

THE NAUGHTY BOY

Original Screenplay

Written

by

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FADE IN:

EXT. SOUTH WEYMOUTH TOWN SQUARE - MORNING

A light snow falls as an SUV stops at a red light. An SUV with MARY-ELLEN WATSON, 30s, ABBY WATSON, 7, and JAMES WATSON, 10, sit in the SUV. James, long blond wavy hair with designer eye-wear is engrossed in his cell phone game as Abby reads.

James swipes his hair and glances out at Nativity scene in the town square. The light above the baby Jesus' head pops out, fizzles and dies out as the traffic light turns GREEN. The SUV joins the traffic as James frowns.

INT. FRANKLIN SCHOOL CAFETERIA - NOON

James stands in the lunch line with STUDENTS, including SCOTT PEARSON, 10, a stout snub-nosed kid, who cuts in front of him.

SCOTT  
(to Lunch Lady)  
More mashed! Great lunch, hey  
Watson?

The LUNCH LADY serves Scott. He saunters off and joins a group of BOYS, 10-11, at a table. James sits near two pimple-faced BOYS, 8, who immediately move to another table.

ABBY WATSON, 7, in a pink dress, sees this and sits with James, leaving KIDS her own at age at her previous table.

JAMES  
No way. You wanna get me creamed?

ABBY  
Wanna play Zooreka later?

JAMES  
No. Why can't you just play phone  
games like everyone else?

ABBY  
(eats fries)  
'Cause I like to play with people,  
not machines. It's nicer.

JAMES  
Nicer for who?

SELMA MARTIN, 10, a pretty yet unkempt Latino girl, sits at a table behind them. As James scans the cafeteria, his eyes fall on her.

ABBY

(opens juice box)

You said you'd have Dad moved home by now. Christmas is in five days and he's still in that smelly apartment with no tree.

JAMES

What do you think I'm working on? You think it's easy getting Mom and Dad down here every week? My life is nothing but detention.

A wad of paper lands on James' neck. James removes it as Scott hides his straw. Scott and his BUDDIES laugh as James reaches into his plate and scoops up some mashed potatoes.

ABBY

James! You promised Mom you'd be nice for Christmas.

James hurls the potatoes which land in Scott's hair. Scott rises, grabs his soda can, shakes it, and lets it rip.

ABBY (CONT'D)

James, I'm wearing my new dress.

Scott sprays James and Abby with his soda. Abby's dress is ruined. A food fight begins and Abby crawls under the table.

Selma gets up and approaches the lunch counter. She shoves some chips, pretzels, and apples into her backpack, zips it up and exits the cafeteria as--

MRS. REARDON, mid-30s, enters in a beige pantsuit. A wad of red beets splatters across her jacket. She sees James standing on a table, hand full of beets. She blows a WHISTLE. Everyone stops fighting and sits down.

MRS. REARDON

James Watson Junior. Get off that table and into my office this instant!

James steps off the table.

ABBY

This is going to be some Christmas.

INT. SANTA CLAUS' OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

SANTA CLAUS, dressed in overalls, watches Mrs. Reardon escort James away on a LARGE SCREEN.

SANTA

Indeed.

INT. FRANKLIN SCHOOL HALLWAY - LATER

James sits on a bench outside Mrs. Reardon's office. He plays a game on his iPhone: *Kamikaze Attack*. James jabs his fingers into the keys at high speed.

JAMES

Kamikaze, over and out!

MARY-ELLEN WATSON, 30s, dressed in business attire, enters in a huff followed by JIM WATSON, 30s, who nearly crashes into her. They exchange annoyed glances.

MARY-ELLEN

She called you too?

JIM

Why is it always right before a meeting?

They hurry down the hallway. James sees them and rises.

JAMES

Hello, DNA. What took you so long?

They barge into Mrs. Reardon's office and close the door.

JAMES (CONT'D)

My work is done here.

James sits back down and resumes his game.

INT. MRS. REARDON'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Mary-Ellen and Jim sit across from Mrs. Reardon who dabs her new suit with club soda. It does not help. She gives up.

MRS. REARDON

That's the second food fight this week. I have some parents threatening to remove their children from this school based on the cleaning bills alone!

MARY-ELLEN  
Naturally, we'll pay for any  
damages. Won't we, Jim?

Jim replies to a text message. Mary-Ellen kicks him under his chair. He gazes up and mouths 'what?'. She rolls her eyes.

MRS. REARDON  
Unfortunately, our job is to  
educate children not to discipline  
them.

Mrs. Reardon rises and puts James' large folder into a file cabinet.

MRS. REARDON (CONT'D)  
Which is why I'm recommending James  
be transferred to the Plight School  
in Boston after Christmas, where  
they are better equipped at  
handling such behavioral problems.

MARY-ELLEN  
Behavioral... Jim, did you hear that?

JIM  
(glances up from phone)  
Boston? That's over an hour away.  
Who's going to pick him up and drop  
him off every day?

SANTA (O.S.)  
Hum, hum, hum, hum, hum.

Mary-Ellen's phone vibrates. It's a text message from James.

TEXT: 'OMG! Major Pee Break. BRB!'

Mary-Ellen closes her phone and sighs.

MRS. REARDON  
I've seen this a thousand times. As  
soon as their parents divorce, the  
children do all sorts of things to  
get their attention.

MARY-ELLEN  
It's only a ten month separation!

JIM  
You mean, he's doing this on  
purpose?

Mrs. Reardon puts her stained jacket back on.

MRS. REARDON

Perhaps if you spent a little more time together as a family, like you did before the divorce, the situation would improve.

MARY-ELLEN

Why does she keep insisting we're divorced?

SANTA (O.S.)

Now we're getting somewhere.

Jim rises and paces around the office.

JIM

There isn't more time. I already work seventy hours as it is. Then there are bills to pay, errands to run, house repairs. Not to mention all the things I have to do with Sarah and her kids.

MRS. REARDON

Who's Sarah?

MARY-ELLEN

I doubt she's interested in hearing about your new girlfriend problems.

SANTA (O.S.)

Hum, hum, hum, hum, hum.

INT. FRANKLIN SCHOOL HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

A TOILET FLUSHES as James exits the boys' bathroom. He heads down the hallway as the SCHOOL BELL RINGS. The halls become inundated with KIDS. Abby spots James and runs towards him.

ABBY

James!

Scott Pearson opens his locker door, accidentally smashing Abby's face against it. Scott's books crash to the floor. He slams the locker shut and sees Abby's frowning face.

SCOTT

Watson tadpole! Look what you did!  
(grabs Abby's arm)  
Now pick 'em up before I...

JAMES (O.S.)  
Before you what?

James shoves Scott against his locker.

JAMES (CONT'D)  
Touch my sister again, Pearson, and  
you'll be eating mashed potatoes  
for life. On account of no teeth!

James kicks Scott's books across the floor as KIDS jump over them and LAUGH. James grabs Abby's hand and walks off. Abby glances back at Scott and gives him a RASPBERRY.

Scott collects his books, pissed, as Mrs. Reardon exits her office followed by Jim and Mary-Ellen.

MRS. REARDON  
Like I said, James has until  
Christmas to--

JAMES  
(reaching her office)  
To what?

ABBY  
Mommy!

Abby hugs Mary-Ellen who gets a load of her new dress.

MARY-ELLEN  
James! Her new dress?

MRS. REARDON  
(eyes James)  
If you'll excuse me, I have parents  
waiting whose child is on the honor  
list.

Mrs. Reardon saunters off as the BELL RINGS. KIDS scramble into their classrooms, including Abby. Jim eyes his watch.

JAMES  
So? Am I savage or what?

Jim's phone vibrates. He reads a TEXT message.

JIM  
Great. They've started without me.

MARY-ELLEN  
(eyes her watch)  
And I'm late for my presentation!

Mary-Ellen and Jim run down the hallway.

JAMES

Hello!? What about me? And who's picking us up after?

MARY-ELLEN

I'll call you later!

JAMES

So much for that family reunion.

James sits on the bench and resumes his iPhone game. Mrs. Reardon, from down the hallway, clears her THROAT.

James pockets his phone, enters a classroom and SLAMS the door. Mrs. Reardon rolls her eyes, returning to two waiting PARENTS, 30s, who warily eye her stained suit.

INT. SANTA CLAUS' OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Santa turns OFF the big screen and strokes his beard.

SANTA

Indeed.

He sits at his large desk covered with children's names stamped 'NAUGHTY' in large red letters. At the top of the stack sits JAMES WATSON's name.

BREEZY, an Elf dressed in Elf attire, enters covered in snow, dragging a large wet MAIL bag into the office.

BREEZY

Sorry I'm late. The mail sleigh got stuck in an abandoned igloo. Took six reindeer to pull out.

Breezy dumps more 'NAUGHTY' names onto the already overloaded desk. Santa sifts through them searching for one 'NICE'.

SANTA

Another bag of Naughties? That can't be right, can it?

Breezy reaches into the bag and grabs one 'NICE' name stamped in green. He puts it on the desk. It reads: ABBY WATSON.

BREEZY

Oh, yes. And one Nice.



SANTA

One!? We'd better check that progress report.

Santa rises and opens a large cabinet. A huge pile of toys fall out onto the floor. Santa steps on a doll which CRIES.

SANTA (CONT'D)

We're using my office for storage now too?

BREEZY

We already filled every mail house, attic, igloo and coal mine for fifty miles! What else is there?

Santa sighs. Breezy grabs an iPod from the pile on the floor.

BREEZY (CONT'D)

So that's where that was! I've been looking everywhere for that.

Breezy puts the headphones ON and rocks to the MUSIC.

BREEZY (CONT'D)

(dances around)

It's one of those new toys the kids love. It's great for exercise and even plays Christmas--

Santa rips the iPod off Breezy's head and throws it into a huge crate marked: RETURNS. The crate holds MP3s, E-Readers, iPads, iPhones, laptops, Gameboys, and other electronic devices used by kids.

SANTA

You know how I feel about those toys. They distract children from learning the four c's.

BREEZY

I know. Communication, compassion, compromise, and confidence. But it's fun!

MRS. CLAUS, a beautiful plus-sized woman, enters with a tray of hot cocoa and sweets. She sees Santa's toys on the floor.

MRS. CLAUS

How did those get in here?

SANTA

We're checking them for durability.

BREEZY  
 (holds a wooden block)  
 What's to check? They've outlasted  
 eight recessions.

Breezy shoves the toys back into the closet as Santa eyeballs him. Mrs. Claus tries to put her tray on Santa's desk, but cannot find a vacant spot.

MRS. CLAUS  
 Are those all Naughties? What  
 happened to all the Nices?

Breezy watches on as Santa takes the tray from Mrs. Claus.

SANTA  
 I see you've been baking again.

He puts the tray on a nearby table. Mrs. Claus eats a muffin.

MRS. CLAUS  
 You know how I get this time of  
 year. With all the excitement, I  
 can't seem to keep still. And that  
 new electric oven, baking so easy.  
 It's as if they bake themselves!

SANTA  
 Newer isn't always better,  
 unfortunately.  
 (takes muffin from her)  
 Perhaps you could help with the  
 dolls again.

Breezy frantically waves his hands. He shows Santa a doll with a face that looks like a transvestite.

MRS. CLAUS  
 But you said my dolls were scaring  
 the children.

Breezy hides the doll as Mrs. Claus takes back the muffin.

SANTA  
 On second thought, baking is much  
 better. We have more than enough  
 dolls this year.

Mrs. Claus nods as she happily nibbles her muffin. An OLDER ELF enters with a golden sealed envelope.

OLDER ELF  
 Special delivery!

The Older Elf salutes Santa, hands him the envelope, and exits.

BREEZY

Uh oh. It's from the Elf Elders.  
They found out about the toys.

MRS. CLAUS

What about the toys?

Santa opens the envelope and reads it.

SANTA

Apparently that igloo collapsed,  
revealing some of the stored toys.

MRS. CLAUS

Stored toys? Why were they being  
stored? Elf toy-making rules say  
that toys must be delivered by  
Santa to every Nice child that asks  
for them!

BREEZY

Which is exactly why we've had to  
store them. We're all out of Nice  
children. Nobody seems to want our  
toys anymore!

Breezy slaps his hand over his mouth and walks off.

MRS. CLAUS

Nobody wants our toys? What is he  
talking about?

SANTA

It's true. Ever since the invention  
of the newer toys, we've had a  
steady decrease in requests for our  
toys and a sharp increase in the  
number of Naughtyies. Breezy and I  
had to not only make up a number of  
toy requests, but we've had to add  
to them each year to keep the elves  
from becoming aware of the problem.

Mrs. Claus eyes the crate full of new toys marked: RETURNS.

MRS. CLAUS

You're storing toys. Exactly how  
many years has it been since you've  
delivered all of them?

BREEZY

Thirty! Ever since the invention  
of the laptop.

Breezy slaps his hand over his mouth again and walks off.

MRS. CLAUS

Is this true?

SANTA

I'm afraid so.

Mrs. Claus bites into another muffin. Santa takes it away.

SANTA (CONT'D)

This is exactly why I didn't want  
to worry you. Sooner or later the  
children will remember why they  
preferred our toys.

MRS. CLAUS

But what if they don't? What if  
the Naughty list continues to grow?  
What will happen to all the nice  
children?

BREEZY

She's right! A few more years like  
this and Christmas could go out of  
business!

He slaps his hand over his mouth as another closet bursts  
open revealing Santa's toys. Santa eyes the crate full of  
the newer toys, and strokes his beard, worried.

EXT. FRANKLIN SCHOOL - DAY

Rain pours. Abby and Mrs. Reardon stand in front of the  
school, waiting. Abby holds her Barbie umbrella above Mrs.  
Reardon's head. James emerges from the school and sees them.

JAMES

What? Again?

Abby nods 'yes'. An exasperated James pulls out his cell  
phone. Mrs. Reardon holds out her open palm.

MRS. REARDON

You know the rules. No cell phones  
on school property during school  
hours.

JAMES

But it's *after* school.

MRS. REARDON

Would you like more detention?

JAMES

You just gave me six hours!

MRS. REARDON

Shall we make it seven?

James hands over his cell phone and scowls. Mrs. Reardon retrieves her own cell phone and 'speed dials' a number. The phone RINGS and RINGS as more cars drive by. She hangs up.

MRS. REARDON (CONT'D)

I don't have time for this. I have my own kids to pick up.

JAMES

No fail. I can walk her home. It's only three blocks and I have the keys right here. See?

James dangles his house keys in front of Mrs. Reardon's eyes.

MRS. REARDON

Fine! But have her call me the second she gets in, or I'll expect to see both of your parents back in my office first thing tomorrow.

James nods. Mrs. Reardon watches them walk off.

JAMES

(to Abby)

See? I told you my plan was working.

They continue down the street.

ABBY

Your plan is stupid. Don't you every think that just nice would make things better?

JAMES

When's 'just being nice' ever done? If you want to fix something, you gotta have a plan. How many times I gotta tell you that?

They stop at an intersection as the FEMALE CROSSING GUARD, 30s, sees James. She gives him a nasty look.

JAMES (CONT'D)

What's her problem?

ABBY

You wrote 'Honk If You Bet She's Single' on her sign last year. Remember?

JAMES

That was forever ago. Can't she take a joke?

The Crossing Guard lets James and Abby cross. An impatient driver HONKS as he drives by her.

FEMALE CROSSING GUARD

I'm engaged now!

James shakes his head as Abby frowns.

JAMES

Noob.

ABBY

What if Dad doesn't move back? This could actually be our last Christmas together.

JAMES

Not gonna happen. Soon they'll both see that newer isn't always better.

ABBY

What?

JAMES

That old isn't... that new stuff can't... Oh, I don't know. Why do you always ask so many questions? I'm just trying to be nice, okay?

Abby stops in her tracks. Her eyes well with tears.

ABBY

That's just it, James. You're never nice. If you were, maybe they'd stop fighting.

James halts, floored, and looks back at her.

JAMES  
I can't believe you just said that.

ABBY  
Just really try to be nice this  
Christmas. For me? Please?

She bites her lip. James turns away.

JAMES  
Don't do that. I hate that.

She bites her lip again. James sees her tears. He throws up  
his hands.

JAMES (CONT'D)  
Okay, I'll try! Only I'm telling  
you, being nice never fixes  
anything!

A car HONKS as Mary-Ellen stops beside them.

ABBY  
Mommy!

Abby runs over to the SUV. James follows.

MARY-ELLEN  
Why weren't you at school?

JAMES  
Why weren't you?

Mary-Ellen lowers the backseat window. James sees BILL  
HARRIS, late-30s, in the front seat, and his sons, HENRY, 9,  
and THOMAS, 11, in the back playing Gameboys. James gives  
his mother the stink eye.

MARY-ELLEN  
(to James, hushed)  
Be nice.  
(louder)  
You remember Bill Harris and his  
boys from school? They're coming  
to the mall with us.

JAMES  
Oh joy! Just what I always wanted.

ABBY  
James, you promised!

James helps Abby into her booster seat and climbs in.

MARY-ELLEN  
Promised what, honey?

JAMES  
(shoves boys)  
Move over!

BOYS  
You move over.

James slams the door as the SUV drives off. Abby looks out the window and frowns.

EXT. SANTA'S VILLAGE - DAY

Santa and Breezy exit Santa's house. They head down the hillside toward the village.

SANTA  
Maybe it was a misprint. Maybe they didn't actually find the toys.

BREEZY  
You really are living in a fantasy world, aren't you?

They enter a huge building in the middle of the village which reads: TOY SHOP.

INT. TOY SHOP - CONTINUOUS

Thousands of ELVES make toys by hand or with the help of old-fashioned machinery. They work efficiently. Santa and Breezy walk past them.

ELVES  
It's Santa! You're here early.

SANTA  
(eyes toys)  
Simply marvelous. Keep up the good work.

BREEZY  
(under his breath)  
Shouldn't you be saying, slow it down?

Santa and Breezy climb a staircase to a second floor landing. Santa peers inside an office window and sees the THREE ELF ELDERS seated at three small wooden desks.



Each Elf Elder is dressed in an elf suit with golden shoulder tassels. Breezy notices Santa sweating and hands him a handkerchief.

BREEZY (CONT'D)  
Should I come with?

SANTA  
(dabs forehead)  
No. We don't want to appear  
anxious.

BREEZY  
Right. Denial is always the best  
approach.

Santa enters the office alone. The factory has fallen silent. Breezy looks at all the elves who have stopped working to watch.

BREEZY (CONT'D)  
Work!

The elves work faster than ever and smile happily.

BREEZY (CONT'D)  
Yep. We're doomed all right.

He peers into the office.

INT. ELF ELDERS' OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Santa stands before the three ELF ELDERS as they hide some blueprints and rise from their desks.

SANTA  
You wanted to see me, gentlemen?

ELF ELDER THREE  
Have a seat. Won't you?

Santa spots an elf-sized chair in the middle of the room and makes several attempts to sit on it. He finally gives up.

SANTA  
I think I'll stand, thank you.

The Elf Elders circle him as one of them brandishes a report.

ELF ELDER THREE  
It has come to our attention that a  
great many toys are being stored  
throughout the village.

ELF ELDER TWO

Including nearly a billion toys  
that haven't been requested this  
Christmas!

Elf Elder Two holds up a report. Santa turns around, trying  
to keep up with them.

ELF ELDER ONE

This means the elves are down there  
right now making toys you have no  
intention of delivering!

ELF ELDER TWO

Not to mention the billions of toys  
you're now storing!

Santa grabs on the tiny chair, slightly dizzy.

SANTA

Alright. I'll admit we've had a  
slight increase in the Naughty list  
over the past few years, but I  
assure you it's only a matter of  
time before the children lose  
their interest in all high-tech  
devices and return to requesting  
our toys.

ELF ELDERS TWO AND ONE

So you admit it. You are secretly  
storing toys!

SANTA

It's not the children's fault. The  
world has become an increasingly  
distracting place to live in.

Santa paces the office.

SANTA (CONT'D)

Why most parents today have to work  
twice as hard for far less than  
ever before, which means less time  
spend with their children. That's  
why our toys are more important  
than ever.

(MORE)

## SANTA (CONT'D)

They help teach children the values that will not only help them become happier children and adults, but also encourage them to embrace a physical world filled with social and emotional experiences which lead to memories that last a lifetime, which reminds them that not only is giving the only way to be happy, but it is exactly the reason why playing with toys that teach the to become Nice is so important.

The Elf Elders turn to each other, confused.

## ELF ELDERS ONE, TWO AND THREE

I have no idea what he's talking about? Do you know what he's saying? No!

## ELF ELDER TWO

What's this got to do with saving your toys!?

Elf Elder Three rises.

## ELF ELDER THREE

I warned you this would happen. If we don't start making the toys children want today, you're going to put us all out of business!

Breezy enters, concerned.

## BREEZY

Is everything all right in here?

## SANTA

If only there was some way I could remind the children about the value of the four c's, without the use of the toys. But how? We've always relied on our toys to convey the message of Christmas.

Elf Elder Three's eyes widen.

## ELF ELDER THREE

Excuse us a moment, will you?

The Elf Elders form a huddle and whisper.

ELF ELDER THREE (CONT'D)

That's it. We'll ask him to turn one Naughty into Nice by Christmas without the use of his toys, or else admit to the elves that he's no longer in charge of Christmas!

ELF ELDER ONE

And what if he succeeds in this?

ELF ELDER THREE

Nonsense. Once a Naughty always a Naughty and never a Nice twice. Everyone knows that.

ELF ELDER TWO

He's right. We'll be able to make our own toys and be in charge of Christmas!

They HUSH Elf Two and look over at Santa and smile. They return to their desks.

ELF ELDER THREE

We've decided to accept your offer.

SANTA

Offer? What offer is that?

ELF ELDER THREE

You turn one Naughty into Nice by Christmas, without the use of your toys.

SANTA

Did I say that?

ELF ELDER ONE

And we'll see if the four c's still mean as much to the children as they do to you and our toys.

ELF ELDER THREE

And if not, we'll be in charge of Christmas from now on which means, we'll be making the newer toys!

Breezy eyes widen, stunned.

BREEZY

You'll be making toys? That sounds like you trying to fire Santa!

The Elf Elders rise holding the blueprints and reports.

ELF ELDER ONE  
Would you rather be making coal?

ELF ELDER TWO  
We're in the business of storing  
toys!

ELF ELDER THREE  
Either he proves he can still run  
Christmas or we'll have no choice  
but to get rid of him and his toys!

Santa is deeply hurt by this.

ELF ELDER TWO  
Agreed?

SANTA  
Agreed.

Breezy passes out on the floor as Santa eyes him, suddenly  
overwhelmed.

INT. SANTA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

An ELF DOCTOR hovers over Breezy who lies in Santa's bed. The  
Elf Doctor sticks a tongue depressor in Breezy's mouth as  
Santa looks on, dressed in his red robe and slippers.

ELF DOCTOR  
Say, ah!

BREEZY  
I told you, I'm perfectly...

ELF DOCTOR  
Say it!

BREEZY  
AHHH!

The Elf Doctor puts his tongue depressor away and rises.

ELF DOCTOR  
You'll live. Now get some rest and  
I'll check on you later.

Breezy bolts out of the bed.

BREEZY  
Rest? How can I rest in the middle  
of a crisis?

ELF DOCTOR  
What crisis?

Breezy looks at Santa, panicked.

BREEZY  
Elf flu! You know how the elves  
are this time of year. Busy, busy,  
busy. Not even a bomb can slow them  
down.

ELF DOCTOR  
Elf flu! That is urgent. Why  
haven't I heard about this?

The Elf Doctor rushes out the door.

SANTA  
You're lying now?

BREEZY  
What did you want me say? That  
Christmas is ending because of a  
few outdated toys?

Mrs. Claus enters with a tray of treats.

MRS. CLAUS  
But children have played with our  
toys for four hundred years. And  
you said yourself, the newer toys  
don't last more than a few months.  
Most of them are not even child  
proof.

SANTA  
That's not the point. The Elf  
Elders no longer believe I  
understand the children or what  
they need. And maybe their right.  
Maybe my time as Santa has come to  
and end.

Mrs. Claus and Breezy are both shocked by this. Mrs. Claus  
touches Santa's shoulder.

MRS. CLAUS  
Nonsense. If anyone understands  
what makes a child heart full of  
joy it's you. You must remember,  
the gift of giving is remembered  
for a life time.

BREEZY

But who is the Naughty child? Has anyone heard?

OLDER ELF (O.S.)

Special delivery.

The Older Elf enters with a golden sealed envelope. He hands it to Santa, salutes him, and exits the room.

BREEZY

I don't even think I want to hear this.

Breezy walks off as Santa opens the envelope and reads.

BREEZY (CONT'D)

Dear lord. Please, make him a gracious, reasonable, rational, responsible--

SANTA

It's James Watson.

BREEZY

What!?

(turns around)

James Watson of 389 Belmont Drive, South Weymouth, Massachusetts?

SANTA

Yes. Why?

BREEZY

He's the most selfish child on our radar. He's topped the Naughty list three years in a row!

MRS. CLAUS

A selfish child at Christmas?

SANTA

Apparently the Elf Elders knew that a selfish child is the hardest to change back to being Nice. They've completely forgotten what giving is.

BREEZY

That's it. It's over. I can smell the coal dust already.

SANTA

We still have five days to see what he does remember.

Santa puts the envelope away. He takes off his robe and lies on the bed.

SANTA (CONT'D)

In the meantime, we'll get some sleep and leave first thing in the morning to speak with him.

A huge silk comforter engulfs Santa and tucks him in, followed by his pillow fluffing itself for his head.

BREEZY

What do you mean, 'we'?

SANTA

I haven't spoken to a human child in nearly a century. Ever since they started putting Santa's in the store. Besides, you're a parent. I could use your support.

Mrs. Claus takes off her robe and lies beside Santa. The comforter and pillow do the same thing for her.

BREEZY

Elves are not children. They don't know how to be selfish. That's why we're so good at making toys!

Breezy exits the bedroom as Mrs. Claus turns OFF the light.

MRS. CLAUS (O.S.)

Goodness gracious. Since when did making a few toys to make some children happy become so complicated?

SANTA (O.S.)

Since I thought of giving them, I believe.

INT. APPLEBEE'S RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Jim and Mary-ellen sit at a table with James and Abby. The WAITRESS stands beside James, taking his order.

JAMES

I'll have the double-double, extra fries, a Mac and Cheese, and...



JIM  
James, you're ordering too much.

JAMES  
Its called take-out, Dad. Besides,  
you know how Mom hates to cook.  
I'm just trying to help out.

James continues ordering as Mary-Ellen sighs.

MARY-ELLEN  
He always does that.

JIM  
What?

MARY-ELLEN  
Makes me feel like I'm doing a  
horrible job as a mother.

JIM  
When is the last time you cooked?

Mary-Ellen gapes at Jim as SARAH MARSHALL, 30s, an attractive blonde, enters the restaurant with her twin daughters, EMILY and RACHEL, 11. She waves to Jim.

MARY-ELLEN  
What's Sarah doing here?

JIM  
I said I'd help her pick out a tree  
later.

MARY-ELLEN  
But you told James you'd help him  
with his homework.

JIM  
I thought you were going to.

BILL (O.S.)  
Hi, there!

Mary-Ellen looks up and sees Bill wave. He sits at a nearby table with his sons who play with their Gameboys.

JIM  
What's Bill Harris doing here?

BILL  
(winks to Mary-Ellen)  
Can't wait to see the lights later.

Mary-Ellen looks away as Jim's eyes widen.

JIM  
You're dating him?

MARY-ELLEN  
We're friends. And what  
difference does it make? You're  
dating, aren't you?

Abby looks at her parents, worried, and bites her lip.

BOY'S VOICE (O.S.)  
Sorry I'm late, Mrs. W.

PHILLIP BARTON, 16, a huge kid with acne dressed in a high school wrestling jacket which reads: CAPTAIN, arrives at their table.

PHILLIP  
We just beat the pants off Wesley.

JIM  
Who's this? Another date?

MARY-ELLEN  
This is Phillip. Our new baby-  
sitter.

James looks up, nearly chokes.

MARY-ELLEN (CONT'D)  
This is my husband, Jim, and that's  
Abby and James.

Phillip sits between Abby and James and grabs a menu.

PHILLIP  
So what's good here? I'm starved.

JIM  
What happened to the old baby-  
sitter?

MARY-ELLEN  
Would you like to explain, James?

JAMES  
How did I know it was paint instead  
of food coloring? Besides, they're  
just hair extensions.

The Waitress returns with a plate of fries that she places before James. Phillip eats one. James' mouth drops.

PHILLIP

I'll have what he's having.

The Waitress walks off as Phillip's hand goes back into James plate. James picks up his fork to retaliate.

JIM

James!

James puts the fork down and unscrews the top to the ketchup. He puts it next to Phillip.

PHILLIP

(to Abby)

So sweetpea, I hear your a real fan of Zooreka. How about we play a game after dinner?

ABBY

Really? You're nice.

PHILLIP

Those could use more ketchup. Don't you think, buddy?

Phillip grabs the ketchup and tries to squeeze it. James grabs it back and squeezes it himself. The cap falls off and ketchup splatters all over James' shirt.

JAMES

Butters!

MARY-ELLEN

James, what did you do now?

PHILLIP

No sweat, Mrs. W! We'll get that cleaned up in no time.

Phillip grabs James and drags him towards the men's room.

JAMES

Mom, Dad! Do something!

Abby smiles, pleased.