

ACT ONE

INT. HOLMES HOSPITALITY HEAD OFFICE - BOARD ROOM - DAY

CEO ALLISON HOLMES (30s, smart, cool, pretty) sits at the head of a board room and listens as VP OF ADVERTISING, RICHARD (30s, handsome but a little slick) delivers an ad pitch for her family's national hotel chain.

RICHARD  
**START** → So now we got our sleigh bells  
 ringing, our string quartet  
 stringing, French horns, frenching--

Richard is by an EASEL which displays storyboard panels, depicting the last shots of a TV AD. His staff, TWO IN-HOUSE CREATIVES (20-somethings), stand by ready to assist.

RICHARD (CONT'D)  
 Business Dad is talking to his kids  
 on the laptop, opening their gift  
 to him, and we end on our tag line--  
 "If you can't have Christmas at  
 home, have it at Holmes..."

He pulls away the comp storyboard to reveal a title card  
 "HAPPY HOLIDAYS from the HOLMES HOTELS FAMILY".

Allison weighs the presentation as they look on. Then:

ALLISON  
 Seems a little... bleak.

RICHARD  
 We were thinking 'poignant'.

ALLISON  
 Why isn't Business Dad home with  
 his kids on Christmas?

RICHARD  
 Because... Business? Families are  
 apart for the holiday sometimes. I  
 mean, that's just a reality.

ALLISON  
 But we aren't selling *reality*  
 Christmas. We're selling *happy*  
 Christmas.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A large FRAMED PORTRAIT of the HOLMES FAMILY looms on the wall behind her, two poker-faced, very well-to-do parents with three children, a YOUNG ALLISON eldest among them.

ALLISON (CONT'D)

There's a big difference. Happy Christmas is sparkly snow, sparkly hot chocolate and a sparkly family having a great time, together, at one of our sparkly hotel locations.

RICHARD

So more families on vacation, just like last year's spots.

ALLISON

Just like the ones that worked?  
Yes. More of that. Please.

Richard nods to his staff, who quickly sweep up the easels.

RICHARD

OK... You heard the boss. Go rough up some sparkly.

They file out. Richard closes the door after them, turns back to Allison. Both of them relax into a more intimate air.

ALLISON

I'm sorry if I was short.

RICHARD

Are you stressing about the year-end with the shareholders? They love you. You've been running things for three years straight with barely a ripple in revenue.

ALLISON

They wouldn't mind a ripple in the right direction.

He sits on the table, close to her. Reaches into his coat--

RICHARD

Well, in their defense, they're ravenous fiends.  
(pulls tickets from coat)  
Run away with me.

He fans two TRAIN TICKETS out before her. She takes a ticket, looks it over, sees the departure date.

ALLISON  
Richard--

RICHARD  
OK, yes, it's over the Christmas break. It was the only way I could get reservations at that spa you love but can never find time for.

ALLISON  
We don't do holidays. Remember? I was clear--

RICHARD  
But we could. It could be a new thing. A next level thing.

ALLISON  
We don't have a next level.

RICHARD  
Are you sure about that? Allison.

ALLISON  
You weren't supposed to do this.

RICHARD  
Unless I was.

She looks at him for a beat. Sighs. She didn't want this conversation, but with resignation she begins it:

ALLISON  
OK. Let's say we go away for Christmas, and it goes the best it can possibly go. 'This is it,' we say, and we decide to get married.

RICHARD  
(taken bit aback)  
Married? Look, I wasn't trying to--

ALLISON  
Best it can possibly go, right? So-- dashing power couple. Big destination wedding. Everybody jealous.

RICHARD  
OK, that's not so bad--

Richard nods along, playful. A hint of sadness blooms as she presses on, the family portrait looming behind her.

CONTINUED: (3)

ALLISON

Then it's time to settle down, go back to the job, have a few unhappy children, and really start to hate each other. But we can't possibly get divorced. No, that's not in line with the wholesome Holmes Family brand so, we just... *stay* like that. We just get older and sadder, quietly cheating on each other for the rest of our lives.

RICHARD

(stung deadpan)

...and that's *the best* it can go.

Allison hands the ticket back to him, half-sure she's ending this relationship.

ALLISON

I'm sorry. I am. But I've got other plans for the holiday.

**←END**

FYI ONLY

INT. SNOW GLOBE INN - MORNING

ALLISON takes in the scene: GRAMPA OWEN on a stepladder, trying to straighten the tree, with Hillary eyeballing his progress from behind him.

HILLARY  
More to the left!

OWEN  
Your left or my left?

HILLARY  
We have the same left.

RICHARD breezes in and takes a cookie off the plate of them on the CHECK-IN desk.

RICHARD  
**START** → Warm cookie, nice. What's going on?

Allison glares at him.

ALLISON  
The tree is leaning. It's also undecorated and unlit. On Christmas Eve, because all that stuff is Jake's job and he's not here.

RICHARD  
The Jake doll left? Why?

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CONTINUED:

ALLISON

Because of you! I'm going to talk to Elena Roarke about her letting you in here--

RICHARD

Great. Be mad at her, not me.

ALLISON

I am a Holmes. I can be mad at both of you. Can't you just leave?

RICHARD

How? Apparently we're someplace called - get this - Yuletide Mountain, and it doesn't seem to have an airport, cabs, or be in any particular state. You're wintering in the Twilight Zone.

ALLISON

Dammit. Jake is supposed to be here, there are supposed to be small obstacles and a misunderstanding where they think I'm going to make them sell the inn and then a party with a crisis that the whole town solves together, then Jake proposes in a Christmas sweater in front of carolers.

RICHARD

You want another man to propose to you.

ALLISON

It's fake, Richard.

RICHARD

Exactly! It's fake. I'm real, Jake's fake.

ALLISON

(dangerously)

This is my *fantasy*. It's my choice and it's important to me!

**← END**

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