitha:** Th—thanks?

[audience cheers loudly and applauds]

**Rachel:** Exterior: the next morning at the Poinsettia Point family clinic. A man, incredibly handsome, rings a bell outside the building.

[audience cheers loudly and applauds]

**Chris:** [yelling] Money for charity! Please give money to charity for Christmas!

**Tabitha:** Uh, excuse me. I'm looking for—

**Chris:** A great way to help those less fortunate than you?

**Tabitha:** W—well, sort of. I'm supposed to be working at the Poinsettia Point family clinic today?

**Chris:** Oh, sure, I can help, no problem. That'll be five dollars, please!

**Tabitha:** What? [holding back laughter] Five dollars? God, what kinda scam are you runnin', here?

**Rachel:** Chris shakes his bucket.

**Chris:** The Christmas kind? For poor people?

**Tabitha:** Ohh, right, okay. I'm sorry. Well—I only have a 20.

**Rachel:** There is a two-minute-long pause.

[extended audience laughter]

**Chris:** You know what? It's Christmas. I'll spot you one. It's right behind ya.  
[chuckles]

**Tabitha:** [laughing uncomfortably] Oh, ha, I get it. Joke's on the new guy.

**Chris:** Here. Lemme just unlock the door and help get ya settled.

**Tabitha:** You... work here?

**Chris:** Oh yeah! I'm the office manager. Collecting money for the needy is a— just a side hustle. I'm, uh, Chris! Chris Evergreen.

[audience laughs]

**Tabitha:** Tabitha Bigcity.

**Chris:** Oh, I know. We've been expecting you. Hope you got plenty of tinsel and holly berries in that bag!

**Tabitha:** Uh, I don't know that you all need any more decorations. You guys really go all out for Christmas, huh?

**Chris:** Doesn't everybody?

**Tabitha:** I think I have a copy of NSYNC Home for Christmas on cassette at home, but that's about as festive as I get.

[scattered but loud cheering]

**Chris:** I—I don't understand.

**Tabitha:** I don't know... I guess it was just never a big deal for our family. Dad always volunteered to work Christmas Day, and my Mom was allergic to trees.

**Chris:** [sympathetically] Ohhh.

[audience laughs]

**Tabitha:** Also, my Gamgam was the one who always went all out for Christmas, and when she died it just never felt the same.

**Chris:** Okay. So which—

**Tabitha:** And my Mom left my Dad for a mall Santa on...



[audience laughs]

**Chris:** On—on Christmas?

**Tabitha:** Arbor Day.

**Chris:** I get it. Your stocking's a little empty, but I think once you see the power Christmas has in this town, all your days are gonna be... merry and bright. Listen: people are filling up your waiting room. You better get in there.

**Tabitha:** You aren't staying?

**Chris:** Nah, I got a shift at the Christmas Tree Farm. Good luck in there!

[audience cheers loudly and applauds]

**Rachel:** Dr. Bigcity enters the clinic to find a full waiting room.

[audience cheers loudly]

**Rachel:** She is eager to get started. The nurse puts her first patient in a room, and Dr. Bigcity nervously knocks and walks in.

**Tabitha:** Hello, I'm—I'm Dr. Bigcity. I'll be taking over things here at the clinic for a bit. What brings you in today, Ms. Crimble?

**Ms. Crimble:** Oh, please, dear, call me Holly. We're all like family here in Poinsettia Point, no need for formality.

**Tabitha:** Well, that's very nice of you, ma'am, thanks! Now, what seems to be the trouble?

**Ms. Crimble:** Well, it's just a small thing, really. I even feel silly for coming in for it, but you don't wanna let these things go on too long without getting them checked. Just in case, you know? Anyway, I needed to know how many candy canes you use for a sore throat.

**Tabitha:** Uh... I—I'm sorry? What—what are the candy canes for, now?

**Ms. Crimble:** For my sore throat! I've been—I've hung about a dozen or so around the house since it started, but I forget exactly how many it usually takes!

**Tabitha:** S—so, wait. Are you gonna *eat* the candy canes for your throat? Like, to soothe it, since it's sore?

**Ms. Crimble:** No, of course not! You don't eat your Christmas decorations, dear. I've hung some on the tree, and I have a cute little garland with some across the door frame, and I've attached several more to a larger decorative candy cane that hangs over the fireplace, but my throat is still scratchy, so I must need to put up a few more. I don't wanna overdo it, you know? So, eight or nine more?

**Tabitha:** Uh—why don't we start with a quick exam first. I'll just take a look, and maybe feel for enlarged lymph nodes in your neck, and—

**Ms. Crimble:** Oh no, dear, I don't have time for all that! I just needed a reminder about the candy canes. I'm sure it'll be fine. I'll just go buy another box of them and start hanging them til I feel better!

**Tabitha:** Uh—i—if candy canes help soothe your throat, I don't see any harm, but I would really feel better if I could just do a quick exam to ensure this is just a viral illness, and it'll go away on its own.

**Ms. Crimble:** You know, I think I have the answer to this question written down at home somewhere from a checkup I had once before. I'll just be going, now. Thank you anyway, honey! It was so nice to meet you. Take care, and, well, good luck with your other patients today! I'm sure you'll get the hang of it.

[audience cheers loudly and applauds]

**Rachel:** Ms. Crimble leaves in a rush, clearly a bit disappointed in the new doctor.

[audience cheers loudly and applauds]

**Rachel:** Tabitha is a bit flustered by the strange encounter, but shrugs it off and heads to the next room.

**Tabitha:** Hi there! I'm Dr. Bigcity. And you must be Mr. Frankson. It says here in your chart that you have high blood pressure, is that right?

**Mr. Frankson:** Yeah, doc. I gotta tell ya, uh, *nothin'* is workin'. It's still just as high as ever, maybe worse.

**Tabitha:** Well, tell me a little about the treatments you've tried so far.

**Mr. Frankson:** Well, it started with building, uh, one gingerbread house. When that didn't work, I built a second gingerbread house. By the time I came back to my followup, I had built a whole gingerbread neighborhood, with little cars and mailboxes and fences made outta licorice, and everything, with all that, my blood pressure was as worse as ever.

**Tabitha:** Oh—so was this, like, for stress? Maybe you had discussed lifestyle changes, and stress management, and this was related?

**Mr. Frankson:** Oh, it was *definitely* stressful. I've never felt worse! All I do is build things out of gingerbread now! I—I have a whole gingerbread city! There are bridges and parks and skyscrapers... it's taken over my whole house! My wife is *furious*.

I have—I have no time for sleep or exercise, mainly I eat gingerbread pieces for all my meals, I've gained 40 pounds, I've run up a huge credit card bill buying baking supplies and candy for decorating. No matter how much I build, my pressure just keeps getting worse and worse! What do I do?

**Tabitha:** Uh... okay, let's just start with adjusting your doses. What medication are you taking?

**Mr. Frankson:** I told you about the gingerbread, right?

[audience laughs]

**Tabitha:** Yes. Uh, but what *pills* are you taking for your blood pressure.

**Mr. Frankson:** [uncertainly] Peels?

[audience laughs]

**Tabitha:** Ye—yes. Pills. Medicine. Pills that are medicine to make your blood pressure go down.

**Mr. Frankson:** What would they look like?

**Tabitha:** Well, they—they all look different, but generally small, round or oblong, can be any color, really—

**Mr. Frankson:** Gumdrops!

**Tabitha:** No! What? [frantically] No-no-no! Pills, medicine!

**Mr. Frankson:** Oh, hold on. My phone is buzzing. I gotta take this.

Yeah, hello, honey? Oh what's wr—slow do—slow down. Which one fell over? N—no, not the gingerbread Walmart!

[audience laughs]

**Mr. Frankson:** It collapsed? And it took out the gingerbread Taco Bell? Are you kidding me?! And the gingerbread Arby's is on fire!

[audience laughs]

**Tabitha:** The gingerbread Arby's is on *fire*? How is that—

**Mr. Frankson:** [loudly] Yeah, I'm leaving right now, honey. Ye—yeah, just—just keep throwing royal icing on it!

Sorry, doc, I got—I gotta go take care of this.

**Tabitha:** But your blood pressure! We have to do something, this is serious!

**Mr. Frankson:** [loudly] Yeah, yeah, I got it! Drumgo—gro—drumgops! I—I—I'll just keep using more [distantly] drumgo—gumdrops! Gumdrops?

[audience cheers loudly and applauds]

**Rachel:** Mr. Frankson rushes out to deal with the gingerbread fire while Tabitha sits, puzzled by the whole interaction.

[extended loud cheering and applause]

**Rachel:** She wanders, still befuddled, into the next room, to find a man with an obviously broken left arm, and a right arm that appears fixed at an odd angle. He is also very clearly in pain.

**Tabitha:** Oh my goodness, your arm! When did this happen, Mr. Cameron?

**Mr. Cameron:** Uh, well, uh, the right one here got broken when my neighbor, Mr. Gibbler, drove his one-horse open sleigh into a drifted bank and got upsot. So I drove *my* one-horse open sleigh over there to help him, and I ended up upsot too.

[audience laughs]

[inhales] So we're both in that bank, trying to help each other get *un*-upsot when I broke the darn thing!

**Tabitha:** I—it—it seems like maybe it didn't heal exactly straight? Can you use it at all?

**Mr. Cameron:** Oh yeah, I can do this: [grunts]

[audience laughs]

**Mr. Cameron:** And this: [grunts] [breathes heavily]

**Tabitha:** How was *that* break managed?

**Mr. Cameron:** Oh, well, after I talked to the doctor, I went straight to work on putting up the Christmas lights. I got Santa and his reindeer up pretty easily, and the inflatables weren't too much trouble, but I ended up in a *bit* of a pickle when I was putting the lights on the roof.

It was hard to maneuver up there, what with the arm and all, and wouldn't you know it, I ended up falling off the ladder and breakin' the other one.

[audience laughs]

**Tabitha:** Well, we need to get an x-ray of that right away to determine the extent of the fracture and whether or not we can just get away with, you know, setting it and casting it...

**Mr. Cameron:** A cast? [laughs] No ma'am. No cast for me! It's three days until Christmas! I still have the bushes to cover, and the LED projectors for the front of the house, not to mention all the extra lights I'm going to need to put up to cure *this* arm.

**Tabitha:** Well, we have to set it, or else it'll heal crooked, like the other one! That one is a much bigger problem, we're gonna need a specialist to see you, to figure out if we need to re-break it and set it properly—

**Mr. Cameron:** Break my right arm again. [laughs] Are you kidding me?! I have a broken arm, and you wanna go and break the other one that just healed! What kinda quack are you?!

[audience laughs]

**Mr. Cameron:** Where's *my* doctor, anyway?

[pauses]

**Rachel:** Chris Evergreen, having heard the commotion from the exam room, knocks on the door, and then enters the scene.

[audience cheers]

**Chris:** Hey there Cam, no need to get all worked up. I'm sure this is just a, uh, misunderstanding. Our new doc here has a... good heart, she's just still learnin' the ropes of our little town, is all.

**Mr. Cameron:** Chris! Thank goodness you're here! I was beginning to feel like I was in some fancy schmancy hospital in the big city! She was talkin' about casts, and *breaking my arm*, and here it is, three days til Christmas, and I still have to get up the all-penguin nativity set in my yard!

[audience laughs]

**Chris:** That's right, you do, and I wager that's just what Dr. C would prescribe for that arm, anyway.

**Mr. Cameron:** You are so right, Chris. I'm going to get on that right now. Thanks, doc! Sorry I got so worked up, there. This thing just hurts like the dickens, you know? Oh well! Merry Christmas!

[audience laughs and cheers loudly]

**Tabitha:** But—wait! No! Your arm! Your other arm! We have to do something about your broken arms!

**Chris:** Hey, doc. I don't wanna interrupt your work, but... what would you say to a walk, and a nice cup of cocoa, huh?

**Tabitha:** I—but the patients in the waiting room!

**Chris:** Oh, they'll be fine. I have them all out there workin' on paper garlands and letters to Santa as we speak. Besides, I think I need to fill you in a bit on our little town, here.

**Tabitha:** I *am* kind of in the weeds.

**Chris:** Come on. It'll clear your head. Extra marshmallows on me.

[theme music plays]

**Justin:** Hello, everyone. I hope you're enjoying the program, this very special program we made for you. Quick word from our sponsors. The first up is Squarespace. Do you have a big idea? You know, something that you really wanna get out into the world? Maybe you wrote a half-hour, uh, Hallmark movie, uh, about fake medicine, and you wanna share that with everybody.

Well, the good news is you can have a fantastic partner in Squarespace. Take that big idea, turn it into a website. You can blog or publish content, you can sell services if you want to, and a lot more.

They got these beautiful designs that are created by world-class designers. No scrubs here, as TLC once famously said. These are... [kiss noise] primo.

They got a new way to buy domains and choose from over 200 extensions, free and secure hosting, and so much more.

So, check out [squarespace.com/sawbones](https://squarespace.com/sawbones) for a free trial. When you're ready to launch, use the offer code "sawbones" to save 10% off your first purchase of a website or domain.

Next up: we've got Boll and Branch. You know, the holidays are, uh, here, basically. These are the holidays. You're in the holidays, currently. And afterwards, you know what you're gonna need? You're gonna need a little bit of rest, and there's no better place to get that rest than on Boll and Branch sheets. They make all their sheets, from bedding to blankets, from pure, 100% organic cotton, which means they start out super soft, and they get even softer over time.

They got a ton of great reviews. Forbes, Wall Street Journal, Fast Company, they're all talking about Boll and Branch.

Shipping is free, and you can try them for 30 nights. If you don't love 'em, send 'em back! You get a full refund.

So, get you started right now. Our listeners get \$50 off your first set of sheets at [bollandbranch.com](http://bollandbranch.com), promo code "sawbones." So go to [bollandbranch.com](http://bollandbranch.com) today for \$50 off your first set of sheets. That's [bollandbranch.com](http://bollandbranch.com), promo code "sawbones." [Bollandbranch.com](http://bollandbranch.com), promo code "sawbones."

Last up, a new sponsor for our show: Eero! E-E-R-O. Eero makes home WiFi systems. There's a new Eero, and the Eero Beacon that allow you to build a WiFi system that's perfectly tailored to your home. You can block malicious content across your network, you can tag sites that contain violent, illegal, or [conspiratorial tone] *adult content*, so you can choose what your kids can and cannot visit in the Eero app.

Eero makes a fantastic product, and I think that if you have struggled with WiFi at all, I think that Eero is gonna make things a lot easier for you. You know, we've struggled with WiFi reception over at my in-laws house, so we installed the Eero system, and it has been, uh, a real game-changer, if I may lean on a cliché.

So, stop thinking about WiFi. Just fix it. Get \$100 off the Eero base unit and two beacons, that package plus one year of Eero Plus. Just go to [eero.com/sawbones](http://eero.com/sawbones), and use the code "sawbones."

Also, this is normally where we thank The Taxpayers, but this time our music was, uh—well, I guess I technically sung it, but the beautiful orchestration is from Adam Sakiyama, so thank you to Adam for that beautiful tune.

And now, back to the show!



**Rachel:** Our next scene opens softly focused on a picturesque small town street. Piles of snow—I mean, absolute mounds of the stuff—

[audience laughs]

**Rachel:** —line the sidewalks. The lampposts are strewn with garland and twinkling lights, and the shop windows are filled with candles and trees and wreaths and toy trains. Lots of toy trains.

[audience laughs]

**Rachel:** Chris and Tabitha are strolling along, listening to the Christmas carols that are also the soundtrack, but we doubt the audience will notice.

[audience laughs]

**Rachel:** They're clutching mugs of hot chocolate in their fuzzy-mittened hands, and flakes of snow drift around them, but don't actually land on anything because they're just CGI.

[audience laughs loudly]

**Tabitha:** So, Chris. Honestly, what's the deal with this place? I had some of the strangest appointments in the office this morning.

**Chris:** Oh, I'm sure our little town isn't much like the... big city that you're used to.

**Tabitha:** Well, yes, but that isn't exactly what I meant. It was much more difficult than that.

**Chris:** Well, this cocoa here might not be Starbucks—

[audience laughs]

**Chris:** —but my Dad opened Greg's Cookie and Cocoa Emporium over 30 years ago, and we've been usin' the same family recipe ever since. I can assure you that the number one ingredient... has always been love.

[audience laughs]

**Tabitha:** A—again, that isn't *really* what I'm talking about? But I will grant you that Greg makes a great cup of cocoa.

**Chris:** Who's Greg?

**Tabitha:** Your—your Dad? From Greg's... Cookie and Cocoa Emporium?

**Chris:** His name's not *Greg*.

**Tabitha:** Well—well, then who's Greg?

**Chris:** I don't know, who's Target?!

[audience laughs]

**Tabitha:** See, I really don't wanna be offensive, but this place is just off! Everybody seems obsessed with the holidays, and I don't mean in a festive way? I mean in a way that seems to be dangerous to their health. It's almost like they think that doing Christmas-y stuff will somehow treat their illnesses? I—I know that must sound really bizarre.

**Chris:** No, not at all. I think you're beginning to understand the true meaning of Poinsettia Point. See, a lot of towns celebrate the holidays with decorations and cookies and caroling and all that, but they don't embrace the true spirit of Christmas! And that's a shame.

**Tabitha:** Oh no, wait. Is this, like, some "war on Christmas" thing?

**Chris:** No! I—I just mean that Christmas is medicine.

[pauses]

[audience laughs]

**Tabitha:** S—so, like—so, like, being cheery and having a positive attitude is—is good for you. That kind of thing?

**Chris:** Not at all. See—

[audience laughs]

**Chris:** —Christmas is literally medicine. See—okay. The way Dr. C explained it to me, disease is really just the result of weakness in your brain receptors, okay?

**Tabitha:** That's completely wrong.

**Chris:** So all you have to do to get healthy and stay that way is to make sure the receptors are strong again, and the best way to strengthen your brain receptors is with Christmas cheer! So holiday activities like decorating the tree and singing carols can actually *cure* you, as long as you do them enough!

**Tabitha:** That may be the dumbest fake medicine thing I've ever heard. You can't possibly believe that!

**Chris:** [chuckles] And here I thought you big city folk were supposed to be open-minded.

**Tabitha:** I—I am! I—I mean, I am to actual medical advancements, but this is completely ridiculous!

**Chris:** You know what? If you think you know so much better, why don't you come to the tree lighting ceremony in the town square tonight, huh? Everybody'll be there, and you can see just how well we've been doing, following Dr. C's advice!

**Tabitha:** Y—you know what? I will come. If for no other reason than there may be some very ill people in this town who are in need of actual medical assistance.

**Chris:** That's the Christmas spirit. It's a date, then.

**Tabitha:** No! It's not a date! It is *nooo* way a date. *Please* understand that this is not a date.

**Chris:** Okay then. Wink, wink. I'll see you—

[audience laughs]

**Chris:** —I'll see you later at our... not-a-date, where we definitely won't... fall in love for ever and ever. [loudly] Bye!

[audience cheers and applauds]

**Rachel:** Before Tabitha can protest any further, Chris downs the last of his cocoa and sprints off to his next job: his small stand at the year-round Christmas bazaar where he makes and sells hand blown glass ornaments.

[audience laughs]

**Rachel:** For orphans.

[audience laughs]

**Rachel:** Tabitha makes her way back to her room at the bed and breakfast, still in a bit of a daze. She needs to talk to someone who will makes some sense. Tabitha decides to FaceTime with her sisters!

[audience cheers and applauds]

**Tabitha:** Beth, Mandy! Oh, it's so good to see you both. I'm losing it here, sisters! You have no idea what this place is like!

**Beth:** Let me guess. Lovely, quaint, snow-dusted, and cozy?

**Mandy:** [mockingly] The people all have warm smiles and big hearts? Sounds awful!

**Tabitha:** No! No, the people are *weird!* I mean, it looks nice, but everyone thinks that Christmas is medicine, and they do holiday stuff to treat themselves?

**Beth:** [laughs] Oh, Tabitha, you're just not used to doing the Christmas thing! You know, our family has always utterly rejected the entire holiday and refused to acknowledge its existence, even in the most minor way... this is just new to you!

**Tabitha:** But it—it's more than just our family's complete distaste for all things Christmas. It's like I was telling Chris today—

**Mandy:** Ohhh, who's Chris? He sounds cute! [giggles]

**Tabitha:** He's the office manager at the clinic. And, well, he actually has a startling number of other jobs too... but anyway, he was kind of showing me the ropes, and—

**Beth:** He is so adorable!

**Tabitha:** I haven't told you what he looks like!

**Mandy:** How long have you been dating Chris?

**Tabitha:** Well—I'm obviously not dating him, I just got here yesterday—you literally saw me two days ago!

**Beth:** Oh, Tabitha! You're always so afraid to commit when it comes to love!

[audience laughs]

**Mandy:** Yeah, you'll keep an amazing guy like Chris at arm's length, no matter how perfect he is for you in every single way, just because you're scared of getting hurt again! It's time for you to open up your heart to someone new. It's time for you to find love. For Christmas.

[audience cheers and applauds]

**Tabitha:** What? What could you possibly be talking about? I'm *married!* I have been for six years!

[audience cheers loudly and applauds]

**Beth:** Listen, listen, Tabitha, you need to let the magic of that picture-perfect small town where everyone is beautiful fill your heart with Christmas cheer! Then you need to move there and stay there forever.

**Tabitha:** What?! Stay here—Beth, what—what are you—

**Mandy:** Exactly! Just stay right there, married to Chris, and happy forever!

**Tabitha:** Okay, I'm getting really worried about you both. What are you talking about? Are you drunk? Is this a joke?

**Beth:** [exaggerated laughter] Good one, Tabby. By the way, the corporate hospital office called and offered you that big doctor management job that you always wanted.

**Tabitha:** Really? Are you serious?! That's amazing! I'll call them back right away to accept!

**Mandy:** Oh—oh, no-no-no, don't worry. We already told them that you couldn't take it because you were never coming back to the city, and are going to stay in that little town with a big heart forever and ever, happy with your new husband, Chris Evergreen.

**Tabitha:** What?! No! What are you thinking?! What is wrong with you both?! And—how did you know his full name?

**Beth:** Okay, goodbye! We love you sis, bye!

**Mandy:** Merry Christmas! Say hi to Chris for us!

[audience cheers and applauds]

**Rachel:** Suddenly, there's a knock at the door. She opens it to find Chris standing there, smiling, ready to escort her to the tree-lighting ceremony.

[scattered cheers]

**Tabitha:** Look. Chris, I need to get home. I can't do this right now. Things are... *very* confusing.

**Chris:** I—I'm sorry to interrupt, but it's kind of an emergency. We really need our doctor in the town square right away.

**Tabitha:** Oh. O—okay, well, I'll grab my bag and we'll head there now.

[pauses]

[audience laughs]

**Rachel:** It's the evening of the tree-lighting ceremony, and the spectacle is almost too much to take in. On the Hallmark budget, that means that eight people will appear onscreen at the same time.

[audience laughs]

**Rachel:** Beautiful children have well-meaning snowball fights as they duck and weave between tents filled with the very sick-looking citizens of Poinsettia Point.

[audience laughs]

**Rachel:** Chris is covering Tabitha's eyes as he leads her into the middle of the ceremony.

[audience laughs and cheers]

**Rachel:** He removes his hands triumphantly.

**Chris:** Tada!

**Tabitha:** Is... this the emergency?

**Chris:** I just didn't want you to miss it.

[pauses]

**Tabitha:** [horrified] Oh God. What am I wearing?!

**Chris:** Aren't they great? They're therapeutic. [holding back laughter] You should feel your circulation improving already.

[audience laughs]

**Tabitha:** [shakily] Chris, d—do we match?

**Chris:** Huh! [through laughter] Okay now, *this* is getting spooky. Are you—

[audience laughs]

**Chris:** Are you feelin' this vibe, or *what*?

[audience laughs]

**Tabitha:** I'm gonna be sick!

**Chris:** Well, then lucky thing you find yourself at the healthiest night of the year: the Poinsettia Point Christmas tree-lighting ceremony.

**Tabitha:** What in the...

**Chris:** So lemme give you the grand tour. Our first stop is the cookie decoration booth, which is probably the tastiest way I can think of to treat your asthma.

[audience laughs]

**Chris:** Every day, the patients pick up their piping bags, and they don't put 'em down until they find themselves breathing... a little bit easier.

**Tabitha:** And how—how—how long does that normally take?

**Chris:** I'm sure it'll happen soon. Oh—

[audience laughs]

**Chris:** —this is fun, over here. It's the elf on the shelf shack. You search all through the shack until you find that rascally little scamp, and then—

**Tabitha:** And—and then...

**Chris:** And then you eat it to cure your gout.

[audience laughs loudly]

**Chris:** Oh, okay. So, over here, this is a little more so—no, it's here. This is a little more somber. It's a tent for our most serious cases. Basically you just stand in the dark while a little girl reads that line from *It's A Wonderful Life* about angels getting their wings over and over and over again. It's, um... it's intense.

[audience laughs]

**Chris:** I—I wouldn't get too close. Actually, let's step away and over to the carolers!

**Mr. Golfberg:** [singing] On the eighth day of Christmas, my true love gave to me, eight maids a-milking... on the eighth day of Christmas—

[audience laughs]

**Mr. Golfberg:** —my true love gave to me, eight maids a-milking—



**Tabitha:** Why—why are they just singing the eighth day of Christmas? Over and over again?

**Mr. Golfberg:** [simultaneously] On the eighth day of Christmas, my true love gave to me—

**Chris:** Our studies have shown that it's the most therapeutic! See? We're science-based, too. Hey, let's keep those maids a-milkin', folks!

**Mr. Golfberg:** Oh, we will. And don't worry... your secret is still safe with me, Prince Remington.

[audience laughs loudly]

**Chris:** [bad cockney accent] And I shall be forever in your debt for that, Mr. Golfberg.

[pauses]

[bad cockney accent] Oh yeah, I'm also secretly a prince.

[audience laughs loudly]

**Chris:** [bad cockney accent] It's, uh—it's a really long story, innit?

**Tabitha:** Um... so when—when do they light the tree?

**Chris:** Oh, every seven minutes.

[audience laughs]

**Chris:** It's so inspirational and beautiful, it's not really medically sound to do it only once a year, so every seven minutes one of us flips the switch, and we all gasp and tear up a little bit and spontaneously break into "Silent Night."

**Tabitha:** Uh—I—I have to go.

**Chris:** Wait, wait, wait, not yet! It's your turn to light it!

**Tabitha:** [stammers] Well, I, um...

**Chris:** [yells] Speech! Speech!

**Rachel:** Tabitha reluctantly takes the stage.

**Tabitha:** Uh... hi. Okay, so I just wanted to say that I never really believed in the whole Christmas thing until I came to your town.

**Chris:** [yells distantly] Woo! That's my girlfriend!

**Tabitha:** No!

[audience laughs]

**Tabitha:** No, Chris! Never! Never! [pauses] Where was I? Okay. Right. So, anyway, [emphatically] none of this is anything! At all! In fact, it's the dumbest thing I've ever seen in my whole life.

You're all going to be dead by your mid-40s, and everyone is gonna tell ghost stories about the weird Christmas city where everyone was an idiot, and then they died, and now it's haunted. Uh—

[audience laughs]

**Tabitha:** —I'm going home. Best of luck turning into ghosts.

[audience laughs]

**Chris:** Uh—what—

[extended cheering and applause]

**Santa:** Well! Looks like I'm *just* in time!

[audience cheers loudly]

**Chris:** Dr. C!

**Rachel:** It's Dr. C!

**Tabitha:** What?! You're—you know what? Don't answer. I'm gonna find an Uber. I just—I just have to ask. How—how are *my* patients?

**Santa:** Oh ho ho, dear, sweet little Tabitha. They're extremely bad!

[audience laughs]

**Santa:** [loudly] Merry 'Chridment' to all! And to all a good night!

**Together:** The End.

[audience cheers and applauds]

**Justin:** [singing and playing guitar] That's-a Christmas to me... me and her a tree... learnin' about birds and the bees... That's-a Christmas to me!