

**Sawbones 523: Sawbones Classic Double-Feature: A Medicine Called Christmas 1 & 2**

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**Justin:** Hello everybody. Merry Candelights to you and yours. I just wanted to say hello. Christmas Eve, I guess, according to the clock on the wall, and I've got a very special treat for you. It is a holiday re-issue. You know how they put *It's a Wonderful Life* back in theatres every year? Well this is just [chuckles] like that.

It is parts one and two of *A Medicine Called Christmas*, Sydnee and my fantastical holiday... sort of Hallmark parody deal. We just did our latest iteration in the new Candelights special. If you haven't watched it yet, you still can. Go to [bit.ly/candlenightstickets2024](https://bit.ly/candlenightstickets2024).

This one is probably one of our wildest yet, but these first two, little more tame, but if you wanna know where the story starts, this is how you do it. So a Happy Holidays to you and yours, we love you and we'll see you next year. Bye.

[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 *Candlelights*, written by Justin and Sydnee McElroy.

[audience cheers and applauds loudly]

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

[audience laughs and cheers]

[*A Medicine Called Christmas* theme music plays]

**Justin:** [in theme music] [sings] Come and sit with me 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

**Justin:** [on stage] [laughs]

**Justin:** [in theme music] [sings] 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]

**Justin:** [in theme music] [sings] 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 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. [groans] 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 really called that. [laughs nervously] Now, have a good trip.

[audience cheers and applauds loudly]

**Rachel:** Smash cut to the beautiful—

[audience laughs]

**Rachel:** — 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.

[audience chuckles]

**Rachel:** 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 Wiseau Family Wreath Shop, Garlands and More Garlands.

[audience laughs]

**Rachel:** 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 and applauds loudly]

**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—

**Griffin:** Thank you, Paul—

[audience cheers 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 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 3:30 AM, and garland tying club at 6:15, and—

**Tabitha:** Whoa, whoa. Lemme stop yah 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'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:** Yeah, 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' yah checked in. Did yah leave your wreath in the cab, or what?

[audience laughs]

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

**Phil:** Left it at home, huh? I don't blame yah. 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:** Thanks?

[audience cheers and applauds loudly]

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

[audience cheers and applauds loudly]

**Chris:** [yells] 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:** 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 \$5, 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:** Oh, 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 yah. [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 yah 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 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]

**Chris:** I—

**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 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 and applauds loudly]

**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 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.

[audience chuckles]

**Tabitha:** Uh... I'm sorry? 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:** 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:** 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 and applauds loudly]

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

[audience cheers and applauds loudly]

**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 yah, 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 one gingerbread house. But when that didn't work, I built a second gingerbread house. By the time I came back to my follow-up, 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 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 no time for sleep or exercise, mainly I eat gingerbread pieces for all my meals.

[audience chuckles]

**Mr. Frankson:** 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:** Yes. Pills. Medicine. Pills that are medicine to make your blood pressure go down.

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

**Tabitha:** Well, 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 down. Which one fell over? No, not the gingerbread Walmart!

[audience laughs]

**Mr. Frankson:** It collapsed? And it took out the gingerbread Taco Bell?

[audience laughs]

**Mr. Frankson:** 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. Yeah, just keep throwing royal icing on it!

Sorry, doc, 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'll just keep using more [distantly] drumgo— gumdrops! Gumdrops?

[audience cheers and applauds loudly]

**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]

**Mr. Cameron:** So we're both in that bank, trying to help each other get un-upsot when I broke the darn thing!

**Tabitha:** 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? [chuckles] 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 mockingly] 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?

[pause]

**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 letter 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.



**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 are 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:** 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 Dad? From Greg's... Cookie and Cocoa Emporium?

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

**Tabitha:** 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 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 just mean that Christmas is medicine.

[pause]

[audience laughs]

**Tabitha:** So, like— So like being cheery and having a positive attitude 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 am! 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:** 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 make 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's more than just our family's complete distaste for all things Christmas. It's like I was telling Chris today—

**Mandy:** [teasingly] Ohhh, who's Chris?

[audience chuckles]

**Mandy:** 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 and applauds loudly]

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

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

[pause]

[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.

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

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

[audience laughs]

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

**Chris:** Huh! [chuckles] 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 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 a Shelf shack. You search all through the shack until you find that rascally little scamp, and then—

**Tabitha:** 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... [gravely] it's intense.

[audience laughs]

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

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

[audience laughs]

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

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

**Mr. Goldberg:** [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. Goldberg:** 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. Goldberg.

[pause]

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

[audience laughs loudly]

**Chris:** [bad cockney accent] It's, uh— That's a really long story, isn't it?

**Tabitha:** Um... so 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 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 from a distance] Woo! That's my girlfriend!

**Tabitha:** No!

[audience laughs]

**Tabitha:** No, Chris! Never! Never! 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.

[audience laughs]

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

[audience laughs]

**Chris:** Uh— what—

[extended cheering and applause]

**Dr. C:** 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 are my patients?

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

[audience laughs]

**Dr. C:** [loudly] Merry Critment to all! And to all a good night!

**Justin, Sydnee, Rachel & Clint:** [simultaneously] The end.

[audience cheers and applauds]

[*A Medicine Called Christmas* theme music plays]

**Justin:** [in theme music] [sings] That's-a Christmas to me. You and me and her a tree. Learnin' about birds and the bees. That's-a Christmas to me!

[pause]

**Jordan Morris:** You can't really know if your own show is any good.

**Jesse Thorn:** So I asked my kids about ours.

Is *Jordan, Jesse, Go!* a good show?

**Speaker One:** No, definitely not, it's really bad.

**Speaker Two:** I would say out of 10, maybe like a four out of 10.

**Speaker One:** It's just really boring.

**Speaker Three:** I think a zero. [giggles]

**Jesse Thorn:** Subscribe to *Jordan, Jesse, Go!* a comedy show for grownups.

[pause]

**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: A Royal Pain*.

[audience cheers]

[*A Medicine Called Christmas* theme music plays]

**Justin:** [in theme music] [sings] Come and sit with me 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. 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]

**Justin:** [in theme music] [sings] 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]

**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:** Here, here, ma'am. Let me help you with that.

**Tabitha:** Phil?! Phil Pibbles?!

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

**Tabitha:** 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 take your bags.

**Tabitha:** 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:** Oh? That's good to hear. 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:** Ah... 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 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 is 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! 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... 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 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, whatever comes up. No, until you check out we're just like here.

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

[audience chuckles]

**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.

[audience laughs]

**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 still not completely clear. I met a guy named Chris Evergreen—

**Jesus:** Ooo, 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 still can't shake the nightmares.

**Jesus:** Okay, you trailed off, there. Are you expecting me to say something in character? 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? Never mind. I'm gonna go to bed.

**Jesus:** No, no, no, wait, wait! I'll come up with something. Uh, 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:** [in a vague European accent] Yes, who's there? I barely have the strength to open my eyes!

[audience laughs]

**Tabitha:** Good morning, sir. 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:** [in a vague European accent] Oh, thank you.

[audience laughs]

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

**Mr. Soriano:** [in a vague European accent] 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:** [in a vague European accent] But after weeks of therapy, I can move my tongue to speak again, so that's something!

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

**Mr. Soriano:** [in a vague European accent] 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:** [in a vague European accent] Like I say, it's a mystery!

[audience laughs]

**Mr. Soriano:** [in a vague European accent] 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:** [in a vague European accent] 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:** [in a vague European accent] 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:** [in a vague European accent] — the frosted ones from Kroger. You know, all the food groups!

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

**Mr. Soriano:** [in a vague European accent] 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:** [in a vague European accent] 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 were drinking milk, too. You know, that's odd. You would've thought that—

**Mr. Soriano:** [in a vague European accent] Oh, no. Not the milk part. Just the cookies.

**Tabitha:** Well— why not the milk?

**Mr. Soriano:** [in a vague European accent] I don't like milk.

[audience laughs]

**Tabitha:** Oh. Oh, okay. Well, uh—

**Mr. Soriano:** [in a vague European accent] 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 and 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 loudly]

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

[cheering continues]

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

**Tabitha:** 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:** [angrily] 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?

[audience laughs]

**Chris:** 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.

[audience laughs]

**Chris:** I realized the error of my ways, Tabitha. I know you were right about real medicine being real medicine and not Christmas stuff. Hey, 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!

[audience laughs]

**Tabitha:** Uh, oh. Wow, 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.

**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 workday 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.

[audience laughs]

**Tabitha:** 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:** [sighs] 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:** 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.

[audience laughs]

**Rachel:** Which she is dismayed to realize... is actually eggnog.

[audience groans]

**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. Yeah, 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:** Yeeeeeah, 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 total mess. [chuckles]

**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's fine, 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 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.

**Rachel:** [chuckles]

[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 who eats them?

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

**Rachel:** The waiter throws up his hands in exasperation, and then excuses himself to get the cheque. 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 chuckles]

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

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

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

**Rachel:** [chuckles quietly]

[audience laughs and cheers]

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

**Tabitha:** Chris? 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 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.

[audience laughs]

**Chris:** 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 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.

[audience chuckles]

**Tabitha:** I think there's a bit of a misunderstanding here, um... 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?

[audience chuckles]

**Queen:** 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? [chuckles awkwardly]

**Queen:** Oh, no trouble. [distantly] Yah 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.

[audience laughs]

**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.

[audience laughs]

**Rachel:** 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 know, maybe? I think? Yeah, I think maybe I do care about Christmas, after all!

**Chris:** Ah! Okay, this *is great!* I mean, I really thought it would take a little more effort.

[audience laughs]

**Chris:** 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.

[audience cheers]

**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...

[audience laughs]

**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 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 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.

[audience chuckles]

**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, you know, the whole world is watching, you know, I'm gonna do something that the all world media will be forced to cover.

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

**Chris:** Pumpkin pie.

**Tabitha:** 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.

[audience laughs]

**Chris:** 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 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, even for you.

**Tabitha:** 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:** 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!

[audience laughs]

**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 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?!

[audience laughs]

**Tabitha:** No! No, no, no, there is no ball. 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! [scoffs] 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 tooks— takes any opportunity she can to remind us of that, doesn't she?

**Beth:** I know, right?

[audience laughs]

**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.

[audience chuckles]

**Rachel:** 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:** [coldly] 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. 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?

[audience chuckles]

**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:** [sighs] Oh, thank you, Jesus.

[audience laughs]

**Carl:** [shouts] Carl!

[audience laughs]

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

[audience laughs]

**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]

**Rachel:** Carl...



[audience chuckles]

**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 you here to rescue me?

**Santa:** Oh, no, no. Chris named me Minister of Defense!

[audience laughs]

**Santa:** But I know a coup d'état 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 goooooo!

[audience cheers]

**Rachel:** The End.

[audience cheers loudly]

[outro theme music plays]

[ukulele chord]

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