

EXT. PARK - DAY

Leafless, snow-covered trees stir lazily in the wind.

A young boy, BRADY (8) runs through the trees. Snow crunches under his feet. He puts a hand on one tree and swings around.

On the other side of the tree stands a little GIRL (9), looking up at the trees.

BRADY is startled. The GIRL looks at him, smiles and runs off.

BRADY follows her. The GIRL jumps behind a bush to hide. BRADY runs past the bush, stops and looks around. The GIRL jumps up, walks to BRADY and gives him a kiss on the cheek.

BRADY opens his mouth to speak and the GIRL runs away. BRADY stares, awe struck, in her wake.

INT. BRADY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

BRADY sits hunched over his desk, colored pencil in hand. He's drawing a picture of the GIRL. He sighs.

INT. BRADY'S BEDROOM - DAY

BRADY looks out his window. In the distance, a GIRL and her mother walk down the street. BRADY sits up attentively. The two pass his window, it is not the little GIRL. He slumps down.

INT. BRADY'S FRONT HALLWAY - DAY

A doorbell rings. BRADY rushes through the hall and opens the door, a huge smile on his face. A salesman stands across the threshold. BRADY's mother approaches and stands behind BRADY.

SALESMAN

Good afternoon, as you well know,  
the holidays are upon us--

BRADY's mother slams the door. BRADY mopes out of the hallway.

EXT. PARK - THE NEXT DAY

BRADY sits on a swing, he sways slightly back and forth. He slowly looks around and off into the distance, but the park is vacant.

INT. BRADY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

BRADY sits with his laptop. He searches through class photos on the local elementary schools web sites. A map hangs on his wall with certain places circled, some of them crossed out.

He sets the laptop down, stands and walks to the map as he pulls out a red marker. He crosses out another circle.

BRADY backs away, looking at the map. He reaches to his radio and turns it on.

RADIO

(music)

He's making a list, checking it  
twice--

BRADY's head whips to look at the radio. He turns it off, sprints to his bed and grabs the laptop.

He pulls up a music web site and starts playing Christmas songs.

COMPUTER

(music)

He sees you when you're sleeping,  
he knows when you're awake--

INT. BRADY'S BEDROOM - LATER

BRADY pops a DVD of "AE Biography: Santa Clause" in the player.

ON TV: SANTA sits in his workshop.

SANTA

I couldn't get all the presents to  
all the boys and girls if I  
couldn't find them, could I?  
(chuckles)

A grin spreads across BRADY's face. The TV still plays in the background.

INTERVIEWEE (O.S.)

Santa's just this guy, you know?

INT. BRADY'S LIVING ROOM - CHRISTMAS EVE NIGHT

BRADY places a plate of cookies and a glass of milk on a small table near the fireplace.

He turns and hides behind the couch.

INT. BRADY'S LIVING ROOM - LATER

A rustle comes from the fireplace. Legs emerge, then the full body of SANTA, bag of toys and all.

SANTA bends over the tree and lays down presents.

SANTA turns and steps to the table with the milk and cookies. He picks up the glass and takes a sip of milk. He sighs and sets the glass down. He grabs his stomach as he wobbles in place.

BRADY watches from behind the couch as SANTA falls to the ground, unconscious. BRADY walks to SANTA's body. He looks down at him.

BRADY  
Merry Christmas.

INT. BRADY'S BEDROOM - LATER

SANTA is tied up to a chair in front of BRADY's desk, still passed out. BRADY sits on his bed and watches SANTA.

SANTA stirs awake.

BRADY turns on the desk lamp. SANTA squints in the light which now shines in his eyes.

BRADY  
Where is she?!

SANTA looks down at his bindings and around the room.

SANTA  
Wha-- why have you got me tied up?  
Let me go, I've got lots of houses  
that need presents before morning!

BRADY  
Tell me where she is and there will  
be no need to delay you any  
further.

SANTA  
Where who is?

BRADY  
Her!

BRADY grabs his drawing of the GIRL, he shoves it in SANTA's face. SANTA turns away.

BRADY (CONT'D)  
(desperately)  
I don't *know* who she is but you've  
got to find her, I can't live  
without her!

SANTA  
And what exactly gives you the idea  
that I can find this GIRL?

(beat)

BRADY stands, turns his laptop to face SANTA and hits a key, bringing up the music player. BRADY leans over the laptop from behind, he eyeballs SANTA.

BRADY  
Exhibit A.

BRADY hits another key.

COMPUTER  
(music)  
He sees you when you're sleeping.  
He knows when you're awake.

BRADY hits another key.

SANTA (O.S.)  
(on computer)  
I couldn't get all the presents to  
all the boys and girls if I  
couldn't find them, could I?  
(chuckles)

BRADY again hits a key and the playback stops.

BRADY  
Now. Are you going to help me or do  
things have to get... difficult?

BRADY shoves the drawing back in SANTA's face.

SANTA looks at the drawing and does a double-take.

SANTA  
(thoughtfully, to himself)  
Noo...

BRADY

What was that, SANTA? You *do* know  
where she is then! Tell me!

Brady slams his hands on the desk.

BRADY (CONT'D)

I've got aaalllll winter break,  
SANTA. We'll just wait and see how  
long it takes you to change your  
mind.

Brady takes a seat on the side of his bed, he stares fixedly  
in SANTA's eyes. SANTA stares back.

FADE TO:

INT. BRADY'S BEDROOM - CHRISTMAS MORNING

Birds chirp. SANTA is still tied in the chair, asleep. BRADY  
sleeps on top of his bed, the covers are undisturbed, he is  
still in his clothes, his legs hang off the bed.

A phone beeps repeatedly. BRADY and SANTA stir awake. BRADY  
finds the source of the beeping and walks to SANTA, reaches  
in his pocket and pulls out a cell phone.

There is a photo of the girl on the phone with the phrase  
"new message" and the name "Sofia Claus."

BRADY narrows his eyes and looks at SANTA.

BRADY

You DO know her? She's your  
daughter?

SANTA

So what if she is. And if you think  
I'm telling you where she is after  
how naughty you've been, you've got  
anothe--

SANTA gargles as BRADY stuffs a stocking into SANTA's mouth.  
BRADY turns away.

BRADY

Don't you see, Santa? I don't need  
to find her anymore. Before long  
she will come to me.

SANTA looks up at BRADY, terrified. The stocking still in his  
mouth.

EXT. BRADY'S HOUSE - LATER

The GIRL walks down the street. She stops in front of Brady's house.

INT. BRADY'S BEDROOM

BRADY sets up a candlelit dinner of milk and cookies on a small table. SANTA is still tied to the chair, but he no longer has the stocking in his mouth.

SANTA

It's not going to work, BRADY. Once she finds out what you've done she won't want anything to do with you.

BRADY

You didn't see us in the park. We had... chemistry.

The doorbell rings. BRADY pushes SANTA, chair and all, into the closet. He shoves the stocking back in his mouth and ties it in place with garland.

BRADY (CONT'D)

Stay quiet in there. No funny business.

BRADY gives the room a once-over. He tosses some dirty clothes under his bed. He pulls the drawing of the girl off of his wall and puts it in a drawer.

The doorbell rings again.

BRADY (CONT'D)

Coming!

INT. BRADY'S FRONT HALLWAY

BRADY runs to the door. Stops. Takes a deep breath. He opens the door. The girl, SOFIA CLAUS, is there. She looks up, opening her mouth to talk, but stops when she sees BRADY. BRADY puts his arm on the door frame and leans on it.

BRADY

Hi there.

SOFIA

(smiles)

Hi.

FADE TO:

INT. BRADY'S BEDROOM - LATER

BRADY and SOFIA sit at the candlelit table. BRADY stares at SOFIA, transfixed.

SOFIA  
...so I said to her, "Mom, he  
probably just went out for a drink  
after work." But she went out  
looking for him anyway.

BRADY snaps out of his 'trance.'

BRADY  
Wait, what? So you're *not* looking  
for him, then?

SOFIA  
If I was looking for my dad would I  
be sitting here with you?  
(beat)

BRADY looks stunned.

SOFIA (CONT'D)  
No. Once mom took off I snuck out.

A muffled groan and thump come from the closet. BRADY and SOFIA look in that direction.

SOFIA (CONT'D)  
What was that?

BRADY  
What?

Another muffled thump.

BRADY (CONT'D)  
Oh that? Nothing. Just mice.

SOFIA shakes her head and continues.

SOFIA  
Look, I'm sorry I had to run off on  
you the other day.

BRADY surreptitiously looks around, focusing on the closet when he can.

BRADY  
(distractedly)  
Oh, don't worry about it. I'm glad  
you're here now.  
(MORE)

BRADY (CONT'D)

(beat)

Hey, did I show you the tree?

SOFIA

You want to show me your Christmas  
tree right now? I think I'd like to  
finish--

SOFIA picks up a cookie and starts to bring it to her mouth.  
BRADY brings her hand back down to the plate.

BRADY

No! Um, I mean. It's just real  
neat. Let me show it to you.

BRADY stands and pulls out SOFIA's chair for her. He leads  
her from the room.

INT. BRADY'S LIVING ROOM

BRADY leads SOFIA into the living room by the hand.

BRADY

Here she is. Great, huh?

SOFIA

(politely)

It's very nice.

BRADY

You gotta see it from the right  
angle. Here.

BRADY grabs SOFIA by the shoulders and moves her so that her  
back is facing the doorway.

BRADY (CONT'D)

Soak it in.

(beat)

I'll be right back.

BRADY walks quickly to the door.

SOFIA

Where are you going?

BRADY

It's a surprise. Just keep looking  
at the tree. I'll be right back.

BRADY bolts out of the room. SOFIA turns back to the tree and  
sighs.



INT. BRADY'S BEDROOM

BRADY rushes into the room and heads straight for the closet. He opens the closet doors and takes off SANTA's stocking-gag.

SANTA  
(fuming)  
She is so grounded!

BRADY puts his hand over SANTA's mouth.

BRADY  
Shhh!

SOFIA (O.S.)  
(in the distance)  
What was that?

BRADY  
(yells, to SOFIA)  
Nothing! Be right there!  
(to SANTA, quietly)  
Whisper.

BRADY takes his hand away and begins to untie SANTA's bindings.

BRADY (CONT'D)  
I'm gonna let you go but you can't  
say a word about this to anyone.

SANTA  
Yeah right, I won't. That little  
girl is coming home with me right  
now.

BRADY finishes untying SANTA. SANTA stands. He begins to talk louder.

SANTA (CONT'D)  
She's snuck out for the last time.  
When I'm done with her, walking  
backwards you won't be able to tell  
her butt from Rudolf's nose.

SANTA walks toward the door. BRADY steps in front of him, putting his hands up.

BRADY  
You need to be quiet! We had a  
deal, you need to get out of here!

As BRADY speaks, the door opens and SOFIA walks in.

SOFIA  
What's going on in here? Sounds  
like you're talking to someone--

SOFIA stops in her tracks when she sees SANTA.

SOFIA (CONT'D)  
(shocked and angry)  
Dad! What the hell?! You can't keep  
showing up like this!  
(to BRADY)  
Sorry about my dad, he's crazy.

BRADY  
Plainly. He seems to think he's  
Santa Claus.

SOFIA  
Oh no, he *is* Santa Claus. It's  
pretty annoying.

SANTA  
Listen here, missy. I'm still your  
father and you're going to listen  
to me.

SOFIA  
No. You listen *here*. You're going  
to leave me alone or I'm going to  
tell Mom I found you a Murphy's Pub  
on Clark.

SANTA and SOFIA stare at each other appraisingly for several  
moments.

SANTA  
Fine.  
(beat)  
As far as I'm concerned you're at  
you're Grandma's house. And and far  
as your mother is concerned... my  
sleigh broke down in Australia.  
Deal?

SOFIA  
Deal.

SANTA nods and walks out of the bedroom. BRADY turns to  
SOFIA.

BRADY  
Wait a sec, ok?

BRADY walks out of the room.

INT. BRADY'S HALLWAY

BRADY jobs up behind SANTA.

BRADY  
Hey. Wait. Santa.

SANTA stops and turns to BRADY.

BRADY (CONT'D)  
We cool?

(beat)

SANTA  
Yeah. Don't worry about it. I would  
have done the same thing for Mrs.  
Claus.  
(smiles nostalgically)  
Why, I remember when we first met.  
It was back in Sacramento nineteen--

BRADY  
That's nice. Well, as long as we're  
cool. You can show yourself out.  
See you later.

BRADY runs back into his bedroom. SANTA yells after him.

SANTA  
I'll be watching you!

SANTA turns and leaves.