

FINDING CHRISTMAS IN ALASKA

By

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FADE IN:

EXT. ALASKA - DAY/NIGHT

The following montage is our introduction to the beautiful state of Alaska. And it takes place during the daytime, except twilight arrives for the final scene.

MONTAGE ("O COME, ALL YE FAITHFUL" BY CELTIC WOMAN FROM THE ALBUM ENTITLED, "A CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION," PLAYS IN ITS ENTIRETY OVER THIS MONTAGE WHILE THE CREDITS ROLL WITH RED AND GREEN LETTERING)

A) We're descending on the rotating Earth, with various continents passing by as we get closer to the Earth's surface. It's late November, and about one-fourth of the world's land is snow-covered. Finally, we arrive overhead the entire state of Alaska, which is completely snow-covered.

B) We're approaching the large city of Anchorage, heading over the large inlet of water in front of it while it's lightly snowing. It has several fairly tall buildings, and there are snowy mountains behind it. (Note it continues to snow lightly throughout the rest of this montage.)

C) We're approaching the small city of Juneau, which has a channel of water in front of it and snowy mountains behind it.

D) In downtown Juneau, a few people are walking on the sidewalk as they walk past the Governor's Mansion, which is a stately and pretty building.

E) A big cruise ship is gliding parallel to the gigantic Hubbard Glacier (a very pretty blue-and-white glacier where cruise ships often sail), and the glacier dwarfs the ship as the people on the ship look up in awe at it.

F) Several kayakers are passing through a field of icebergs floating in the ocean in Prince William Sound (a favorite destination for kayakers) as they enjoy the site of these icebergs, which range from small pieces to huge pieces rising about twenty feet above the ocean.

G) We're soaring up the great Kenai River. It's flowing with its unique and stunning color of turquoise due to being fed by glaciers, which helps make it one of the most beautiful rivers in the world.

H) We're soaring up the vast Harding Icefield and its seemingly never-ending miles of smooth snow-covered ice that extends up a mountainside.

I) We're soaring closely around/over big snowy mountains until arriving at Mt. McKinley (which is now called Denali), and then we start to circle this awe-inspiring mountain.

J) A polar bear mother walks across the vast and snowy terrain with her two small adorable cubs closely following her.

K) Several sea lions swim underwater in the crystal-clear ocean as they do their incredible acrobatics of swimming around each other while twisting and turning.

L) A herd of musk oxen, braving the elements, stands together in the snow.

M) An arctic fox (which is white since its fur changes to white during the winter) scampers in the snow.

N) Two orcas break the ocean's surface while gracefully swimming next to each other in a bay against the backdrop of snowy mountains.

O) Although it's the afternoon, it has started to become dark because twilight has arrived since there are only about six hours of daylight during this time of year in southern Alaska, and these Alaskan winter twilights are really long and are famous for their beautiful bluish light. We're just above the ocean's surface while approaching a fairly small fisherman's boat that has a single line of red and green Christmas lights glowing around it. This boat belongs to TRISTAN ZEILER, who's 45 years old, fit, and handsome, and he's driving it pretty fast as he stands behind the captain's wheel at the front of the boat, with the other three crewmates sitting in the back of the boat, and all of them are wearing wool/fleece coats. (Note "Zeiler" is pronounced like "Zyler.") Tristan is heading towards a small lonely fisherman's dock in the near distance that's located in a bay isolated by the surrounding mountains. In this serene setting, the final notes of "O Come, All Ye Faithful" ring out, and the credits end.

Tristan is continuing to drive his boat through the falling snow in the twilight, and he slows it down as he approaches the dock.

There are only a few boats tied to the dock, and it's deserted as Tristan successfully gets the side of the boat to gently coast up against the dock.

CREWMATE #1, 35 years old, jumps over the side of the boat and lands on the dock. Another crewmate throws the bulk of two ropes over the side of the boat and onto the dock, with one end of each of the ropes attached to the boat.

Crewmate #1 picks up one of the ropes, and he quickly ties it to a cleat on the dock.

Tristan shuts down the boat's engine, making the entire surroundings very quiet.

Crewmate #1 picks up the second rope and quickly ties it to a different cleat, securing the boat.

Tristan hops over the boat's side and lands on the dock, and he stretches out his arms in order to relax after a workday of fishing on the ocean.

TRISTAN

Ah, it's good to be back.

CREWMATE #1

You can say that again. We made a killing.

TRISTAN

We always make a killing.

CREWMATE #1

That's because we don't stop fishing until we do.

Tristan and Crewmate #1 smile at each other.

The two crewmates still on the boat begin to unload by handing down one of their nets, which contains about fifty small dead fish, to Tristan and Crewmate #1.

INT. CHRISTMAS STORE - NIGHT (TWILIGHT)

EMILY ZEILER, 45 years old, is Tristan's beautiful wife, and she's wearing a pretty wool/fleece coat, although she isn't wearing a stocking cap as she's walking around this very nice store that only sells Christmas items. This medium-sized store is located in downtown Anchorage, and it's filled with pretty decorations, and there are a lot of other people shopping too. Emily stops next to one of the nice Christmas trees that are scattered throughout the store, with shining white lights and ornaments decorating the trees, and she looks at some of the tree's ornaments that are for sale.

SANTA CLAUS, 60 years old, is fittingly dressed up with a gorgeous red suit and white beard since he, obviously, works for this store. And he walks up to a cute SHOPPING GIRL, 7 years old, and the SHOPPING GIRL'S MOTHER, 35 years old, who are looking at Christmas decorations for sale on a table near where Emily is looking at the Christmas tree.

Santa Claus stops next to the Shopping Girl, and he pulls out one of the many small stuffed animals in a basket that he's carrying. It's a nice white polar bear who's wearing a red scarf and a red stocking cap, and he smiles at the girl as he bends down and holds the polar bear out to her.

SANTA CLAUS

You know, I noticed you're on my good list every year. So, would you like a Christmas polar bear?

The Shopping Girl smiles back at Santa Claus.

SHOPPING GIRL

Yes, please.

The Shopping Girl takes the polar bear from Santa Claus.

SHOPPING GIRL (CONT'D)

Thank you.

SHOPPING GIRL'S MOTHER

Yes, thank you.

The Shopping Girl's Mother smiles at Santa Claus, who smiles back at her as he stands up straight.

SANTA CLAUS

You're both very welcome.

The Shopping Girl and the Shopping Girl's Mother walk away.

Santa Claus walks a few steps up to Emily and stops next to her.

SANTA CLAUS (CONT'D)

Is there anything I can help you find?

EMILY

Well, I'm looking for a decoration for the top of our tree, and I always love to make Christmas meaningful, so do you have anything that just screams, "Jesus," or something?

Emily smiles at Santa Claus, who smiles back at her.

SANTA CLAUS

Unfortunately, none of our decorations can talk.

Emily laughs as Santa Claus smiles.

SANTA CLAUS (CONT'D)

But, since Santa Claus happens to work for Jesus as his personal birthday party thrower, I think I have just the thing.

Among the many decorations that are sitting on one of the tables next to the tree, Santa Claus picks up a beautiful gold star and hands it to Emily, who loves it.

SANTA CLAUS (CONT'D)

A star is about as traditional as the cross, but I think it's always the best.

EMILY

Oh, it's perfect. You can't beat traditional. And this is so much better than what we used to have.

SANTA CLAUS

What did you have?

EMILY

Nothing ... well, after my husband shot our angel off with a crossbow anyway.

Emily and Santa Claus smile at each other.

SANTA CLAUS

Did I give him the crossbow?

EMILY

Yes, I'm afraid you did.

SANTA CLAUS

Do you want me to give him coal this year?

EMILY

No, that's OK. But he could use a new doghouse since he's been living in the same one for years.

Emily and Santa Claus laugh.

SANTA CLAUS

Merry Christmas.

EMILY

Merry Christmas.

Santa Claus and Emily walk away in separate directions.

EXT. DRIVE TO THE ZEILERS' HOUSE - NIGHT (TWILIGHT)

It's continuing to snow lightly throughout the following montage where Emily drives from the Christmas store to her home, and it's a pretty drive due to the snow and Christmas decorations.

MONTAGE

A) Emily is driving her van down a street in Anchorage, with a lot of the city shops having nice Christmas lights shining on them, with brilliant colors of white, red, and green. And there are quite a few people who are walking on the sidewalks as they do their Christmas shopping while a gorgeous afternoon twilight, which provides a fair amount of light, is lighting everything with a little bit of a bluish glow.

B) Emily drives past a few suburban houses that are nicely lit by Christmas lights as she leaves the city behind and heads out to the countryside.

C) Emily drives past the small wooden sign for the town of Wasilla, which is where she lives in southeastern Alaska. We read the sign to say, "WELCOME TO THE TOWN OF WASILLA! WE HOPE YOU ENJOY COLD WEATHER!"

D) Emily drives down the street of her house as she goes past her neighbors' houses that are lit by Christmas lights. It's a typical Alaskan town, so it's not very big. But it's very pleasant looking, and it's quiet. Also, each house has fairly large front yards and backyards, with massive trees adorning most of the yards. She turns into her driveway, and she parks.

EXT. ZEILERS' HOUSE - NIGHT (TWILIGHT)

It's still lightly snowing as Emily gets out of her van in front of her middle-class home, which is very beautiful. Her home has red and green Christmas lights glowing around the roof and windows, and a big U.S.A. flag adorns one of the front posts.

Emily walks past the corner of her house, and it opens up to a large frozen lake (Lake Lucille) that's surrounded by snowy mountains, and three of her five kids are skating while playing ice hockey on this lake: COURTNEY is 16 years old and beautiful; DAVID is 15 years old and handsome; and AVA is 10 years old and impossibly cute. All three kids are wearing hockey jerseys, hockey helmets, and hockey gloves.

Emily walks through the snow as she goes towards the lake, which is right behind her house.

AVA

Hi, Mom!

EMILY

Hi, sweetie! Who's winning?

COURTNEY

David is winning, but he does have an unfair size advantage after all.

DAVID

Hey, don't hate me because I'm the best.

COURTNEY

Yeah, you're the best. Great job on beating up on your sisters.

David smiles at Courtney, and she smiles back at him.

Emily sits down in the snow by the lake and watches her kids play hockey as David plays against both Courtney and Ava. Immediately afterwards, Tristan pulls his car into the driveway and parks behind Emily's van. Tristan exits his car and walks on the same path that Emily just walked, so he's approaching Emily as she sits with her back to him.

AVA

Dad, do you want to play hockey?

TRISTAN

No, sorry, but I'll sit over here with your mother and watch you.

Tristan arrives next to Emily, and he sits down beside her and joins her in watching their kids play hockey.

EMILY

How was work?

TRISTAN

Oh, it was pretty good.

EMILY

You know, if you had been here yesterday, you could have celebrated with us a little something called Thanksgiving.

TRISTAN

Yeah, I know. I'm sorry about that. I let the boat get out too far, and I got back so late that I just spent the night in a hotel.

EMILY

Well, it's not like it's the first time you've missed a holiday.

Ava is on a breakaway as she skates towards the net with the puck, and David is trying to catch her from behind.

David gains on Ava, but she's pretty fast and is too far in front of him, so she shoots and scores a goal in the unguarded net.

AVA

Oh, she shoots and scores!

Courtney skates up to Ava and gives her a high five.

COURTNEY

Nice shot!

EMILY

(clapping)

Woo-hoo!

TRISTAN

Show them how it's done, Ava!

With Ava positively beaming, David uses his hockey stick to get the puck from the net, and then he skates with the puck as Courtney and Ava play defense against him.

EMILY

We're so lucky our kids play together so well.

TRISTAN

Yeah, maybe we'll keep them. So, where are Zack and Alexis? Didn't they come home for Thanksgiving?

EMILY

Yeah, they were here, but Zack is sleeping at a house with some of his college buddies tonight. And Alexis is staying at her boyfriend's house down the street. They'll be here tomorrow though.

Emily stands up while brushing the snow off of her rear that accumulated from sitting in the snow.

EMILY (CONT'D)

OK, kids, it's time to go inside and get ready for dinner!

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Tristan is sitting at the head of the dining room table while Emily and Ava sit on one side of the table, and Courtney and David sit on the other side. They're eating dinner, and a lot of delicious-looking food is on the table.

AVA

I love this moose chili! We should have it every night.

EMILY

I'm glad you like it.

AVA

I love it. Dad, do you want to play video games with us after dinner?

TRISTAN

No, I need to rest a little, OK?

AVA

OK. How about tomorrow?

TRISTAN

I've got to go to the fish market tomorrow to sell all the fish I just caught.

COURTNEY

(to David)

At what age did we learn to stop asking?

DAVID

I think I was still in the action-figure stage.

COURTNEY

I was still playing with dolls, and I probably would have learned before I could walk if I hadn't gone through a denial phase first.

TRISTAN

Hey, I'm still in the room.

EMILY

Now, your dad plays with all of you from time to time, but he has to work hard to support us, and that takes up a lot of his time, and it makes him tired.

AVA

Why don't you just work at sea or the fish market but not both?

TRISTAN

I have to work at both to make enough money.

AVA

You don't have to. You are your own boss. You can do whatever you want.

TRISTAN

But, then, your mom and I wouldn't have been able to buy this house and pay for your college tuitions and your clothes and this food. You'll understand when you grow up. You'll have to trust me on this, OK?

AVA

OK.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Emily is sitting on the sofa while reading a letter from Tristan's brother, and Ava is sitting next to her while reading a beautiful tall book that's filled with colorful pictures, and its front cover has a picture of snowy Alaskan mountains where we read the book's title: "THE INTERESTING HISTORY OF ALASKA." Courtney and David are sitting on the floor in front of the sofa while playing a board game, and Tristan is upstairs. In the corner of this nice room, a beautiful Christmas tree has red and green lights glowing, and the gold star (which Emily just bought) is on top of it.

COURTNEY

Hey, Mom, why don't you make Dad work less or at least stay awake when he's here?

EMILY

When I first met your father, we were in neighboring high schools, and he was swimming across a nearly frozen lake when the temperature was about ten degrees. So, I knew right away he might not be the at-home type. I married him, but I'm not under the delusion that I can change him.

Ava looks up excitedly from her book.

AVA

Wow, we should try swimming in really cold water like that sometime!

COURTNEY

Only you would think that's a good idea.

AVA

I think it's a great idea. Only to try it once though, just to see how it feels.

COURTNEY

I'm guessing it feels cold. Or, just maybe, it feels really, really cold.

AVA

Ah, you pour cold water on everything.

Courtney, enjoying Ava's humor, smiles at Ava, who looks back down at her book in order to read something to everyone.

AVA (CONT'D)

(paraphrasing from her book)

Did you know that Alaska would be the 18th largest country if it was a country? It's almost two-and-a-half times the size of the second biggest state, Texas. In fact, it's larger than Texas, California, Florida, New York, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Ohio combined. But there are about 150 million people in those states, and only about 750,000 live here. And there's more coastline here than the rest of the United States combined. I guess that's why they call this "The Last Frontier."

Ava looks up from her book.

DAVID

(to Courtney)

It's a shame to see a young girl like that reading a book when she could be like watching TV.

COURTNEY

Yeah, she's wasting her brain.

Emily has finished reading the letter, so she just holds it on her lap. And a treasure map came with the letter, so Emily holds this map out to Ava.

EMILY

Do you want a treasure map?

AVA

A real one?

Ava takes the treasure map from Emily, and of course, Ava is curious as she looks at it.

EMILY

No, it was just with this letter that your nutty Uncle Lukas had sent to us upon his death. Part of the letter says he spent years digging for gold, and he found a lot of it and hid it behind a waterfall and drew that map for us to go claim it.

Ava closes her gorgeous book, and she leans over the side of the sofa and puts her book down on the end table next to the sofa. Then, she grabs a red crayon from the already opened box of crayons sitting on this table, and she settles back down on the sofa and starts to draw on the map with the crayon.

AVA

But how do you know it's fake?
Maybe, it leads to gold.

EMILY

No, it's extremely rare to find gold, and your uncle never had money. If there's gold out there, it's fool's gold because your uncle was, indeed, a fool. He had been living a nomadic lifestyle all around Alaska, which he did for most of his life, and he never even came to visit you kids. He called Dad and I a few times though, mostly for us to send him bail money. Besides, he actually was a little nutty. Most of this letter doesn't even make sense.

AVA

In the late 19th century, there was a big gold rush around here that brought a lot of people looking to make it rich. Too bad Uncle Lukas was more than a hundred years too late.

EMILY

Alright, guys, it's time to go to bed.

David swiftly puts all of the board-game pieces into its box, and then Courtney puts the game board on top of everything in the box.

Courtney puts the lid on the box and picks up the box as she and David stand up. Meanwhile, Ava gives the map to Emily, and then Emily and Ava also stand up.

On top of the end table, Courtney lays the board-game box down while Ava puts her crayon back in the crayon box.

Emily puts Lukas's letter and map down on top of the end table too.

COURTNEY

Goodnight, Mom.

DAVID

Goodnight.

EMILY

Goodnight, kids.

Courtney and David start to walk to the stairs, which are located in the living room and lead upstairs to their bedrooms.

AVA

Goodnight.

Emily and Ava hug each other.

EMILY

Goodnight, darling.

Ava breaks from Emily's embrace and rushes after Courtney and David.

All three of the kids walk upstairs while Emily, with a mother's pride, watches them go to bed.

Emily goes to the tall bookcase located in this living room.

She glances past a few of the large number of books sitting on the bookshelves, trying to decide which book she wants to read.

She chooses the book that we see is entitled, "A CHRISTMAS CAROL." (Note this book's plot mirrors our plot of overcoming greed during Christmas).

She sits down on the middle of the sofa.

She opens the cover and turns to the first page.

Emily has barely read a word when Tristan comes down the stairs and starts walking towards her. So, Emily closes her book and leans over and puts it down on the end table.

TRISTAN

Did everyone go to sleep?

EMILY

Yes, Tristan, you're safe. The kids are gone.

Tristan sits down on the corner of the sofa next to Emily.

Tristan notices the letter and map that are on the end table next to him, so he picks them up and looks at them.

TRISTAN

What's this?

EMILY

Your brother, Lukas, died somehow and sent us that.

TRISTAN

Oh. Well, I hope the afterlife suites him better than this life. Why did he write in crayon all over this map?

EMILY

Ava did that.

After a quick glance at the letter, Tristan gets really excited.

TRISTAN

Hey, the letter says this map leads to gold that's worth millions of dollars!

Tristan looks back at the map, eagerly trying to figure out how to get the gold.

TRISTAN (CONT'D)

It looks to be out in the middle of nowhere, but it seems like it's only a couple hundred or so miles north of here.

Tristan looks up from the map and looks at Emily with a devilish smile.

TRISTAN (CONT'D)

I'm sensing another vacation starting tomorrow.

EMILY

Right, the family that freezes together stays together, for eternity.

TRISTAN

Oh, come on, Emily. Lukas wasn't a liar, so there must be gold here. Although the roads are out, we can rent snowmobiles. And, if we go on this trip, I'll take a couple of weeks off for Christmas.

EMILY

You would spend time at home?

TRISTAN

Absolutely.

EMILY

OK.

TRISTAN

You're the best.

Tristan and Emily smile at each other, and then he gives her a quick kiss on her lips. Then, Tristan puts the letter and map back down on the end table, and he puts his arm around Emily's shoulders.

Tristan keeps his arm around Emily, and he simply relaxes while contemplating his good fortune. Indeed, he's convinced that he'll soon be rich.

TRISTAN (CONT'D)

It is too bad the roads are out during the winter.

EMILY

Yeah, the governor should hire more people to clear them.

TRISTAN

Governors are worthless.

EMILY

Yeah, except Sarah Palin was good.

TRISTAN

Yeah, there must be something in Wasilla that makes people great like her and especially me.

Tristan and Emily laugh.

INT. UPSTAIRS BEDROOM - DAY

David and Ava are throwing clothes out of a closet that they're going to pack, and the clothes land on the nearby bed. They, like their parents and Courtney, are excited to go camping and look for gold.

AVA

We're like gold prospectors now.

DAVID

I doubt the world has many of those. What does that tell you?

AVA

That we know something the rest of the world doesn't.

DAVID

Does it even rain in your world?

Ava smiles at David.

AVA

Nope.

David smiles back at Ava.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Tristan is standing while organizing things (e.g., cots, clothes, skis, a tent, and sleeping bags) that are scattered all over the floor, and Emily is pacing while talking on her cellphone with her daughter Alexis.

EMILY
(on the phone)
So, what do you say about joining
us? It will be fun.

INT. KITCHEN OF ALEXIS'S BOYFRIEND'S HOUSE - DAY

ALEXIS, 23 years old and attractive, is on her cellphone while sitting at the breakfast table with her boyfriend. With nearly empty plates on the table, Alexis and her boyfriend have, obviously, almost finished eating their breakfast.

ALEXIS
(on the phone)
Well, I do need to do a paper for
one of my psych classes. And I not
only get good grades but actually
get stories published when they're
about my psycho dad.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Emily laughs, but she stops abruptly when Tristan, wondering why she's laughing, looks at her.

ALEXIS (O.S.)
(on the phone)
I'll be there in a few minutes.

EMILY
(on the phone)
Great, see you then.

Emily hangs up her cellphone and puts it into her pocket while Courtney, coming from the adjacent room, walks into the living room and stops next to Emily.

COURTNEY
What do I tell my friends that I'm
doing? If I tell them I'm leaving
to look for gold, they'll think
I've lost my mind.

EMILY
You have to tell them the truth.
Tell them your dad is insane, and
you have to help him this weekend.

Courtney smiles.

COURTNEY
I like that, thanks.

Courtney turns around and starts to walk up the stairs.

TRISTAN
Is that what you told the
neighbors?

EMILY
Of course.

TRISTAN
Hey, aren't the rest of you also
crazy for agreeing to come along?

EMILY
Yeah, but, as always, I'm pretty
sure you take the cake.

Tristan and Emily smile at each other while Ava has just
come down the stairs.

Ava has a big armful of clothes as she walks across the room
and stops and simply tosses the clothes onto the floor next
to the sofa.

AVA
Did you know that the aurora
borealis is named after Aurora, the
Roman Goddess of the dawn, and
Boreas, the Greek God of the wind
that brings the cold winter air?

TRISTAN
No, I didn't know that. Thanks for
telling me. If you weren't around,
I'd never learn anything.

Tristan and Ava smile at each other.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - DAY

David is looking up at the attic door in the ceiling while
contemplating if it's safe to open it, and Courtney arrives
from behind David and notices him standing here, so she
stops and stands beside him.

DAVID
Hey, Courtney, do you think Dad
fixed the ladder to the attic?

COURTNEY

He hasn't even fixed that hole you
put in my wall.

David laughs.

DAVID

Oh, yeah, that was a good one. I
flipped you over, and you ...

David's voice trails off as Courtney looks angrily at him.

DAVID (CONT'D)

fell and OK, I'll stop now.

David, wanting to end the awkwardness, reaches up and grabs the rope that's hanging down from the attic door. He opens the door by walking forward while pulling the rope. The ladder, which is clearly not fixed, shoots down viciously, and the ladder's feet land hard in front of Courtney, although it wasn't close enough to make her move.

David barely puts a foot on the ladder to walk up it when a large, heavy bag falls out of the attic and hits him in the chest and knocks him down onto his back on the floor, where he remains as he tries to recover.

Courtney looks down at David on the floor, and she laughs, but then she puts a foot on the ladder to walk up it when another large, heavy bag falls out of the attic and hits her in the chest and knocks her down onto her back on the floor, so Courtney and David are lying beside each other.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Zack, who's 22 years old, athletic, and handsome, enters the house via the front door that opens into a small entrance hallway in front of the living room. In this hallway, while he removes his coat (which he hangs on one of the coat hooks on the wall) and takes off his boots, Zack observes the bustling scene in the living room.

Of course, the living room is messy with things scattered all over. Also, Tristan is standing up while organizing things on the floor while Emily is sitting on the sofa as she folds the clothes that Ava tossed onto the floor, and Ava is kneeling on the floor next to a small, overstuffed bag that she's struggling to zip up.

TRISTAN

Hey, Zack!

ZACK

Hello.

Zack has finished removing his coat and boots, so he walks into the living room and stops.

TRISTAN

Get packing because we're leaving in an hour to go look for gold.

ZACK

What?

TRISTAN

Gold. That thing that comes ahead of silver in the Olympics.

ZACK

Oh, that gold. Thanks for explaining everything. Is there someone sane here that I can ask?

TRISTAN

Nope, wrong family. Wrong state, actually.

Zack gives Tristan a look of disbelief for a brief moment.

Then, Zack turns his attention to Ava.

ZACK

Hey, Ava!

AVA

Hello! Can you help me? I can't zip up my bag.

ZACK

Sure.

As Zack sits down on the floor in order to help Ava with zipping up her bag, Alexis enters the house via the front door.

In the entrance hallway, while observing the busy scene in the living room, Alexis takes off her coat and hangs it up on one of the coat hooks on the wall, and then she takes off her boots.

AVA

Hello, Alexis!

Alexis has finished removing her coat and boots, so she walks into the living room, where she stops among everyone.

ALEXIS
Hello! I hear we're going on
another trip, and this time, we're
treasure hunters.

AVA
Yes, we are.

ALEXIS
So, do you think we'll find
treasure, or has Dad lost his mind?

AVA
I'm thinking both.

Alexis smiles.

TRISTAN
Thanks for coming on our little
adventure to start off the
Christmas season.

ALEXIS
No problem.

TRISTAN
Your boyfriend didn't want to come
along?

ALEXIS
Actually, I'm planning on keeping
him, so I thought it might be best
he not come along to one of our
Zeiler family vacation tragedies
until we've been married for like
twenty years.

Courtney and David have just come down the stairs, and each
of them is carrying a box that they got from the attic. And
Courtney addresses Alexis as she walks past Alexis.

COURTNEY
Good thinking.

Everyone in the room smiles.

Courtney and David put their boxes on the floor and kneel
beside them, and they start to remove things (e.g., a
lantern and a heater) out of them.

TRISTAN
Well, I'm betting you're going to
write another paper about me.

ALEXIS

Yep.

TRISTAN

So, I pay thousands of dollars to put you through graduate school, and you become a psychiatrist, and I get dumped on?

ALEXIS

Yep.

Tristan shrugs.

TRISTAN

OK.

Alexis smiles.

EXT. SNOWMOBILE STORE - DAY (ESTABLISHING)

We read an advertising sign on the store that's displayed in large letters: "CHEAP SNOWMOBILES FOR RENT." This store is in the countryside, so there aren't a lot of other buildings nearby. Also, it's gently snowing, and the parking lot is nearly empty, indicating this isn't the most popular store.

INT. SNOWMOBILE STORE - DAY

Tristan and Emily are at the cashier counter in the front of the store, and they're paying a cashier in order to rent snowmobiles.

All five of the Zeiler kids are in the middle of the store, where they're standing among the large stock of different snowmobiles while they wait for their parents to finish paying.

AVA

Did you know that Alaska has more airplanes and almost more snowmobiles per capita than anywhere else in the world?

COURTNEY

That's because other places use something called roads.

ZACK

Yeah, those suckers.

ALEXIS

So, little girl, what do you want
to be when you grow up? A
historian?

AVA

No, I don't know yet. I'll think
of something.

David leans his hand on a steering handle of one of the snowmobiles, and the handle breaks off into his hand and causes him to lose a little bit of his balance. All of the other kids immediately notice and look at him.

COURTNEY

What are you doing?

DAVID

I'm doing research. And I've come
to the surprising conclusion that
these vehicles aren't exactly top
of the line. So, we're all going
to die.

David guiltily puts the steering handle on the snowmobile seat, and not wanting to get caught, he slyly moves a few steps away.

A SNOWMOBILE SALESMAN, 25 years old, walks near the kids, but he isn't paying any attention to them.

ALEXIS

Excuse me, sir, but are these
snowmobiles safe?

The Snowmobile Salesman stops to answer Alexis.

SNOWMOBILE SALESMAN

I work here, so it's probably best
that I not answer that, sorry.

ALEXIS

Great, thanks.

The Snowmobile Salesman walks away.

Tristan and Emily have finished paying, so they turn from the cashier counter and head to the door to go outside.

EMILY

Come on, kids!

The five Zeiler kids start to walk towards the door too.

EXT. SIDE OF SNOWMOBILE STORE - DAY

It's still snowing as all of the Zeilers are standing in the snow with a wide-open, flat area stretched out in front of them that leads to their destination of a snowy and imposing mountain range that's visible in the far distance.

They're standing next to the four snowmobiles that they've rented. These snowmobiles are very nice looking, with each one having, basically, one solid color.

One of the snowmobiles has a long blue supply sled attached behind it in order to drag the supplies. This sled has a really big and long bag of supplies in it, and three backpacks are strapped on top of this big bag.

Everyone is wearing beautifully colored coats (which are made of wool/fleece), loose-fitting jeans, gloves, and boots. But they're not wearing stocking caps since they're holding helmets that they're going to wear instead.

TRISTAN

Let me make sure everybody is here
before we start our latest
adventure of a lifetime.

Tristan points at everyone as he counts them one by one, and he purposely counts Ava last.

TRISTAN (CONT'D)

OK, that's six and a half.

Ava angrily realizes that she was only counted as half a person.

AVA

Hey!

Tristan runs his hand back and forth over Ava's head as he playfully tussles her hair, and both of them laugh while everyone else smiles.

TRISTAN

OK, seven.

EMILY

Alright, Ava, you're riding with
your father. Zack, you're driving
Courtney and pulling our supply
sled. David, I'm driving you.
And Alexis is driving her own
snowmobile. Any questions?

DAVID

I've got one. How is Courtney going to survive without cellphone coverage?

EMILY

I think she'll be OK.

DAVID

I've got another one. It looks like we're starting out with Plan A, and I'm pretty sure Plan A has never worked for us. So, wouldn't it be better to just save time and go straight to Plan D or L or somewhere around Q?

EMILY

(to the entire family)

Are there any other questions?

DAVID

Hey, you always said there was no such thing as a stupid question.

EMILY

There's an exception to every rule.

DAVID

I'm hurt.
(to Courtney)
Hold me.

David jokingly hugs Courtney, and she laughs while she pushes him away.

Emily smiles at David's antics.

EMILY

OK, let's get started.

Everyone climbs onto their snowmobiles while putting on their different colored/designed helmets that, along with the different colors of their snowmobiles, help to tell them apart as they're riding.

They lower their transparent helmet visors, and then they start their snowmobiles by turning their keys.

MONTAGE ("THE FIRST NOEL" BY CONNIE FRANCIS FROM THE ALBUM ENTITLED, "CHRISTMAS CHEER," PLAYS IN ITS ENTIRETY OVER THIS MONTAGE)

- A) The Zeilers take off riding through the falling snow, leaving the snowmobile store behind. The terrain is very flat and completely wide open as they head towards the mountains in the distance.
- B) They've arrived at the base of the mountains, and they're riding alongside a beautiful and fast-moving stream, with a quiet forest of snow-covered evergreens on the other side of the stream. They've truly entered the magnificent countryside that exists all over Alaska, which is one of the world's greatest winter wonderlands.
- C) At the base of the mountains, a cute snowshoe hare (which is white since its fur changes to white during the winter) is standing in the snow next to an evergreen forest. Everyone in the family has already gotten off their snowmobiles, and they're crouching down with their helmet visors flipped up in order to see better as they simply enjoy watching the hare. After a short while, the hare hops away into the forest.
- D) Now, they're truly riding in the mountains, which are mostly covered with snow but also have exposed rocks, and scattered forests of snow-covered evergreens are prevalent. These picturesque mountains present a huge, epic terrain that makes the Zeilers look tiny in comparison.
- E) A red fox, a curious observer, is standing and looking at the snowmobiles speed past it in the mountains, but no one in the family sees the fox since it's far away.
- F) They're traveling near a large glacial lake (similar to Kenai Lake or Skilak Lake) that's enclosed by towering mountains. Although ice is creeping in a little from the shores, this lake hasn't frozen over yet, and it has a brilliant turquoise color due to the water being from glaciers.
- G) The Zeilers stop their snowmobiles, and then they get off and flip up their helmet visors as they walk a few steps forward, where they stop and are amazed at the beautiful sight in front of them. It's a large herd of caribou gathered in the valley below, with each caribou having white-and-brown fur. The Zeilers stand and enjoy the incredible view of the caribou in a majestic setting.
- H) They're riding along a mountain stream as they follow beside it downstream for a little while. They enjoy looking at its running water as they speed along.
- I) They're traveling past a large and very scenic waterfall that's forcefully flowing from a clear mountain stream.

J) A lynx, another curious observer, is standing and looking at the snowmobiles speed past it in the mountains. However, no one in the family sees the lynx since it's far away, and "The First Noel" comes to an end.

EXT. CAMPSITE BETWEEN EVERGREEN FORESTS - NIGHT (TWILIGHT)

While it's still snowing, the Zeilers are stopping their snowmobiles on a flat, open area between snow-covered evergreen forests within the mountains in order to set up their tent for the night. Notably, Tristan's snowmobile is in the rear and is, thus, the last to stop.

Everyone turns off their snowmobiles, and then they stand up while taking off their helmets and putting them on their snowmobile seats.

Emily looks around and quickly notices that Ava isn't here, so obviously, she becomes very worried.

EMILY

Tristan, where's Ava?

Tristan, and everyone else, looks around for Ava.

TRISTAN

What, she's not here? She must have fallen off.

EMILY

How do you not check to make sure she's still sitting behind you? That's the number one rule, especially when that person is your ten-year-old daughter!

TRISTAN

I know. I guess I just forgot to check. She can't be too far back though, and she must be right near our tracks. Everyone, stay here, and I'll go get her.

ALEXIS

No, I'm coming too since I doubt she'll want to ride back with the person who left her in the cold to die.

Tristan and Alexis hurriedly put their helmets back on as Tristan gets on his snowmobile and Alexis gets on her snowmobile, and then they ride back to find Ava.

EXT. ALONG THE SNOWMOBILE TRACKS - NIGHT (TWILIGHT)

On a flat, open area between evergreen forests within the mountains that's a few miles behind where everyone else stopped to set up their campsite, Ava is walking through the falling snow. It's lonely and quiet, and she's going in the direction of her family since she's following their snowmobile tracks.

Tristan and Alexis are approaching Ava as they quickly stop their snowmobiles and get off them, and they flip up their helmet visors as they walk towards Ava.

Ava is wearing her helmet with her visor flipped up, and she's looking down because she's cold and hurt that she was left behind, but she's not crying since she's tough.

TRISTAN

Are you OK? I'm so sorry. I
didn't feel you fall off.

Alexis puts her arm around Ava's shoulders as everyone stops walking.

ALEXIS

Are you warm enough?

Ava nods yes, and Alexis leads Ava to her snowmobile.

ALEXIS (CONT'D)

Good. Come here, and hop on the
back.

(looking at Tristan)

I won't leave you.

Ava keeps looking down as she hops onto the back of Alexis's snowmobile.

Alexis sits down in front of Ava, and she starts to drive back to the campsite.

Tristan looks dejectedly at them drive away before he starts to walk to his snowmobile.

EXT. CAMPSITE BETWEEN EVERGREEN FORESTS - NIGHT

Tristan arrives at the large blue tent that the rest of his family put up while he and Alexis went to get Ava, so he stops his snowmobile next to the other snowmobiles in front of the tent.

Tristan turns off his snowmobile, and then he stands up and removes his helmet, and he somberly walks inside the tent.

INT. CAMPSITE BETWEEN EVERGREEN FORESTS - NIGHT

Tristan stops as he stands just inside the doorway, and he sees that everyone else is sitting on their cots.

There are three cots on one side and four cots on the other side. This very nice tent is big enough to walk around within, and they use one heater to warm it and one lantern (which hangs from a hook on the roof) to light it. And, when inside, no one wears gloves, stocking caps, or coats since the heater keeps it warm enough.

Ava is sitting on the end of her cot, which is the cot furthest from Tristan. She's beside the heater, which sits on the ground and is only about two feet high and runs on propane. She's wrapped in her beautiful furry blanket that's of the Alaskan state flag (which is navy blue and displays the Big Dipper and the North Star). Also, when sleeping, Ava covers herself with this blanket, instead of a sleeping bag, while everyone else sleeps in sleeping bags.

Emily is sitting on the end of her cot, and she's making hot cider in a big transparent coffee jug that's warming up on a hot plate, which sits on the ground in front of her and is less than one foot high and runs on propane.

DAVID

So, as a psychiatrist, is there something you can prescribe to cure Dad's chronic idiocy?

ALEXIS

No, that seems to be incurable. But, on the bright side, I have the title of my paper: "My Dad is a Moron."

Tristan briefly glances at Alexis, knowing that she's correct that he acted like a moron.

Tristan recognizes his sleeping bag, which is spread out on the cot next to him, so he puts his helmet down on top of his sleeping bag. Then, he takes off his gloves and coat, and he lays them on top of his sleeping bag too.

The hot cider is now ready, so Emily picks up the coffee jug from the hot plate and pours hot cider into a clear glass for Ava, and it looks delicious.

EMILY

I'm sorry I forgot the hot chocolate that I know you and everyone else loves, but I did bring this hot cider.

Emily walks a couple of steps to Ava and gives her the glass of hot cider.

Ava takes a sip of her hot cider while Emily leans over and checks the temperature settings on the heater.

EMILY (CONT'D)

We've got the heater turned up as high as it will go, so the tent will be warm in no time, OK?

AVA

OK, thank you.

Emily returns to the coffee jug and begins to pour hot cider for everyone else, and then she walks around and gives the glasses to them. Meanwhile, Tristan walks between the two rows of cots and sits on the bottom of Courtney's cot (while Courtney is sitting at the top) since it's next to Ava's cot. However, Ava doesn't want to look at Tristan, so she keeps looking down at her cup of hot cider.

TRISTAN

Your father is an idiot. I should have checked for you a lot more than I did. I'm very, very sorry.

AVA

I know. You're always sorry.

Tristan knows Ava is right, but it still hurts him.

TRISTAN

Yeah, I guess I am.

Emily gives Tristan the last cup of hot cider that she poured, so everyone now has a glass. Tristan stands up and walks towards his cot while everyone quietly drinks their hot cider.

EXT. CAMPSITE BETWEEN EVERGREEN FORESTS - DAY

The tent has already been taken down, and Tristan, Emily, and Zack are kneeling next to the supply sled as they pack the last items (several folded-up cots) into the big bag in the sled. Then, they'll strap the three backpacks, which are sitting in the snow, on top of the big bag. Everyone else is standing next to the snowmobiles while they wait for the supply sled to be packed. And no one is wearing their helmets yet.

David stretches his arms out as he soaks in the nice air.

DAVID

Ah, I love the smell of Hey,
what in the world is that smell?

Ava responds somberly since she's still hurt from being left behind the previous night.

AVA

Fresh air.

DAVID

Then, I love the smell of fresh air
in the morning.

David lowers his arms.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Come on, cheer up. Listen, Dad
probably just forgot you because
you're the youngest.

AVA

What do you mean?

DAVID

I mean, the attentiveness of
parents decreases from the oldest
child to the youngest. Alexis is
twenty-three, so she got the most
attention, and Zack is twenty-two,
and Courtney is sixteen, and I'm
fifteen, and you're way down at ten
years old. Didn't you ever wonder
why you have so much time to read?

AVA

Is this supposed to cheer me up?

DAVID

Not working, is it?

AVA

No.

DAVID

Sorry, I must have gotten our dad's
insensitivity genes.

AVA

Definitely.

David hops onto his snowmobile since they're about ready to leave, and he turns the key twice. However, the engine just makes a grinding noise and doesn't start on either attempt.

DAVID

Dad, my snowmobile won't start.

While Tristan walks a few steps over to David's snowmobile, David gets off of the snowmobile and stands next to Courtney.

Courtney and David watch Tristan reach down and turn the key, but the engine just grinds again and doesn't start.

TRISTAN

We're going to have to leave it behind.

David addresses Courtney.

DAVID

At least it was cheap.

Courtney smiles.

TRISTAN

You can ride with Zack and Courtney, and your mother can ride with me.

Tristan walks over to Emily as she's now standing and just waiting while Zack finishes packing by tightening the straps (which are connected to the sled) that are now holding the backpacks to the top of the big bag in the supply sled.

TRISTAN (CONT'D)

Emily, you're riding with me because your snowmobile won't start.

EMILY

Well, that's a shocker.

TRISTAN

When we get back, we'll tell the store to come pick it up. Alright, everybody, let's take off.

Everyone puts on their helmets while getting onto their snowmobiles.

Everyone starts their snowmobiles.

Everyone drives off with Tristan and Emily leading the way on one snowmobile; Alexis and Ava are on another snowmobile; and Zack, Courtney, and David are on the snowmobile that's pulling the supply sled.

EXT. BETWEEN A BIRCH FOREST AND MOUNTAINS - DAY

The Zeilers have traveled several miles already and are riding along nicely in a wide valley that's fairly flat and open, with a snow-covered birch forest on their left and the base of towering mountains on their right. But, suddenly, the suspension breaks on one of the two front skis on Alexis and Ava's snowmobile, which causes this ski to become wobbly, so Alexis stops her snowmobile.

Everyone else notices that Alexis has stopped, so they drive their snowmobiles next to her and stop too.

Everyone takes their helmets off in order to communicate better. And Alexis gets off her snowmobile and walks to the front of it, and she kneels down in the snow as she looks at the broken ski while everyone else remains seated.

ALEXIS

Oh, great.

TRISTAN

Can you still drive it?

ALEXIS

I think so.

EMILY

Do you want to trade machines?

ALEXIS

No, that's OK.

ZACK

I'm so glad we got a good one.

Zack slaps the front of his snowmobile to emphasize it's a good one, and the front cover/fender falls off as the seat lowers and tilts to the back with Zack, Courtney, and David falling off the back and landing in the snow. Ava laughs at this while Tristan, Emily, and Alexis find it amusing too.

TRISTAN

Well, I guess we got the only good one.

Tristan, smiling, raises his hand to slap his snowmobile.

EMILY

Don't you dare slap it.

Tristan's smile disappears as he obeys Emily, so he doesn't slap his snowmobile, and he simply lowers his hand.

EXT. BETWEEN A BIRCH FOREST AND MOUNTAINS - DAY (LATER)

Everyone is riding through the same majestic countryside again, although Alexis and Ava's snowmobile is driving wobbly, and Zack, Courtney, and David's snowmobile doesn't have a front fender.

Suddenly, Tristan sees a moose ahead of him that runs into the birch forest on his left side, so he points it out to everyone else.

TRISTAN

Hey, look at that moose!

Tristan steers close to the woods and drives alongside the woods to get a better view of the moose, and the two other snowmobiles follow him.

However, Tristan is paying too much attention to the moose, so he doesn't see the snow-covered log that's stretched out dangerously in front of him.

EMILY

Tristan, look out!

Tristan hits the log, and he and Emily fly off while their snowmobile soars through the air and flips over and crashes to the ground.

The two trailing snowmobiles try to avoid the crash, but they're traveling too close behind Tristan, so they don't have enough time to react.

ZACK

(to Courtney and David)

Jump off!

Zack, Courtney, and David swiftly jump off, and their snowmobile continues forward as it swerves and hits one of the trees in the forest.

ALEXIS

(to Ava)

Jump!

Alexis and Ava hastily jump off, and their snowmobile continues forward and hits the same log that Tristan's snowmobile hit, so it flips over the log and crashes to the ground.

Obviously, all three of the snowmobiles are damaged beyond repair.

Tristan and Ava are lying on their backs while everyone else is sitting on the ground. Everyone takes off their helmets and puts them on the ground while they try to compose themselves since they're a little shaken up, although Ava clearly enjoyed it.

AVA

That was awesome!

Courtney and David are sitting next to each other.

DAVID

At least they were cheap.

Courtney gives David a deadpan look because of his idiotic comment. And she puts one of her arms across David's chest and slowly moves it backwards and, thus, pushes him to the ground as he doesn't resist and just falls down onto his back.

EMILY

Is everyone OK?

ALEXIS

I'm OK.

Ava sits up.

AVA

I'm OK too.

COURTNEY

I'm fine.

David sits up.

DAVID

I'm good.

ZACK

I'm fine.

Emily is sitting next to Tristan, and she stares at him in disbelief while he, still trying to recover, slowly sits up.

EMILY

How many people do you think had their last words be "look at that moose"?

TRISTAN

I'm guessing not many.

EMILY

Yeah, that would be my guess too.

Emily stands up while everyone else remains sitting on the snow.

EMILY (CONT'D)

Well, I think we've had enough excitement for today.

(looking at Tristan)

I think one near-death experience per day is our family's quota.

DAVID

(to Courtney)

We have a quota?

EMILY

So, since we're not meant to travel today apparently, we'll just set up our tent here for the night.

EXT. MOUNTAINSIDE ABOVE THE CAMPSITE - DAY (ESTABLISHING)

The five Zeiler kids are above and a little to the side of their tent, which is set up in the valley at the bottom of this mountain, and they're wearing their nice coats, gloves, and stocking caps. They're walking side by side down the fairly large and bare mountain as they kick snow to their sides in order to write a very big sign in the snow on the side of the mountain. Thus, they're making each letter five-people wide, and they're making the last letter (an "E"), so they've nearly completed the sign.

EXT. CAMPSITE AT THE BASE OF A MOUNTAIN - DAY

Although the kids walked a little up the mountainside to make their sign, Tristan and Emily stayed on the valley near the birch forest where they wrecked. They're also wearing their nice coats, gloves, and stocking caps while sitting beside each other on a cot in front of the tent. Tristan is looking at a map (not the treasure map) to plot the best way forward while Emily is looking at their kids.

EMILY

I have no idea how we ended up with kids as good as them. I mean, Alexis and Zack are doing good in college and are well on their way to great careers, and Courtney and David are normal teenagers who are

finding their place in this world,
and Ava Zeiler is going to end up
ruling the world.

TRISTAN

I like four of them, but Alexis is
evil.

Emily smiles and jokingly slaps Tristan on his arm, and
Tristan smiles.

EMILY

I can't read their sign from here.
What do you think it says?

TRISTAN

I'm guessing it's reporting us to
Children's Services.

EMILY

Come on, you know they always love
our little trips and are having the
time of their lives. They love the
outdoors and adventure.

TRISTAN

Do you think they like the nearly
dying parts that always seem to
happen to us?

EMILY

Well, you have a point. It's kind
of hard to love that part.

Tristan is finished looking at the map, so he folds it in
half and lays it to his side on the cot.

EMILY (CONT'D)

So, what are you going to do with
all of this "gold" when we find it?

TRISTAN

I'm going to buy myself a trophy
wife.

Emily knows he's kidding, but she still gives him a look
like he must be out of his mind.

EMILY

Do you just try to get into
trouble?

Tristan smiles, and he puts his arm around Emily's
shoulders, so she smiles too.

TRISTAN

I'm kidding. You know I married way above my head. In fact, I married the best girl in all of Alaska, which has the most beautiful, and coldest, women in all the world.

EMILY

That's better.

Tristan and Emily laugh, and Emily puts her arm around the back of Tristan's waist and puts her head on his shoulder.

EXT. MOUNTAINSIDE ABOVE THE CAMPSITE - DAY

The kids are still walking down the mountain while kicking snow to the side, and they've almost completed the last letter of their massive sign.

David gestures towards his parents.

DAVID

Ew, look, our parents are cuddling.

COURTNEY

I think it's kind of sweet that they do that after having been married for like ... ever.

DAVID

That's sweet? I think "weird" is a better word.

ALEXIS

Yeah, it couldn't be that you're weird. But it's a little weird that it's a fisherman and a beauty queen.

DAVID

This reminds me. Hey, Ava, I think it's time for you to run away and become normal. It's too late for the rest of us, but you still have a chance. I'll just tell our parents that the abominable snowman killed you.

ALEXIS

It's actually too late for her too because the most important

developmental stage is from birth
to five years old.

DAVID

Is it even possible for shrinks to
have fun?

Alexis smiles.

AVA

Actually, I think Alexis is right
because there's just no coming back
from moments like these.

The kids turn to their left to walk across the mountain and
complete the bottom part of the last letter (an "E").

COURTNEY

It's not just us who aren't
normal. It's kind of hard to live
in Alaska and be normal. I mean, I
love seeing so many great people
come here and admire the beauty in
the summer, but they're mostly gone
by winter. It takes a different
kind of person to stay.

ZACK

That's true because most people
don't think winter is the best
season or like living in a remote
area with a unique lifestyle.

COURTNEY

Or would say,
(imitating Tristan)
"Hey, it's barely subzero outside.
That sounds like great camping
weather. Come on, Emily, get the
kids. We're looking for gold."

The kids laugh, and after just a couple of more steps, they
finish up their large sign. Each of them, not wanting to
damage the sign, takes a large step out of their sign, and
then they turn towards the top of the mountain and look at
their sign, and they smile proudly.

ALEXIS

Cool.

AVA

It would have been even cooler if
we wrote this on Denali, which used

to be called Mt. McKinley, because it's the tallest mountain in the world, besides some underwater mountains. But this will do.

ZACK

Alright, let's go break up our parents' lovefest.

The kids turn away and walk down towards their tent (which is fairly close to them) as we look down from high overhead and see that the sign says, "WE NEED HOT CHOCOLATE." This sign covers a lot of the mountainside, and it consists of three rows: "WE" is in the first row near the top of the mountain, followed by "NEED" below in the second row, and "HOT CHOCOLATE" is below in the third row.

ALEXIS

So, do you think we would get more hot chocolate if we wrote this on Denali?

AVA

Yeah, definitely.

Everyone smiles, and Alexis playfully rubs Ava's stocking cap while they continue to walk down the mountain.

EXT. CAMPSITE AT THE BASE OF A MOUNTAIN - DAY

The kids stop and stand in front of the cot where Tristan and Emily are sitting, although they're no longer cuddling.

TRISTAN

So, kids, do you want to build the world's largest snowball?

AVA

Oh, yeah!

EMILY

Oh, no.

EXT. MOUNTAINSIDE ABOVE THE CAMPSITE - DAY

The entire family is pushing an enormous snowball that's about eight feet high, but they can't push it very fast since it's obviously very heavy. They're on a fairly flat spot that's a little below the top of the mountain and a little above the sign, "WE NEED HOT CHOCOLATE." Notably, they're to the side of their large sign, and their tent is located below at the opposite side of the sign.

ALEXIS

We can barely push it anymore.

ZACK

Well, there are only seven of us
against one snowball after all.

EMILY

(to Tristan)

Is there any way I can convince you
to not push this down the hill?

Tristan smiles.

TRISTAN

Not a chance.

AVA

We should make a snowman.

TRISTAN

A snowman that can be seen from
space. That's a great idea. We'll
keep that in mind for next time.

AVA

Hey, Mom, do you remember that
snowman you made last year with
Courtney, David, and me?

EMILY

Oh, yeah, it stayed up for almost
the entire winter, and we added
little snowmen children and even a
pet cat made of snow.

AVA

Yeah, that was the best.

They push the snowball a few feet more, and they let it come
to rest on top of a small rock ledge that's only about two
feet high. And everyone stands next to each other as they
look down the mountain, with the snowball at their side.

TRISTAN

Alright, here's our moment of
glory. We will never accomplish
anything greater than this. We
have reached the apex of our lives.
I proclaim this mountain to be
forever named, "Mt. Zeiler," and
this snowball is our christening of
it. May this great mountain always

be here standing proudly to the world.

Tristan, dramatizing this grand occasion, puts his hand on the snowball and rests it there while looking at the snowball.

TRISTAN (CONT'D)

To the snowball, I say that all good things must come to an end. We'll never forget you. We watched you grow up from when you were no bigger than our boots.

Tristan takes his hand off the snowball.

TRISTAN (CONT'D)

Does anyone have some words they'd like to say?

EMILY

Uh, don't do it?

TRISTAN

Unfortunately, we passed the point of no return when this thing reached five feet, so you're about three feet too late.

EMILY

I'm not sure that would hold up in court. Of course, I don't think a lot of the things you do would hold up in court.

TRISTAN

Let's have a moment of silence, please.

ALEXIS

I'm not being quiet for a snowball.

Everyone, except Alexis, bows their heads and begins to observe a moment of silence.

Alexis looks at everyone else as if she can't believe she's related to them.

ALEXIS (CONT'D)

This is insane.

After a quiet moment, Tristan raises his head.

TRISTAN
OK, are we ready?

Everyone else raises their heads, except Alexis since she never lowered her head.

AVA
Yeah! Bon voyage, snowball!

TRISTAN
Truer words were never spoken. OK,
let's push it.

Everyone is excited as they walk behind the snowball, although Emily is a little worried.

They push the snowball off the rock ledge.

They watch the snowball go through the air for a few feet until it comes thundering down onto the snow below.

It rolls very fast down the mountain, and it even gets bigger as it collects snow.

It reaches the valley below, where it rolls over this flatter ground until it eventually comes to a rest in the distance. And everyone enjoyed watching this spectacle.

DAVID
That was pretty cool, but it would
have been cooler if it exploded or
something.

Everyone hears snow starting to break up behind them.

EMILY
Oh, oh. Not cool.

A small avalanche, which was caused by the snowball, occurs as everyone turns around and sees snow rapidly rushing down onto them.

They scream as the snow knocks them off the rock ledge. Thus, they're knocked backwards, and they fly through the air until they land on the mountainside as the snow breaks their fall.

They're sliding fairly fast on their backs/stomachs as they go down the mountain.

The avalanche has stopped since it wasn't very big. In fact, it was more like a quick burst of falling snow, so everyone has managed to stay on top of the snow as they continue to slide down the mountain.

They try to slow down by grabbing the snow, but they're still going fast.

They're quickly approaching the valley below.

They reach the valley, so they're able to stop themselves on this flat area.

Thus, they've come to rest on the same level as their tent. But the tent wasn't hit by the avalanche since it's too far to the side of the avalanche.

Everyone is lying down and is a little shaken up, so they're in no hurry to get up.

EMILY

Was the avalanche part of the christening?

TRISTAN

No, that was sort of like a bonus.

EMILY

Can I tell you I told you so?

TRISTAN

Yep.

DAVID

(to Courtney)

I think we went over our quota.

Ava, lying on her stomach, looks up the mountain and sees that their sign, "WE NEED HOT CHOCOLATE," is now partially covered in snow.

AVA

Oh, no, we'll never get any hot chocolate now.

Courtney looks up the mountain and sees that a trickle of snow is continuing to fall.

COURTNEY

Uh, guys, I don't think it's done.

Everyone looks up the mountain and sees that, although the snow is only trickling now, it's obvious that a massive avalanche is coming since a lot of snow is starting to break up drastically.

Indeed, the snow is developing large cracks that are swiftly spreading across the top of the mountain, and they're getting wider.

TRISTAN

Run! Go towards the tent!

Everyone gets up from the ground and starts to run across the valley while the snow continues to break up above them.

Emily runs next to Ava to ensure she makes it to safety, and Tristan runs behind everyone to ensure their safety.

The tent isn't far away, and it appears they're going to make it to safety in plenty of time since the avalanche hasn't formed yet.

However, Courtney trips and falls down hard. And she's shaken up, so she doesn't immediately get up.

David, who was running just in front and to the side of Courtney, stops and goes back for her. And Tristan, who was trailing everyone, stops beside Courtney.

Tristan and David each grab one of Courtney's arms, and they pull her up. Then, all three of them glance up the mountain and see a huge avalanche has now formed and is starting to race downwards.

DAVID

OK, time to start running again.

Tristan, Courtney, and David quickly start to run again.

Everyone else makes it to the tent, which is safely to the side of the path of the avalanche. And they turn around and anxiously watch Tristan, Courtney, and David, who are running towards them.

The avalanche is moving very rapidly and is, of course, gaining even more snow as it falls.

The avalanche is getting dangerously closer to Tristan, Courtney, and David, but they're not too far away from the tent now.

The avalanche is about to overtake them, but Tristan, Courtney, and David run fast and arrive at the tent in the nick of time as the avalanche races over the ground they just ran across.

Tristan, Courtney, and David join everyone else in facing back the way they came and watching the seemingly never-ending river of snow flow past them.

They're safe, but the flowing snow is only about twenty feet in front of them.

AVA

Boy, that was some snowball.

Courtney looks affectionately at David for saving her life, and she hugs him from the side while leaning the side of her head on his shoulder. But, like a typical brother, he looks down at her like she's crazy and pushes her head away, so she stands back up and gives him a hurt look.

EMILY

I think it's great that you're playing with the kids and all, but maybe

TRISTAN

No more avalanches?

Emily, like everyone else, continues to watch the snow flow past them, although it's flowing a lot slower now since the avalanche is coming to an end.

EMILY

Yeah, no more of these for a while would be good.

EXT. CAMPSITE AT THE BASE OF A MOUNTAIN - NIGHT
(ESTABLISHING)

It's snowing and quiet, and the lantern inside the tent is shining through the tent's blue fabric, creating an ethereal image of the lighted tent against the dark mountains.

INT. CAMPSITE AT THE BASE OF A MOUNTAIN - NIGHT

Everyone is sitting/lying down on their cots while wearing bedtime clothes (the men wear T-shirts and shorts while the women wear nice flannel pajamas that have short sleeves and short pants). Alexis is reading a psychiatry book that we see is entitled, "CASE STUDIES OF FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS," and Ava is reading her book, "THE INTERESTING HISTORY OF ALASKA," while everyone else is just relaxing.

DAVID

That book looks really interesting.
Is it a bestseller?

Alexis doesn't want to be bothered, so she doesn't look up.

ALEXIS

Yes, it's flying off the bookshelves.

DAVID

I don't know much about psychiatry,
but I think the definition of being
crazy is reading that book.

Alexis, realizing that she isn't able to ignore David, looks
up from her book.

ALEXIS

Don't you have anything better to
do?

DAVID

I'm stuck in a tent with my family
on a mountain in the middle of
wherever. So, no. Hey, Mom, did
you know your daughter is crazy?

EMILY

You're calling her crazy? In
psychiatric terms, I'm guessing
that's called ironic. Anyway,
you'll find God made it so no two
people in this world are the same,
and no one's perfect, so you
shouldn't be so critical.
Sometimes, you just have to take
the good from people and leave the
bad.

DAVID

I know you used to be a teacher,
but you're not supposed to take
your work home with you. By the
way, since this vacation is
starting off like our other ones,
we'll be lucky to be home for
Christmas. So, do you think Santa
delivers to people in tents?

EMILY

Why? You're afraid you won't get
your coal?

DAVID

Yeah.

David realizes that Emily is making fun of him.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Hey!

Emily and Alexis smile, and then Alexis looks back down at
her book to continue reading.

EMILY

Relax, we'll be back to Wasilla in time, I think.

Emily stands up and walks to Ava's cot, where Ava is sitting up while reading.

Emily sits on the cot and puts her arm around Ava's shoulders, so Ava looks up from her book.

And Emily looks down at Ava's book for a moment, taking an interest in what Ava is learning about.

EMILY (CONT'D)

Hey, honey, what are you reading about now?

AVA

I'm reading about the Russians coming here in the 1700s and establishing colonies for fur trade. And, then, the British and Americans came here and started trading too. It's pretty neat.

EMILY

I bet. That sounds intriguing. Did you know that, in the winter, the ocean freezes between here and Russia, and it's even possible to walk to Russia across the ice?

AVA

No, I didn't know that. That's pretty awesome.

Emily and Ava smile at each other.

EMILY

Alright, who wants hot cider?

Alexis, Courtney, David, and Ava raise their hands eagerly, and Emily counts them.

EMILY (CONT'D)

OK, that's four of you.

Emily stands up and grabs the transparent coffee jug that was on the hot plate in front of her cot. Meanwhile, Alexis and Ava close their books and put them down on top of their coats that are on the ground next to their cots.

Without even bothering to put on a coat, Emily walks outside.

EXT. CAMPSITE AT THE BASE OF A MOUNTAIN - NIGHT

Emily crouches down to the ground while the falling snow quickly gathers on her hair and clothes.

She scoops up a lot of snow into the coffee jug, overfilling the jug.

She stands up and enters the tent.

INT. CAMPSITE AT THE BASE OF A MOUNTAIN - NIGHT

Emily walks a few steps to her cot and sits on the end of it, and then she places the coffee jug on the hot plate.

Emily turns on the hot plate as the packets of cider, which are waiting to be used to make hot cider, sit on the ground next to it.

ZACK

What's the plan for tomorrow?

TRISTAN

Well, I've looked at the maps, and we may have some trouble finding the exact location. But it looks like there's a small resort of cabins a few miles ahead. So, we'll ski there and see if there's someone who can give us better directions, and maybe we can even spend the night there.

ALEXIS

Wow, you're going to stop and ask for directions?

TRISTAN

Hey, I'm having a little trouble reading through the crayon writings, OK?

AVA

Oops.

TRISTAN

But isn't this great spending tonight on our very own mountain?

ALEXIS

Actually, I'm a little scared. I don't think it likes us very much.

ZACK

What gave you that impression? The fact that it tried to bury us?

ALEXIS

Yeah, I think that did it.

TRISTAN

Ah, that was probably just the mountain's little way of saying, "Hello."

ALEXIS

Are you sure that it wasn't, "Get off now, or you'll die"?

TRISTAN

Uh, it could have been that, yeah.

COURTNEY

I think this mountain is beautiful. We're so lucky to see so much beauty on this trip and on our other trips too. It's funny that, besides Zack, us kids have never even left Alaska, and we haven't seen close to everything here. But I love seeing the snow-covered mountains in the winter or seeing the rainforests in Southern Alaska in the summer. It's just so hard to choose what is the most beautiful.

DAVID

I like seeing the glaciers and icebergs in the fjords when we go sailing.

AVA

I thought that igloo we stayed in one night in the Arctic Circle was really beautiful.

ALEXIS

I like the waterfalls we slide down in the summer.

ZACK

I like that glacial cave that had the pond of bright-blue glacial water. It almost glowed.

TRISTAN

I like the ocean and its powerful waves and never-ending views and seeing the whales and things.

DAVID

(to Courtney)

I thought he was going to say moose.

Courtney smiles at David's comment.

COURTNEY

Alright, Mom, you're last. What do you think is the most beautiful thing you've ever seen?

The hot plate (which is sitting on the ground in front of Emily) is warm now, so the snow in the clear coffee jug is starting to rapidly melt.

EMILY

Oh, I don't know. The parts of nature that you have all mentioned are very beautiful. But there are so many other things too, like being with family. Or seeing so many people help other people. Or seeing someone whose life brightly shines past some terrible disease, handicap, or tragedy. Or when

Suddenly, a pillow hits Emily in the shoulder after soaring through the air.

It surprised Emily, and she looks up and sees that Courtney, who's guiltily smiling, threw it.

COURTNEY

You were getting a little sappy.

Emily and Courtney smile at each other.

EMILY

Then, I say I like gentle snowfalls. Is that better?

COURTNEY

Yeah, that will work.

David throws his pillow at Emily, and it also catches her unaware as it hits her arm.

EMILY

Hey, what did you do that for?

DAVID

Fun.

David smiles at Emily, and she smiles back at him.

Tristan, Alexis, Zack, and Ava also throw their pillows at Emily. And, one after another, all of the pillows fly through the air and hit Emily while she protects herself from the onslaught.

Emily stops protecting herself since everyone else is out of pillows to throw, and she smiles while everyone else laughs.

EMILY

This is so not fair.

EXT. LARGE MOUNTAIN RANGE - DAY

Throughout the following montage, a gentle snowfall is falling on the rugged mountain peaks (which consist of a mixture of snow and exposed rocks) and the valleys that run between the mountains.

MONTAGE

A) The Zeiler family is having fun as they cross-country ski in a fairly open valley, where mountains tower above them on both sides, and they're wearing coats, gloves, and stocking caps. Even on this flat terrain, everyone is able to move at a good pace since they're good skiers, and they ski fairly close together, with the exception of Tristan since he doesn't ski as often and is, thus, always about one hundred feet behind everyone else. Zack is pulling the supply sled behind him since they no longer have a snowmobile to drag it. This supply sled (also known as a pulk sled) is connected to Zack via a shoulder/chest harness that snaps together in front of him. The sled now only contains one big bag in it since Tristan, Emily, and Alexis are wearing the backpacks that used to be strapped on top of the bag. And the three youngest kids (Courtney, David, and Ava) don't wear backpacks or carry supplies.

B) They're skiing down a gentle slope near a plentiful forest of snow-covered evergreens. It's fun as they just let gravity carry them down the hill, and their skis easily cut through the thin layer of fresh powder.

C) They're skiing next to a slow-moving stream, with the quiet sound of the flowing water combining with the falling snow to create a tranquil experience.

EXT. SMALL MOUNTAIN - DAY

It's still snowing as Emily, who's leading everyone, finishes skiing up the last part of a small mountain that's very gradually sloping, and then she stops to rest on the top of it. Everyone else stops beside her, except Tristan since he's still a little bit behind, and they rest while admiring the pretty view of mountains, valleys, and forests.

COURTNEY

I love skiing.

EMILY

Yeah, it's fun.

AVA

This is more difficult than our normal trails, but I like it. Hey, where do you think we'll take our next trip?

EMILY

I don't know, but I'm guessing it will be swimming with sharks or wrestling bears or cliff diving.

Ava smiles.

AVA

Cool.

David addresses Courtney, who's standing beside him.

DAVID

Do you think she uses the word "cool" as like a synonym for that sounds incredibly dangerous, and there's no way I'm doing that?

COURTNEY

I just know I'm thinking I'll be somewhere safe and warm when our next trip happens.

ZACK

Yeah, right. You'll get suckered in like the rest of us. Look at Alexis and me. We're in college and are still coming on these trips. It's like a black hole. There's no escape.

Courtney smiles.

EMILY

Listen, you guys go on ahead, and
I'll wait for your father.

COURTNEY

OK.

Everyone else goes down the very gentle mountain as Emily watches them ski away before she turns around to spot Tristan, who's close behind as he skis up the slope.

Emily enjoys the complete quietness as she waits, and she enjoys what she named as the most beautiful thing that she ever saw: a gentle snowfall. So, she smiles slightly as she appreciates these few precious moments of being alone with the quietness and the falling snow.

Tristan quickly makes it up the mountain and stops next to Emily, and he's a little out of breath from the journey.

EMILY

How are you doing?

TRISTAN

I'm doing fine. This isn't too
bad.

EMILY

Good. The kids are just loving
this skiing.

TRISTAN

They're really good, aren't they?

EMILY

They're great skiers. You should
see them on the big hills. They
just conquer them like they're
nothing. Are you ready to go
again?

TRISTAN

Yep, lead the way.

Tristan and Emily start to ski down the mountain.

EXT. BIG MOUNTAIN - DAY

It's still lightly snowing while Tristan and Emily are skiing side by side as they approach their kids, who are standing at the top of a scary-looking mountain. They continue to ski forward until they reach their kids, and

then they stop next to them. Everyone is lined up next to each other as they look down the very tall mountain.

The mountain slopes downwards pretty severely, but it consists of smooth fresh powder without any rocks or trees in the way. So, although it's very intimidating to novice skiers, it's a dream slope to very good skiers.

AVA

This is going to be awesome!

TRISTAN

What kind of map forgets to point out that between point A and point B is the cliff of death?

AVA

You must not have a topographic map because if you had one, you could read the contour lines that designate the differing elevations, and thus, you would know where the "cliffs of death" are.

Zack addresses David, who's standing next to him.

ZACK

It's like she's too smart for her own good because she's going to get herself killed with comments like that.

DAVID

Yeah, smart people can't survive in our family.

TRISTAN

This hill is like a black-diamond slope, and I can barely ski the little green-circle slopes.

COURTNEY

Everyone else can ski well, and you would too if you had bothered to have gone skiing with us, not to mention that our ancestors are from Austria and we live in Alaska. This must be God's way of telling you that you're a complete loser.

TRISTAN

Thanks for clearing that up because I was starting to have my doubts.

COURTNEY

My pleasure.

EMILY

Don't worry because we'll notice if you're left behind. Well, actually, I'm not sure the kids would come back for you, and of course, I have to go with the kids.

TRISTAN

That is so not comforting.

Suddenly, Ava, anxious to enjoy skiing downhill, takes off skiing down the steep mountain like a pro, and of course, she has no fear.

AVA

Woo hoo!

Everyone else, except Tristan, starts to ski down the mountain with ease.

They spread out across the mountainside as they rapidly descend.

It's quite a sight as the six skiers crisscross down the mountain.

It's a complete adrenaline rush.

Their skiing is like poetry in motion.

It's a swirl of flying snow and ski tracks being made in the fairly deep fresh powder.

Their turns are smooth and relaxed.

They ski fast, but they're always under control.

It's obvious that they're excellent skiers.

Indeed, they make this challenging skiing look easy and nearly effortless.

It's not often that one gets to ski on fresh powder, so they're having a lot of fun as they kick up the loose snow with every turn.

This is a great combination of beauty and pure fun.

It simply doesn't get much better than this for those who enjoy skiing.

Ava, who's still in front of everyone else, is a little more than halfway down the mountain, and she turns fairly hard to her right in order to go in the direction of the cabins.

Ava stops on the mountainside as she spins herself around in order to be able to look up the mountain at Tristan.

Everyone else follows Ava as they also turn to their right.

Everyone else stops next to Ava, and they, like Ava, spin themselves around when they stop.

Everyone looks up at Tristan, who's still standing on top of the mountain as he gazes down at them.

TRISTAN
(to himself)
There will be no living with them
after this.

Tristan starts to ski down the mountain.

He goes very fast straight down the mountain since he's not good enough to be able to carve turns on this steep slope.

In fact, he goes down the mountain like a bullet shot out of a gun since he can't slow himself down.

He's kicking snow up everywhere as he's going way too fast, and the snow engulfs him as it flies into his body and face and makes it very hard to see.

He's completely out of control, and it's obvious that he's going to crash soon.

He's absolutely blazing down the mountain at an unbelievable velocity.

The overwhelming speed finally causes him to lose his balance.

So, he falls down very hard into the snow, and his skis and ski poles fly off.

He's tumbling down the mountain as he approaches the area where the rest of his family is standing.

Everyone else watches, in amazement, the bizarre sight of Tristan passing right by them as he quickly tumbles down the mountain.

He's taking a beating as he brutally tumbles downwards.

Everyone else descended with grace, but he's descending with absolute chaos.

He's approaching the bottom of the mountain.

Since the ground becomes a little flatter, he finally stops tumbling, and he begins to slide very rapidly on his back.

He's on his back as he slides forward at the bottom of the mountain and mercifully comes to rest on this flat ground.

He's a long way from the rest of his family, and they're looking at him with astonishment/bemusement.

AVA

Ah, I told you this was going to be awesome!

ZACK

I don't think Dad and mountains go very well together.

EMILY

No, I don't think so either. It's like the mountains need a restraining order or something.

Tristan gingerly stands up, and he's pretty much hurting all over, but he's not seriously hurt as he leans backwards to stretch out his back.

TRISTAN

(to himself)

I really hate skiing.

Emily sees that Tristan isn't badly hurt since he's standing at least.

EMILY

Well, I don't think there's much sense in waiting and pretending we care. Let's go to the cabins, and he'll meet us there.

Everyone, except Tristan, begins to ski down the rest of the mountain, but they ski to their right in order to go towards the cabins.

Tristan looks up and sees his family leaving him.

TRISTAN

(to himself)

Oh, that's just fantastic.

Tristan starts to walk up the mountain to get his skis and ski poles, which are a long way from him.

TRISTAN (CONT'D)

(to himself)

You guys go ahead. I'll just stay out here and turn into an icicle. No, don't you worry. I mean, it happens all the time that people tumble down mountains while their family leaves them to freeze to death. Besides, Alexis's paper can have a happy ending now: "Family rejoices after leaving Dad for dead." So, everyone's happy. Of course, I'll be dead, but everyone else will be happy. Ah, family.

EXT. PATH TO THE CABINS - DAY

While it's still snowing, Emily is leading everyone, except Tristan, as they cross-country ski on a fairly wide, flat path that's a dirt road in the summer. There are snow-covered evergreens on both sides of the path, with the surrounding mountains towering above. They're moving pretty fast and easily as they enjoy their trip to the cabins.

AVA

I feel like we're training for the Olympics.

COURTNEY

Yeah, we're like the Zeiler relay team. I bet we're the best team for many miles.

DAVID

Boy, you're going out on a limb there. Of course, if we were really good, I'm guessing our mother wouldn't be leading us.

Everyone smiles/laughs.

AVA

I wish we could ski with Janica Kostelic or Bjorn Daehlie or Marcel Hirscher.

COURTNEY

That would be really cool.

ZACK

Personally, I'd rather do this
Iditarod style, so I could have
some dogs pulling this sled.

ALEXIS

I'm sorry to change the subject,
but don't you guys think we should
feel a little guilty about leaving
Dad?

AVA

Nope.

DAVID

She makes a compelling case. I'm
going with no too.

EXT. BIG MOUNTAIN - DAY

Tristan has tiredly hiked about halfway up the mountain, and he's standing while holding his skis and ski poles since he finally retrieved them. He drops his skis to the ground and begins to put them on.

TRISTAN

(to himself)

What's that? No, I'm fine. Of
course, I almost broke every bone I
have, but it's nothing to worry
about. Thanks for waiting by the
way. You really didn't have to. I
know we're supposed to stick
together as a family and all, but
really, you guys are too kind.

Tristan has finished putting on his skis, so he's ready to ski down the mountain to go to the cabins. However, when he pushes off to start skiing, he leans too far forward and immediately falls face down into the snow.

EXT. PATH TO THE CABINS - NIGHT

Everyone, except Tristan since he's a long way behind everyone else, is still cross-country skiing to the cabins while it continues to snow. Although night has arrived, the moon is shining very brightly, so they can see fine.

AVA

It sure got dark fast.

EMILY

There are only about six hours of daylight this time of year.

David addresses Ava, who's skiing beside him.

DAVID

You didn't get to that chapter yet, huh?

David and Ava smile at each other.

Emily looks ahead to her right and notices a few cabins, which are located in the woods just off the path.

EMILY

Look, there are the cabins!

ALEXIS

Finally, nice warm shelter.

DAVID

I guess we won't have to eat each other then.

COURTNEY

Nice, David.

ZACK

We have plenty of food, you idget.

DAVID

Hey, you're only studying journalism. You can't call people mean and nasty names until you actually become a journalist ... or a comedian or a businessman or one of my classmates. Darn, there are a lot of mean people in this world. What's the deal, Mom?

EMILY

I only know I want you to be better and to deal with everything thrown your way with a sense of knowing it doesn't really matter what they say because they can't define you. Only you can define yourself.

COURTNEY

That sounded deep. I bet you didn't catch any of it, huh?

DAVID
Not a word.

Courtney smiles.

Everyone leaves their current path as they turn onto the path on their right that's for the cabins in the woods.

EXT. PATH AMONG THE CABINS - NIGHT

Emily and the kids are skiing among six large log cabins that are very picturesque. The cabins are nestled fairly close together in a snowy evergreen forest at the base of several mountains. The five guest cabins are identical, and they're one-story high. But the sixth cabin, the main cabin, has two stories, and it's the only cabin that's occupied during the winters, so it has lights shining out from the windows. Also, the main cabin is the only cabin decorated with Christmas lights, which are purely white lights glowing in the darkness, giving a heavenly look. A little before the main cabin, the Zeilers are approaching a Nativity scene in the woods just off the path.

EMILY
Ah, what a gorgeous Nativity scene.

They stop and line up next to each other at the immaculate Nativity scene. It consists of an open-faced wooden barn that's about eight feet wide and five feet high. Icicles are hanging off its roof, and a glass Christmas Star is on the roof's apex. White Christmas lights are glowing around the roof and the two front posts. The floor is covered in hay, with some snow mixed in it. The barn encloses Jesus in the manger, Mary and Joseph kneeling beside Jesus, and the three wise men standing and looking at Jesus. These wooden figures look lifelike as they're painted and are wearing nicely colored clothes (e.g., Mary is wearing a blue dress and a white shawl), and they're very beautiful and ethereal.

COURTNEY
Jesus looks cold.

DAVID
You do know he's wooden, right?

Courtney rolls her eyes at David.

It's peacefully quiet as the figures of the Nativity scene look angelic in the falling snow. Somehow, the figures look almost alive, like they're listening to the Zeilers. The combination of the falling snow, the quiet isolation, the white Christmas lights, and the Nativity scene create a sense that this location is like heaven on Earth.

ALEXIS

"I know men, and I tell you that Jesus Christ is no mere man. Between him and every other person in the world, there is no possible term of comparison. Alexander, Caesar, Charlemagne, and I have founded empires. But on what did we rest the creation of our genius? Upon force. Jesus Christ founded his empire upon love." Napoleon.

ZACK

"I am a historian. I am not a believer. But I must confess as a historian that this penniless preacher from Nazareth is irrevocably the very center of history. Jesus Christ is easily the most dominant figure in all history." H.G. Wells.

DAVID

I was going to say that, but you beat me to it. I know a bunch of other quotes too, but I just want to soak in this quiet and wonderful moment.

David leans over to Ava in order to address her.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Quick, Ava, we need a quote. The college kids are kicking our butts.

The heavenly Nativity figures continue to look like they're listening.

AVA

"And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord.'" The Bible.

DAVID

Wow.

(to Alexis and Zack)

Take that.

Everyone smiles.

EMILY

That was very nice. Now, let's let
Jesus rest and go get warm.

They begin to ski the very short distance to the main cabin since the lights coming from the windows make it clear that someone's inside the cabin.

EXT. MAIN CABIN - NIGHT

The six Zeilers stop in front of the cabin's front porch, and they use their ski poles to press down on their skis' binding levers, which loosens the bindings. And they step out of their skis, leaving their skis on the ground.

They lean their ski poles against the side of the cabin's porch, and then they walk up the three steps of the porch, which is snow-covered since its roof didn't fully protect it from the wind-blown snow. And Emily knocks on the door as everyone stops in front of it.

The cabin's front door has an ice sculpture of a Christmas tree on one side of it and an ice sculpture of Santa Claus on the other side, and both of these very nice sculptures are about five feet high. So, while they wait for someone to answer the door, Emily admires the sculpture of Santa Claus. And she brushes some snow off of Santa's face, and then she smiles at it.

COURTNEY

They're probably going to think
we're carolers.

DAVID

Yeah, we traveled a hundred miles
to the middle of nowhere just to
sing them a couple of songs and,
then, go back to civilization.

Ava sings in jest.

AVA

(singing)

Rudolph, the red-nosed reindeer,
had a very shiny nose.

Courtney elbows Ava jokingly for Ava's singing, and they giggle.

The door is opened by the WIFE OF THE CABINS' OWNER, 33 years old, and she's angelic-looking with her straight blonde hair and pale skin, appearing as if she truly belongs in these heavenly surroundings. And she smiles at the Zeilers, who smile back at her.

WIFE OF THE CABINS' OWNER
Hello, Merry Christmas!

EMILY
Merry Christmas!

WIFE OF THE CABINS' OWNER
Please come inside and get warm.

EMILY
Oh, thank you. Thank you very much.

The Zeilers enter the cabin.

INT. MAIN CABIN - NIGHT

While the Wife Of The Cabins' Owner goes behind the cashier counter (which is next to the front door), the Zeilers take off their gloves and stocking caps and hold them in their hands while they stop and look around to admire this very large room that nearly occupies the entire first floor of the cabin.

This room is beautifully decorated for Christmas. Long strands of holly and ivy contain glowing Christmas lights (which are red and green), and they're hanging from the ceiling and spread across the walls. Moreover, many wreaths are hanging on the walls, and tall plastic candy canes are standing near the walls. And a big decorated Christmas tree is standing in the very distant corner.

Next to the Christmas tree, the CABINS' OWNER, 34 years old and handsome, and his son, 7 years old, and his daughter, 5 years old, are sitting around a small table. They're making a pretty gingerbread house as they put frosting and gumdrops onto the house that's more than halfway completed.

EMILY
You have an absolutely beautiful place, with such gorgeous decorations. It's so incredible. It feels like heaven.

The Wife Of The Cabins' Owner smiles at Emily.

WIFE OF THE CABINS' OWNER
Thank you. We just love the
Christmas season. We really enjoy
doing artwork and decorating and
everything. But we almost never
get visitors at this time of the
year, so it's really nice to see
you.

EMILY
Yeah, how is it up here with no
roads due to the snow and all?

WIFE OF THE CABINS' OWNER
Well, my husband, our two kids, and
I enjoy relaxing up here from about
October through March when no one
rents the cabins. But, during the
rest of the year, we have guests
who come up here to ski, raft,
hunt, and fish, so things are
pretty hectic then.

Emily smiles at the Wife Of The Cabins' Owner.

EMILY
That sounds nice.

The Wife Of The Cabins' Owner smiles back at Emily.

WIFE OF THE CABINS' OWNER
Yeah, it is pretty nice. So, what
brings you up here?

EMILY
That's a long story. But,
basically, my husband likes to take
us on unusual trips once in a
while.

WIFE OF THE CABINS' OWNER
Oh, that sounds fun.

EMILY
It isn't. I mean, it is sometimes,
and sometimes it's just plain
crazy.

WIFE OF THE CABINS' OWNER
Where is your husband?

EMILY

Oh, he's back there a ways, but
he'll be here later ... much later.
Are we able to rent one cabin for
just tonight?

WIFE OF THE CABINS' OWNER

Sure. Each cabin has hot showers,
two beds, and even video games for
the kids. They usually cost a lot
more, but since this is definitely
our off season, how about fifty
dollars?

EMILY

That sounds great. Thank you.

Emily and the Wife Of The Cabins' Owner smile at each other.

WIFE OF THE CABINS' OWNER

You're welcome.

EMILY

Just let me get my credit card.

Emily slings her backpack off of her back and places it on
the counter. She unzips it and begins to rummage through it
to find her credit card.

WIFE OF THE CABINS' OWNER

Hey, I was making hot chocolate
when you came in, so would any of
you like a cup?

Ava, who is, of course, craving hot chocolate, rushes to the
cashier counter.

AVA

Yes, please.

EXT. PATH TO THE CABINS - NIGHT

In the falling snow, Tristan is standing alone in the same
path between evergreens that the rest of his family skied
through earlier. He's bent over and leaning on his ski
poles while he catches his breath since he's not used to
skiing this much. Suddenly, he hears wolves howling, so he
stands up straight, although he isn't afraid at all.

TRISTAN

Hey, I'm married and have five
kids. You're going to have to do
more than howl to scare me.

Tristan starts to ski again.

EXT. ZEILERS' CABIN - NIGHT (ESTABLISHING)

It's snowing on this cabin that's located next to the main cabin. It's identical to all the other cabins, except the main cabin. There's only one door and two windows (one window on each side of the door). And there's no porch, only three steps leading to the door.

INT. ZEILERS' CABIN - NIGHT

There's just one large room (consisting of two large beds and a TV) and one bathroom. Emily and the kids are inside the large room, and their hair is wet from the showers they just took. They're wearing their bedtime clothes while relaxing and enjoying themselves in this warm cabin, a welcomed reprieve from a much colder tent.

On the bed next to the cabin door, David is nearest to the door as he's sitting against the headboard while playing a hand-held video game, with the volume turned off. Courtney is sitting against the headboard to the left side of David, and she's using a pencil to draw something on a large pad of drawing paper. Emily is sitting against the headboard to the left side of Courtney, and she's reading her book where we read the title, "A CHRISTMAS CAROL."

The second bed is next to the bed of Emily, David, and Courtney, but it's further from the cabin door. On this bed, Alexis is sitting against the headboard, and she's writing something for her paper about Tristan. Zack and Ava are sitting on the foot of the bed, and they're playing a video game of hockey on the TV, with the volume off.

AVA

Yay, I win again!

ZACK

This is embarrassing. How do you find time to master video games and books?

AVA

I don't know. I just do a lot of both.

Zack and Ava smile at each other.

We see that Courtney is drawing a beautiful, although only halfway-completed, picture of her entire family standing and

looking at a herd of caribou. She's currently drawing one of the caribou, and it's obvious she's a great artist as she draws with smooth and definitive strokes. Of course, this drawing depicts what they did at the beginning of this trip when they got off their snowmobiles and saw the majestic caribou. And she continues to draw as she talks.

COURTNEY

Hey, Mom, I wish we could come back and stay in these cabins for a while sometime. It would be so nice to play outside in the mountains during the day and, then, come back to this nice warm cabin at night.

Emily looks up from her book.

EMILY

That would be nice. That's not really our style though. Ours is more like the let's-tempt-fate-until-something-goes-horribly-wrong style.

COURTNEY

Oh, yeah, I forgot about that.

David stops playing his video game.

DAVID

If we do find gold, do I still have to go to school?

EMILY

Yes.

DAVID

Why? It's not like I'm learning anything anyway.

COURTNEY

He's got a point. I don't think he's capable of learning.

David smiles.

DAVID

Thanks, sis.

COURTNEY

Don't mention it.

EMILY

You'll still have to go to school because I like to torture you whether we're rich or poor. And because I have this strange motherly hope that you might actually find something you enjoy and find learning about it to be fun. Then, you might make a career out of it and make your parents proud and even contribute to society.

DAVID

That's definitely a far-fetched hope.

Emily looks back down at her book in defeat.

EMILY

Yes, I know. Thanks for reminding me.

DAVID

No problem.

EXT. PATH AMONG THE CABINS - NIGHT

As it continues to snow, Tristan is skiing past the Nativity scene, and he points at Jesus.

TRISTAN

Yo, you the man. Keep it strong.

Tristan skis to the main cabin.

EXT. MAIN CABIN - NIGHT

Tristan stops and uses his ski poles to press down on his skis' binding levers, which loosens the bindings.

He steps out of his skis, leaving his skis on the ground.

He leans his ski poles against the side of the cabin's porch.

He walks up the steps of the porch, and he knocks on the door.

While Tristan waits for someone to answer the door, he leans over and quickly swipes some snow off of the ice sculpture

of Santa Claus since Emily didn't brush all of the snow off, and more snow has gathered on Santa since Emily was here. But, after he brushes off a little snow, he brushes Santa's head too hard, so he knocks Santa over, which is another example of him not being in sync with his family.

TRISTAN (CONT'D)

Whoa!

Luckily, there was enough snow on the porch to break Santa's fall, so Santa wasn't damaged.

Tristan picks Santa up and places him upright again, and he addresses Santa.

TRISTAN (CONT'D)

We're still buddies, right?
Remember, a Ferrari, a speed boat,
a hot tub, and a muzzle for Alexis.

The Cabins' Owner opens the door and smiles at Tristan, who smiles back.

CABINS' OWNER

Hello, there. I assume you're
looking for your wife and kids.

TRISTAN

Yes, I am.

The Cabins' Owner points to the Zeilers' cabin.

CABINS' OWNER

They're in that cabin over there.

TRISTAN

Great, thank you. I was also
hoping you could help me with some
directions.

CABINS' OWNER

Sure, come on in.

Tristan enters the cabin.

INT. MAIN CABIN - NIGHT

While the Cabins' Owner goes behind the cashier counter, Tristan looks to the far side of the room and sees the Wife Of The Cabins' Owner sitting with her two young kids around the small table beside the Christmas tree, and they're decorating their nearly completed gingerbread house.

Tristan swings his backpack off of his back and puts it on the counter.

Tristan takes off his stocking cap and gloves, and he puts them on the counter too.

Tristan pulls out a map (not the treasure map) from a side pocket on his backpack, and he spreads the map out as he lays it on the counter. And he points to an area on the map.

TRISTAN

We're trying to get to this area here.

The Cabins' Owner studies the map.

TRISTAN (CONT'D)

So, do you and your family stay up here for the entire winter?

CABINS' OWNER

Yes. We don't usually get guests in the winter, but we enjoy riding snowmobiles and skiing and just spending quality time together as a family.

TRISTAN

That's funny because I've just been enjoying snowmobiles, skiing, and great family time too. Hey, you should try the avalanches around here. They're fantastic. Oh, and wait until your kids grow up and leave you for dead.

The Cabins' Owner looks up from the map and smiles at Tristan, who smiles back, and then he continues to study the map.

TRISTAN (CONT'D)

Don't you ever want to leave for a little while after being here for so long with just your family?

CABINS' OWNER

No, we really love being here when there are no distractions. It's just peaceful and laid back.

(pointing to the map)

I know how you can get here without too much trouble. Let me get a better map and show you.

The Cabins' Owner goes to get a map while Tristan waits.

INT. ZEILERS' CABIN - NIGHT

The Zeilers (except Tristan, of course) are still having a good time while comfortably relaxing. In fact, everyone is doing what they were doing before, except David is just watching Courtney draw instead of playing his hand-held video game as he addresses her.

DAVID

I was thinking everyone ends up going into a career in relation to Dad. See, he doesn't make any sense, so Mom became a math teacher to make sure one plus one still equaled two. Alexis is going to be a psychiatrist because she naively thinks she can explain Dad. And Zack is studying journalism in order to take English classes to make sure he can speak properly. So, I'm guessing you'll become a social worker for dysfunctional families, and I'll become a lawyer for children seeking separation.

COURTNEY

And Ava will probably just end up as a psycho killer.

DAVID

Yeah, she'll kill them with facts.

Courtney smiles.

ALEXIS

OK, everybody, can I please have your attention for a minute?

Everyone stops what they're doing, and they face Alexis, who's sitting with pen and paper since she writes down everyone's answers to the question she's about to ask them.

ALEXIS (CONT'D)

For my paper, I need everyone to vote on their favorite crazy vacation that Dad has taken us on. I've decided on four vacations to choose from: A, when Dad took us on a cave tour but decided to take us off the guided path and got us lost

for a day and a half. B, when Dad took us fishing in the ocean but sunk the boat, so we all had to swim about a mile to shore. C, when Dad took us camping next to a river in a rainstorm, and we got flooded when we were sleeping. Or D, this vacation, where everyone will probably freeze to death.

ZACK

We're calling these vacations?
That's kind of a stretch, isn't it?

DAVID

So, Dad crashing our plane in the tundra didn't make the list?

COURTNEY

How about whenever Dad takes us hunting where no animals live, so we just get lost and frostbitten?

EMILY

Come on, you know you all enjoy these trips. They're exciting. Alexis, I vote for A because the total silence was nice for a change, even though we were lost a couple of miles underground with no food, and we only had one flashlight, and we had a dreadful fear of not finding a way out. Well, all vacations have their drawbacks.

AVA

I vote B because I like swimming, and I got to swim next to a seal.

ZACK

I vote B too because it was the least life-threatening.

DAVID

I vote C because it was fun watching Courtney's luggage float down the river.

COURTNEY

Gee, thanks, David.

Courtney smiles at David, who smiles back.

Courtney holds up the gold necklace she's wearing in order to show it to everyone, and the only item on the necklace is a gorgeous red Jade gemstone.

COURTNEY (CONT'D)

I vote A because I found this cool Jade gemstone, which is Alaska's state gemstone.

ALEXIS

That is pretty. And I'm voting D because, knowing Dad, I bet we haven't seen anything yet.

EXT. ZEILERS' CABIN - NIGHT

Tristan is very tiredly carrying his skis and ski poles while he walks towards the front door. It's a lonely walk, and a slight wind is the only sound.

He's passing the window next to the door, and the light coming from inside catches his eye. So, he pauses at the window and looks inside.

He sees his kids having fun with, especially, Zack and Ava smiling and talking while they play a video game. No one inside notices him. The warm, familial vision inside of the cabin is in stark contrast to the cold, lonely sight of Tristan standing outside.

After this brief, but very telling, glimpse of his family enjoying their time without him, Tristan turns from the window.

He trudges up the three steps to the door, and he enters.

INT. ZEILERS' CABIN - NIGHT

Everyone notices that Tristan has arrived, so the cabin suddenly becomes quiet and awkward (since no one waited for Tristan after he crashed). Everyone stops what they're doing and looks at Tristan.

Tristan lays his skis and ski poles on the floor next to the door. He takes off his gloves, stocking cap, and coat, and he drops them on the floor next to his skis.

Tristan walks around the bed that's closest to the cabin door and sits on the edge of the bed (on the left side of Emily), and he leans back against the headboard. He's completely exhausted, but he's happy to have caught up to his family and finally be able to rest.

ALEXIS

This is a great vacation so far,
Dad.

TRISTAN

Everything will be OK when we get
the gold.

ALEXIS

Oh, that's a great plan: Pay your
family off. My paper is going to
be really long.

TRISTAN

What did I ever do to you, except
provide for you and take care of
you and put you through college?

ALEXIS

You didn't do anything else, and
that's the point. Do you realize
that the only time you take off
work is when you feel the need to
endanger us? It's never because
one of your kids is graduating
school or has a hockey game or has
a birthday. And, this time, you
actually think you're going to
strike it rich.

TRISTAN

In my defense, it's probably a lot
of gold.

ALEXIS

Oh, yeah, you're in the clear then.

AVA

Dad, do I get less attention
because I'm the youngest?

TRISTAN

Yes. Heck, I stopped caring after
kid number two.

Ava looks sadly down. And Emily also doesn't find any humor
in Tristan's comment, so she gives him a look of complete
disbelief.

EMILY

Are you crazy?

Tristan, of course, immediately realizes his insensitivity,
so he addresses Ava again.

TRISTAN

I was just kidding. Of course, we give you attention. It's just that there have always been five kids since you arrived. Besides, Alexis is our first born, so obviously, that's not all it's cracked up to be.

Alexis sticks out her tongue at Tristan, which causes Ava to laugh, and then Ava addresses Tristan.

AVA

Did you know that Alaska has more than one hundred thousand glaciers, which is more than half of all of the glaciers in the world?

TRISTAN

Wow, that's amazing. We'll have to go name a glacier after us too.

Tristan and Ava smile at each other, and Courtney addresses David.

COURTNEY

We should be in group therapy.

David smiles.

EXT. ZEILERS' CABIN - NIGHT (ESTABLISHING)

It's snowing fairly hard, and there's an eerie, but lovely, quietness.

INT./EXT. VARIOUS LOCATIONS IN ALASKA - NIGHT/DAY

Everyone is peacefully asleep in their cabin throughout the following montage, which begins in the forest where the Zeilers' cabin is located, and then the rest of the montage flashbacks to events in the Zeilers' past.

MONTAGE ("O HOLY NIGHT" BY CARRIE UNDERWOOD FROM THE ALBUM ENTITLED, "CARNIVAL RIDE: CHRISTMAS EDITION," PLAYS IN ITS ENTIRETY OVER THIS MONTAGE)

A) (Night) We're tracking across everyone sleeping in the cabin. It's completely quiet, and everyone looks content. Tristan and Emily are sleeping on one bed; Alexis and Zack are sleeping on the other bed; and Courtney, David, and Ava are sleeping on the floor (with Courtney and David in

sleeping bags and Ava covered in her blanket of the Alaskan state flag with white sheets underneath her).

B) (Night) Not far from the Zeilers' cabin, the forest of snow-covered evergreens looks empty while it continues to snow on this peaceful evening.

C) (Night) Two gray wolves walk in the forest while it's snowing.

D) (Night) A bald eagle is sitting in a tree in the forest while it's snowing.

E) (Night/Day) It's still snowing as a river otter dives into a stream in the forest and swims away. And the stream fades into a joyful snowball fight with Tristan and Emily vs. all of their kids as they pelt each other with snowballs while it's snowing in an open area. So, we're now looking at past events of the Zeiler family since it switched from the current events at night to a past event during the day.

F) (Day) It's snowing as everyone, except Tristan, is joyfully making snow angels in a wide-open area, and then they stand up and admire them. (Note Tristan is noticeably absent in this scene and some other scenes throughout this montage since this montage shows they're a great family, but Tristan has missed a significant amount of their lives.)

G) (Day) Everyone, except Tristan, is standing in a glacier cave (which is an ice cave inside a glacier) within the Mendenhall Glacier, and the walls of the glacier are nearly fluorescent blue. They're gathered around a fairly large pool, which contains nearly fluorescent blue water, as they wondrously admire this amazing location. A stream is steadily flowing into the pool, and Emily walks a few steps to the stream, and she crouches down to get a closer look. Emily takes off one of her gloves and runs her hand through the flowing stream, and the nearly fluorescent water makes her hand look like it's glowing, causing her to smile.

H) (Day) Everyone, except Tristan, is wearing ice skates and hockey jerseys (with the names of Crosby, Ovechkin, etc.) as they stand in a circle on the frozen lake behind their house while they pass the hockey puck to each other.

I) (Night) Emily and Ava are sitting on the sofa in their living room while quietly reading books.

J) (Day) It's snowing as everyone is laughing on top of a snow-covered hill as Tristan, Alexis, Courtney, and Ava pile on top of each other on one inner tube, and Emily, Zack, and David pile onto a different inner tube. Of course, it's a lot of people on each inner tube, and they can barely stay

on them without falling off. They kick off the ground, and they go fast down this hill as they race each other.

K) (Day) Emily, Courtney, David, and Ava are in their backyard as they finish making a big snowman, two snowmen children, and a cat made out of snow. Emily and Courtney are brushing off the big snowman with their hands to make it smooth while David and Ava are kneeling next to the cat as they put sticks into it to represent its whiskers.

L) (Day) Tristan and Emily go outside of their house's front door when Courtney, David, and Ava ambush them as they throw shovels of snow at them and, thus, cover them in snow. Courtney, David, and Ava laugh as they drop the shovels and run away while Tristan and Emily look at each other and smile before playfully running after the three kids.

M) (Day) Everyone, except Tristan, is standing in an indoor swimming pool. There are only a few other people playing in the pool, and it's surrounded on three sides by huge glass windows that show there's a lot of snow on the ground outside. They're having a lot of fun as they're standing in a circle while throwing a sponge ball to each other.

N) (Night) Everyone, except Tristan, is decorating the gorgeous Christmas tree in their living room. Some of them are getting nice ornaments out of a box and hanging them on the tree while everyone else is putting red tinsel on it.

O) (Night) We're now back to the present, and we're passing above everyone asleep peacefully inside the cabin as "O Holy Night" finishes.

EXT. ZEILERS' CABIN - DAY (ESTABLISHING)

It's no longer snowing, but due to the overnight snowfall, there's a ton of snow lying everywhere.

INT. ZEILERS' CABIN - DAY

Everyone, except Tristan, is sitting on the two beds and are getting ready to go outside by putting on their boots and small plastic snowshoes. Tristan is standing and leaning up against the wall next to the door since, unlike everyone else, he isn't putting on snowshoes, so he's already prepared to go outside. He's holding his stocking cap, gloves, and coat in his arms as he waits for his family.

COURTNEY

Why aren't we skiing today?

EMILY

It snowed a lot last night, so the snow is too soft and deep.

Emily turns her attention to Tristan.

EMILY (CONT'D)

So, fearless leader, what are we doing today exactly?

TRISTAN

Well, my faithful follower, last night the cabins' owner said the fastest and safest way to get through these mountains is to raft down the river. He said the rapids aren't dangerous as long as we get off before the big rock on the right side that we can't miss. So, I rented a raft from him, but he keeps them next to the river, so we have to walk a few miles to get it. And, when we finish rafting, we just leave the raft beside the river, and he's going to pick it up in the spring. Then, it's not far to our waterfall. And there's a small town a few miles beyond that where he said we'll be able to pay a local person to fly us back home. So, we're almost there.

EMILY

Well, that sounds foolproof to me. Surely, nothing can go wrong now.

Tristan puts on his stocking cap, coat, and gloves.

TRISTAN

Ah, Emily, I'm sensing you have some doubts. We'll see who's laughing in a little bit. OK, kids, let's get rolling.

Emily and the kids have finished putting on snowshoes, so they stand up and walk towards the door while putting on their stocking caps, coats, and gloves. Tristan opens the door while Emily looks at him like he's crazy for not using snowshoes.

EMILY

You do know it snowed a lot last night, right?

TRISTAN
Nothing I can't handle.

Tristan smiles at Emily while she continues to look at him in disbelief, and then he walks outside.

EXT. ZEILERS' CABIN - DAY

Tristan is on the top step while his family stands in the doorway behind him. Unlike the previous night, the three steps of the cabin are covered in snow.

Tristan walks down a step, and his foot sinks into the deep snow that has gathered against the cabin. So, he loses his balance and falls face down until he has completely disappeared, with just an imprint of his body in the snow.

Everyone else laughs at Tristan.

Tristan climbs out of the hole as he crawls back onto the top step of the cabin, and then he stands up as he faces his family. He's completely covered in snow, with snow even covering most of his face.

The rest of the family laughs even harder at the sight of Tristan standing in front of them, and Ava laughs so hard that she falls down backwards into the cabin.

TRISTAN
Maybe, it snowed a little more than
I thought.

Emily smiles at Tristan.

EMILY
Yeah, maybe. Well, at least Ava
got her snowman.

EXT. INSIDE A BIRCH FOREST - DAY

Everyone in the Zeiler family is walking in snowshoes. Even Tristan, who learned his lesson, is wearing snowshoes. Tristan and Ava are walking together a little behind the rest of family since they're moving a little more leisurely.

The Zeilers are traveling on flat ground within the mountains as they walk between the trees in a very beautiful and spacious forest. Indeed, there's no undergrowth between the snow-covered birch trees, so there's plenty of room to walk freely and comfortably.

It's an enjoyable walk through a winter wonderland, and it's very peaceful with the only sounds being their snowshoes crunching a little on top of the deep snow as they walk.

EMILY

This is so fun. I love walking in the snowy woods and looking for animal tracks and things. I could do this for hours. Aren't you guys having fun?

DAVID

Oh, yeah, this is a thrill a minute. We should go off course more often. I mean, those bunny tracks back there were like the best things ever.

EMILY

You know, that's why you're on Santa's naughty list this year. Well, that's one of the reasons. You actually have a book of reasons. It probably even fills one of the drawers in Santa's desk.

DAVID

Hey, isn't it like your job to tell me that I'm the best and build up my self-esteem?

EMILY

Sorry, I'm not that kind of mother.

COURTNEY

Well, I know I love this peace and quiet, but you do realize that Dad will ruin it somehow, right?

EMILY

Oh, yeah, the calm before the storm.

Courtney addresses Emily.

COURTNEY

So, it looks like we might miss school this entire week?

DAVID

Yes, there's a bright side to every disaster.

EMILY

Yeah, you're getting a different kind of education this week, but I think it's important to have experiences like this too, although a little less danger would be nice. Besides, I figured this trip might take longer than planned since your father planned it. So, I told the principal that you, David, and Ava might miss school this week.

COURTNEY

What excuse did you tell them?

EMILY

I told them we have a family issue that we need to take care of.

COURTNEY

Oh, yeah, we definitely have those.

DAVID

Hey, Mom, I was wondering that since you have an Alaskan accent, and Dad has an Alaskan accent, and I speak normally, is there any chance I'm adopted?

EMILY

You wish.

DAVID

Well, obviously.

COURTNEY

Don't you ever think of anything normal?

DAVID

Maybe, but I wouldn't know since this family has kind of thrown off my frame of reference.

Tristan and Ava are still trailing everyone else as they're walking up to a fairly big cave opening on their side that's framed by several large snow-covered rocks around it. They glance over at the cave, but they can't see into the cave since it's too dark inside.

TRISTAN

Do you want to see my fastball?

AVA

OK.

Tristan and Ava stop walking next to the cave.

TRISTAN

First, I have to find the fastest
snow.

Tristan looks around at the snow on the ground as he scans
the area.

TRISTAN (CONT'D)

Here, this snow looks fast.

Ava is smiling while she watches Tristan pick up some snow.

Tristan compacts the snow in his hands, making a nicely
sized snowball.

TRISTAN (CONT'D)

Now, I've got to initial it.

Tristan uses his fingers to write his initials on the
snowball as Ava enjoys watching him.

TRISTAN (CONT'D)

OK, it's ready.

Tristan throws the snowball into the cave, and it disappears
into the blackness within the cave.

TRISTAN (CONT'D)

Now, let's see yours.

AVA

OK.

Ava smiles as she quickly picks up some snow and compacts it
to make a snowball.

Ava carves her initials onto the snowball.

Ava throws the snowball into the cave, and she and Tristan
are immediately taken aback as they hear a quiet bear growl
that comes from inside the cave.

TRISTAN

Whoa! Uh ... that was a good
fastball. That was good. Very
fast. Let's pick up the pace a
little, OK?

AVA

Good idea.

Tristan and Ava start jogging.

Tristan and Ava are pretty worried that a bear might start chasing them, so although they're not running as fast as they can, they're moving fairly fast.

They quickly catch up to the rest of their family as they start to approach them, and everyone else is surprised to see them jogging, so they turn and look curiously at them.

EMILY

Why are you running?

TRISTAN

We're just trying to make good time.

Everyone hears a very loud bear growl.

TRISTAN (CONT'D)

And avoid the big bear hunting us.

EMILY

(angrily)

What did you do?

The entire family starts running together as fast as they can through the spacious room between the birch trees.

Everyone looks ridiculous since they can't run very well in snowshoes, and they have to pick their legs up high in order to not trip over their snowshoes.

TRISTAN

I bet you wish you didn't have that sled now, huh?

ZACK

Isn't it ironic that I have this sled because you're lousy in the snow, and now, I'm going to get eaten by a bear you just awoke because you're faster than me?

TRISTAN

Boy, that is ironic. The man with the sled will be dead. Hey, that rhymes. I wonder what that means.

Tristan trips over his snowshoes and falls face down into the snow, receiving poetic justice for teasing Zack.

DAVID

Can you go psychoanalyze the bear
and come to some kind of mutual
understanding?

ALEXIS

Sure, just come with me because I
need to send you in first to break
the ice.

EMILY

No, your father is going in first.

Tristan gets up and starts running again.

David is narrowly leading everyone as they make good
progress through the forest.

Indeed, they're moving quickly between the trees.

No one has seen the bear yet, so David looks behind
himself.

David doesn't see a bear, so he stops running.

Everyone else notices David has stopped, so they come to a
stop too.

Everyone is breathing hard from the run while they turn
around and look to see if a bear is, indeed, chasing them.

Everyone scans the area, but they don't see or hear a bear.

TRISTAN

I guess it just went back to sleep.

EMILY

I really don't think we have that
kind of luck.

TRISTAN

Well, all I know is this looks like
a good place to rest.

Tristan walks a couple of steps to the nearest tree, and he
tiredly sits down with his back leaning against the tree as
he relaxes.

In the far distance, Emily sees a brown grizzly bear walking
out of the cave where Tristan and Ava threw their snowballs.

The bear is sniffing the ground, searching for the Zeilers'
trail.

EMILY

I don't want to rain on your
parade, but if the bear's asleep,
he's sleepwalking.

Everyone else notices the bear that Emily spotted.

The bear looks up and sees the Zeilers. And the bear and the Zeilers are frozen in shock while they stare at each other.

David, who's standing beside Courtney, points at her in order to jokingly tell the bear that she's the one who woke him up, so Courtney angrily slaps David on his shoulder.

The bear starts to run after the Zeilers, so everyone, except Tristan, screams and starts running.

TRISTAN

(to himself)

OK, rest time is over.

Tristan stands up and starts running with everyone else.

The Zeilers are running as fast as they possibly can in snowshoes.

The bear is a good distance behind the Zeilers, but grizzly bears are faster than humans, so it's gaining ground.

Courtney trips over her snowshoes and falls face down.

COURTNEY

I can't run in these stupid things!

David starts to run past Courtney.

DAVID

You just have to lift your

David trips over his snowshoes and falls face down while Courtney gets up and starts to run past him, and she smiles at him.

COURTNEY

Thanks for the advice.

David gets up and starts to run with everyone else again. Some of them look over their shoulders to see where the bear is, and they see it's still pretty far behind. However, it looks inevitable that the bear will eventually catch them.

Suddenly, and unexpectedly, they come to the top of a hill, so they stop abruptly.

EMILY

Whoa!

EXT. SLOPING HILL - DAY

Everyone looks down the hill, which isn't long but is pretty steep, and it's treeless on its hillside and at the bottom.

EMILY

Well, I guess we're going to have to slide down this.

ALEXIS

We are in so much trouble.

Zack unsnaps the supply sled's harness from himself, and he addresses Courtney, David, and Ava.

ZACK

Do you guys want to ride on the sled?

AVA

Yeah! I call front seat.

At the front of the supply sled, Ava sits down on the big bag of supplies, straddling the bag.

DAVID

I'll take second.

David sits down as he straddles the bag behind Ava.

COURTNEY

I'll take third.

Courtney sits down as she straddles the bag behind David.

ZACK

I bet you wish you had this sled now, huh?

TRISTAN

Nobody likes a show-off.

ZACK

Do you think they like people who anger grizzly bears?

TRISTAN

OK, you win.

Zack smiles.

ZACK

Alright, guys, here we go.

Zack pushes the sled down the hill while he hops on the back of it and, thus, straddles the bag behind Courtney.

They go straight down the hill and incredibly fast.

Tristan, Emily, and Alexis are watching the sled slide down.

EMILY

They're making this look way too easy.

Tristan looks behind himself and sees the bear coming close.

TRISTAN

OK, time to go.

As the grizzly bear approaches, Tristan, Emily, and Alexis jump down the hill, and they scream as they slide down on their backs.

The bear stops at the top of the hill and just watches the Zeilers flying down the hillside.

The ones in the sled go faster than those sliding on their backs, but everyone goes fast.

Snow is flying everywhere as the Zeilers cut their way through the layer of loose snow.

Everyone is going extremely fast.

They're simply cruising.

There's no way for them to slow themselves down on this steep slope.

The sled is approaching the bottom of the hill, where it's flat and smooth.

At the bottom, the sled slides very rapidly across flat ground.

They turn their sled as they make a very cool-looking stop with lots of snow kicking up into the air. And they're smiling because they loved the ride.

AVA

Wow!

Tristan, Emily, and Alexis are approaching the bottom.

At the bottom, Tristan, Emily, and Alexis slide a little ways across the flat ground and stop in front of the sled, so they sit up.

EMILY

Hey, we made it. That wasn't so bad.

ALEXIS

Now, we just have to hope the bear doesn't follow.

Everyone stands up, and the ones from the sled walk over to Tristan, Emily, and Alexis. And everyone looks up the hill to see if the bear is going to follow them down.

The bear briefly looks at the Zeilers, but the bear decides to go home and, thus, turns and walks away.

EMILY

Oh, thank God.

Emily turns her attention angrily to Tristan.

EMILY (CONT'D)

What did you do this time?

TRISTAN

Hey, you can't blame this one on me. It's all Ava's fault. She had the more accurate snowball.

AVA

You threw the first snowball!

EMILY

Tristan!

TRISTAN

OK, it was me.

EMILY

I thought I told you no more snowballs.

TRISTAN

Actually, I think you told me no more avalanches. This is something entirely new.

ZACK

Sadly, this isn't even new. We've been chased by bears before. We're

actually starting to repeat tragedies.

EMILY

Yeah, it's that whole circle-of-Tristan thing.

AVA

I think they should make snowshoe running an Olympic sport.

COURTNEY

First of all, I'm not sure you could call what we were doing "running." Second of all, if they do make it a sport, maybe they should cut out the whole mad-bear-wanting-to-kill-you part.

AVA

(actually thinking it over)
Mm, maybe.

EXT. MOUNTAIN STREAM BESIDE A BIRCH FOREST - DAY

In an open area next to a birch forest, the Zeilers are walking beside a nice stream that's gently flowing on flat ground as they go towards a family of three Eskimos: QANNIK, a cute 16-year-old girl, QANNIK'S FATHER, 43 years old, and QANNIK'S MOTHER, 42 years old. The Eskimos are sitting on a lengthy log beside the stream while quietly fishing, and they're wearing nice Eskimo coats, which have furry hoods that are currently not pulled up, and Eskimo mittens.

EMILY

Maybe, we can sit down with them and share stories of how you're trying to get us killed.

TRISTAN

Hey, I'm not trying to get us killed. It just sort of happens that way.

EMILY

Oh, well, then it's OK.

TRISTAN

Besides, if I was trying to get us killed, I'd be a failure. But, since I'm not trying to get us killed and haven't gotten us killed, I'm a ... success.

EMILY

You're a success? There's definitely something wrong with that logic.

TRISTAN

Yeah, I didn't think that made sense either.

Tristan and Emily smile at each other.

The Zeilers are now very close to the Eskimos, so Tristan smiles at them as he calls out to them.

TRISTAN (CONT'D)

Hello!

The Eskimos smile back at Tristan.

QANNIK'S FATHER

Hello!

TRISTAN

How's the fishing?

Qannik's Father gestures towards a couple of fish on a metal chain that are lying next to his backpack in the snow behind him as the Zeilers stop next to the Eskimos.

QANNIK'S FATHER

Good, we already caught a couple.

TRISTAN

Fantastic. Do you mind if we sit down and have lunch next to you?

QANNIK'S FATHER

No, not at all. Please have a seat.

TRISTAN

Thanks. I'm as hungry as a bear.

Emily rolls her eyes at Tristan's corny pun that alludes to the fact that they were almost killed by a bear.

As seen when looking at the front of them, the Eskimos are sitting on the log from left to right in the following order: Qannik, Qannik's Mother, and Qannik's Father.

Tristan sits on the end of the log that's closest to him, on the left side of Qannik's Father. And Emily walks behind the log to avoid the fishing lines, and then she steps over

the log and sits down between Qannik's parents. Tristan and Emily take off their backpacks and put them on the snow in front of themselves, and they reach into side pockets of the backpacks and pull out fruit bars that they start to eat.

Meanwhile, all of the Zeiler kids walk behind the log and go to the far end of the log, where they stop. Zack unsnaps the supply sled from himself while Alexis takes off her backpack and puts it on the ground next to the sled. And Alexis kneels down and begins to rummage through her backpack to find fruit bars for everyone while her siblings stand next to her as they patiently wait. (Of course, Courtney, David, and Ava are still not wearing backpacks.)

Tristan holds out two fruit bars to Qannik's Father and Qannik's Mother.

TRISTAN

Do you want fruit bars?

QANNIK'S FATHER

No, thank you.

QANNIK'S MOTHER

No, we're fine, thanks.

QANNIK'S FATHER

So, what brings you by here?

TRISTAN

Oh, my wife and I are doing some hiking and camping with our kids.

QANNIK'S FATHER

That's a good idea to get outside and enjoy it with your family.

TRISTAN

I guess that's what you're doing too, huh?

QANNIK'S FATHER

Yes, we live near here, and we like to fish on the different streams and rivers.

TRISTAN

Are you and your family the only ones that live nearby?

QANNIK'S FATHER

There are a few others around but not many.

TRISTAN

Well, this must be a quiet place,
huh?

QANNIK'S FATHER

Yes, very quiet.

TRISTAN

You don't ever feel like moving
closer to like ... more people?

QANNIK'S FATHER

No, my family and I really like
being close to nature, and we can
listen to each other better away
from the noise, and we love that
time moves slower here. So, no,
we'll never move.

Qannik's Father smiles at Tristan, who smiles slightly back,
but then Qannik's Father looks at his fishing line on the
stream while Tristan keeps looking at him for a moment as he
considers Qannik's Father's commitment to his family.

EMILY

I see you're raising a teenager.
Are you having as much fun as I
am?

QANNIK'S MOTHER

Oh, yes. Cellphones, emails,
social media websites, it's like
she won't stop until she's talked
with everyone on planet Earth.

EMILY

Yeah, I even think that if there's
life on another planet, someone
will discover it by texting it
somehow.

Emily and Qannik's Mother share a laugh.

EMILY (CONT'D)

On this planet anyway, I sure envy
your life out here. We live near
Anchorage, and although we live in
the country too, it's not quite
like this.

QANNIK'S MOTHER

Well, we love visiting the city
with its big stores and events,

especially since the roads around
here are closed half the time, but
this is the place for us.

Emily and Qannik's Mother smile at each other.

Alexis finishes giving fruit bars to her siblings, so they sit down and eat. Courtney ducks under Qannik's fishing line and sits on the log between Qannik and Qannik's Mother. Ava sits on the end of the log, on the right side of Qannik. There's no more room on the log, so Alexis, Zack, and David sit on the large bag in the supply sled, which is next to Ava. And, like everyone else, they're facing the stream since the bag, like the log, is parallel to the stream.

Courtney holds out one of her three fruit bars to Qannik.

COURTNEY
Do you want a fruit bar?

QANNIK
Yeah, I'd love one.

Courtney gives one fruit bar to Qannik.

QANNIK (CONT'D)
Thanks.

COURTNEY
No problem.

Qannik puts down her fishing pole (while keeping its fishing line in the stream) as she rests it on the log in order to eat the fruit bar.

COURTNEY (CONT'D)
What's your name?

QANNIK
Qannik.

COURTNEY
That's a beautiful name. What does it mean?

QANNIK
Snowflake.

COURTNEY
That's so cool.

Courtney and Qannik smile at each other.

QANNIK

What are your names?

COURTNEY

She's Ava, and I'm Courtney. They don't mean anything.

Ava points at the beautiful and unique mittens that Qannik is wearing. They're made of animal hide and have animal fur around the wrists. Also, there are intricate and colorful bead decorations on the top (backhand) of these mittens that Eskimos famously, and historically, make with pride.

AVA

Your mittens are so beautiful.

Qannik smiles.

QANNIK

Thanks.

AVA

Did you make those bead designs?

QANNIK

Yes, I made the entire mittens.

AVA

Wow, I can't even make paper airplanes.

Qannik smiles.

QANNIK

Do you want them?

AVA

Oh, no, I couldn't.

QANNIK

Yes, you can. I have another pair of mittens that I made in our backpack, and besides, I like making them.

AVA

Well, I'll trade you my gloves and my pin of a polar bear for them if you want.

QANNIK

OK.

Ava smiles broadly as she takes off her gloves and, then, takes off the pin with a nice picture of a polar bear that was pinned to the bottom of her coat. Meanwhile, Qannik takes off her mittens.

Ava gives her gloves and pin to Qannik, and Qannik gives her mittens to Ava.

They're both happy and proud as Qannik pins the polar-bear pin to the bottom of her coat, and they both put on their new gloves/mittens.

COURTNEY

No one is going to believe how you got those.

AVA

I know, this is like the coolest thing ever.

Courtney, Ava, and Qannik smile.

QANNIK

Yeah, it was amazing that our paths crossed today.

Courtney, Ava, and Qannik smile at each other.

It's very peaceful with just the sound of the stream flowing as the Zeilers and Qannik eat lunch while Qannik's parents fish. They're two families, who were strangers minutes ago, enjoying nature together.

EXT. HILLY EVERGREEN FOREST - DAY

Within a mountain forest, the Zeilers are walking in their snowshoes as they near the top of a gradually sloping hill, with Zack pulling up the rear since he's having to pull the supply sled up the hill. Of course, everyone is still wearing their stocking caps, gloves, and coats.

COURTNEY

That was nice talking to that family.

DAVID

I'm just surprised they talked to us.

COURTNEY

Why?

DAVID
Because Eskimos and Indians each
had their own lands until
immigrants arrived.

COURTNEY
Oh, yeah, good point.

Emily looks down and admires the Eskimo mittens that Ava is wearing.

EMILY
I bet those mittens are warm, huh?

AVA
Yeah, they're really warm.

EMILY
Well, that's pretty special to have
Eskimo mittens. Those are like
living Alaskan history.

AVA
I know. It was really nice of
Qannik to give them to me.

EMILY
Yeah, nice people are the best.

Emily and Ava smile at each other.

Suddenly, David runs up from behind Ava and wraps his arms around Ava and picks her up, and she screams as he playfully tackles her to the ground.

David and Ava are lying on their backs next to each other, and they're laughing while everyone else smiles as they continue to walk forward.

AVA
(jokingly)
Well, that wasn't very nice.

David gets up, and he pulls Ava up, and then he kindly brushes the snow off of the shoulders and back of Ava's coat.

DAVID
Yeah, I thought I'd put an end to
that.

David and Ava smile at each other, and then they walk after their family.

Everyone walks just a few more steps, and they arrive at an overlook (except for Zack, who's just a little bit behind), and they stop in order to admire the beauty of the snowy mountains and forests and a fairly wide turquoise river running through the valley below. It's an unforgettable image of the pristine and epic beauty that exists in Alaska (which means "The Great Land" in the Aleutian language).

TRISTAN

How about this view, huh? This puts the "great" in "the great outdoors."

Zack arrives but doesn't look at the view since he's tired.

ZACK

Yeah, it's great.

Zack falls exhausted to the ground and sits with his back against the side the supply sled and the bag in the sled.

ALEXIS

I wonder how many people have seen this view.

EMILY

Maybe a few. Alaska is so big; the terrain is so rough; the weather is so harsh; and there are so few people living here that, on this trip alone, I have no doubt that we've already set foot in some places where no human has been before.

AVA

Like Mt. Zeiler?

Emily smiles.

EMILY

Yes, like Mt. Zeiler.

AVA

Wow.

DAVID

So, I guess this is the perfect place to off somebody.

COURTNEY

Mom, are you sure David is related to us?

EMILY

Yes, it's kind of hard to forget that ten pounds of joy ripping out of my body as I was shrieking in pain.

David addresses Courtney.

DAVID

I guess I made an impression.

Courtney smiles.

Alexis walks over to the supply sled and sits down on the ground next to Zack, and she also rests her back against the side of the sled/bag.

COURTNEY

Oh, I got to check to make sure I put my Bible back in the bag.

Courtney walks over to the bag.

ZACK

The Bible? That's a big book.

Courtney unzips the bag and immediately sees that her Bible is in it, so she zips the bag back up, and she sits down next to Alexis as she also leans her back against the side of the sled/bag.

COURTNEY

Oh, good, it's next to your Bible, Alexis.

ZACK

What?

Alexis smiles at Zack's exasperation of having to carry the heavy Bibles on his sled.

ZACK (CONT'D)

I can't be carrying around Bibles.

ALEXIS

Well, we can't throw them out. They're kind of important.

COURTNEY

Yeah, Christianity is only the reason that the West has led the world in things like art, culture, science, and politics.

ALEXIS

Actually, I was thinking God would strike us down, but yeah, that entire Western civilization stuff too.

ZACK

Hey, I go to church. I think God should cut me a break.

Alexis and Courtney smile at Zack since he's still exasperated.

Tristan gestures to the river below.

TRISTAN

Well, that's our river, so the rafts must be stored nearby, so let's head out.

Tristan, Emily, David, and Ava turn back the way they came and start to walk back down the hill.

DAVID

How do we get down there?

TRISTAN

We just have to go around this hill. We only came up here for the view.

Zack can't believe that he pulled the sled up here just for the view as he looks at Tristan, Emily, David, and Ava walking past him.

ZACK

What?

Alexis and Courtney laugh, and Alexis puts her hand on Zack's shoulder to sympathize a little with him, and then she helps him stand up as all three of them stand up and follow everyone else down the hill.

EXT. RAFT SHED NEXT TO THE RIVER - DAY

In a beautiful valley with forests of snowy evergreens covering the mountains on both sides, Tristan is leading everyone as he approaches the door to the shed, which is located between an evergreen forest and the edge of a gently flowing river that's only about 20 feet away. The shed consists of brown wood, and it's about 10 feet high and 30 feet long with a snow-covered roof. Also, it's in good

condition, and it's fairly picturesque. The beautiful river is fairly wide, and it has a brilliant turquoise color since it's fed by glaciers.

TRISTAN

Here we are.

Emily, Alexis, and Zack go to the bank of the river while everyone else goes to the shed.

Zack unsnaps the supply sled from himself and leaves it next to the river, and Emily and Alexis take their backpacks off and put them on the snow next to the sled. Meanwhile, Tristan opens the unlocked door to the shed, and it swipes snow aside as it swings open.

Emily and Alexis walk the few steps to the shed, where they join everyone else, while Zack waits alone at the river.

Everyone is standing next to each other as they look inside the shed and see there are eight large blue rafts that are organized into two rows (with four rafts each having another raft stacked on top). Also, there are life preservers hanging on one wall, with oars below them that are standing up with their bottom halves in wood boxes and their top halves leaning against the wall.

TRISTAN (CONT'D)

Perfect. This top one will do.

Tristan reaches into the shed and grabs the front of a raft that's sitting on top of another raft, and he pulls it down and drags it towards the river. The raft slides easily on top of the snow, and Tristan places the front of the raft right next to the river, next to Zack while Emily addresses everyone remaining at the shed.

EMILY

OK, everybody, grab an oar and a life preserver.

Everyone, except Tristan and Zack, goes into the shed to grab an oar and a life preserver.

Tristan and Zack each grab a side of the supply sled, and they pick it up and put it into the raft.

Zack picks up Emily's and Alexis's backpacks and puts them into the raft while Tristan swings his backpack off his back and puts it in too. Then, Tristan and Zack just stand next to the raft as they wait for the rest of their family to join them.

ZACK

You don't think the water is too cold to be doing this?

TRISTAN

Probably, but it's only cold if you fall in.

ZACK

Oh, good, no worries then.

TRISTAN

That's my motto. Que sera, sera.

ZACK

So, you're going with the Doris-Day philosophy of life?

TRISTAN

Yep.

ZACK

Do you think that's wise?

TRISTAN

You do know who you're talking to, right?

ZACK

Oh, yeah. What was I thinking? Sorry.

Everyone, except Tristan and Zack, walks out of the shed, and each of them is wearing a life preserver and carrying an oar. Also, Emily is carrying two extra oars and two extra life preservers in order to give them to Tristan and Zack.

Emily, Courtney, and Ava walk towards the raft while Alexis stays behind as she begins to close the door to the shed, and David also stays behind as he finishes tightening his life preserver.

ALEXIS

Am I the only one who thinks this is a bad idea?

DAVID

No, but once you've gone along with so many bad ideas, it's almost like rational to keep doing it.

Alexis has closed the door to the shed, and David has finished tightening his life preserver.

ALEXIS

So, basically, Dad has destroyed
all of our logic.

DAVID

Yep.

Alexis and David start to walk to the raft, where everyone else is standing while Tristan and Zack tighten the life preservers that Emily gave them as Emily waits to give oars to them.

TRISTAN

Alright, everybody, hop in!

David calls back out to Tristan with a cheerful and sarcastic response.

DAVID

Good idea!

Alexis and David arrive at the river.

Alexis, Courtney, David, and Ava hop into the blue raft while Emily gives the oars to Tristan and Zack since they've finished tightening their life preservers. (Note everyone is still wearing their snowshoes since they don't bother to take them off, as well as their snow caps, gloves, and coats.)

Tristan addresses Emily.

TRISTAN

So, are you ready for more
adventure?

EMILY

The good kind or the bad kind?

TRISTAN

Was the bear thing good or bad?

EMILY

That was the very bad kind.

TRISTAN

Oh. Well, technically, this is the
yet-to-be-determined kind, but I'm
hoping for the good kind.

EMILY

Oh, thank goodness. I mean, as
long as your hoping, sure, this
sounds great.

Emily hops into the raft, leaving only Tristan and Zack on the shore.

TRISTAN

Call me crazy, but I think I'm starting to detect a lack of confidence.

ZACK

No way, we're with you all the way.

TRISTAN

You don't really think that, do you?

ZACK

No, not even close.

Zack hops into the raft.

TRISTAN

(to himself)

It's like I can just feel the love.

(to his family)

OK, here we go.

Tristan pushes the raft onto the river while he hops into the back of it.

EXT. RIVER - DAY

All of the Zeilers are paddling down the turquoise river that's similar to the Alaskan whitewater-rafting hot spots of Six Mile Creek and Kenai River. Tristan and Zack are paddling in the back of the raft while everyone else is paddling on the sides.

They're slowly paddling down the river as they raft over calm water to begin their trip, so it starts out as a very pleasant ride. Indeed, the river looks calm for as far as they can see.

The river gently helps to push them along, and everyone is very relaxed.

TRISTAN

See, this river is nice and calm, nothing to worry about. We only need to go down a little ways, and then we'll get off to our right when we see the big rock. In fact,

I think it's nice to be out here
without any other rafters around.

ZACK

I guess the nearly zero
temperatures and nearly freezing
water didn't appeal to them, as
crazy as that sounds.

DAVID

This is actually fun.

EMILY

Yeah, everything we do starts off
as fun. Then, there's screaming
and crying and running for our
lives and wondering how in the
world did we get into this mess
and, then, realizing all we did was
listen to your father.

DAVID

Oh, yeah. Well, at least we have
something to look forward to.

AVA

You know, the Danish explorer Vitus
Bering was the first to discover
Alaska when he sailed what is now
called the Bering Strait in 1728
and proved Asia and America were
separate continents.

TRISTAN

Well, poor Vitus isn't alive
anymore, but we're carrying on his
tradition by doing our own
exploring today.

Ava smiles.

AVA

Yeah.

EXT. RIVER - DAY (LATER)

Everyone is still paddling on calm water while enjoying the
nice cruise down the river as David addresses Courtney.

DAVID

How long do you think you would
have before getting hypothermia if
you fell in?

COURTNEY

A few minutes.

DAVID

Oh. Well, good to know.

COURTNEY

Why? You're not going to push me overboard, are you?

DAVID

No, Ava would tell. So, these life preservers save you from drowning, so you can die of hypothermia. Do you think that's on the label?

Courtney doesn't even respond to David's typical sarcastic comment.

EXT. RIVER - DAY (LATER)

Everyone is paddling as they go over waves that are slightly bigger and choppier, and the river is flowing quite a bit faster. So, it's obvious that the serene section of their journey is over, and moreover, the waves and current are increasing, but it's still not too bad yet.

ALEXIS

It's starting to get a little rougher.

TRISTAN

Ah, this is nothing.

Ava looks to her right and sees a gigantic snow-covered rock that's on the river's bank. This rock stretches skywards as it towers over the river.

AVA

Boy, that rock is big.

Everyone looks to their right and sees the gigantic rock, which they didn't recognize earlier since it's covered in snow. They know this is the rock that the Cabins' Owner told them to exit before reaching, so everyone stops paddling and stares in horror at the rock as they sail helplessly past it since they're pretty far from the shore, except Ava loves it since she's very adventurous.

TRISTAN

Oops.

Ava smiles.

EMILY

What did the cabins' owner say was after the big rock?

TRISTAN

He mentioned something about some big waves and rapids and some waterfalls and large rocks and, then, something about it ending in a gigantic waterfall called, "The Waterfall of Death." Oh, and

EMILY

Tristan! Pull us to land, now!

Tristan starts to paddle hard to try to get them to the shore, but the current and waves are increasing.

TRISTAN

I'll try, but the current is pretty strong.

Tristan addresses everyone.

TRISTAN (CONT'D)

Listen, we just need to keep our raft going head on at the waves while gradually moving to the right. And keep your feet tucked under the edges of the raft to keep from falling out.

David addresses Courtney.

DAVID

So, when we first started on this trip, and I said we were going to die, I was right?

COURTNEY

It's looking like a good bet, yeah. Congratulations on calling it.

DAVID

Thanks, I guess.

The current and waves have increased so much that whitewater has become prevalent. Thus, the Zeilers are going over their first real section of whitewater.

Ava is smiling and enjoying it while everyone else is a lot more worried. In fact, Ava is downright giddy, and the others are downright terrified.

The waves are forceful, but they aren't too ferocious, so the Zeilers manage to maneuver pretty well as they steadily move along.

This section of whitewater isn't real long, so there's not much of a chance for them to move towards the shore before the whitewater flows into a little waterfall that they're quickly approaching.

ZACK

Here comes our first waterfall!

After going over a couple of more waves, everyone screams as they go over a small waterfall that's only about five feet high. Of course, Ava screams out of joy while everyone else screams out of terror.

The waterfall isn't too dangerous, so they make it down safely without much trouble.

However, immediately afterwards, the river flows into a bigger waterfall.

ZACK (CONT'D)

And here's our second!

Everyone screams as they go over this second waterfall that's about ten feet high.

They come crashing down with water spraying everywhere, but their raft lands safely.

They're relieved to have made it, and although they're still traveling over pretty fast whitewater, it's not too dangerous.

They start to paddle a little closer to the shore.

AVA

Ah, this is so much better than our waterpark!

ZACK

Really, this is just like being at a waterpark, except for the part where we plunge to our deaths.

AVA

Yeah, except for that part.

They continue to make more progress towards shore, but they're still pretty far away.

The whitewater starts to become a little fiercer.

They're picking up a little bit more speed, and they're finding it difficult to move towards shore.

The river accelerates them into an area where a lot of large rocks are sticking out of the water.

They try to avoid the rocks as they paddle in between them.

They successfully cruise past a few rocks.

However, there are too many rocks, and they're moving too fast, so the raft glances hard off of two rocks in a row.

COURTNEY

Dad, quit hitting the rocks!

TRISTAN

What, stop hitting them? Why didn't you speak up sooner?

Although they're able to keep going without capsizing, the rocks prevent them from moving towards the shore.

They manage to avoid the last few big rocks as they speed past them, so they've successfully made it through the section of rocks.

However, the whitewater continues to flow fast and fairly rough.

EMILY

Tristan, we need to do something else to get to shore!

TRISTAN

Let's angle the raft a little more to the right! But not too much, or we'll tip!

They're able to angle the raft a little more and paddle a little closer to the shore, although they're still fairly far away.

Unfortunately, they're fast approaching a section of whitewater that's incredibly dangerous, and in fact, they're accelerating towards this whitewater.

EMILY

It's about to get a lot worse!

TRISTAN

We just need to stay calm! We can do this!

The very rough whitewater pulls the raft into it as if it was done by suction.

Everyone, including Ava, is terrified as they go into this hazardous and relentless path of whitewater.

They're going extremely fast now as the river flows very forcefully.

Each wave pushes the raft into the air until it comes crashing down and goes into the next wave, with water splashing over the sides of the raft and drenching everyone.

Indeed, the raft starts to, basically, soar up and down as it hits these brutal rapids.

Obviously, this is the roughest that the river has been yet, and it's amazing they haven't tipped.

They paddle very hard to make sure their raft doesn't hit a wave sideways because that might cause them to tip.

They paddle through rough wave after rough wave, hoping to find their way to safety, but the river makes it seem pretty hopeless.

They're still trying to get to the shore on their right, but they're mostly just trying to survive the whitewater.

They're taking a beating, but they're able to keep going without tipping.

The river keeps punishing the raft while pushing it along very fast.

They're at the mercy of the river.

COURTNEY

Oh, no, I see the big waterfall!
Dad, we need to get to shore now!

TRISTAN

OK, I'm going to turn us sideways!

ALEXIS

Sideways? We're goners.

Tristan takes his oar out of the water on the side of the raft and puts it in the water behind the raft.

Tristan paddles feverishly for a few strokes, which gets the raft heading directly towards the shoreline to his right, and then he puts his oar back into the water on the side of the raft.

TRISTAN

Now, everyone, paddle as hard as
you can!

The side of the raft is taking a beating from the waves.

Everyone paddles really hard, and they're able to move a lot
closer to the shore.

The gigantic waterfall, which would surely kill them if they
went over it, is rapidly approaching.

Fortunately, they're able to paddle very close to the shore,
where the river is a lot shallower and calmer.

Tristan hurriedly drops his oar into the raft and unsnaps
the snowshoes from his boots, and then he stands up and
rushes to the front of the raft.

Tristan jumps out of the front of the raft and lands in the
water, which reaches to the level just above his knees.

Tristan grabs the front of the raft, and he uses all of his
strength as he pulls it as he runs towards the shore.

So, everyone else is paddling hard as Tristan runs through
the water while pulling the raft.

Tristan reaches the shore just before the waterfall, and he
runs several steps up the snowy bank while pulling the raft
to safety.

They're safe now, so Tristan stops pulling the raft, and
everyone else climbs out of the raft.

All seven of the Zeilers collapse onto the ground from
exertion as they lie down on their backs, and they're trying
to catch their breaths.

AVA

Dad, you were awesome! I thought we
were goners for sure.

COURTNEY

Yeah, you did great. I can't
believe we're alive.

Tristan is panting so hard that he can barely talk between
breaths as he responds.

TRISTAN

It ... was ... no ... sweat.

INT. CAMPSITE IN AN EVERGREEN FOREST - NIGHT

Everyone is wearing their bedtime clothes, and they're just sitting/lying on their cots in the tent as they rest in the mountains. They traveled since they landed their raft, so they're not close to where they avoided death at the waterfall. And David is finishing eating a peanut butter sandwich.

DAVID

Hey, Mom, why do we only eat peanut butter sandwiches and fruit bars?

EMILY

When you start to pull the supply sled, we're going to be eating extremely large animals.

DAVID

Oh. I guess I like these a lot then, don't I?

EMILY

Yes, you do.

TRISTAN

Alright, everybody, tomorrow is the day. We'll be at Lukas's waterfall in a few short miles.

ALEXIS

So, do we have to cross a volcano or climb a mountain or fight off a blizzard?

TRISTAN

Nope, it's all easygoing now.

ALEXIS

Will you forgive me if I don't believe you?

TRISTAN

Yeah, I think I understand.

ZACK

If there really is gold behind some waterfall, why did Uncle Lukas store it and not spend it?

TRISTAN

I don't know. I think he liked the journey and didn't care much for the destination.

David addresses Courtney.

DAVID
Was that deep?

COURTNEY
Since Dad said it, I'm guessing no.

Ava notices the corner of the tent next to her is gently flapping in the wind.

AVA
This corner isn't staked down.

TRISTAN
I'll get it.

Tristan stands up and throws on his coat and boots. He picks up a small mallet that's sitting on the floor beside his cot, and he walks outside via the tent door that's next to his cot.

EXT. CAMPSITE IN AN EVERGREEN FOREST - NIGHT

Tristan walks to the corner of the tent and sees a stake lying down instead of being staked into the ground.

He kneels down, and he quickly pounds the stake into the ground with a couple of swings of his mallet.

He stands up and starts to walk back to the tent's door when a light in the sky just catches his eye. So, he stops and looks up and sees a little bit of a greenish glow that's coming over the top of the evergreen trees on the small hillside next to the tent, and then he goes into the tent.

INT. CAMPSITE IN AN EVERGREEN FOREST - NIGHT

Tristan tosses his mallet to the ground beside his cot.

TRISTAN
I've got something amazing to show
all of you. Come outside.

AVA
What is it?

TRISTAN
You'll see.

Tristan walks outside.

ZACK

I guess he thinks we haven't had
enough excitement today.

EMILY

Yeah, well, he's probably starting
to think we're invincible.

Everyone stands up and starts to follow Tristan outside while putting on their coats and boots, but they don't bother to put on their gloves or stocking caps since they're not going to be outside for a long time.

EXT. CAMPSITE IN AN EVERGREEN FOREST - NIGHT

Everyone arrives and stops on top of a small hill that's only a few hundred feet away from their tent that's just a little below them. They have a clear view as they excitedly see the aurora borealis stretched out for miles like a flowing river of light as it glows and sparkles across the clear sky with stripes of green, blue, and pink lights. Of course, it's an epic and breathtaking sight.

AVA

Wow, the lights really do dance.

EMILY

I've never seen it so clear and
massive. It's amazing.

ALEXIS

Definitely.

Tristan points at the sky as he addresses Ava.

TRISTAN

Do you also see the Big Dipper
there and the North Star over
there?

Ava sees the Big Dipper and the North Star as they shine brightly to the side of the aurora borealis. They're among the many stars that are easily visible on this incredibly clear night.

AVA

Yeah, just like my blanket of the
state flag.

TRISTAN

Exactly. So, what can you tell me
about these lights?

AVA

I know they're called the aurora borealis, or northern lights, here in the North.

EXT. THE SKY - NIGHT

We see the amazing construction of the aurora borealis (with the solar wind's microscopic particles going from the sun to the Earth where they collide with Earth's particles and emit colorful lights) as Ava explains this phenomenal process.

AVA (V.O.)

They're created when the solar wind brings charged particles of electrons and protons across outer space and into the Earth's magnetic field. Then, they enter the atmosphere at the magnetic North and South poles, which is why these lights are only seen in the far north and far south. When the solar particles collide with Earth's atoms and molecules, the Earth's particles give energy off in the form of these lights. Oxygen atoms and molecules give off red and green lights, and nitrogen gives off red, blue, and violet lights. And these colors sometimes combine to create other colors like pink.

EXT. CAMPSITE IN AN EVERGREEN FOREST - NIGHT

David looks down from the sky and addresses Courtney.

DAVID

She doesn't even make sense anymore.

Courtney looks down from the sky and smiles at David.

COURTNEY

Yeah, she's definitely out there.

Tristan addresses Ava without looking down from the sky.

TRISTAN

Ah, don't listen to them because you'll be able to understand more,

which means you'll be able to see
more, which means you'll be able to
get so much more out of life.

Ava smiles without looking down from the sky because, like
Tristan, she's transfixed on the sky.

Emily, not wanting to disturb anyone, quietly starts to walk
down the hill to the tent. Everyone else, except Tristan
and Ava, quietly follows Emily back to the tent.

The aurora borealis continues to shine and sparkle while
Tristan and Ava stand alone together, and they're completely
mesmerized by it, so they can't stop staring at it.

AVA

Dad?

TRISTAN

Yes.

AVA

I read a little about Isaac Newton
and how he explained a lot of
nature and how he's the one most
responsible for our technology and
about how he did a lot of different
things like, in optics, he invented
a telescope and helped explain
light and colors.

TRISTAN

Yeah?

AVA

Yes. I want to be a scientist.

TRISTAN

Well, there will come a time when
you'll have to make a very
important decision about what you
want to do with your life. If you
decide then that you want to be a
scientist more than anything else
in the world, I have absolutely no
doubt you'll be a great one.

Ava smiles, and then Tristan looks down from the sky.

TRISTAN (CONT'D)

Come on, let's go get some sleep.

Ava looks down from the sky too.

AVA

OK.

Tristan and Ava start to walk back to the tent.

INT. CAMPSITE IN AN EVERGREEN FOREST - NIGHT

Tristan and Ava enter the tent and walk to their cots while the rest of their family is taking off their coats and boots and climbing onto their cots in order to go to sleep.

EMILY

Well, I hope everyone rests well
for tomorrow's disaster, so
goodnight, everyone.

COURTNEY

Goodnight.

ALEXIS

Goodnight.

DAVID

Goodnight.

ZACK

Goodnight.

AVA

Goodnight.

TRISTAN

Goodnight.

While Tristan takes off his coat and boots at his cot, Ava takes off her coat and lays it on the ground next to her cot, and then she pulls off her boots.

Ava climbs onto her cot and lies down with her head on her pillow, and she covers herself with her blanket.

Tristan walks to the lantern that's hanging from the tent's ceiling, but then he pauses as he glances at Ava lying down peacefully, and with pride and empathy, he smiles slightly to himself. Then, he reaches up and turns off the lantern and goes back to his cot, where he lies down to sleep.

With light from the moon and the aurora borealis making just enough light in the tent to see, Ava sits up and looks at her furry blanket of the Big Dipper and the North Star. She smiles, reflecting on her great evening, as she briefly runs her hand over these stars, and then she contently lies down again to go to sleep.

EXT. FROZEN RIVER - DAY

While it's lightly snowing, the Zeilers are walking in an evergreen forest within the mountains. They're not wearing snowshoes since the snow isn't too deep/soft, but they're wearing snow caps, gloves, and coats. Emily, Zack, and Courtney arrive at a narrow frozen river that's more like a large stream, and they stop to rest, so Zack unsnaps the supply sled from himself. And everyone else continues to walk towards the river since they're a little behind.

COURTNEY

Why is this river frozen when the other one wasn't?

EMILY

This water must not flow as fast or turbulent.

ZACK

Wow, not as turbulent as the other river. It must be some kind of freak of nature.

Emily and Courtney smile, and then everyone else arrives at the river and stops.

AVA

Yay, we can ice skate!

Ava goes to the supply sled, and she unzips the bag. She pulls out three pairs of ice skates that are for Courtney, David, and herself, and she sets them in the snow.

DAVID

You brought all of our ice skates?

AVA

Yeah. I knew everyone would think it silly to pack skates, but I thought we might find ice to skate on, so I snuck them into the bag. And I would have packed our hockey stuff, but I thought Mom might get mad if I took out the tent.

Everyone else smiles at Ava's comment. And Courtney, David, and Ava sit down on the bag, and they excitedly start to take off their boots and put on their ice skates.

COURTNEY

Wouldn't it be cool to have Virtue and Moir here to skate with us?

AVA

Oh, yeah, they're my favorite. I think they're the most graceful skaters ever.

COURTNEY

Yeah, definitely. They were so breathtaking.

Tristan addresses Courtney, David, and Ava.

TRISTAN

Hey, before you go out, let me make sure the ice is safe.

Tristan walks a few steps onto the river, and Alexis addresses Emily.

ALEXIS

Safe? I don't think I've ever heard him ask that.

Emily smiles.

Tristan stomps on the ice.

TRISTAN

It's OK. It's solid enough. Just be careful because our waterfall is a little ways ahead on this river. And don't get too far ahead of us.

Tristan walks back to the shoreline as Alexis looks at him in shock that he's being more concerned for his kids.

ALEXIS

I'm scared.

EMILY

It's like a comet sighting or something.

Courtney, David, and Ava have finished putting on their skates, so they stand up and go on the icy river.

Zack snaps the supply sled to himself again.

The three kids skate around, going in circles and such, as they make their way down the river while the rest of the family starts to walk on the river's bank.

It's very peaceful as the Zeilers make their way down the frozen river while it continues to snow. And the kids don't skate very far ahead, so they're always near everyone else.

TRISTAN

So, Emily, why do you let me do crazy things like this trip? I mean, I almost got everyone killed a few times on this trip alone.

EMILY

Because we're Alaskans, so we're not fragile. And, besides, one has to do crazy things once in a while just to make the memories stand out, although I think whitewater rafting may be out for the near future.

TRISTAN

Wow, you're almost as screwed up as I am.

EMILY

Yeah, almost. You didn't think you could marry someone who wasn't at least a little screwed up, did you?

Emily smiles at Tristan, and he smiles back at her.

TRISTAN

No, that's true. Hey, I was thinking that I'm going to stop taking so many fishing trips.

EMILY

I assumed you wouldn't be working at all if we got a bunch of gold.

TRISTAN

I'm going to work less even if we don't find gold. I figured I'd start to spend a little more time at home.

EMILY

Wow, you must have hit your head pretty hard on one of your falls down a mountain because you're starting to think straight. I mean, you're actually planning on doing something that I thought was impossible.

TRISTAN

What's that?

EMILY

Acting like a grown up.

Tristan and Emily smile at each other, and then Tristan looks at his kids ice skating on the frozen river.

TRISTAN

Well, I hope it isn't too late.

EMILY

It isn't.

Tristan and Emily smile.

As Ava skates towards the river bank, she hits the play button on her smartphone, so the music (not the lyrics though) to the song, "THE TWELVE DAYS OF CHRISTMAS," starts to play aloud. Then, Ava tosses her smartphone to Alexis, and she skates back out towards the middle of the river to join Courtney and David.

While singing their unique version of this song, Courtney, David, and Ava skate forward, in circles, and backwards. Sometimes, they wrap arms together while skating forward, and they hold hands while skating in a circle. Their ice skating looks poetic and effortless, and it's as if they were part of a spectacular Christmas show, with the three kids singing while, basically, gracefully dancing on the icy river. And the rest of the Zeilers enjoy the show as they walk along the river bank.

DAVID

(singing)

On the 1st day of Christmas,
My family sent to me
One wild vacation.

COURTNEY

(singing)

On the 2nd day of Christmas,
My family sent to me
Two crazy parents.

COURTNEY, DAVID, AND AVA

(singing)

And one wild vacation.

AVA

(singing)

On the 3rd day of Christmas,
My family sent to me
Three reasons to run away.

COURTNEY
(singing)
Two crazy parents.

COURTNEY, DAVID, AND AVA
(singing)
And one wild vacation.

DAVID
(singing)
On the 4th day of Christmas,
My family sent to me
Four loony siblings.

AVA
(singing)
Three reasons to run away.

COURTNEY
(singing)
Two crazy parents.

COURTNEY, DAVID, AND AVA
(singing)
And one wild vacation.

COURTNEY
(singing)
On the 5th day of Christmas,
My family sent to me
Five emotional scars!

DAVID
(singing)
Four loony siblings.

AVA
(singing)
Three reasons to run away.

COURTNEY
(singing)
Two crazy parents.

COURTNEY, DAVID, AND AVA
(singing)
And one wild vacation.

AVA
(singing)
On the 6th day of Christmas,
My family sent to me
Six near-death memories.

COURTNEY
(singing)
Five emotional scars!

DAVID
(singing)
Four loony siblings.

AVA
(singing)
Three reasons to run away.

COURTNEY
(singing)
Two crazy parents.

COURTNEY, DAVID, AND AVA
(singing)
And one wild vacation.

DAVID
(singing)
On the 7th day of Christmas,
My family sent to me
Seven scary moments.

AVA
(singing)
Six near-death memories.

COURTNEY
(singing)
Five emotional scars!

DAVID
(singing)
Four loony siblings.

AVA
(singing)
Three reasons to run away.

COURTNEY
(singing)
Two crazy parents.

COURTNEY, DAVID, AND AVA
(singing)
And one wild vacation.

COURTNEY
(singing)
On the 8th day of Christmas,
My family sent to me
Eight lasting nightmares.

DAVID
(singing)
Seven scary moments.

AVA
(singing)
Six near-death memories.

COURTNEY
(singing)
Five emotional scars!

DAVID
(singing)
Four loony siblings.

AVA
(singing)
Three reasons to run away.

COURTNEY
(singing)
Two crazy parents.

COURTNEY, DAVID, AND AVA
(singing)
And one wild vacation.

AVA
(singing)
On the 9th day of Christmas,
My family sent to me
Nine broken bones.

COURTNEY
(singing)
Eight lasting nightmares.

DAVID
(singing)
Seven scary moments.

AVA
(singing)
Six near-death memories.

COURTNEY
(singing)
Five emotional scars!

DAVID
(singing)
Four loony siblings.

AVA
(singing)
Three reasons to run away.

COURTNEY
(singing)
Two crazy parents.

COURTNEY, DAVID, AND AVA
(singing)
And one wild vacation.

DAVID
(singing)
On the 10th day of Christmas,
My family sent to me
Ten deadly animals.

AVA
(singing)
Nine broken bones.

COURTNEY
(singing)
Eight lasting nightmares.

DAVID
(singing)
Seven scary moments.

AVA
(singing)
Six near-death memories.

COURTNEY
(singing)
Five emotional scars!

DAVID
(singing)
Four loony siblings.

AVA
(singing)
Three reasons to run away.

COURTNEY
(singing)
Two crazy parents.

COURTNEY, DAVID, AND AVA
(singing)
And one wild vacation.

COURTNEY
(singing)
On the 11th day of Christmas,
My family sent to me
Eleven wrecked vehicles.

DAVID
(singing)
Ten deadly animals.

AVA
(singing)
Nine broken bones.

COURTNEY
(singing)
Eight lasting nightmares.

DAVID
(singing)
Seven scary moments.

AVA
(singing)
Six near-death memories.

COURTNEY
(singing)
Five emotional scars!

DAVID
(singing)
Four loony siblings.

AVA
(singing)
Three reasons to run away.

COURTNEY
(singing)
Two crazy parents.

COURTNEY, DAVID, AND AVA
(singing)
And one wild vacation.

AVA
(singing)
On the 12th day of Christmas,
My family sent to me
Twelve years of therapy.

COURTNEY
(singing)
Eleven wrecked vehicles.

DAVID
(singing)
Ten deadly animals.

AVA
(singing)
Nine broken bones.

COURTNEY
(singing)
Eight lasting nightmares.

DAVID
(singing)
Seven scary moments.

AVA
(singing)
Six near-death memories.

COURTNEY
(singing)
Five emotional scars!

DAVID
(singing)
Four loony siblings.

AVA
(singing)
Three reasons to run away.

COURTNEY
(singing)
Two crazy parents.

COURTNEY, DAVID, AND AVA
(singing)
And one wild vacation!

The song ends, so Courtney, David, and Ava smile at each other since they had fun singing. And they recognize a frozen waterfall just ahead of them, so they skate forward a little bit, and then they stop.

EXT. FROZEN WATERFALL - DAY

It's still lightly snowing as Courtney, David, and Ava are standing atop the waterfall while everyone else is starting to walk out onto the ice to join them.

The three kids are fairly close to the waterfall's edge, and they're looking towards the bottom of it in order to judge its height. The waterfall is about thirty feet high, and it's pretty narrow. Thus, it isn't really big, but obviously, it's big enough to present a challenge.

COURTNEY

I think we found the waterfall.

DAVID

Alright, I've got a plan. You jump first, and then ... I'll figure it out from there.

COURTNEY

That doesn't sound too good for me.

DAVID

You noticed, huh?

Courtney smiles at David, and he smiles back at her.

Everyone else arrives next to Courtney, David, and Ava. And, from behind, Emily playfully rubs each of the heads of the three kids, one after another, in order to acknowledge their singing, and she smiles at them while they turn their heads and smile back at her.

EMILY

Nice singing, kiddos.

Everyone lines up next to each other as they look towards the bottom of the waterfall, and Alexis hands the smartphone back to Ava, who puts it into her pocket.

TRISTAN

Well, this is it.

ALEXIS

How do we get down there? The sides of the river are too steep to walk down.

TRISTAN

Come on, you have to remember all those times I took you rappelling.

ALEXIS

You can't be serious. I was the one who kept hitting my face against the sides of the cliffs.

ZACK

Hmm, repeated head trauma. I thought it was just genetics.

ALEXIS

Ha! Ha!

Tristan smiles at Alexis, and she smiles back at him.

Tristan, Emily, and Alexis swing their backpacks off their backs and put them on the ice next to the supply sled while Zack unsnaps the sled from himself.

Tristan unzips his backpack and removes rappelling gear (one coil of rope and seven harnesses), and he puts the gear on the ice. All of the harnesses have carabiners, which are metal loops to connect harnesses to ropes for rappelling.

David unzips the big bag in the supply sled, and he removes the boots for himself, Courtney, and Ava, and he puts them on the ice. Then, Courtney, David, and Ava sit down on the bag, and they begin to take off their ice skates and put on their boots.

Tristan picks up the coil of rope, and he gestures towards a tree on the bank that's jutting out a little onto the river.

TRISTAN

Tie this rope around that tree please.

Tristan tosses the rope to Zack, and then Zack walks towards the tree on the river's bank.

Tristan, Emily, and Alexis pick up their harnesses and begin to fasten them around their waists and legs.

TRISTAN (CONT'D)

OK, I'm going to go first, and then we'll send the gear down, and then everyone else will come down.

ALEXIS

So, it's all easygoing, huh?

TRISTAN

Well, more like easygoing and a little bit of danger, sorry.

AVA
(joyfully)
This vacation keeps getting better
and better.

Alexis looks down at Ava.

ALEXIS
It's like we're not even in the
same reality.

Ava smiles up at Alexis, and David addresses Alexis.

DAVID
You know, if you die, there will be
more gold for the rest of us.

Tristan addresses David.

TRISTAN
That's why I didn't give you the
rope.

DAVID
Oh. Good move.

Zack has wrapped the fairly long rope around the tree, and he grabs both ends of the rope and begins to tie them together.

Tristan, Emily, and Alexis have finished putting on their harnesses.

Tristan sits down next to Courtney on the bag in the supply sled since he's, obviously, trying to connect better with his kids now.

TRISTAN
So, when did you all become ice-
skating carolers?

COURTNEY
Last week, just fooling around.

TRISTAN
Oh, yeah? Well, that was great.
But your mother and I have no idea
where you got good singing voices.

COURTNEY
We've heard you two sing. We don't
know either.

Tristan and Courtney smile at each other.

TRISTAN

Maybe, we showed you what not to do.

COURTNEY

Yeah, maybe.

Tristan and Courtney smile at each other.

Zack has finished tying the two ends of the rope together, and he's walking on the frozen river as he goes towards the waterfall's edge. He's carrying the knotted end of the rope while the two long legs of the rope are dragging on the ice behind him.

Zack throws the rope down the waterfall, so the knot lands on the bottom, and the two legs of the rope extend the length of the waterfall. So, the rope is ready for rappelling, and Zack starts to walk towards everyone else.

ZACK

The rope is good.

TRISTAN

Alright, good work.

Courtney, David, and Ava stand up since they're now wearing their boots and have put their ice skates back into the bag, and Tristan stands up too.

Zack, Courtney, David, and Ava begin to put on their harnesses.

Everyone else watches Tristan as he walks very close to the waterfall's edge.

Tristan grabs both legs of the rope and hooks his harness's carabiner to them.

TRISTAN (CONT'D)

OK, I'll see you guys at the bottom. Unless, of course, I just take the gold and run.

EMILY

Then, you would have to find some other family to drag on ridiculous adventures.

TRISTAN

Oh, yeah. Well, the odds of me finding one of those has to be about zero. So, I guess I'll have to stay.

EMILY

I guess so.

Emily smiles at Tristan, and he smiles back at her since they both know they're happily stuck with each other.

Zack, Courtney, David, and Ava have finished putting on their harnesses.

Everyone else watches Tristan as he confidently gets ready to rappel by grabbing both legs of the rope in front of him with one hand and both legs of the rope behind him with his other hand.

Tristan walks backwards a few steps, going over the edge of the waterfall, so his boots are on the side of the waterfall, and his body is parallel to the frozen river at the bottom of the waterfall.

Tristan kicks off the waterfall and begins to rappel down, and he's very good at rappelling, so he rappels down with considerable ease and speed. Indeed, he only takes one more kick off the side of the fairly small waterfall as he descends.

Tristan lands at the bottom, and he unhooks his harness from the rope.

TRISTAN

OK, send down the supplies!

Zack begins to pull both legs of the rope up the side of the waterfall. Meanwhile, Emily kneels down and begins to place the three backpacks on top of the bag in the supply sled and to strap them down.

DAVID

(to Courtney)

You know, this is all Seward's fault for buying this state.
Buyer, beware.

AVA

Ooh, do you want to hear about
Seward's Folly?

DAVID

No.

AVA

Oh.

Ava turns to Emily.

AVA (CONT'D)
Mom, can I go after the supplies?

EMILY
Sure.

COURTNEY
Should we feel embarrassed that our
little sister is braver than us?

DAVID
Oh, yeah.

Zack finishes pulling the rope up. And Emily finishes strapping down the backpacks, so she stands up.

Emily watches Zack quickly wrap the rope around the middle of the sled like an expert as he tilts the sled up and throws the knotted end of the rope under it. Then, he lowers the sled down on top of the rope and grabs the knotted end of the rope from the other side of the sled.

Zack pulls up the knotted end of the rope, so the rope is tightly wrapped the rope around the middle of the sled, and then he quickly ties the rope onto itself, securing the rope to the sled.

EMILY
Wow, I'm impressed. You certainly
have always had good survival
skills.

ZACK
Thanks, but it kind of comes with
being in this family.

EMILY
Yeah, well, I guess that's true.

Zack smiles, and then he walks to the far side of the tree where he anchored the rope previously.

While holding the rope against the tree, Zack prepares to use the tree as a pulley in order to lower the supplies.

ZACK
Can you push the sled over?

EMILY
Sure thing.

Emily gently pushes the supply sled over the edge of the waterfall.

Zack begins to lower the supply sled to Tristan by slowly feeding the rope through his hands.

Alexis joins Emily at the edge of the waterfall, and they look out along the frozen river below.

ALEXIS

I can't believe we actually arrived here. This happens every time with Dad. It's like he has the most incredible luck. How is that possible?

EMILY

I don't know. All I know is if we were surrounded by a thousand guerrilla fighters raining fire down on us, your father would say, "I like the odds." And you might even believe him.

ALEXIS

It's just so unbelievable how it always works out.

EMILY

Yes, it is. Kind of cool though, huh?

ALEXIS

Yeah. Actually, it is kind of cool.

Emily and Alexis smile at each other.

The supplies have reached the ground, and Tristan quickly unties the rope's knot around the supply sled and pushes the sled to the side.

Tristan hooks his carabiner to both legs of the rope, and while holding the rope, he walks back a few steps since he's the belayer.

TRISTAN

Alright, send the next person down!

AVA

Here, I come!

EMILY

Not yet. Let me check your harness.

AVA

Mom, I'm ten years old now. I can do my own harness.

EMILY

I know, but it doesn't hurt to have me check it.

Emily lightly yanks on Ava's harness to make sure it's securely fastened around Ava's waist and legs. The harness is fine, so Emily hooks it to both legs of the rope.

EMILY (CONT'D)

OK, good job.

AVA

Thanks.

(to Tristan)

Coming down!

With one hand holding the rope in front of her and one hand holding the rope behind her, Ava walks backwards a few steps onto the side of the waterfall.

Tristan readies himself since he's the belayer for Ava, as well as everyone else while they rappel down.

Ava kicks off the waterfall, and like everyone except Alexis, Ava is a very good rappeler. And, of course, Ava has little fear and loves adventure, so she rappels extremely fast.

So, Ava very quickly reaches the bottom and unhooks her harness.

AVA (CONT'D)

OK, send the next person down!

DAVID

Wow, she's fast for an encyclopedia.

David takes the initiative to be the next person to rappel, so he hooks his harness to both legs of the rope.

ALEXIS

Ava has Dad's craziness and Mom's smarts. How do those qualities even exist in the same person?

DAVID

I don't know, but it's only happened once. If it happens again, the universe will explode.

While Ava takes off her harness and drops it by the supply sled, David walks backwards onto the side of the waterfall, and he has one hand holding the rope in front of him and one hand holding the rope behind him.

David kicks off the waterfall and begins to rappel down. And he rappels nearly as fast as Ava, so he quickly reaches the bottom and unhooks his harness.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Send the next one down!

COURTNEY
Well, it must not be too bad. I'll go.

While David takes off his harness and drops it by the supply sled, Courtney hooks her harness to both legs of the rope. And, with one hand holding the rope in front of her and one hand holding the rope behind her, she walks backwards onto the side of the waterfall.

Courtney gently kicks off the waterfall and begins to rappel down. Courtney is a little slower and more cautious than David, but she's still, obviously, a good rappeler.

Although Courtney releases the rope a little slower, she still only takes one more kick off the side of the waterfall as she enjoys her calm trip.

Courtney lands softly at the bottom and unhooks her harness.

COURTNEY (CONT'D)
Send the next person down!

EMILY
You can go, Zack.

ZACK
OK.

While Courtney takes off her harness and drops it by the supply sled, Zack hooks his harness to both legs of the rope. And, with one hand holding the rope in front of him and one hand holding the rope behind him, he walks backwards onto the side of the waterfall.

Zack kicks off the waterfall and begins to rappel down, and unlike everyone else, he doesn't even touch the waterfall again after his initial kick off of it.

Zack simply rappels straight down, so he reaches the bottom very rapidly, and then he unhooks his harness.

ZACK (CONT'D)
Alright, ready for the next one!

ALEXIS
You go ahead. I'll go last.

EMILY
Are you sure?

ALEXIS
Yeah.

EMILY
OK. Now, just remember to relax
and breathe slowly, and I'll see
you at the bottom, alright?

Alexis, who is obviously a little afraid of rappelling,
nervously nods yes.

While Zack takes off his harness and drops it by the supply
sled, Emily hooks her harness to both legs of the rope.
And, with one hand holding the rope in front of her and one
hand holding the rope behind her, she walks backwards onto
the side of the waterfall.

Emily kicks off the waterfall and begins to rappel down.
And she's as good as her kids at rappelling, which is really
impressive for a mother of five kids, so she steadily
descends.

Emily quickly reaches the bottom and unhooks her harness.

EMILY (CONT'D)
OK, you can come down!

While Emily takes off her harness and drops it by the supply
sled, Alexis hooks her harness to both legs of the rope.

ALEXIS
(to herself)
Great. How come they like all got
these rappelling genes? I am
definitely in the wrong family.

Alexis is scared, but with one hand holding the rope in
front of her and one hand holding the rope behind her, she
cautiously walks backwards while making sure she avoids
looking down at the terrifying view towards the bottom of
the waterfall.

Alexis goes over the waterfall, and she plants her feet into
the side of the waterfall, but then she pauses instead of
starting to rappel.

ALEXIS (CONT'D)
I really hate this!

TRISTAN
It's OK! I won't let you fall!

Alexis nervously kicks off from the waterfall. However, when she swings back to the waterfall, her feet slip when they make contact with the ice again, so her body slams hard against the waterfall.

Tristan, the belayer, saves Alexis from falling very far by pulling the rope taut, keeping her dangling in mid-air.

EMILY
Just watching this is painful.
It's a miracle she always makes it
down.

ZACK
At least she's doing a lot better.
She's usually crying by now.

Alexis gets her feet back onto the waterfall, so she regains her footing. However, one of her feet immediately slips, but she quickly regains her footing again.

DAVID
Well, if she does any better, she's
going to drop straight to the
ground. I got dibs on her share.

ALEXIS
I really, really hate this!

ZACK
Don't worry, it's not much further!

COURTNEY
Wow, lying to her. You are like
one of those journalists. Do you
also do liberal bias? And I
thought your two years in the Army
made you smarter.

ZACK
Ah, that's low. It would be better
if you called me the devil or
something.

Zack and Courtney smile at each other.

Alexis closes her eyes and takes a deep breath, preparing to descend again, and then she opens her eyes and exhales.

Alexis gives a big kick off the waterfall, and she very rapidly lowers herself as she's a little out of control.

Alexis lands hard at the bottom of the waterfall.

Tristan and Alexis unhook their harnesses as Tristan walks up to Alexis and stops.

TRISTAN

I have no idea how you're going to make it down that big cliff later.

ALEXIS

What? You have to be kidding me.

TRISTAN

Yeah, I am.

Tristan smiles at Alexis as she glares back at him since she's not amused.

While Tristan and Alexis take off their harnesses and drop them by the supply sled, Zack unties the rope's knot and pulls one leg of the rope down, so the entire rope falls all the way down the waterfall and lands beside him.

Tristan unzips the bag in the supply sled and removes a big empty bag that he plans on using to collect the gold.

Tristan tosses the bag to Zack, and then Tristan gestures towards the nearest side of the waterfall.

TRISTAN (CONT'D)

Alright, everybody, this way.

While it's continuing to snow, Tristan leads everybody to the nearest side of the waterfall, and they go behind the waterfall via a fairly large opening between the waterfall and the snowy cliff.

INT. BEHIND THE FROZEN WATERFALL - DAY

Everyone slowly spreads out as they look around at this fairly large area that's enclosed by the frozen waterfall on one side and walls of rocks on the other three sides. The rocks on the walls and floor are damp, and there's a fair amount of sunlight entering from both sides where there's space between the rocks and the waterfall, so it's not dark.

TRISTAN

According to the map, the gold is kept below one of these stones in the ground.

Everyone scans the ground, and Tristan quickly spots a large flat stone near the back wall that looks out of place among the more uneven stones that cover the ground.

TRISTAN (CONT'D)

This must be the stone right here.

Tristan walks a few steps forward as everyone else gathers behind him.

Tristan bends down and lifts up one side of the large stone, which reveals a large hole in the ground. Then, Tristan lays the stone to the side, and he looks into the dark hole while everyone else also tries to peer into the hole as they stand behind him.

TRISTAN (CONT'D)

It looks like there's a torch on the wall.

Tristan takes a book of matches out from his coat pocket.

TRISTAN (CONT'D)

Wait here.

Tristan walks down stone steps in the hole. And everyone else waits anxiously and silently at the top of the stairs as they gaze down into the hole and wonder what is in there.

Tristan lights a large torch that's hanging on the wall at the bottom of the stairs, but we don't see him light it. However, we see the light coming up from the hole in the ground since there are only about twenty steps, so the torch isn't real far away.

TRISTAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)

It's OK! Come on down!

One after another, the rest of the family walks down the stairs while Tristan begins to light the other two torches, which are hanging on the walls in a room.

INT. LUKAS'S GOLD ROOM - DAY

Everyone else arrives at the bottom of the stairs as Tristan finishes lighting the last torch, and the three torches combine to provide enough light to make the room clearly visible. Everyone else stops near the bottom of the stairs as Tristan stands alone next to the torch that he just lit. And everyone is simply standing in awe while looking at this fairly large damp room that was excavated into the bedrock.

Impressively, there are hundreds of gold nuggets and hundreds of piles of gold dust sitting on shelves that were carved into the stone of the bedrock. And the light coming from the torches reflect off the brightly colored gold, making the gold look even more ethereal.

EMILY

I can't believe there's actually gold in here.

COURTNEY

I am so getting a car.

AVA

I'm getting a lot of books.

DAVID

I love crazy uncles.

Everyone, except Tristan, excitedly spreads out across the room, and they look wondrously at and touch the numerous gold nuggets and piles of gold dust.

They're too excited to notice that Tristan doesn't share their excitement. Indeed, Tristan just remains standing next to the torch.

Among the gold nuggets on a shelf near him, Tristan curiously notices a folded-up letter that's leaning up against the bedrock, and we read his name, "TRISTAN," written on it.

So, Tristan picks up the letter and unfolds it. While he's reading the letter, we see it simply says, "MAY YOU BUY EVERYTHING YOU EVER DREAMED. LUKAS."

Tristan looks up from the letter and briefly looks at his family while they're busy looking at the gold. And he knows their dreams don't depend on gold.

Tristan reaches up and lights the letter on fire from the torch hanging on the wall, and then he immediately drops it to the ground.

Tristan watches the letter instantly shrivel up and disappear as the flames go out.

Tristan looks up from the ground and notices that everyone else is now looking at him with curiosity.

EMILY

What did the letter say?

TRISTAN

It said we're rich. That's all it said.

Everyone, except Tristan, smiles and turns their attention to the gold again.

TRISTAN (CONT'D)

But, just so everybody knows, we're not keeping the gold.

Everyone else is shocked as they turn their attention back to Tristan.

EMILY

We're not?

TRISTAN

No. Unfortunately for us, this is the season of giving.

DAVID

Well, when is the season of taking? Because, maybe, we could come back then.

ALEXIS

I've got to know the reason for this.

Tristan addresses everyone.

TRISTAN

I was just thinking that nearly every star and celebrity and, basically, anyone who is rich lives in a big house and buys expensive things, and they live very well. And I know people deserve nice lives, but there's too much need in the world to live so well. I mean, just look at the injustice of so many people who have to work long hours with little pay or all of those terrible diseases out there that need cures. And it's as clear as day that all of you will do great in life ... even David.

David gives a stunned and confused look while Courtney, who's standing beside David, finds it amusing. So, Courtney looks at David and laughs a little.

TRISTAN (CONT'D)
So, I think we should give all of
this gold to some cause that can,
hopefully, help people because it's
the right thing to do.

Tristan addresses Alexis.

TRISTAN (CONT'D)
I'm sorry if I ruined your paper.

ALEXIS
No, I think I'll get an A. I'll
have to change the title though.

Tristan and Alexis smile at each other.

TRISTAN
Of course, I'll be kicking myself
later.

Everyone else, except David, smiles. And David turns to
Emily.

DAVID
Why couldn't the Christmas spirit
tell Dad to like buy a yacht? This
can't be real, can it? I mean,
it's like gold fever in reverse.

EMILY
Oh, come on, this is great. It's
like Bing Crosby said, "Unless we
make Christmas an occasion to share
our blessings, all the snow in
Alaska won't make it white."

David can't believe what he's hearing, so he looks up at the
ceiling to see if air is reaching them.

DAVID
This place must not get fresh air.

Emily smiles.

ZACK
OK, eternally poor people, let's
fill this bag up.

Zack throws the bag (which Tristan had tossed to him before
they entered behind the waterfall) onto the damp stone floor
in the middle of the room.

Everyone starts to pick up the gold nuggets and scoop up the gold dust from the shelves, and they begin to put them into the bag.

Everyone, including David, is happy that they're going to give the gold to a worthwhile cause, so they're cheerfully and speedily filling the bag with all of the gold.

EXT. FROZEN RIVER - DAY

It's no longer snowing as the Zeilers are walking down the middle of the river as they go downstream after having collected the gold into the bag that's now strapped on top of the large bag in the supply sled. So, they're walking away from the waterfall that rises behind them, and they're heading to the nearby town where the Cabins' Owner told them they could get a plane to go back home. Of course, they're thrilled to have completed an incredible journey.

COURTNEY

This was the best trip ever.

TRISTAN

That's for sure.

EMILY

You're going to have to change everyone's answers on your paper to this being their favorite vacation.

ALEXIS

Oh, yes, definitely.

Emily and Alexis smile at each other.

AVA

Yeah, and next time we're swimming with sharks.

EMILY

No, we're not.

AVA

Walking to Russia?

EMILY

No.

AVA

Cliff diving?

EMILY

No.

AVA

Bringing hot chocolate?

EMILY

Yes, we can do that.

Everyone laughs as they continue their pleasant walk to their home.

EXT. CHURCH - NIGHT (ESTABLISHING)

It's Christmas Eve, and a heavy, quiet snowfall is falling on the attractive facade of the Wasilla Bible Church while deep snow is lying on the ground. It's a fairly small building, and the parking lot is nearly full. And there's a large sign in front of the church that we read to say, "WELCOME TO THE CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE OF WASILLA BIBLE CHURCH."

INT./EXT. CHURCH AND ZEILERS' HOUSE - NIGHT/DAY

The following montage begins in the church for the Christmas Eve service, and then the rest of the montage takes place at the Zeilers' house during Christmas Day.

MONTAGE ("SILENT NIGHT" FROM THE ALBUM ENTITLED, "CELTIC CHRISTMAS: FEMALE VOICES," PLAYS IN ITS ENTIRETY OVER THIS MONTAGE)

A) (Night) All of the pews in the church's nave are full for this Christmas Eve service as everyone is finishing lighting each other's white candles. The Zeiler family is sitting together, so they're lighting each other's candles. And the room's lights have been dimmed, so all of the candles are glowing nicely. Then, the entire congregation stands up. The LEAD CHURCH SINGER, a 25-year-old woman who's very pretty, is standing in front of a microphone on the stage in front of the congregation. She's in the middle of a few other young female singers who are also standing behind microphones, and there are a few musicians sitting behind them. The musicians begin to play, and the Lead Church Singer begins to sing "Silent Night" (note the version of this song that we actually hear is from the album, "Celtic Christmas: Female Voices.") The Zeiler family and the rest of the congregation remain standing as they gently sway to the music while holding lighted candles. Thus, the music of, perhaps, the world's most famous song soars out as the candles are shining brightly in the church.

B) (Day) It's Christmas morning, and we're looking at the outside of the Zeilers' house during a daytime snowfall. Indeed, it snows throughout this Christmas Day, which encompasses the rest of this montage.

C) (Day) All of the Zeilers are either sitting on the sofa or on the floor as they're gathered around their beautiful Christmas tree in their living room in order to open their presents that are under the tree. Ava is sitting on the floor, and she opens a present that's, of course, a book, and she's thrilled. She immediately opens the book and begins glancing at its pages. Emily is sitting on the sofa, and she opens a card. While she reads it, we see it's a thank you card from her church saying, "WASILLA BIBLE CHURCH THANKS YOU FOR THE INCREDIBLY GENEROUS DONATION" She passes the card to David, and he briefly looks at it before shaking his head and passing it to Courtney since he wanted the gold, half-heartedly anyway.

D) (Day) In the backyard of the house, all of the Zeilers are gathered around a very tall snowman that they're finishing as Emily puts a red Santa's hat on top of the snowman, Courtney puts rocks in it for its eyes, and Ava puts sticks in it for its arms. Then, Emily, Courtney, and Ava step back and stand beside everyone else in their family as they all admire the completed snowman.

E) (Day) In the backyard of the house, all of the Zeilers are gathered as Tristan lifts Ava up to a tree, and she grabs the biggest icicle that was hanging off the lowest branch. Tristan puts Ava on the ground, and she starts to eat the icicle while watching Courtney and David playfully fight each other as they use big icicles as swords. And Courtney playfully stabs David, so he pretends to die dramatically as he falls down onto the snow while everyone else laughs.

F) (Day) In the living room, Tristan, Courtney, David, and Ava are sitting on the floor as they play a video game on TV. And Emily, Alexis, and Zack are sitting on the sofa behind them as they sip hot chocolate from coffee mugs while they watch the video game. Ava gets excited that she just won a game and throws her hands up in triumph, so Tristan jokingly tackles her to the ground while the rest of the family laughs.

G) (Night) Nighttime has arrived on this Christmas Day, and in the kitchen, some of the family are sitting at the kitchen table and eating Christmas dinner. Everyone else is walking around the food containers on the counter while filling their plates with delicious-looking turkey and stuffing and such, and then they sit down at the kitchen table. So, they're all seated with Tristan sitting at the

head of the table and Emily sitting at the foot of the table and all of the kids sitting at the sides of the table. And the Zeilers happily converse with each other while eating Christmas dinner. We slowly pull away from the Zeilers as we exit through a kitchen window until we're looking at the outside of the house on a peaceful Christmas night during a quiet snowfall. And red and green Christmas lights are brightly shining on the house as the final notes of "Silent Night" ring out.

FADE OUT.

THE END