

## **Sawbones 303: A Medicine Called Christmas 2: A Royal Pain**

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**Rachel:** From Justin and Sydnee McElroy...

[audience cheers]

**Rachel:** ... co-authors of *A Medicine Called Christmas*, comes a new holiday fable to delight a generation.

[audience cheers]

**Rachel:** Gather the family and prepare for.. *A Medicine Called Christmas 2: A Royal Pain*.

[audience 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] 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!

[audience cheers]

[cheering swells]

**Rachel:** Zoom in on Tabitha Bigcity.

[audience cheers]

**Rachel:** After her unsuccessful attempt to convince the residents of Poinsettia Point that Christmas could not cure human diseases...

[audience laughs]

**Rachel:** ... Tabitha fled her medical practice in America and decided to ply her trade in developing nations where she could make more of an impact, and where tinsel was less plentiful. Doctors Without Borders has just deployed her to the newest assignment, the tiny European nation of Batavia—

[scattered loud laughter]

**Rachel:** —nestled just between Austria and Spain and Slovakia. You know, that whole sort of area. It's there.

[audience laughs]

**Rachel:** Almost before her plane finishes taxiing along the dilapidated runway, Tabitha is shocked to see a familiar face: Phil Pibbles, the former proprietor of Pibbles' Bed and Breakfast.

**Phil:** H—here, here, ma'am. Let me help you with that.

**Tabitha:** Ph—Phil?! Phil *Pibbles*?!

**Phil:** Aye, that's me, ma'am. But I'm sorry, I can't place your—

**Tabitha:** Poin—Poinsettia Point! I was assigned to be the town doctor? You helped me carry my bags.

**Phil:** Oh. Of course.

[audience laughs]

**Phil:** [hostile tone] Ms. Bigcity. How could have I have forgotten.

**Tabitha:** What are you *doing* halfway across the world?

**Phil:** There was nothin' for me in Poinsettia Point. I knew there had to be a place somewhere in the world where a man is still free to live the way he sees fit. To keep sacred the values of faith and family. To leave his Christmas lights up until February.

[audience laughs]

**Phil:** Batavia *is* that place. Here, I'll—I'll take your bags.

**Tabitha:** Uh—wait. How's your—what was it? *Super* arthritis?

**Phil:** [speaking close to the mic] Oh, markedly worse, thank you.

[audience laughs]

**Phil:** Every movement is an agony. A silent, torturous prayer to a God that feeds on my suffering.

[audience laughs loudly]

**Phil:** I'm copin' a bit better lately, though.

**Tabitha:** O—oh? That's good to hear. Did—did you start some new anti-inflammatories?

**Phil:** Nope. I've been distracted by my adult onset mega rickets.

[audience laughs]

**Phil:** Yep. A severe lack of Vitamin D has my legs bowed out into permanent question marks.

**Tabitha:** Ahh... I—

**Phil:** The question is, of course, how I manage to open my eyes day in and day out when consciousness brings only a hellish symphony of physical and spiritual agony that borders on the transcendent.

[audience laughs]

**Tabitha:** You—you—you have—

**Phil:** This is, of course, a question for which neither God nor man would dare to answer, so I'll continue to twirl in a waking purgatory in which my corporeal form is animated only by my own misery and fear of what lies beyond!

[audience laughs and cheers]

**Phil:** Anyway, the Elantra's right over here on the left.

[audience cheers]

**Rachel:** After a long drive, scored only by silence and Phil Pibbles' low moans of pain, Tabitha is deposited at her hotel, the Count Galoo Family Fun Center and Mainly Casino.

Exhausted from a long day's travel, she flips on the lights of her room and is shocked to find two sheep, a mule, and several robed strangers gathered around a wooden crib stuffed with hay.

**Tabitha:** Oh, I'm so sorry! I thought this was *my* room. There must've been a mix up.

**Jesus:** No, no. Hold up there, toots.

[audience laughs]

**Rachel:** A voice beckons Tabitha from the crib! There, perfectly positioned in the hay just above a headless baby doll, is the face of a bearded man in his late 30's.

[scattered laughter]

**Jesus:** No need to rush off, uh, we're just the living nativity.

**Tabitha:** My *what*?

**Jesus:** Living nativity! Uh, there's one in every room in the hotel to help guests get into that festive spirit. So, uh, unto you a me is born! Pretty killer, right?

**Tabitha:** Uh... so, how long are you here... J—Jesus?

**Jesus:** 33 years tops.

[audience laughs]

**Jesus:** I'm just kiddin'! We're always here! We wait to use the can until you're out of the room, if that's your worry. And the maids clean up the mule dookie, like—what do you think, Greg? Like, twice a day? Yeah, like, twice a day.

**Tabitha:** But what—what do you—

**Jesus:** Yes, we all close our eyes while you're in the shower! It's in our contract! Not a concern!

**Tabitha:** And while I *sleep*?

**Jesus:** We work odd jobs just to make ends meet. This isn't technically a *paying* gig?

**Tabitha:** So at least I'll have a little privacy then?

**Jesus:** Oh, no. We stay in the room. And work on our laptops. A little transcribing, a little drop shipping, uh, whatever comes up. No, until you check out we're just, like, here.

Uh, actually, my body from the neck down is standing on a stool in a room on the floor below, so—so I really don't have a lot of options? You and me are gonna get *real* familiar.

**Tabitha:** [tired] Perfect.

**Jesus:** Yep! Just like Dad made me.

**Tabitha:** Ugh... I hate this time of year.

**Jesus:** That's cool, it's just my birthday!

**Tabitha:** No, no, sorry. It's just—see, I'm a doctor. And last December I was sent to a town called Poinsettia Point to... I *think* learn the true meaning of

Christmas? It's—it's still not completely clear. I met a guy named Chris Evergreen—

**Jesus:** *Oooh*, it's getting *juicy*!

**Tabitha:** No, no, no, no. It's not like *that*. He was a maniac that believed Christmas could be used as medicine, and had tricked an entire town into believing it, too! It was honestly the most dispiriting moment of my medical career! I've traveled the world helping people since then, but I—I still can't shake the nightmares.

**Jesus:** Okay, you trailed off, there. Are you expecting me to say something in character? I mean—I mean, no presh. I audited a few classes at UCB. Okay. Uh...

[audience laughs]

**Jesus:** Just know, um... advise you in the manner of your Lord and Savior in all his perfect wisdom.

**Tabitha:** You know what? N—never mind. I'm gonna go to bed.

**Jesus:** No, no, no, wait, wait! I'll come up with something. Uh, just—just ask yourself: what would *me* do? You know, like the bracelet.

**Rachel:** Tabitha rises early the next morning and sets out for her first day of relief work.

[extended audience cheering]

**Rachel:** She is not well-rested in the slightest, but she *had* to get out of her room. Jesus kept her up half the night trying to remember what inspirational things he had said in the Bible, and she quickly learned that twice a day mule dookie cleanings was just not cutting it.

She arrives at the temporary hospital that'd been set up to accommodate the increasing number of sick residents. It is an abandoned Hardee's.

[audience laughs]

**Rachel:** Tabitha walks from cot to cot, assessing the patients before stopping and kneeling beside one.

**Tabitha:** Hi, uh, Mr. Soriano, is it?

**Mr. Soriano:** [some kind of amalgamation of bad German and Russian accents] Yes, who's there? I barely have the strength to open my eyes!

[audience laughs]

**Tabitha:** Good morning, sir. I'm—I'm Dr. Bigcity, from Doctors Without Borders. I hope you don't mind, but I was hoping to ask you a few questions. You see, I've read about you in all the major medical journals, and you're fascinating!

**Mr. Soriano:** Oh, thank you!

[audience laughs]

**Tabitha:** No, no, that's *bad*. How are you feeling?

**Mr. Soriano:** Well, overall I would say very, very, bad. As you know, I'm now officially the weakest human in medical history.

[audience laughs]

**Mr. Soriano:** But, after weeks of therapy, I can move my tongue to speak again, so that's something!

**Tabitha:** That's wonderful! Uh, I have to ask, though. How did this happen?

**Mr. Soriano:** It's a mystery to me, too, *ja*?

[audience laughs]

**Tabitha:** Yeah, but to get pellagra and beriberi and scurvy and marasmus and kwashiorkor and deficiencies of zinc, copper, chromium, fluoride, iodine, iron, manganese, selenium, calcium, potassium, magnesium, phosphorous, sodium, *and* Vitamin A, B, C, D, E, and K, all at the same time—

[scattered whoops]

**Tabitha:** —it's basically... impossible.

**Mr. Soriano:** Like I say, it's a mystery!

[audience laughs]

**Mr. Soriano:** I was a healthy, strapping man, full of vigor before all this! And I eat a very balanced diet.

**Tabitha:** Could you elaborate?

**Mr. Soriano:** Well, I consume all the major food groups.

**Tabitha:** I'm not trying to be pushy, but could you expand on that a bit?

**Mr. Soriano:** Well, heck, doc, you know! All the food groups! Sugar, butter, peanut butter, snickerdoodle, macaroon, chocolate chip, thumbprint, gingerbread, the frosted ones from Walmart—

[audience laughs]

**Mr. Soriano:** —the frosted ones from Kroger. You know, all the food groups!

**Tabitha:** W—wait. Those are just different types of cookies.

**Mr. Soriano:** Well, *ja*! Hey, listen! If cookies are good enough for the big guy, they're good enough for me!

**Tabitha:** The... big guy?

**Mr. Soriano:** Are you kidding me here? What kind of doctor are you?! Santa, of course! Santa! The big guy? The red suit? The beard that's white and the special night and all that? If milk and cookies are good enough for Santa, they're good enough for Ravo Soriano!

[audience laughs]

**Tabitha:** So you—you were drinking milk, too. You know, that's odd. You would've thought that—

**Mr. Soriano:** Oh, no. Not the milk part. Just the cookies.

**Tabitha:** Well—why not the milk?

**Mr. Soriano:** I don't like milk.

[audience laughs]

**Tabitha:** Oh. Oh, okay. Well, uh—

**Mr. Soriano:** Look, doc. Can I go back to resting my face muscles now? All this talking has made me just worn out.

**Tabitha:** Sure, sure, sorry—

**Mr. Soriano:** [already snoring]

**Tabitha:** —just let me know if there's anything I can do.

[audience laughs]

[audience cheers]

**Rachel:** Tabitha is shaken by this strange encounter. This patient's belief in a Christmas-themed diet reminds her of the horrible experience she had in Poinsettia Point, and she begins to fear that something is very wrong here in Batavia.

As her mind trails off in worry, she rounds a corner and runs face-first into someone carrying a very large cardboard box. Tabitha catches herself against the wall and begins to apologize to the stranger, when he lowers the heavy box to the floor and looks back up at her, smiling. Tabitha realizes that she is staring into the eyes of none other than Chris Evergreen.

[audience cheers]

**Chris:** Oho, ho, ho!

[cheering continues]

**Chris:** Tabitha?! I'm so sorry, I didn't see you there!

**Tabitha:** What—what are you—how—are you *following* me?! What's your deal, man?! I took a self defense elective in high school, back off!

**Chris:** Whoa, whoa, whoa. Just hold your horses, there, Dr. Bigcity. I've been in Batavia for a while now. I had now idea you were comin'! Heck, I'm probably here for the same reasons you are. There are people here in need of help, and helping people... it's what I do.

[audience laughs]

**Rachel:** Tabitha, still confused and frankly pretty freaked out, looks down at the big cardboard box at her feet and gasps in horror as she sees a red and green sweater with two elves building a snowman knitted on the front spilling out of the top.

**Tabitha:** [seething] You and your Christmas crap! You're doing it again! You're trying to fix these poor sick people with Christmas, you twisted... weird... moron!

[audience laughs]

**Chris:** Oh, no, no, no. You got it all wrong, Tabitha. I'm a different person, now! I left all that Christmas stuff behind.

**Tabitha:** Then what about that horrible sweater?

**Chris:** I mean, horrible's a little much, isn't it? I'm a bit rusty, but it's still decent craftsmanship.

**Tabitha:** And you're probably gonna go wrap it around poor Mr. Soriano over there and heal them and shake some jingle bells over him in place of some IVs or some other crap like that, right?

**Chris:** Oh, no, no, no, no, no! I mean, it's for Robert, but just because he's cold all the time from the... complete lack of any... human muscle tissue at all. I realized the error of my ways, Tabitha. I know you were right about real medicine being real medicine and not Christmas stuff. If you don't believe me, just... look under the sweater.

**Rachel:** Tabitha leans over and nervously moves the hideous sweater. She is surprised to find that underneath it are actual medical supplies! Well, honestly, it's just a bunch of loose pills and some open band aids, but still! Medical supplies!

**Tabitha:** Uh, oh! Wow, you—you were telling the truth. This is actual... medicine. Sort of.

**Chris:** I told you, Tab. I'm a new man now, who's just trying to make the world a better place. Hey, by any chance, you wouldn't be interested in having dinner with this new man tonight, would you?

**Tabitha:** Wow, Chris. I think maybe we got some signals crossed, here? That's not really where *I* am right now, and—did you just call me *Tab*?

**Chris:** Never mind that. Just have dinner with me. See, I have a plan to save this place and make everything better. Just meet me at the only remaining restaurant in the whole country, tonight at eight, and I'll explain *everything*.

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[theme music plays]

**Justin:** This was such a lot of fun. Thanks to everybody, again, for coming out, and to Adam Sakiyama for "That's a Christmas to Me," orchestrated, uh, version. I want to take a minute to tell you about our sponsors this week. First up is Squarespace. If you wanna build your own website and you don't know where to start, it's—you know, you don't need to code. It's 2019! Just get in there and start making something!

People like architects, uh, food producers, record labels, venues, athletes, creative consultants—[quietly] whatever that is—designers, lawyers, uh, everybody is using Squarespace to build and create their websites. It's 'cause they're super beautiful and super flexible. You can use 'em to blog or publish content, promote your physical or online business, announce an upcoming event or special project, whatever you wanna do with a website. And people have done some things, let me tell you.

Uh, you can do it with Squarespace. These are beautiful sites, and they've got powerful e-commerce functionality just kind of baked right in, and great customer support that's available whenever you need 'em.

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

I also wanna tell you about Away. You know, holiday travel can be so stressful, but in my opinion it's a little easier if you got the right luggage. And from where I sit, the right luggage is made by Away.

They got a range of suitcases made from different durable materials, a variety of colors, and two different carry-on sizes, so whichever one, you know, sort of suits your style. Away has luggage that works for how you travel.

They got a lifetime guarantee, a hundred day trial, and free shipping and returns within the contiguous US, Europe, Canada, and Australia. They're beautiful bags. They got interior organization systems and, uh, this is great. There's a laundry bag in there that's hidden, and you can remove it to keep your dirty clothes separate. And, four 360 degree spinner wheels, so they're really easy to get around with. That's my favorite feature, personally.

For \$20 off any suitcase or bag, visit [awaytravel.com/sawbones20](https://awaytravel.com/sawbones20) and use promo code "sawbones20" during checkout. That's [awaytravel.com/sawbones20](https://awaytravel.com/sawbones20), and promo code "sawbones20" for \$20 off any suitcase or bag. Check it out. Make your holiday travel a little bit easier. Or your forever travel, 'cause they're—again, lifetime guarantee. You can't beat that. [Awaytravel.com/sawbones20](https://awaytravel.com/sawbones20), promo code "sawbones20."

And, with that, let's get back to the show.

\*\*\*\*\*

**Rachel:** Before Tabitha can protest further, Chris rushes off with his box of pills. Tabitha—

[scattered laughter]

**Rachel:** —stares blankly for a moment, considering her options, and then shrugs, as she resigns herself to yet another odd evening with Chris Evergreen.

The day rushes by in a blur of strange diagnoses that she would be more acquainted with seeing in history books than in exam rooms.

Sooner than she would like, the work day is over, and she finds herself walking into the last remaining restaurant in the tiny, destitute country: [with a French accent?] Noel Bisquick.

[scattered laughter]

**Rachel:** Chris waves her over to his table and gestures for her to sit down. He has at least had the courtesy to order her a beer already.

**Chris:** Oh, I'm so happy you came! I have to admit, I really wasn't sure if you would, but that's ridiculous, right? I mean... with these looks?

[audience laughs and cheers]

**Chris:** What gal wouldn't show, am I right?

**Tabitha:** Let's not, Chris. I came because you said you had a plan to fix this place, and I am a doctor, and bound to help people by an oath, and... all that. So, just tell me what's up.

**Chris:** Well, first you have to understand the way things work, here. Do you remember the Poinsettia Point, all the "[mocking tone] Christmas is medicine" stuff?

**Tabitha:** Ye—yeah. Uh, I remember it, dude. It ruined me. I've spent the last few years wandering the globe trying to find who I am and where I'm meant to be, and regain the joy I once found in medicine that you weirdos took from me.

**Chris:** Hey, I'm sorry about all that. I truly, truly am.

[audience laughs]

**Rachel:** Chris reaches across the table in an attempt to hold Tabitha's hand, and she just shakes her head and mouths the word "No—"

[audience laughs]

**Rachel:** —before downing her beer in one big gulp, which she is dismayed to realize... is actually eggnog.

**Chris:** So, anyway, this place is sort of suffering from the same thing as the Point, but worse. The new ruler is a terrible despot. He has raided all the country's savings to spend on Christmas stuff.

Our education budget just went for tree ornaments. Our defense spending was for a bunch of nutcrackers and toy soldiers. Instead of infrastructure, money went into inflatables, so... you've seen what's become of our healthcare system. It's cookies and candy canes and tinsel and twinkling lights all over again! Something *has* to be done!

**Tabitha:** That's terrible! But it makes sense as to why the whole country has taken such a downturn in the last few years.

**Chris:** Yeahhh, that guy's just the worst. He blew all the money we had allotted for social security on a big Christmas parade, just so he could show off all of our holiday spirit power?

[audience laughs]

**Chris:** Hundreds of Christmas floats and Christmas balloons, Christmas bands and Christmas tanks and—

**Tabitha:** Wait—wait, wait, wait. Christmas *tanks*?

[audience laughs and cheers]

**Chris:** Yeah, you know. Christmas tanks!

[audience laughs]

**Chris:** Anyway, it's a—it's a total mess.

**Rachel:** Before Tabitha has a chance to ask for more information on the aforementioned Christmas tanks, the waiter arrives, carrying a baking sheet with fresh, warm, undecorated sugar cookies, cut into adorable holiday shapes.

He lowers it to the table with a flourish and begins to arrange bottles of red and green icing, as well as tiny shakers of sanding sugar, nonpareils, and candy snowflakes.

**Tabitha:** Wait, I'm sorry. You must have the wrong table. We—we haven't ordered any food yet.

**Waiter:** It's a *prix fixe*, madame, as it always here at Noel Bisquick.

**Tabitha:** That—that's fine, I—I guess, but we haven't eaten any *dinner* yet? You never brought us the *main* course?

**Waiter:** I'm sorry?

**Tabitha:** The *main course*, the—the food? The dinner food? Not the dessert?

**Waiter:** Are—are you asking for something other than cookies?

**Rachel:** At these words, a collective horrified gasp can be heard through the restaurant.

**Waiter:** [horrified gasp]

[audience laughs]

**Rachel:** A fork clatters as it is dropped to a plate. The silence lengthens. A hawk cries, somewhere in the distance.

[audience laughs]

**Chris:** No, no, no, no, no, never. [laughs nervously] She's just new, is all. She hasn't been here before, cut her some slack. She'll be fine with the menu, I promise.

**Waiter:** Well... I guess if that is the case, we will forget your indiscretion this one time. You may go ahead and enjoy.

**Rachel:** The waiter does not leave, but stands and stares at them intently. Tabitha nervously reaches for a gingerbread man and brings the cookie slowly to her mouth to take a bite. The waiter draws in a tense breath.

**Chris:** [quietly] No, no, no, no, no. Don't eat it. Just decorate it. Just pick up some frosting and decorate the darn cookie!

**Rachel:** Tabitha holds the cookie suspended in midair, inches from her mouth. She reaches for the icing and begins haphazardly piping on thick, red layers in a design that almost resembles half a sweater vest, or perhaps a fatal stab wound.

[audience laughs]

**Waiter:** Truly embarrassing. Now, remember, stay quiet as you decorate so that we can hear the montage music, and be certain to smile warmly at each other periodically from different angles so that we have options.

[audience laughs]

**Waiter:** And, as always, don't eat them. [gets closer to the mic] Don't *ever* eat them.

[audience laughs]

**Tabitha:** Well then—then who eats them?

**Waiter:** They are for le the church, of course! Geez!

**Rachel:** The waiter throws up his hands in exasperation, and then excuses himself to get the check. Tabitha and Chris once again find themselves alone.

**Chris:** Yikes! I hope the prince doesn't find out you tried to order real food!

**Tabitha:** Uh, what—would I get fined?

**Chris:** Beheaded, probably.

**Tabitha:** *What?!*

**Chris:** You know what? Probably not. He doesn't want an international incident. But who knows? The prince is a monster! He only cares about celebrating Christmas as intensely as possible. He doesn't care who gets hurt as a result! I only hope that you and he never have to cross paths. I bet you're one of his least favorite people on Earth.

[audience laughs]

**Waiter:** Excuse me, sir, but here is your check. Also, you seem to have left your crown in the urinal again.

**Tabitha:** [horrified] Oh, God!

**Chris:** Crap! Yeah, okay, [holding back laughter] you got me. I am the prince.

[audience laughs and cheers]

**Chris:** But, uh—I—I did have you goin' for a little bit there, right? [laughs loudly]

**Tabitha:** Chris? You—*you*, Chris Evergreen, are the prince of Batavia?!

**Chris:** Yeah, most def, most def, most def, yeah.

[audience laughs]

**Chris:** It's a bit of a King Ralph situation. Literally moments after you left Poinsettia Point, I got a telegram that all the Batavia Evergreens had died from smallpox.

**Tabitha:** No—Chris, smallpox was eradicated globally in 1979, [loudly] thanks to vaccines!

[audience cheers loudly]

**Chris:** Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. It was, like, um—it was, like, a nostalgia thing or something?

[audience laughs]

**Chris:** Anyway, I got called up to the majors and decided to make a country where I and those like me would still be free to celebrate *Christmas*.

**Tabitha:** What—what are you talking about? Who kept you from celebrating?

**Chris:** Why... you did, Tabitha. Don't you know?

**Tabitha:** Know what?

**Chris:** Oh, I forgot! You haven't been back home since that night. Poor, sweet Tabitha... you insisting that night that Christmas wasn't medicine triggered a crisis of Christmas cheer that soon spread nationwide. I'm sorry to be the one to break the news, but because of the actions of you, Tabitha Bigcity, Christmas is illegal in America.

[audience laughs]

**Tabitha:** That is... the dumbest thing I've ever heard in my entire life.

**Chris:** It's all true, Tabitha! Chestnuts, banned! Candy canes, banned! Those little butter cookies in the blue tin that your grandma puts all her sewing stuff in—

[scattered loud cheers]

**Chris:** —banned. And it's all thanks to you and your highfalutin big city ways. [wistfully] I guess... you finally won the war on Christmas.

[audience laughs]

**Tabitha:** I'm gonna go back to the hotel.

**Chris:** Not so fast, Ms. Bigcity! You aren't the slightest bit curious why you've been brought here?

**Tabitha:** I assumed it's because your medical infrastructure was basically nonexistent, which I *now* suspect is due to the country being run by a sentient Yule log.

[audience laughs]

**Chris:** You cut to the core of me, Tabitha. But no! We don't need your allopathic voodoo. We've got hearts full of Christmas cheer. No, I brought you here because you're the one who killed Christmas, and the way I figure it, you're the one who's gonna bring it back.

**Tabitha:** There's absolutely no way on Earth that I'm helping you with *literally* anything! So, again, I'm headed back to my room.

**Chris:** [loudly] Guards, seize her!

**Rachel:** An uncomfortable minute passes.

[audience laughs]

**Chris:** [loudly] Guards? Phil? [normal volume] I know, I know, you're the only guard. Could you just—could you hurry up the seizing a little bit? I know, the adult-onset mega rickets, I get it.

[audience laughs]

**Chris:** I do, I just—okay, so you're sitting down. Just taking a little break there, huh, champ? Okay, that's fine, no biggie. Are you *crying*?

**Tabitha:** Oh, okay, God. Just let him—let him sit. Let him sit. I'll go to your... castle?

**Chris:** Abandoned Toys R' Us, but same difference!

[audience laughs and cheers]

**Rachel:** As Chris and Tabitha enter the main foyer of the Toys R'—I mean, the castle—they are greeted by an imperial-looking woman in Christmas-themed robes, and wearing a crown on her head. She is already staring coldly—

[audience cheers]

**Rachel:** —as she approaches.

**Queen:** So. *You're* the little American tart who thinks she's good enough for my little prince, hmm?

**Tabitha:** I'm *sorry*?

**Queen:** You should be... *commoner*.

[audience laughs]

**Tabitha:** Who are *you*, now?

**Chris:** [starts distantly but rapidly approaches the microphone] Oh, oh, oh! I've been so excited for this moment! I just can't believe it's really happening. Okay, Tabitha, meet my mom, Queen Evergreen. Mom, this is Tabitha, the doctor girl that I told you so much about?

**Queen:** I would say charmed to meet you, but as you may be able to tell, I am most certainly *not*.

**Tabitha:** I—I think there's a bit of a misunderstanding here, um... your—your highness. We are not *together*. This is sort of a "I was brought here by guards against my will" situation, if you get my drift?

**Queen:** [laughs haughtily] So the little Yankee peasant thinks *she* is the one who is too good for the bona fide prince? Is *that* your... drift?

[audience laughs]

**Tabitha:** Okay. What is *wrong* with all you people?

**Queen:** *You people*? So prejudiced against Batavians, too, I see. A real catch, this one.

**Chris:** Oh, Mom, don't be so hard on her. She *is* a doctor, and she's gonna help me bring Christmas back to America!

**Tabitha:** Okay, this is the second time you've said that. I have to ask, why in the world would I wanna help you?

**Chris:** Mom, would you give me and Tabs a second, please? I need a little privacy here? [laughs uncomfortably]

**Queen:** Oh, no trouble. [distantly] Ya basic.

[audience laughs and cheers loudly]

**Queen:** My only—

[laughter continues]

**Queen:** —[passive aggressive tone] my only dear son, I'll just go hide in my room like a ghost. Don't mind me. Just your mother who gave up everything, abdicated her actual crown so you could be in charge and do your Christmas thing, but no trouble at all, I'll just go wither quietly in the corner while you flirt with the little... *street urchin*.

[audience gasps]

**Queen:** Don't mind me! I've just been blowing up beach balls all day.

[audience laughs and cheers loudly]

**Rachel:** Queen Evergreen leaves, but you can still hear her guilt trip for several minutes longer from the other side of the castle.

**Chris:** Oh, look, Tabitha. I know you're gonna be helping me, because no matter *what* you say, I know the Christmas spirit is still hiding somewhere in that big, gooshy heart of yours! I just haven't been able to figure out how to get to it until now.

**Rachel:** With that, Chris takes a bag off an abandoned Toys R' Us display case and reaches inside slowly. He begins to hum "Hark the Herald—"

**Chris:** [hums "Hark the Herald"]

**Rachel:** —[simultaneously] like the *Peanuts* characters do in the Christmas movie. As he reveals the contents of the bag to Tabitha, it is a small snow globe. It is clearly old and a bit scratched, but inside, the snow still swirls around a perfect little family skating on a frozen pond.

Tabitha takes the snow globe, her hands trembling a bit.

**Tabitha:** [softly] This can't be real! How could you have found this? It's the last present my mom ever gave me for Christmas before she left my dad for that mall Santa on Arbor Day!

[audience laughs]

**Tabitha:** [tearfully] It's my last memory of what Christmas—when it *meant* something to me!

**Chris:** So, like, does that make you wanna change your mind then? I mean, does that make you wanna... help me?

**Tabitha:** Well... I don't—I don't know, maybe? I think? Yeah, I think maybe I—I *do* care about Christmas, after all!

**Chris:** Ahh! Okay, this is *great*! I mean, I really thought it would take a little more effort. I can't say I'm disappointed, but I *do* feel a little bad about Plan B, now.

**Tabitha:** Plan B?

**Chris:** I sort of kidnapped your dad?

[audience laughs]

**Chris:** I had him thrown in the dungeon and I was gonna threaten to... kill him, if you didn't comply.

**Rachel:** Tabitha's dad, Mr. Bigcity, is led into the room in chains.

**Tabitha:** Oh, God! Dad?!

**Mr. Bigcity:** Tabitha, honey! Thank goodness you are here.

**Tabitha:** Are you okay?!

**Mr. Bigcity:** I am now that I know that Christmas will be saved!

**Tabitha:** Aw, no...

**Mr. Bigcity:** Yessir, uh, that dungeon was no treat! And all you could really—and you all could really do with a bathroom, and maybe some water down there somewhere, or—or even just a floor that isn't constantly damp. Uh, but it was all worth it in the end, if my kidnapping and imprisonment for seven months is—

[audience gasps and laughs]

**Mr. Bigcity:** —is what it takes to bring Christmas back to the good ol' US of A, then sign me up!

**Tabitha:** So they got to you, too?

**Mr. Bigcity:** Only if you mean that by, uh, they got to my big gooshy heart with—with Christmas spirit and goodwill, then yes, they sure did! Also, uh, they brainwashed me.

[audience laughs]

**Mr. Bigcity:** I'm fairly certain. Uh, but who cares anymore! Christmas!

[audience cheers]

**Mr. Bigcity:** [distantly singing "Deck the Halls"]

**Rachel:** Mr. Bigcity is led off singing "Deck the Halls" at the top of his lungs, as Tabitha hangs her head in defeat. Slowly, she turns to Chris.

**Tabitha:** Okay, I quit. What's your plan?

**Chris:** You're gonna like the plan, though. It's a really good plan.

**Tabitha:** It doesn't really sound like I have much choice.

**Chris:** Yeah. So, I figure to get everyone's attention if we're gonna make a real impact in the U.S.—you know, the whole world is watching, you know—I'm gonna do something that all world media will be forced to cover.

**Tabitha:** Chris, that sounds terrifying. Please just think about—

**Chris:** Pumpkin pie!

**Tabitha:** S—sorry?

**Chris:** Tomorrow night at 8 PM, Phil's grandma, Nana Pibbles, is going to make... the world's best pumpkin pie.

**Tabitha:** So, how does that do... uh, anything?

**Chris:** [loudly] The world's *best*, Tabitha. You think they're gonna be able to ignore that? You think there's any news station on the planet that's gonna miss showing their viewers the pumpkin pie that makes all others look like simple piles of squash and bread?!

**Tabitha:** This is all no—nothing, obviously. But how can you even prove that it's the world's best pumpkin pie?

**Chris:** It's right here, in the *Blessed Redeemer Baptist Church 1979 Family Cookbook*. See? "Nana Pibbles' Recipe for World's Best Pumpkin Pie!" Are you saying that Nana Pibbles is a *liar*, Tabitha?

**Tabitha:** I guess not?

**Chris:** So, just the fine people of the Blessed Redeemer Baptist Church, huh?! Dang, that's cold, Tabitha, ever for *you*.

**Tabitha:** So—so what? I'm supposed to take a big bite and give a thumbs up to the camera? "[through a full mouth] Dang, grandma, this pumpkin pie is creamy! United us all as a planet and has just the right amount of clove..."

**Chris:** No, Tabitha. The pie is just the appetizer. The main course... will be humble pie.

**Tabitha:** S—so the pie isn't the dessert? It's an appetizer for the pie that follows the initial... pie? Is there a dessert? Like, an as-yet-unnamed third pie? Or...

**Chris:** [sharply] No! You're going to announce to the world that you're very sorry for killing Christmas and that Christmas rules! And also, it's *medicine*.

**Tabitha:** Noooo—

**Rachel:** Five minutes later.

**Tabitha:** —oooo!

**Rachel:** Tabitha's cry of despair is suddenly interrupted by the arrival of her two sisters, Beth and Mandy.

[audience cheers]

**Rachel:** They come rushing over to her in a flurry of excitement, carrying armloads of tulle and satin and sparkly necklaces and makeup palettes. Tabitha stares at them in confusion, unable to speak for a moment.

**Beth:** Well, hello to you too, sis! Not much of a royal welcome, here, huh?

**Mandy:** Yeah, I'd expect better manners from a princess-to-be?

**Tabitha:** What?! A—a princess—what are talking—what are you talking about—why are you here? *How* are you here? What is happening?!

**Beth:** You thought you could keep a secret like this from your own sisters? A prince! A castle! A romantic Christmas ball!

**Mandy:** [high-pitched] The world's best pumpkin pie?!

**Tabitha:** No! No, no, no, there is no *ball*. I'm—I'm being held *hostage*, basically? Dad was in the dungeon?! This guy's a moron who ran his whole country into the ground with his strange Christmas obsession! This is not a romance thing.

**Mandy:** Well, not with you looking like *that* it's not! [laughs] Must be hard to feel the magic in the air in those... dingy scrubs. Ugh!

**Beth:** Yeah, just between you and me, sis... I don't know why you even wear them. They look so... I don't know... sterile.

**Tabitha:** They're *supposed* to look *sterile*! I'm a *doctor*!

**Mandy:** She just takes any opportunity she can to remind us of that, doesn't she?

**Beth:** I know, right?

**Mandy:** [sighs] Anyway, Tabs, we gotta get you all fancied up for the big ball now, so let's get a move on, huh? There's a lot to do if we are gonna make you into a princess that will *definitely* be proposed to by the end of *this* night.

**Beth:** We've got... glasses to take off, hair to let down, a dress for you to look uncomfortable in, and some quirky tennis shoes to go with the whole thing, 'cause hey, you still gotta be adorable you!

**Mandy:** Mm-hmm!

**Tabitha:** No, no, no, no. This is *really* not the vibe, here. How are you guys so misreading this situation?! Hey, wait!

**Rachel:** Before Tabitha can stop them, the sisters have rushed her off to some sort of makeover montage—

[scattered cheers]

**Rachel:** —in which she is, indeed, transformed into a beautiful princess-to-be, at least by Christmas movie standards. Basically, she's wearing a prom dress and tennis shoes, and her hair is down.

But the effect on Chris is obvious when Tabitha re-enters the room. Just imagine that you were looking at the stage through a soft focus lens right now. Go ahead, just imagine.

**Chris:** Wow, Tabs! You just look—

**Tabitha:** Stuff it, Chris. I just can't with you right now. Let's go to the stupid pie thing.

**Rachel:** It's 7:55 PM in the courtyard outside the abandoned Toys R' Us. The crust of Nana Pibbles' pie is just moments away from being perfectly golden brown. In attendance, all of the world's media.

**Chris:** Wow, this is so cool that you all came!

[audience cheers]

**Chris:** Wow! So... fun! What really makes this special, though, is the Christmas magic? You know, the lights, the cookies the music? All the stuff we used to love before it was totally ruined by this person right here, Tabitha Bigcity, my future girlfriend.

[audience laughs]

**Tabitha:** Never, never, never, ever, ever, ever—

**Chris:** [simultaneously] Okay, you're right. Too far, too far, you're right. Anyway, Tabitha, is there something you wanna say to all the world's media?

**Tabitha:** Okay. It pains me to admit this, but... the pie is actually pretty choice.

**Chris:** You know that's not what I meant!

**Tabitha:** Fine. Fine. For snowbie...

**Chris:** Wait, you *named* the snow globe?! What about "For my dad?!"

**Tabitha:** Oh, yeah. For sure. Okay. Deep breath.

**Rachel:** The crowd falls silent. All eyes are drawn to Tabitha, and only partially because there's a big glob of pumpkin on her chin.

**Tabitha:** [unenthusiastically] Christmas is very cool.

**Chris:** The script, please.

**Tabitha:** [stiffly] Christmas is super sweet, and I'm really sorry I killed it. I promise I'll never do that again. [reluctantly] It was a total boner.

[audience laughs]

**Tabitha:** And also—

**Chris:** Go on?

**Rachel:** Tabitha summons all her courage as she prepares to save her dad and beloved snow globe by betraying all that she holds dear. But then, the silence is broken by a low roar that grows increasingly powerful. Suddenly, the gates burst open and townspeople flood the courtyard of the abandoned Toys R' Us!

At their head, holding a pitchfork, is Jesus.

[audience laughs and cheers]

**Jesus:** [shouts] This has gone far enough, Evergreen!

**Chris:** Jesus, what are you doing out of the hotel?

**Jesus:** [shouts emphatically] My name is *Carl!*

[audience laughs]

**Carl:** And I've had about enough! We all have! Batavia used to be a good, prosperous nation! But you've perverted it with your Christmas obsession.

**Tabitha:** Oh, thank you, Jesus.

[audience laughs]

**Carl:** [shouts] *Carl!*

[audience laughs]

**Carl:** Also, you're welcome! We're not—we're not doin' this for you. We, the citizens of Batavia, demand a return to logic, a return to reason, a return—a return to *Easter!*

**Rachel:** From his robe, Carl pulls a massive crate of colorful eggs and hoists it above his head.

[audience laughs]

**Carl:** I'm done hiding! These precious babies have been under my bed for months, and they smell terrible!

[audience laughs]

**Carl:** My mother cured all manner of genetically transmitted diseases with these beautiful babies, and so did her mother before her, and her mother before her.

**Tabitha:** [exasperated] Oh, come on!

**Carl:** We, the people, demand that we return to the old ways! To the ways of Easter! [chanting] Bring back Easter! Bring back Easter! Bring back Easter!

[audience chants along but quickly peters out]

**Tabitha:** Carl...

**Rachel:** Carl attempts to get the crowd to join in, and they either do or they don't. It's really up to them.

[audience laughs loudly]

**Carl:** [chanting] Bring back Easter! Bring back Easter!

[some of the audience chants along]

**Carl:** And another thing! We wanna go back to calling it Easter Island again, everyone! Bring back Easter!

**Rachel:** In the commotion, a jolly man sidles up to Tabitha.

[audience cheers]

**Tabitha:** Santa Claus?!

**Santa:** Ho, ho, hold it down, will you? I'm tryin' to lay low.

[audience laughs]

**Tabitha:** Are—are you here to rescue me?

**Santa:** Oh, no, no. Chris named me Minister of Defense! But... I know a coup d'etat when I see when. [shouts] We're gettin' outta here! Your dad's already in the sleigh.

**Tabitha:** I can't believe it! All those years of being good are finally paying off!

**Santa:** Mmm, actually one of these yahoos stabbed me with a sharpened candy cane and, uh... I need you to stitch me up.

**Tabitha:** What about snowbie?

**Santa:** Eh, I'll make you 20 of 'em. [shouts] Let's gooo!

[audience cheers]

**Rachel:** The... End.

[audience cheers loudly]

[theme music plays]

[chord]

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