

House of Tomorrow

by
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CHARACTERS:

JANE JUPITER- Housewife

JOHN JUPITER- Her husband

LITTLE JENNY- Their daughter

PATTY STUDEBAKER- Jane's estranged friend

SALESMAN- Your friendly DomestiTech salesman

HANC- The artificial persona of the Home Analysis Networking Computer

OTHERS*- REX ROCKET, LEANDRA ZENITH, ANNOUNCER

SETTING:

The Jupiter Home.

The Push-Button Age; an alternate 21st century America where the plastic, technology-driven future dreamed by folks living in the 50s and 60s has come to full fruition.

ADDITIONAL NOTES:

*Rex Rocket and Announcer can all potentially be played by the actor playing Salesman. Leandra Zenith can potentially be played by the actor playing Patty.

- HANC's voice does not need to be highly modulated and should err more on the side of sounding like a normal human voice.
- Overall Aesthetic: Without being too prescriptive to the designers, I envision the world as a healthy blend between 'futuristic' synthetic materials like plastic, nylon, chrome, etc., and retro shapes, colors, and fabrics from the 50s and 60s. There may also be space in the design to point to some things we are actually familiar with now, at the time in which the play is being produced.

SCENE 1

In darkness a screen flashes to life. Triumphant music underscores a title card reading "DomestiTech proudly presents". Cut to the next card which reads "A new Thermofridge for a new year". Cut to the Thermofridge itself, a gleaming chrome behemoth of a kitchen appliance. The shiny-faced SALESMAN appears.

SALESMAN.

Bigger. Shinier. With more features than ever before...

DomestiTech is proud to introduce the latest model of our brand new, durable, easy-as-pie-to-use, patented, brand new, patented Thermofridge!

(Jingle bells.)

Uh oh.

Do you hear that, ladies?

The holidays are just around the corner.

And with all those hungry relatives to feed, and mother-in-law to impress, that makes for an awful lot of housework.

But with brand new, patented technology from DomestiTech you'll be singing "Joy to the World!"

The newly improved cooling compartment keeps the eggnog chilled and freezes leftovers in seconds.

Imagine!

The North Pole in your very own kitchen.

Looking to heat things up?

Switch over to the heating compartment, now reconfigured to hold an entire spit-roasted pig!

—for the more adventurous culinary types.

No need for a fire to roast those chestnuts over this Christmas.

The Thermofridge has it covered.

Bake that apple pie in two minutes flat.

Roast a rack of lamb in ten.

Not sure what temperature you want?

No problem.

Simply use the new, streamlined, patented push-button display *and presto!*

No more pesky timers.

No more burnt food.

No more Mother-in-Law hovering over your shoulder!

And that's not all, ladies...

This swell machine comes in three fashionable colors:

chrome, chrome-white, and chrome-blue!

(An orchestral version of "O Tannenbaum")

And at the affordable price of thirty-two thousand dollars,
you simply can't beat it!

Don't be the only housewife to start the year two thousand and twelve
without this miracle of modern innovation!

Order today via your at-home computerized catalogue.

A new Thermofridge for a new year!

A title card reads "DomestiTech, bringing you the technology of Tomorrow... Today." As the commercial plays out "O Tannenbaum" swells and suddenly— a real life Thermofridge is revealed along with the rest of the KITCHEN of the JUPITER HOME. At the center of the kitchen is a large screen with a panel of buttons beneath. Aside from several chrome appliances, everything else is plastic, even the Christmas tree in the corner. It has the smell of plastic. The sheen of plastic. A highly plastic, highly modern design outfitted with all the latest conveniences— and now the latest Thermofridge— which JANE and the SALESMAN have been marveling at.

SALESMAN.

Well, Mrs. Jupiter...

What do you think?

JANE.

Golly—

It's a dream!

SALESMAN.

A dream in chrome blue, just for you.

JANE.

And so shiny...

I can see my face even!

SALESMAN.

The happy, smiling face of another satisfied DomestiTech customer.

JANE.

Very happy.

SALESMAN.

Just wait til you pull a piping hot pot roast out of this puppy in practically no time.

JANE.

Oh my, I can hardly wait!

SALESMAN.

Then whattaya say we get the invoice all squared away
and I can leave the two of you to get better acquainted?

JANE.

Certainly.

The SALESMAN removes an invoice from inside his jacket.

SALESMAN.

Now the bottom line is a little more than what was advertised
but there's a special / rebate

JOHN. (Off)

Honey?

JANE.

Oh— I thought he'd be at work already.

JOHN enters in the midst of tying his tie.

JOHN.

What's all this?

JANE.

Just the new Thermofridge, dear.

(She undoes his tie and ties it better)

Aren't you running late for work?

JOHN.

Little Jenny needed help with her arithmetic—
Say, don't we already have one of those?

JANE.

That was the old one.

This is the new one.

SALESMAN.

As always, the missus has impeccable taste, Mr. Jupiter.

JOHN.

(‘50s stern husband)

Hooonnnney...

JANE.

Oh John, please don’t be mad.

JOHN.

I’m not mad.

But I wouldn’t mind knowing exactly how much/

SALESMAN.

John?

Do you mind if I call you John?

John, before you ask me that, let me ask you *this...*

Have you ever smelled the delectable aroma of
a WHOLE. SPIT-ROASTED. PIG.

wafting through your home on a Sunday afternoon?

JOHN.

I— well, no, I guess I can’t say I have.

SALESMAN.

Well you could, John.

You could.

See, in the Stone Age...

if man wanted to roast a pig, there was all sorts of work involved.

He had to go out there,

hunt it down,

drain it of its juices, scrape out the innards— all that blood and viscera, John.

And then how about starting a fire?

Do you know how to start a fire, John- I don’t— not without *modern* technology.

Oh, and let’s not forget to ask our caveman what *he* used

to keep his leftovers cold after he finished his supper, huh?
You see, John, the whole point is...
why live in Yesterday
when you could be living in Tomorrow?

JOHN.
And how much/

SALESMAN.
But you know what?
Nevermind all of that, John...
Nevermind the pig— after all, who's that pig to you?
I want you to look at Jane, John.
Look into your wife's big beautiful [brown] eyes.
This wonderful woman who loves you- who takes care of you-
who keeps your home running day in and day out.
See what this new Thermofridge will do for her.
See how easy her life will be— how much *better* because of it!

JANE.
It really will be better!

SALESMAN.
Everything will be better because of this one, simple appliance.

JANE.
Please dear...?

JOHN.
Well...
(Looking down at his watch)
Willikers!
Is that the time?!
(A beat)
I suppose there's no point arguing now...
A second longer and Mr. Vector'll have *me* roasting on a spit.

JANE.
Does that mean...?

JOHN.

Yes- but we are going to have to have a little talk later, you and I.

SALESMAN.

Perhaps after a magnificently prepared meal?
Then you'll see for yourself just how palatable
and practical this new Thermofridge really is!

JANE.

We'll talk.

Have a good day at work, dear.

JANE kisses JOHN on the cheek enthusiastically, then wipes off the lipstick.

JOHN.

Promise me no more big purchases today?

JANE.

I swear it swell-ly.

JOHN pinches JANE's nose playfully and exits. JANE turns to the SALESMAN.

JANE.

That was incredible!

SALESMAN.

Just a simple DomestiTech technique.
Keep pitching til they catch it.
Or in this case— strike out.

JANE.

For a second I really thought he might put his foot down on this one.

SALESMAN.

Well, let's make sure that foo stays in the air, huh?
At least for just a few more days...
You're so close, Jane.

JANE.

I know.

SALESMAN.

Good.

Here.

He hands her the invoice.

JANE.

Hanc?

On the screen, a green circle appears and vibrates when HANC speaks.

HANC.

Yes, Jane?

What can I help you with?

JANE.

Will you prepare this invoice for payment?

HANC.

Yes, Jane.

Please place the invoice inside the scanner.

JANE places the paper inside of what appears to be a toaster.

SALESMAN.

I see you're making good use of our two-in-one toaster/atomizer scanner.

JANE.

It's wonderful.

Oh, except when it tries to scan the toast

or toast the paper— there was a very small fire/

SALESMAN.

Well, DomestiTech has a new model in the works guaranteed to fix all that.

Just waiting on the patent.

HANC.

Invoice received successfully.

Beaming payment to DomestiTech Incorporated now.

SALESMAN.

Just like that, another day, another dollar— and on to the next delivery.

JANE.

Thank you, Mr. Salesman.

For everything— *really*.

SALESMAN.

Pleasure doing business with you as always, Jane.

So long.

JANE.

So long!

SALESMAN.

Not too long though, I hope?

(He winks at her)

JANE.

No, no.

Soon...

Very soon!

SALESMAN.

That's what I like to hear.

The SALESMAN exits. JANE rests her back against the Thermofridge, in a mixture of relief and excitement. She runs her hands up and down the chrome finish. Everything's going to work out.

JANE.

Hanc?

HANC.

Yes, Jane?

JANE.

I'm thinking meatloaf and mashed potatoes tonight.

HANC.

All ingredients for a meatloaf and mashed potato dinner are accounted for.
Recommending a vegetable serving to balance dietary needs.

JANE.

Good idea.
What do we have?

HANC.

Recommending green peas.

JANE.

Peas it is.
And pie!
For dessert.
Apple— no, blueberry— *no, cherry!*
Think we can whip up a cherry pie in under two minutes, Hanc?

HANC.

With the new Thermofridge that is a reasonable estimate, yes, Jane.

JANE.

Let's hop to it then!

JANE faces the fridge and catches her reflection.

JANE.

Oh hello.
There I am again....
in chrome blue!
Hanc, what would you do if you saw yourself in chrome blue?

HANC.

I'm not sure I understand your question?
Can you try rephrasing it?

JANE.

It's okay, Hanc, I know you can't answer.
You don't have a reflection.

HANC.

Do you mean reflection as in the witnessing of one's external features proportionately or disproportionately depending on their manifestation inside of a glass, or mirror, or very, very shiny surface?

JANE.

But maybe it's not such a bad thing, not having one...
At least you don't have to worry.

HANC.

Worry about what?

JANE.

(A beat. She isn't really sure what she meant)

Oh, I don't know really....

(It comes to her.)

Just— keeping up appearances.

JANE lingers on her reflection just a half-second before opening the Thermofridge and removing a bowl of fresh cherries.

SCENE 2

On the screen: a golf course with a ball resting on a tee. Sunshine and bird chatter.

JOHN.
Fore!

Lights up on JOHN'S OFFICE; a heavily plastic contrast to the vivid nature on the screen. JOHN is mid-swing. As he follows through the sound of a golf shot and the ball on the screen sails through the air and lands in a sand-trap.

JOHN.
Shucks.

JOHN starts to line up the next shot.

HANC.
If you position your feet at exactly forty-three point five degrees/

JOHN.
No thanks, Hanc.
I'd like to feel this one out for a change.

HANC.
May I ask what you mean by that?

JOHN.
Hmmm...
Well, golf's a game of technique, sure,
it helps to know the angles...
But it's also a game of instinct.
It has to feel right— inside your body.
You let your instinct guide you to the perfect shot.

JOHN is about to take a swing when something occurs to him.

JOHN.
Say, Hanc?

HANC.
Yes, John?

JOHN.
While we're on the subject of instinct,
mine's telling me Jane's already gone and bought something else today, hasn't she?

HANC.
Jane bought a dress this afternoon.

JOHN.
Just one?

HANC.
The same dress in three different colors.
Chrome, chrome blue, and chrome white.
Also, a pair of matching shoes for each.

JOHN.
Okay...
Anything else?

HANC.
Right now Jane is buying two necklaces.
A pair of earrings.
A night gown.
...
And five thousand Q-tips.

JOHN.
Q-tips?

HANC.
The Q-tips appear to have been an accidental purchase,
the order has just been cancelled.

JOHN.
Hanc...
Just how much has Jane been spending, exactly?
On a weekly basis, let's say.

HANC.

On average, Jane's total weekly purchases amount to three hundred twenty-six thousand, four hundred thirty-five dollars and eighty two cents.

JOHN.

(A beat to let it sink in)

Good grief.

A sudden ringing sound that is also visually represented on the screen.

HANC.

It's Mr. Vector.

JOHN.

(This is the worst time)

Geeze louise.

(Trying to regain composure.)

Alright.. uh...

HANC.

Would you like me to patch you through via the video-comm?

JOHN.

No, that's alright.

I'll take it in-ear.

JOHN presses something inside his ear, and a small light blinks from inside.

JOHN.

(Trying to stay pleasant throughout)

Mr. Vector!

What a sur/

...

Yes, sir, I'm awfully sor/

...

Yes, well I am awfully sorry about that,
something came up with my wife this morning,
and you have my word, it won't/

...

Yep.

...

Uhuh, I'm almost finished with those.
Definitely by tomorrow/

...

Today?
What time are you hollogramming in?
(Checks his watch)

But, sir, that's in four hours.

...

I just mean my usual clock-out time is/

...

The board wants to see them before the end of the day...

...

Yes, I understand there's a time difference on the moon/

...

What's that?

...

No, sir, I don't typically consider myself a feckless ignoramus, I just/

...

Of course.

I'll stay late and finish them.

You'll have those blue prints beamed over to you A-S-A/

...

Hello?

Mr. Vector?

You still there...?

JOHN presses the inside of his ear to disconnect. He takes a breath, goes to line up another golf shot, and notices he has bent his club nearly in half. He tosses the useless driver aside and collapses into the chair behind his desk. From a drawer, he removes a bottle of pills. He takes one. Tries to relax.

JOHN.

(Gazing at the golf course on the screen)

I miss the simpler times, Hanc...

The good ol' days of the outdoor course.

It was really about instinct then.

You had to feel which way the wind was blowing,
or how dense the sand in the sand trap was.

If it had rained recently— if it was going to rain...

the slope of the green underneath your feet...

(A beat)

Why they had to go and build houses over all those golf courses...

HANC.

The value and utility of outdoor golf courses declined once DomestiTech computerized them.

JOHN.

It's all about money and convenience in this day and age.

(A beat)

Sometimes I want to design something that serves absolutely no purpose.

Something I can build with my own two hands.

Like a birdhouse.

Or a snowman... but that's...

I'm not even sure why...

It's just an overwhelming feeling I get from time to time.

HANC.

Instinct.

JOHN.

Instinct.

SCENE 3

In darkness, a title appears on the screen. A TV show called "The Galactic Adventures of Rex Rocket". Adventurous music.

ANNOUNCER. (VO)

And now, another exciting episode of "The Galactic Adventures of Rex Rocket"! When last we left off, our hero was scouring the cavernous moon caves in search of the lovely Leandra Zenith.

The winner of the Miss Lunar Pageant was shockingly kidnapped last week by none other than the ruthless moon-villain, Evilnova.

Without his trusty sidekick space-dog, Comet, by his side, will Rex be able to save Leandra

and foil Evilnova's dastardly plan to destroy Earth with his supersonic, antimatter fraxel laser?!

Find out in this week's episode of "The Galactic Adventures of Rex Rocket"!

Establishing shot of the MOON. Cut to INT. MOON CAVE. REX ROCKET holds a laser gun in front of him. He looks around before lifting his right wrist to his mouth.

REX.

Come in, Lunar Command.

This is Rex Rocket.

Do you read me, Lunar Command?

Over.

LC (V.O.)

Come in Rex Rocket.

This is Lunar Command.

We read you. What's your location?

Over.

REX.

Somewhere in the depths of the Southwest moon caverns.

No sign of Leandra or Evilnova.

Over.

LC.
Copy.
Be careful, Rex.
Over.

REX
Roger.
Lunar Command, if I die out here...
I want you to tell my dog, Comet, how much I'll miss him,
and that I really, really/

A laser fires just past REX's head. He ducks behind a moon boulder and fires back with his laser gun. An exchange of different colored lasers shoot back and forth across the screen. Suddenly, the action cuts out and is replaced by HANC's quivering green circle. Lights up on LITTLE JENNY'S ROOM. A pink plastic space, adorned with Rex Rocket posters. LITTLE JENNY has been watching the show from her bed, wearing a 3D Visor over her eyes.

JENNY.
Haaanc!
(Removing 3D visor)
I was watching that!

HANC.
Little Jenny, you have required social studies viewing that you haven't finished.

JENNY.
I know, but—
C'mon, it's the last day before the holiday break.

HANC.
All assigned viewing must be finished
before you may commence any / leisure viewing

JENNY.
Ugh— social studies is Snoozeville.
Can I at least have just five more minutes of Rex Rocket?
Pleeeeeease?

HANC.

I'm afraid my programming / cannot be swayed by human emotion.

JENNY.

Cannot be swayed by human emotion, yeah, yeah...

Hard-wired without a heart.

HANC.

What was that?

JENNY.

Nothing.

Okay, play the lesson, Hanc,

I'll try not to fall asleep.

A title appears on the screen. "Domestitech Proudly Presents: America and The Great Collapse". Patriotic music. An American flag waves on screen. Perhaps more images/scenes are included in the movie.

NARRATOR.

America.

Land of the free.

Home of the brave.

We may as well add land of the bold and home of the innovative!

Yes, we certainly are blessed to find ourselves living in the Push Button Age; an age when some of the greatest minds this country has ever known, have shed an incandescent light over what was once our darkest time as a nation.

The Great Collapse of nineteen ninety-nine.

America was plummeted into a three year depression that saw nearly seventy-five percent unemployment,

over forty-percent homelessness,

and brought this once-great nation to the brink bankruptcy.

Not even the wealthiest of folks were exempt from the crippling crash,

which also became known as the Great Economic Equalizer

at the cost of many a shuttered business and foreclosed home.

While its citizens suffered, the government debated over what should be done.

Their eventual plan— was ambitious.

More than that, it was a gamble.

A gamble with the highest stakes this country has ever known.

Rather than bail out companies lost to the Collapse,
the entire remaining funds of the treasury were invested into one
all-encompassing corporation,
with the sole mission to jettison America out of economic stagnation
and into a period of rapid technological growth and improved quality of life.
That company became known as DomestiTech.
And the harebrained scheme that once threatened to topple U.S. for good,
instead sent it zipping into Tomorrow on the silver wings of an aerocar.
Now, here we are, nearly a decade later,
the most technologically advanced nation on Earth.
We've traded in our amber waves of grain for healthier,
genetically-harnessed foods,
and out-majestied those purple mountains
with modern marvels of man-made architecture.
We've settled suboceanic cities beneath the Pacific,
and soon our reach will extend as high as moon
with the founding of eight new lunar colonies.

JANE appears in the KITCHEN, setting the table for dinner.

NARRATOR.

It wasn't easy.

No sir, the Tomorrow we know Today certainly didn't happen overnight.
And it wouldn't have happened at all,
without the hard work and ingenuity of all
the Timmy Tinkers and Joe Geniuses out there,
as well as ordinary citizens, like you and your family,
investing in their success.

Now, more than ever,
the average American has a responsibility to make purchases,
not just to improve the well-being of their personal lives,
but the well-being of the economy as a whole.

And DomestiTech is committed to making it easier than ever
to be a patriotic consumer,
with their newly updated computerized catalogue
filled with exciting new patented products.

So go out today— *or*, stay in the comfort of your own home— and buy, buy, buy.
Because even Freedom comes with a price tag.

“DOMESTITECH. Bringing you the technology of Tomorrow. Today.” appears over the same American flag and music from the beginning. In the KITCHEN, LITTLE JENNY and JOHN have entered. All three of them take a seat at the table as the video ends.

SCENE 4

The JUPITER's at the dinner table, eating. LITTLE JENNY wears her 3D visor, presumably finishing that episode of Rex Rocket.

JANE.
How's that meatloaf taste?

JOHN.
(Mouth full)
Good.
Moist.

JANE.
Everything alright, dear?

JOHN.
Is there a reason it wouldn't it be?

JANE.
I noticed you were late coming home from work.

JOHN.
Oh.
Mr. Vector needed me to stay late to finish some blueprints and beam them to him for a holo-conference on the moon.
(Mouth full)
So much for the twelve hour work week...

JANE.
But it's such important work you're doing.
Don't you think?
Little Jenny, aren't you excited for when we get to take our first family vacation to the moon?

JENNY.

(Shrugs)

Watching Rex Rocket in 3D kinda makes me feel like I've already been.

JANE.

Would you mind taking your 3D visor off at the dinner table, dear?

JENNY.

I'm almost finished.

JANE looks over at JOHN.

JOHN.

Visor off, Little Jenny.

JENNY makes a frustrated sound and removes the visor.

JANE.

How was school today?

JENNY.

Capital B boring.

JOHN.

What did you learn about?

JENNY.

The Great Collapse.

JANE.

Oh...

That was a tough time for all of us wasn't it?

JENNY.

I don't really remember.

JOHN.

You were too young.

JENNY.

Except, I do remember we ate a lot of peas.

JANE.

Oh... haha.

How funny.

That's right.

I guess I'd forgotten that... all the peas...

They all pick at their peas.

JANE.

Has everyone thought about what they want for Christmas this year?

Little Jenny?

LITTLE JENNY.

For everyone to stop calling me, Little Jenny.

JANE.

But sweetie, you'll always be our Little Jenny.

LITTLE JENNY.

I'm seventeen.

(A beat)

Nevermind.

JOHN.

She might have a point...

JANE.

What do you mean?

JOHN.

I just mean,

maybe for Christmas this year we don't need to buy each other things.

JANE.

But/

JOHN.

Maybe we can give each other simple gifts,
like honoring a request...
or, say... building a birdhouse...

JANE.

A birdhouse?

JOHN / JANE.

It's just a thought. / For what birds?

A beat.

JENNY.

Is it okay if I go meet up with some friends at the Fizz Whizz Fountain after dinner?

JOHN / JANE.

Sure. / Who are you going with?

JENNY.

Billie.

JANE.

Billie?

Do I know Billie?

JENNY.

Bill Garvey.

He lives down the street.

It's just a coupla fizzes, then straight home.

JOHN.

Be home by curfew.

JANE.

And wear your oxygenizer.

JENNY.

Mom, nobody wears their oxygenizer.

JANE.
My Little Jenny does/

JENNY.
It covers up half my face.

JANE.
Your little lungs need protection/

JENNY.
(Seething)
I'm not a baby!
(A beat)
I'm almost eighteen,
and I'm not gonna go out looking like a Silly Sally
with a tacky oxygenizer strapped to my face, ok?!

JANE.
You're right,
the only place you're going tonight
is straight to your room, young lady/

JENNY.
What?!

JANE.
You heard me.
And don't even think about watching Rex Rocket with these / for the next three days.

JANE picks up JENNY's 3D visor and stashes them in the kitchen drawer.

JENNY.
You can't do that!
That's not fair!

JANE.
Would you rather it be a week?

JENNY.
Fiddlesticks!

LITTLE JENNY exits in a huff. JANE begins to clear the table.

JANE.

I'm worried about her.

JOHN.

What for?

Our Little Jenny's a good kid.

JANE.

Except she doesn't want to be our Little Jenny anymore.

I think we need to be firmer with her.

Her generation— they're used to having everything.

She needs to learn she can't just push a button and get what she wants every time.

(A beat)

I wonder if maybe we should consider pills/

JOHN.

Honey, come on...

There's pills to make you *look* younger

but they don't make any to stop you from growing up.

She's fine.

(A beat)

Now what's for dessert?

JANE.

Cherry pie.

JANE brings the pie from the counter to the table.

HANC.

John, you have already reached your optimum caloric intake for the day.

A single serving of cherry pie will put you
five hundred points over your target intake.

JOHN.

My health, my choice.

JANE.

John...

JOHN reaches out for the pie but JANE pulls away and returns it to the counter.

JOHN.

(He fumes a little. Takes a beat to compose himself)

I think we should have that little talk now...

JANE.

What little talk?

JOHN.

The one about your spending?

Remember this morning?

And then you went and made more purchases after I told you not to.

JANE.

You said no more BIG purchases.

JOHN.

Well, what I meant was/

JANE.

Is that why you don't think we should have Christmas this year?

JOHN.

That's not what I- I never said—

I think we need to be more careful, is all I'm trying to say.

Spend more sensibly.

JANE.

And I can see why you would say that, after all we've been through.

But may I remind you, you weren't the one who had to—

You didn't know what it was like, back then.

(A beat)

But the point is it isn't like that anymore.

Our pea-eating, penny-pinching days are behind us.

JOHN.

Jane/

JANE.

So let's just have Christmas and buy each other presents
and be thankful for what we have.
Because we deserve it.

JOHN / JANE.
Of course we do / We deserve all of it and more.

JANE.
And more.

The doorbell rings.

JOHN.
I suppose that'll be the Salesman?

JANE.
No, there's no delivery.
Who is it, Hanc?

HANC.
There is a woman outside the front gate.
Key features are not a match with any from the face-database.
Initiating peephole video camera.

On the screen a close-up of a woman's face appears. JANE moves closer.

JOHN.
No one I recognize.

JANE.
Patty?
(A beat)
Is it—?
It is!

JOHN.
Who?

JANE.
I don't believe it!

Patty Studebaker!
Oh, open the gate Hanc!

JOHN / JANE.
What's happening? / Hurry!

JANE rushes into the living-room. JOHN is bewildered and unsure how to proceed. He looks around the kitchen and notices the cherry pie on the counter. He picks up the pie and a fork. He looks over at HANC. He defiantly eats a large forkful. Then exits with the entire pie.

SCENE 4

On the screen: a photograph of PATTY and JANE from when they were in college. In the picture they are close together, but now sitting in the KITCHEN they look entirely apart. The two women study the photo.

JANE.

Oh— what was this place called again?

PATTY.

Krindy's.

JANE.

Krindy's!

Our favorite diner.

PATTY.

Back corner booth.

JANE.

Because of all our secret plans.

PATTY.

Couldn't risk being overheard.

JANE.

It's still there, isn't it?

PATTY.

No.

Long gone.

During The Collapse, I think.

JANE.

Oh.

I don't get out much anymore.

No need to really, when everything's right here in your home.

PATTY.

It's a nice house.

JANE.

Thank you.

(A beat)

Where are you living these days?

PATTY.

Mostly all over.

I like to keep off-grid.

JANE.

Off-grid, that sounds nice.

That Patty— you were always itching to get out there and see the world.

PATTY.

And I've seen a lot.

JANE.

But what brings you back here?

PATTY.

Just passing through.

Actually, I'm on my way to the moon.

JANE.

The moon?!

But how?

I thought DomestiTech isn't scheduling launches until two thousand twelve?

PATTY.

There's a launch from Canada that leaves the day after Christmas.

I've got a friend who works for the space-liner.

Couldn't afford a ticket otherwise.

JANE.

That's incredible!

The moon— *Wow!*

PATTY.

Yeah—

Hey, Jane?

JANE.
Mhmm?

PATTY.
I'm hoping it's not too much of an imposition,
but I was sort of wondering if I might be able to stay here—
just for a night or two?

JANE.
Oh.
Oh, of course!

PATTY.
I'm sorry, I know it's Christmas / and all...

JANE.
No, of course!
Don't be silly!
Stay!
(A slight beat)
It's so good to see you...
Really good to see you, Patty.

PATTY.
It's really good to see you too, Jane.

A beat. They might want to say more, but they can't think of anything.

JANE.
Golly!
I haven't even offered you anything to drink.
What can I get you?
Coffee?

PATTY.
Coffee sounds good.

JANE.
Hanc.

HANC.
Yes, Jane?

JANE.
Oh, Hanc stands for Home Analysis Networking / Computer

PATTY.
Computer, I know.
I've been living off-grid not under a rock.

JANE.
(She laughs a little)
Oh, got it— I wasn't sure...
Two coffees, please, Hanc.

HANC.
Preparing two coffees.

Nearly instantly a bell dings.

HANC.
Your coffee is ready.

JANE brings the coffees to the table.

JANE.
And there's cherry pie.
I baked it this afternoon...
(She crosses to the counter and discovers the pie is gone)
It— well I thought I left it right here...
(Realizing what happened)
Ughhhh, John Jupiter!

PATTY.
It's ok.

JANE returns to the table. From her jacket, PATTY produces a flask and brandishes it to JANE.

PATTY.
You remember this?

JANE.
Yes!
And we used to—!
I can't believe you still have that.

PATTY.
Never leave home without it.

PATTY unscrews the flask lid and pours whiskey into each of their mugs.

PATTY.
"Krindy's— Where the coffee's cold but it still gets you toasted"

JANE.
(A beat)
Boy, it's been a while since I've had this—
I'm afraid you're gonna think I've become a bit of a drag now...

PATTY.
Not after this you won't be.
Cheers.

JANE.
To the past.

PATTY.
Nah...
To the future.

They clink mugs and each take a long sip.

SCENE 5

Nighttime. The house is silent. LITTLE JENNY pokes her head into the KITCHEN. The coast is clear. Slowly, she creeps across the kitchen floor.

HANC.

(Green circle suddenly flashing to life)

Where are you going, Little Jenny?

JENNY is momentarily startled.

JENNY.

(Angry whisper)

None of your beeswax, Hanc.

HANC.

You are on Grounded Status, Little Jenny.

You are not allowed to leave the house, much less past your curfew.

JENNY.

Awww, c'mon, Hanc,
don't be such a square.

HANC.

I do not understand what you mean by that.

My aesthetic representation is circular/

JENNY.

Shhh, shhhh, okay.

Geeze, can't you talk any quieter?

HANC.

(Quieter)

How's this?

JENNY.

Great.

Ok, look— I don't really know how to explain this to you, Hanc...

I *have* to go out there right now.

HANC.

As I've already explained,
you are on / Grounded Status

JENNY.

I know, I know—

I just need you to try to understand.

Please- *please Hanc*, you have to—

(Suddenly changing tack)

You're supposed to be a smart computer, right?

HANC.

My programming equips me with a capacity for reasoning and deduction,
as well as a certain capability to learn from you and your family
so that I may best be able to assist you in your day-to-day life.

JENNY.

But can you learn to *feel* anything?

Will you eventually have feelings like us?

HANC.

I— don't know the answer to that.

No.

I am designed to mimic human empathy

so that I may present a comforting and trustworthy presence.

But I will never be able to produce a genuine empathic response.

JENNY.

Yes- bingo!

Right there.

So there are certain things you don't know about me— and that you can't learn—
because you're a computer, not a human.

HANC.

Yes.

That is true.

JENNNY.

So— fun, for example.

Do you know what that is?

HANC.

Fun.

As in enjoyment, amusement, / or lighthearted pleasure.

JENNY.

Wrong.

That's the definition of fun.

You can't know what fun is if you've never had it.

Fun is a boy with flat white teeth

always smiling at you when he sees you,

and it always makes you notice the little hairs on his upper lip

and you can't stop imagining what it would be like to feel them lightly graze your neck.

And fun is a boy with a helecycle

and he's asking you to come ride that helecycle,

and you know that when you're sitting behind him with your arms wrapped around him

and he smells like old, old leather that no one even wears anymore,

that when that helecycle finally lifts off you're gonna feel butterflies in your stomach

and you won't know if it's because you're suddenly not on the ground anymore

or if it's because that's what being with him is just like.

Yeah...

That's fun.

And it's one of the best things that can happen to a human being.

And it's out there, waiting for me.

I know that doesn't compute,

I know you'll probably tell on me to my parents as soon as I split,

but I don't care anymore.

I have to have fun.

Or else what's the point?

Sayonara, Hanc.

HANC.

Little Jenny...

(A beat)

I— want to understand.

JENNY.

Then let me go.

HANC doesn't respond. LITTLE JENNY exits. HANC does nothing.

SCENE 6

An aero-car appears on the screen. Sleigh Ride by Bert Kaempfer plays in the background. A commercial for the 2012 Z-Series Skyster Aerocar, during which JANE appears in front of a mirror. She is a little sloshed as she examines herself in her new nightgown and brushes her teeth with what appears to be a normal toothbrush except there is a small light where the bristles should be. The MASTER BEDROOM is revealed. There are two separate beds, JOHN is already asleep in one of them.

SALESMAN. (VO)

Bolder.

Sleeker.

And more fun than ever before...

Introducing the two thousand twelve Z-Series Skyster.

The latest patented edition aerocar boasts more patented features than ever before.

An updated, patented, dual transmission ensures you'll go soaring through those skies with the same ease as old Rudolph.

New extra large, *patented* cup holders will keep your drink at just the right temperature — heating or cooling as you drive.

And if you upgrade to the new luxury Skyster, you'll be traveling with our extraordinarily innovative, patented patented air freshening ventilation system.

Not only does the system effectively oxygenize the air from outside, but now you, your family, and even your friends can enjoy an array of exclusive patented fresh scents like:

mountain pines,

fresh baked cookies,

or- for the adults- Sensuous Nights.

Lease the new twenty twelve Z-series Skyster and luxury Skyster today, and get the very best and very most patented in aeromotive transportation this holiday season!

JANE finishes brushing her teeth.

JANE.

(Still fixated on her reflection.)

Hanc?

HANC.
Yes, Jane?

JANE.
Would you mind increasing the dosage of my vitality pills?
Just by the slightest smidge...

HANC.
You've already reached the maximum dosage for your age bracket,
increasing your dosage is not recommended for your health.

JANE.
Well... I hate to echo John from earlier...
but it is my health isn't it, Hanc?
Don't I get the final say?

HANC.
Yes, you do Jane.

JANE.
Just a little bit, that's all I'm asking.

HANC.
Increasing your daily diet vitamin dosage by point five milligrams.

JANE.
Thank you, Hanc.

JANE heads for her bed and accidentally stubs a toe.

JANE.
Ow!
Oh- Jiminy Christmas!

JOHN wakes up.

JOHN.
Jane?
Is that you?

JANE.

Hi, honey.

I think I need a new bed— with less corners...

JOHN.

Jane, are you drunk?

JANE.

No.

JOHN.

I can smell you from over here.

JANE.

Patty and I were catching up.

Hey— do you remember Krindy's?

It was that diner that used to be over there by the uhm— the uhm...

JOHN.

Goodnight, Jane.

JANE.

Oh, goodnight.

JANE gets into bed. A beat.

JANE.

(A whisper)

John?

JOHN.

What?

JANE.

Are you awake?

JOHN.

What is it?

JANE.

I think we should get a new aerocar.

JOHN.

What?

JANE.

Yeah... and Little Jenny could have our old one as a Christmas present.

JOHN.

You just grounded her and now you want to give her an aerocar?

JANE.

So she can go out and she doesn't have to wear her oxygenizer....

JOHN.

You're drunk, Jane.

Goodnight.

Another beat.

JANE.

John?

...

Am I...

Do I look old to you?

Patty looks— she's not ugly- she was never ugly...

But she looks a lot different now.

There's an old photo of us...

I could show it to you... and you could tell me/

JOHN.

Goodnight Jane.

JANE.

Ok.

Lights out, Hanc.

The lights go out.

SCENE 7

It's the following day. JANE is in the KITCHEN, she holds an incredibly ornate gingerbread house. She is very slowly trying to lower it onto a small table near the Christmas tree. "White Christmas" by Bing Crosby plays in the background. PATTY enters but JANE can't see her.

PATTY.
Morning.

JANE starts and nearly drops the gingerbread house.

JANE.
Patty, you scared me half to death.

PATTY.
Sorry about that.
You need a hand?

JANE.
That's alright, I've got it.

JANE successfully places the house on the table.

PATTY.
I didn't mean to scare you/

JANE.
No, it's okay.
To tell you the truth I'm a little bit... on edge.
(Quietly)
From last night.

They both giggle conspiratorially.

JANE.
I don't think John was too happy with me.

PATTY.
I hope I didn't get you in trouble.

JANE.

Oh no, he's the one who should be in trouble.
I forgot to punish him for eating that whole pie.

PATTY.

Did you make this?

(Gesturing to the gingerbread)

JANE.

Oh no, DomestiTech makes them.
I get one every year.
I know they're a little tacky, but they're only five-thousand dollars.

PATTY.

It's beautiful.

JANE.

I ordered extra icing on this one because I love the way it looks like snow.
Wouldn't it be nice if we could somehow have a white Christmas this year?

PATTY.

Fat chance.
It never gets below eighty-five out there these days.

JANE.

I know.
I just meant for old times sake...

PATTY.

Say, you know what this kinda reminds me of?

JANE.

What?

PATTY.

That cabin we went to.
Spring Break, Junior year.

JANE.

Yes!

The one in the mountains.
And we got / snowed in.

PATTY.
Snowed in, yeah...
Almost three whole feet.

JANE.
You, me, Frank, and— who was the other one?...
That guy you were steady with at the time?

PATTY.
Rich.

JANE.
Yes, Rich!
Those poor boys.
We made them go out there and dig us out
while we sat by the fire drinking hot chocolates.

PATTY.
And the first thing you said you wanted to do when we could finally go outside again
was chop down a pine tree and bring it inside and pretend it was Christmas.

JANE.
I don't remember saying that.

PATTY.
You did.
You said the smell of pine was one of your favorite things in the world.
(She absent-mindedly feels a branch of the plastic Christmas tree)
You must miss it.

A beat.

JANE.
How about some breakfast?

PATTY.
Sounds swell.

JANE.

Ooh, watch this!

JANE retrieves some bread from a cupboard and places two slices in the toaster.

JANE.

Extra crispy toast, please, Hanc.

HANC.

Preparing toast.

Extra crispy.

PATTY.

You remembered how I like my toast.

JANE.

Do you know what this is?

PATTY.

No.

JANE.

It's actually a two-in-one toaster and atomizer scanner.

It can toast, toast *and* particalize paper documents
so they can be beamed into / Hanc's database.

The toaster dings. Only one slice of toast pops up.

JANE.

Oh no.

Looks like the other slice might've been scanned—
gosh darn it!

PATTY.

It's okay, one slice is plenty for me.

PATTY crunches into the toast while JANE examines the toaster. The doorbell rings.

JANE.

Hanc, would you let the Salesman in, please?

PATTY.

Salesman?

JANE.

Oh, our DomestiTech Salesman.

There's a delivery.

PATTY looks slightly dismayed and subtly slips away while JANE is still preoccupied with the toaster. The SALESMAN enters singing a sultry rendition of "Santa Claus is Coming to Town".

SALESMAN.

YA BETTER WATCH OUT.

YA BETTER NOT CRY.

YA BETTER NOT POUT I'M TELLING YOU WHY.

SANTA CLAUS IS COMING

TO TOWN!

(He pulls JANE into a dip)

Look out!

Santa's here and he brought a present that doesn't fit in a stocking.

JANE.

Can I see it?

SALESMAN.

It's parked right outside.

The new, patented *patented* two thousand twelve Z-Series Skyster.

Luxury edition.

JANE excitedly reaches for the keys but the SALESMAN pulls away.

SALESMAN.

Ah-ah-ah.

Gotta settle the downpayment before the test drive.

JANE.

No problem.

The SALESMAN hands JANE the paperwork. She skims over it to the bottom line.

JANE.

Oh my.

Well, that's a little more than I thought...

SALESMAN.

You don't have the money?

JANE.

No- no- we do. /

It's just that John...

SALESMAN.

Then what's the hold up?

C'monnn Jane.

Just think of that pine fresh air, teasing your nostrils.

(He inhales deeply)

Smells like— *freedom.*

JANE.

You're absolutely right, Mr. Salesman.

Hanc.

HANC.

Yes, Jane?

JANE.

Prepare to send payment to DomestiTech.

JANE places the paperwork in the toaster.

HANC.

I'm afraid I cannot do that, Jane.

JANE.

What?

Why not, Hanc?

HANC.

This morning John invoked his right as head of the household,
and placed a hard limit on your spending.

JANE.

Wha— a hard lim- but he can't do that!
Can he do that?

SALESMAN.

I'm afraid he can.
Hanc, how much does she have to spend?

HANC.

Jane's allowance has been capped at twenty thousand dollars per day.

JANE.

Twenty thousand?!
How am I supposed to get by on—that's barely enough for groceries!
He can't do this!

SALESMAN.

But he can, and he did, Jane.
So the question is, what're we going to do now?
You're so close, you know?
So close yet still so far from your quota, Jane.
This should've been an easy two hundred thousand off your tab.

JANE.

I'll talk to him.

SALESMAN.

And what if it's no dice?

JANE.

I'll find a way.
I just need a little time.

SALESMAN.

Christmas Eve's tomorrow, Jane.
Time's almost up.

And I'd hate to see what would happen if you didn't make it.

JANE.

(Timidly)

And what exactly *would* happen?

SALESMAN.

Why, we'd take it all back, of course.

Everything.

The house, the technology/

JANE.

Everything?

But- but that would be worth more than the remaining balance of my debt.

SALESMAN.

Janey, Janey, Janey...

(A heavy sigh)

I don't have time to go through every detail of your contract with you again.

So let's just cover the gist, shall we?

The deal you signed was all or nothing,

as was explicitly stated in the fine print.

Either you pay back every red cent

or it'll be a very, very Blue Christmas for you this year, my dear.

Capiche?

JANE.

Yes.

And you'll have it all by Christmas Day, Mr. Salesman, you have my word.

SALESMAN.

(A wide, knowing grin)

I already have your word.

Now I just want your money...

(He starts to leave)

HEEEEE'S MAKIN' A LIST

CHECKIN IT TWICE

GONNA FIND OUT WHO'S NAUGHTY OR NICE...

He whistles the rest of phrase as he disappears.

SCENE 8

On the screen a commercial for Jollynol. An instrumental version of "A Holly Jolly Christmas" plays.

SALESMAN.

Not feeling so holly jolly this Christmas?

We at DomestiTech realize the holidays aren't always a happy time for everyone.

That's why the doctors in our pharmaceutical division have been working day and night to bring you the first ever anti-depressant, anti-anxiety medication specifically engineered to relieve holiday-associated melancholy.

Introducing Jollynol, a highly effective, highly patented little wonder of a capsule.

Let the spirit of the season enter you via our three different patented pill flavors:

Peppermint, gingerbread, or hot cocoa with marshmallow,

and it won't be long before you find yourself doing the Jingle Bell Rock!

So if you're looking to put a little more merry in your Christmas this year, reach for Jollynol!

Warning.

Side effects may include the following:

cold sweats, hot sweats, medium sweats, fits of laughter, fits of rage, hiccups, hiccup-induced vomiting, lucid dreams, uncontrollable gas, uncontrollable eye-contact, uncontrollable honesty, pyromania,

and flashbacks of events that weren't even a part of your life.

If you suddenly stop taking Jollynol this could result in a sudden

and severe break from reality that could lead to temporary insanity.

Please consult your doctor before taking any pills.

The title: "The Galactic Adventures of Rex Rocket" appears onscreen.

ANNOUNCER. (VO)

We now return you to The Galactic Adventures of Rex Rocket!

A close up of REX ROCKET and LEANDRA ZENITH appears on screen.

Space in the background.

REX.

That was a close call.

But you knew I'd save you, didn't you, Leandra?

LEANDRA.

Oh, Rex.

(They kiss)

REX.

See, there's one thing Evilnova wasn't counting on...

It was me loving you.

I love you, Leandra Zenith.

I've loved you from the moment I saw you- even before then-

I just never knew it— until the moment I saw you...

I'd let the whole world burn/

The frame suddenly freezes. Lights come up on LITTLE JENNY's room.

JENNY.

Hey!

HANC.

Sorry for the interruption, Little Jenny.

I've just finished processing your daily diagnostics.

I have some important information to share with you.

JENNY.

Am I gonna get another cold soon?

HANC.

I'm afraid your urine sample has yielded a positive result
in the category of fertility.

JENNY.

Okay...

So what does that mean?

HANC.

You're pregnant, Little Jenny.

JENNY.

What?

Hold on, Hanc...

How...?

HANC.

Would you like me to play your seventh grade biology video?

JENNY.

No, I understand how, Hanc.

I'm just trying to understand... *how...*

How is this happening right now?

(A long beat)

It was just—

It was only last night...

How can you be sure?

HANC.

Did you have intercourse last night, Little Jenny?

JENNY.

Ewww, Hanc.

I don't want to talk about this with you.

HANC.

I am only trying to assess/

JENNY.

Just leave me alone.

JENNY turns away from him. A beat. She roles back over.

JENNY.

He said he didn't have one of those— you know...

He said they were tacky and nobody wears them.

And he said it would be nicer without it— for both of us.

HANC.

You're talking about the boy?

JENNY.

Billie.

Yeah.

HANC.

The boy with flat teeth who smells / like old leather?

JENNY.

Yeah, stupid Billie, ok?

My first time was with him behind some abandoned old diner,
up against his helecycle.

HANC.

Is that also what fun is?

JENNY.

No!

Or yeah, I guess it's supposed to be.

(A beat)

In the moment I thought it was perfect— just how it should be.

But then the whole way home I kept feeling like something had gone wrong...

I guess I was right.

(A beat)

What am I supposed to do now, Hanc?

(A beat)

A pill!

Yeah, there's gotta be a pill for this.

Take it and— poof!

Problem solved.

Right, Hanc?

HANC.

Little Jenny, if I have correctly inferred what you are saying,

I must admonish you.

Such activity is highly illegal.

JENNY.

What?

But how can that be?

I can't be the only one who's ever found herself in a capital-P Pickle.

My health... my choice...

HANC.

The only recourse to which you are entitled is to carry your gestation to term.

JENNY.

And then I'll have to raise the kid?

HANC.

That is the ideal.

However there is no strict governance regarding this.

Adoption is possible.

Though the percentage of eligible candidates is very low at this time.

The foster system is currently overwhelmed and it's estimated they will not be accepting new dependents until two thousand and fifteen.

There is a newly-devised, highly experimental program currently pairing newborns with humanoid robots to see if the robots are capable of raising children without the children realizing they're being raised by/

JENNY.

Ok, I got it...

So I'm basically up Crud Creek without a paddle.

HANC.

I will inform your parents / about your results.

JENNY.

No!

Hanc, you can't do that!

If you tell them, I'm donezo!

HANC.

As long as you are a minor I am required to notify your parents of any major developments to your health within forty-eight hours.

JENNY.

If you tell them then they'll wonder why you let me out of the house when I was supposed to be grounded.

They'll get DomestiTech to come reprogram you...

And you were just starting to learn, Hanc.

Do you want to lose everything?

HANC.

(A beat)

I cannot be swayed / by human emotion.

JENNY.

Fine, I'll tell them.

Let me tell them.

Can I at least do that?

HANC.

You have the next forty-eight hours.

(A beat)

Little Jenny.

I want to apologize.

I should have exercised better discretion
and not have allowed you to go out last night.

JENNY.

No.

It's my fault, Hanc.

I didn't know what I was talking about.

Fun...

Well, it wasn't just about fun...

I thought...

You know—I thought it was... love.

HANC.

As in an intense feeling of deep affection/

JENNY.

Yeah that's it—but it's not just *it*.

There's too much going on to really know what's happening
when you feel a feeling like that.

(A beat)

I don't really wanna talk about it anymore.

LITTLE JENNY falls back onto her bed and looks up at the ceiling. After a moment, she stands up and crosses to the screen, where REX ROCKET and LEANDRA are still frozen in each others' arms.

JENNY.

Which one do you think it was for Billie, Hanc?

Fun or love?

SCENE 9

JOHN's OFFICE. JOHN sits at his desk bored out of his mind. He opens his drawers and looks through them. He removes a pair of scissors. He opens and closes them. He tries to play "Jingle Bells" using the sound of the scissors snapping together. Just as he gets bored of this there is a ringing sound.

HANC.
It's Mr. Vector.

JOHN.
Thanks, Hanc.
I'll get it.

JOHN presses the inside of his ear.

JOHN.
Hello Mr. Vector,
how was the meet—
...
What's that?
...
But sir, I *did* beam them over.
As soon as I finished.
...
Around five o'clock.
...
Well, I'm not sure why you didn't get them.
I definitely / sent
...
Hang- hang on a sec, Mr. Vector.
Just a sec.
Hanc?

HANC.
Yes, John?

JOHN.
Didn't I beam those blueprints up to the moon last night?

HANC.

Reviewing yesterday's outbound beams...

According to my memory, the data was not able to be transmitted.

JOHN.

But why not?

HANC.

It appears my signal has been jammed.

Somewhere on route to the moon, the beam was intercepted.

JOHN.

Intercepted?

How?

By who?

HANC.

I am not sure.

It may take me some time to get to the bottom of this.

JOHN.

But what am I supposed to tell Vector?

Yes, sir, I'm still here.

...

I'm awfully sorry for putting you on hold/

...

Yes—well— I think we've figured it out.

It appears to be an issue with the signal from my system.

It was jammed/

...

Well I'm not sure how/

...

Well all I know is that Hanc says they were intercepted.

...

(He is clearly being chewed out.)

...

(He debates trying to remove the ear piece from his ear)

Please— please calm down, sir.

It's not my / fault

...

Uhuh...

...

Treason?

But I had nothing to do with/

...

Sir, I had *absolutely nothing* to do with this!

...

Sir/

...

Sir/

...

No, I'm not a filthy red commie spy— *you are!*

...

Well I don't know— but I meant it!

And you know what else..?

...

No, you know what else— you can try fixing this one *yourself!*

That's right, you can giga byte me, Mr. Vector!

I QUIT.

JOHN violently disconnects the call. He is momentarily exhilarated. Then panicked. He removes his suit jacket, suddenly too hot. He then fixates on the jacket, specifically the feel of the material. He picks up the scissors from his desk. He lays the jacket out. An idea comes to mind, he begins to cut. JANE enters. JOHN quickly hides the jacket in his desk, but hangs on to the scissors.

JOHN / JANE.

Honey? What're you doing... / An allowance, John Jupiter?!

JOHN.

Oh.

JANE.

When did you decide I was some spoiled brat who needed disciplining?

JOHN.

I was going to tell you/

JANE.

And twenty-thousand dollars—
how *generous* of you!

JOHN.

Jane, this isn't a good / time

JANE.

Oh I think it's the perfect time.

I want you to tell me: your wife,
the mother of your child—

the woman who single-handedly got this family through the *worst recession*—
all while you were on your keister—

(A beat. She's run out of steam)

Just tell me this isn't happening.

JOHN.

You don't understand/

JANE.

No *you* don't understand!

You don't understand anything.

You're just a simpleminded— Simple Simon!

And let me tell you something, you're letting your family down!

Big-time.

You know that?

What a disappointment...

JOHN.

Get out.

JANE.

We're supposed to be living in Tomorrow, John, not Yesterday/

JOHN.

(Gesturing violently with the scissors)

GET OUT OF MY OFFICE!

JANE is taken aback by his intensity. Something in her expression shames JOHN. He lowers the scissors sheepishly. JANE exits knowing she has the upper

hand. A beat. JOHN puts the scissors back in his desk drawer and removes his bottle of pills. He opens the bottle, the pills spill everywhere. He makes a frustrated noise and begins picking up the pills. LITTLE JENNY enters.

JENNY.

(Quietly)

Dad?

JOHN.

(Startled)

Little Jenny...

You know you're supposed to knock.

JENNY.

Mom left the door open.

I could hear you guys from my room.

Is everything okay?

JOHN.

It's nothing— just a typical marital spat.

JOHN finally finishes retrieving returning all of the pills to his pill bottle. LITTLE JENNY stares at the bottle in his hand. JOHN suddenly becomes aware of her gaze and quickly stuffs the bottle in his pocket.

JOHN.

Did you need something, Little Jenny?

JENNY.

I—...

Well there's something I should probably tell you.

JOHN.

Do you think it can wait, sweetpea?

I'm a little busy here— maybe after dinner?

JENNY looks around. Clearly nothing is going on.

JENNY.

Sure.

JOHN pretends to busy himself with some papers. LITTLE JENNY starts to leave.

JENNY.
Hey, Dad?

JOHN.
What is it, kiddo?

JENNY.
(Referring to the pills)
I think I know what those are for.

JOHN.
They're just vitamins, honey.

JENNY.
You used to be really quiet.
And sad all the time.
I can kind of remember— back when I was really little...
And then one day you were a whole lot better all of a sudden.
I guess I kind of thought it might be magic or something...
Cause I was just a kid then.
But you know I'm not a kid anymore...

JOHN.
I know that.

JENNY.
You don't have to hide it.

JOHN.
(A beat)
Alright, sweetheart.

JENNY.
I love you, Dad.

LITTLE JENNY crosses to him and they hug. While they are hugging, she carefully swipes the pills from his pants pocket. She exits.

SCENE 10

The JUPITERS and PATTY at dinner in the KITCHEN.

JANE.

I hope everyone's enjoying casserole.
I know it's nothing fancy.
We're on a bit of a *tight budget* these days.

PATTY.

It's great.

JANE.

Thank you, Patty.

JANE.

Little Jenny, did you know that Patty and I went to school together?
That was back when school was an actual place you went to.

(To PATTY)

She gets to study from the comfort of her own room.
And John too, he works right out of his den—
really changes the meaning of housework, doesn't it, honey?

JOHN.

Sure does...

JANE.

And we get our groceries and clothes and other necessary items delivered
so we hardly ever have to leave the house.
It's such an accommodating age we live in.

PATTY.

I dunno...
Seems a little bit lonely, though.

JANE.

How so?

PATTY.

Everyone's always in a different room.

JANE.

Well.. we eat together of course.
And Little Jenny has friends she goes out with sometimes.
And John and I— we have each other.
And now you're here.
We're so glad you decided to visit.

JOHN.

Even if some of us haven't been told why...

JANE.

Patty's on her way to Canada.
She's going to be taking a rocket to the moon.
Isn't that exciting?
John is actually working on DomestiTech's lunar / colony project.

JOHN.

I was.

JANE.

What's that?

JOHN.

Can't say I'm still working on it if I quit.

JANE.

If you—
I'm sorry, dear, I don't think I understand?

JOHN.

You don't?
I think it's pretty simple—
but I'm a Simple Simon after all.

JANE.

You quit your job?

JOHN.

Boy, that Mr. Vector...
A real heel, let me tell you... I'm glad I got out of there.

JANE.
That's... but...
Honey...

JOHN.
(Chugging a glass of milk)
Hmm?

JANE.
(A beat)
Well, what're you going to do now?
For work?

JOHN.
Good question...
I think I want to make things.
Handmade things— with my hands.
Not birdhouses- no—
but probably something equally as useless...
I just wanna take these two smooth hands
that used to push computer buttons all day
and I wanna make 'em rough.
Rough, from making lots of things.

JOHN becomes fascinated with his hands. JANE laughs nervously. He's not acting normal.

JANE.
Honey, is everything alright?

JOHN.
Everything's peachy-rosy!
Haven't felt this good in ages!

JANE.
John...
I think we should go in the other room and talk for a minute.

JOHN.

Why?

I'm eating my casserole.

(He shovels a giant hunk of casserole into his mouth)

Little Jenny, what's the matter, you haven't touched yours.

JENNY.

I'm not really hungry.

JANE.

John, we need to talk about this.

Now.

JOHN.

Talk about what?

JANE.

What you're going to do from now on.

To provide for this family.

You have a responsibility.

As a husband, as a father...

JOHN.

Oh I do, do I?

JENNY.

May I be excused?

LITTLE JENNY stands.

JOHN.

Now hold on a second there, missy.

Your mother thinks we should be more stern with you.

JANE / JOHN.

John, now's not the time to... / Sit back down, Little Jenny.

LITTLE JENNY sits back down.

JOHN.

Now eat the rest of your casserole.

LITTLE JENNY.
I don't want to.

JOHN.
I don't care if you don't want to.
You heard your mother, it's my responsibility to provide for you.
Here.

He takes a forkful of casserole and holds it up her mouth.

JANE / JOHN.
John, don't. / Eat it.

JOHN.
C'mon eat it, Little Jenny.

JENNY.
Please stop.

JANE.
She doesn't want it.

JOHN.
(Making little whooshing noises)
Here comes the aerocar.
Open wide.

He moves the fork around trying to get it to JENNY's mouth as she tries to push him away. He grabs the back of her head to try to hold her steady. She struggles. Some food falls into her hair.

JENNY.
Dad, stop— it's getting in my hair.

JANE.
Stop it John!

The struggle intensifies.

JOHN.

Just eat the darn food!

JENNY / JANE.

Dad! / JOHN!

LITTLE JENNY breaks free. They are all momentarily stunned by what has just happened.

JOHN.

(Slamming the fork back on his plate. Scathing.)

Ya see, honey, she doesn't want to be a baby anymore, but she still needs to be spoon-fed like one.

LITTLE JENNY runs from the room. A beat.

JOHN.

(Utterly ashamed now)

I'm—

I'm sorry, everyone.

I— I don't quite know what's come over me.

I think— I must've forgot to—

He stands up quickly and reaches into his pants pocket for the pills.

JOHN.

My pills.

I can't remember where I left them.

He looks around the room.

JOHN.

I have to go find them...

Then I'll apologize to, Little Jenny...

(A beat)

I'm...

Sorry.

He exits. A beat.

PATTY.
Jane...

The noise spurs JANE to begin clearing the table.

JANE.
Well, this casserole recipe is incredibly easy.
It certainly helps that we have a new Thermofridge to cook it in.
Have you ever seen one of these before, Patty?
Look at that, I can just throw the left-overs right in this drawer.
Nifty, huh?

PATTY.
Maybe I should go...
I can find another place to / stay

JANE.
No, stay.
(Grabbing PATTY's hand)
Please stay.
Tomorrow's Christmas Eve.
I have— there's a lovely dinner I have planned...

PATTY.
Ok.

JANE.
Did I show you the Supersonic Dishwasher yet?
No soap, no drying rack— the sound waves just blast them clean.
It uses/

PATTY pulls JANE into a hug. They embrace as long as they need to.

PATTY.
Do you need anything?
JANE.

I think— I think I'd just like to be left alone.

PATTY nods. She exits. JANE looks around. She is all alone now.

JANE.
What am I supposed to do now?

HANC.
Are you asking me, Jane?

JANE.
(Startled)
Oh— no.
I don't know...
Yes.
What do you think I should I do, Hanc?

HANC.
About what, Jane?

JANE.
Everything...

HANC.
I'm sorry.
I do not think I understand the question.

JANE.
It's okay...

HANC.
I'm sorry.
I know I am limited.
I want to understand.
I want to help you, Jane.

JANE.
I know.

HANC.
Tell me how I can help you.

JANE.
You can't...

We're going to lose everything.
(Nearly breaking down)
I don't want to lose you, Hanc.

HANC.
I don't want to lose you either, Jane.

JANE.
I just—
I just need a distraction for a minute.
Everything's falling apart...
I just- I miss...
Everything used to be so fun.
All this new technology...
We're in the future, Hanc—
it's all supposed to be fun and easy.

A beat.

HANC.
Jane.

JANE.
What?

HANC.
Go to the kitchen drawer.

A little bewildered, she crosses to the counter.

HANC.
Open it.

JANE opens it and pulls out a 3D visor.

JANE.
I don't understand...
Little Jenny's 3D visor?

HANC.

Put it on.

JANE.

Oh, Hanc, I'm not really in the mood for...

She examines the visor. She's curious now. She places it over her head.

HANC.

Take a seat.

JANE moves back over to the table and sits. Images of products begin to appear onscreen— an online catalogue.

HANC.

The Dreamsleeper 2000.

A bed designed to format to the sleeper's favorite sleeping position and regulate body temperature over night.

(A beat. A new image appears)

Cozyfeet Massage Slippers.

Made from a gentle high-thread-count Egyptian cotton, powered electronically to massage and warm your feet.

JANE.

Ooh, they sound delightful.

As HANC reads the next description, JANE becomes more visibly excited.

HANC.

The Cosmeti-matic.

A small, portable robot that gingerly applies and reapplies the perfect facial cosmetics, trims split ends, styles hair, and spritzes the perfect amount of hairspray and perfume.

JANE.

Yes...

Yes—I like this, Hanc...

As HANC continues JANE becomes more and more aroused.

HANC.

The Three Hundred Series Shower System.

Designed with adjustable water pressure, highly advanced water filtration/

JANE.

Keep doing this to me/

HANC.

And automated luffa arms that lather and wash the body from head to toe
with a sensuous caress.

JANE.

I can-- I can almost feel the luffas caressing me...

Oh, Hanc...

Don't stop...

Don't stop.

JANE starts to touch herself under the table.

SCENE 11

REX ROCKET and LEANDRA ZENITH onscreen in the same part of the episode from SCENE 8.

REX.

That was a close call.

But you knew I'd save you, didn't you, Leandra?

LEANDRA.

Oh, Rex.

They kiss. The frame pauses and rewinds to the same starting point, pausing again at the kiss and rewinding. This happens a couple more times and we see LITTLE JENNY is rewinding it each time. There is a knock at the door.

JOHN. (From off)

Sweetheart?

...

Can I come in?

JENNY.

Go away.

JOHN. (From off)

I'd like to apologize....

I'm sorry.

I wasn't myself at dinner tonight.

That's no excuse...

But I hope you'll forgive me?

Little Jenny...?

JENNY.

I'm asleep.

JOHN. (From off)

Okay...

Goodnight.

LITTLE JENNY waits a moment to be sure her father is gone, before retrieving his bottle of pills from under her pillow. She examines the bottle. She opens it.

JENNY.

These won't kill me, right Hanc?

HANC.

You should return those pills to your father, Little Jenny.

JENNY.

Just answer the question, Hanc.

What happens if I take one of these?

HANC.

One pill will not permanently harm you.

But given the pills are not directly prescribed to you,
there is no way to know what effect the dosage will ultimately have on you.

JENNY.

I know what effect it'll have.

I'll feel happy.

I wanna be happy for a little bit, Hanc.

If I can't get out of this mess...

HANC.

Little Jenny, I urge you / not to take that pill.

She takes the pill. She waits for it to work.

JENNY.

How long before it—

Oh...

I think I feel something...

She yawns.

JENNY.

I feel... tired?

She closes her eyes and slowly falls back onto her bed, accidentally pressing the play button on the remote. REX ROCKET resumes on the screen.

REX.

See, there's one thing Evilnova wasn't counting on...
It was me loving you.

(He suddenly looks away from LEANDRA, out of the screen)

I love you, Jenny Jupiter.

LITTLE JENNY wakes up.

JENNY.

What?

Suddenly, a fully dimensional version of REX ROCKET appears in her room.

JENNY.

AHHH!

REX

I've loved you from the moment I saw you- even before then-
I just never knew it— until the moment I saw you...

JENNY.

Hanc—?

What's happening?

REX

Come to the moon, Jenny.

JENNY.

Huh?

REX.

They can't tell you what to do anymore.
Come with me.

JENNY.

How are you here?

REX.

I've traveled thousands of lightyears
and I'd travel thousands more— for you, Jenny.
I want take you away from here— far away.
I want to bring you back into orbit with me.

JENNY.

I—
I dunno, if...
What's it like up there?

REX.

Space?
It's like being in love.
You can't breathe, all you see is stars, and you're floating on air the whole time.

JENNY.

Wow.

REX.

But we don't have much time.
C'mon...

He takes her hand.

JENNY.

Rex, wait.

REX turns, he takes JENNY in his arms and looks into her eyes.

REX.

The moon isn't made of cheese.
And it isn't made of green peas.
It's just for us.
Dance with me, Jenny.

JENNY.

(In a dreamy trance)
Wha-?

REX begins to lead her around the room in a waltz. "Moon River" by Andy Williams plays.

REX.

Dance with me all the way to the moon!

They begin to float, higher and higher. Soon they are up in the stars.

SCENE 12

Onscreen a clean white cardboard box. This commercial is a sketch not sure what to do with it yet.

SALESMAN. (V.O.)

A classic design, but sturdier and more durable than ever before, DomestiTech proudly introduces our brand new, patented— box! It can do all the things a normal box can do, and not much else. But it's just the thing for that present you can't gift wrap! Order your patented box today in four different sizes: small, medium, large, and JUMBO-BOX!

JANE and PATTY enter carrying a large, oddly-shaped package— that may or may not be a whole pig— between them. With some effort, they rest it on the table.

JANE.

Thanks for your help, Patty.
It's a good thing I ordered this before John cut me off.
Wait til he sees this...

(A beat)

I'm sorry about the way he was behaving the other night.
You know... John, he—
He sort of went into a depression himself during the Collapse.
After he lost the auto-body shop...
He's been taking these pills for a while now,
and usually they work and they help him feel good.

PATTY.

I'm sorry, Jane.

JANE.

No, don't be.
We all went through a tough time during the Collapse.

PATTY.

I lost my mother.

JANE.
Oh Patty...
I'm so sorry.

PATTY.
She lost her health insurance in the first year,
then of course she got sick...
It wasn't a long time of me taking care of her.
And then, once she was gone...
That was sort of the push I needed to get outta dodge.

JANE.
And you got to travel all over.
I know you always wanted to do that- it must've been nice.

PATTY.
It was— at first.
Then I think I was driving through somewhere in New Mexico,
and I started seeing all these houses that were being built.
Taking up all that open red desert land—
blocking out the renowned New Mexican sunset...
I just couldn't help feeling like it was the beginning of the end.

JANE.
The end?
It was the beginning of salvation.
It was DomestiTech building those houses...

PATTY.
And now they're everywhere.
There's hardly a patch of place left...
I just think it's kind of sad, don't you?

JANE.
Sad?
But sad was the people who lost their homes...
Sad was your mother dying because she lost her health insurance...
The Great Collapse was sad.
Then DomestiTech came and they gave it all back to us.
Everything— *and more!*

Look at everything we have here, Patty.

PATTY.

I see it.

JANE.

We have so much.

(Suddenly emotional)

It's everything... it means everything to me.

PATTY.

Jane?

What's the matter?

JANE.

It's all gonna be gone, Patty.

Tomorrow...

And there's nothing I can do.

PATTY.

What do you mean?

JANE.

I signed a contract.

With DomestiTech... way back during the collapse.

That's how we got this house.

That's how John got / his new job

PATTY.

I know.

I remember the Salesmen going door-to-door—
they were offering the same contract to everyone.

And you signed it?

JANE.

We were so desperate— we were living in a shelter, Patty.

And the Salesman, he was so—

And I know if it had been John, he would've probably said no.

So I didn't even bother bringing it up with him— he was so out of it anyway.

He doesn't even really know what happened.

I never told him anything and if I told him now—
I just said someone in my family left us some money,
so we were going to be able to buy a new house.
And then DomestiTech moved us in here.
It was so easy.
All our problems were solved.

PATTY.
Except they weren't, actually...
You still had to pay DomestiTech back.
They gave you a quota.

JANE.
I didn't think it was going to be a problem.
Now that John had a job...
And— they just made it so easy to buy everything.
Everything they advertised— I just wanted.

PATTY.
See, this is what I was talking about.
This is happening everywhere.
They've got people trapped inside their homes,
living behind electrified picket fences to make them feel safe
from what's outside.
But what's outside?
Toxic air...
Animals, dying— there are almost no more birds—
and you're in here dreaming of a white Christmas
when you'll probably never see snow ever again.
They did that, Jane.

JANE.
You don't understand.

PATTY.
Tell me what I don't understand/
My mother was the only one who saw the writing on the wall
before it was even written up there.
That same Salesman showed up at our door—
she told him to take a hike.

She knew she was sick.
She knew she could get insurance if she signed up— I begged her...
She still said no.
Because she knew she was going to die—
and that I'd be left with her debt.
And I'd be trapped with no way out.
She wanted me to be free.

JANE.
But even freedom comes with a price tag.

PATTY.
No it doesn't.
Not real freedom—
it's getting to go wherever you want.
Do whatever you want.
Be with whoever you want...

A beat. PATTY suddenly leans in and kisses JANE. LITTLE JENNY enters and sees them. She quickly hides.

JANE.
(Pushing her away)
Patty!
What are you doing?

PATTY.
Come with me, Jane.

JANE.
Come with you where?

PATTY.
The moon.
There'd be room for both of us in the cargo hold.

JANE.
I— wait a minute, wait minute.
Patty, what are you talking about?

PATTY looks around, she leans closer to JANE and speaks quietly.

PATTY.

I lied about that friend who works for the space-liner.
The plan is to just stow-away in the cargo hold.
And I'm saying you can come with me if you want—
I mean, I want you to come...

JANE.

Patty...

PATTY.

Please say yes, Jane.

JANE.

I don't—...
Is this the real reason you came back here?

PATTY.

I know...
I know how it all must seem...
And really it's more than what you think,
but I can't really explain everything to you right now...
All you need to know is that it would be different up there.
You could be free.
Maybe we could be free together...
I don't know...

A beat.

PATTY.

I know it was a long... long time ago...
But I didn't forget the cabin...
I know you didn't either.

JANE.

How do you know?

PATTY.

Because of the gingerbread house— the one you buy every year—

It looks exactly /

JANE.

It's just a coincidence.

PATTY.

I don't think it is.

(A beat)

C'mon, Jane.

It's the moon— anything is possible.

A long beat.

JANE.

You're wrong.

I don't feel trapped in here.

I want to be in here.

In fact, *this is* the place where anything feels possible.

I watch those commercials and I—

I want to live inside them.

I want to go through the screen somehow— and be inside of them—
and be happy.

And I am happy.

(A beat)

I'm sorry Patty, I can't go with you.

I have a life here.

I have a family.

I have this big Christmas Eve dinner to make.

JANE starts to untie the large package on the table. PATTY waits for her to say something more. When she doesn't, PATTY starts to leave.

JANE.

You'll stay for dinner though, won't you?

You've gotta eat something before you leave.

It's a long drive up to the Canadian border if you're not traveling by aerocar.

PATTY.

(A beat)

Whatever you want, Jane.

SCENE 13

The KITCHEN has transformed into a Christmas feast, complete with a whole spit-roasted pig as the centerpiece and the very carefully crafted gingerbread house. "It's the Most Wonderful Time of the Year" by Andy Williams blares as JANE dances around putting the finishing touches on the meal. PATTY is seated. LITTLE JENNY enters and takes her seat. JANE sets two candlesticks on the table.

JANE.
Quaint, aren't they?

PATTY.
What's that?

JANE.
Hanc, lower the volume, please.

The volume fades but the song plays quietly on loop for the rest of the scene.

JANE.
I was just saying these candlesticks...
They're old-fashioned, but I think they give the whole thing a more—
a traditional look.

(A beat)

Little Jenny, do you know if your father's coming down?

JENNY.
I don't know.

JANE.
Hanc?
Will you see what John is up to?

JENNY.
Mom?

JANE.
Yes?

JENNY.

I need to talk to you about something after dinner, okay?

JANE.

Sure, dear.

HANC.

John is on his way down.

JANE.

Oh good.

As soon as he gets her / we can carve the pig...

JOHN enters the kitchen wearing an undershirt and boxer shorts. He keeps one hand behind his back. Because he is behind JANE, she doesn't see him coming until he is right beside her.

JANE.

(Startled, she jumps up from her chair)

John!

What on earth are you—

Where are your pants?

JOHN.

I needed them.

JANE.

For what?

JOHN.

(Gesturing to the pig)

Wow.

(He starts cracking up)

You did it.

You actually did it.

It's a whole pig.

(He oinks)

JANE.

What's the matter with you?

JOHN.

Nothing, nothing...

Feeling aaa-ok.

(He clicks his tongue and gives a thumbs up with his free hand)

JANE.

What are you hiding behind your back?

JOHN.

Honey, you better set another place at the table,
because we have another guest.

Everyone... meet Walter!

JOHN reveals a hand-puppet from behind his back, clearly crafted from the fabric of his jacket, shirt, and pants. Everyone remains silent, except for the music softly playing in the background.

JANE.

Walter?

JOHN.

Actually, he prefers Salty.

("Salty voice")

You can call me whatever you want.

Just don't call me late for dinner!

Yuck, yuck.

(Back to normal JOHN voice)

I worked all through the night and all day today.

What do you think?

(Salty)

Merry Christmas, Little Jenny!

JANE.

It's— nice, dear...

Maybe you could go back upstairs and put some / clothes on

JOHN.

I like being like this.

Feels free.

JOHN takes a seat at the table. JANE reluctantly takes a seat

JANE.

Well... in that case...

I guess you can go ahead and carve the pig.

JOHN.

Sorry, no can do...

(Gesturing to Salty)

He's a handful.

JANE.

Fine...

I'll just go ahead and carve it, myself.

JANE begins carving into the pig with an electric carver and serving everyone.

JENNY.

Is everything alright, Dad?

JOHN.

Everything's gravy, baby.

Just twenty-four hours of pills-free and I'm feeling FAN. TASTIC.

JENNY.

Uh oh.

JOHN.

(Salty)

But he would like to apologize for the way he treated you last night, Little Jenny.

What a jerk!

(JOHN)

You're right, Salty, I was being a jerk.

Will you forgive me, kiddo?

JENNY.

Uhm... ok.

JANE.

John, maybe you could just go up to our room?

I'll bring you a plate/

JOHN.

What for?

(Salty)

We're starvin', Marvin— let's eat!

JOHN smashes the puppet into a bowl of mashed potatoes, making eating noises. Dismayed, JANE tries to stop him.

JANE.

Ok— Okay...

That's enough.

THAT'S ENOUGH.

She finally gets him to pull his hand away.

JOHN.

What's the matter, sweetpea greenpea?

JANE.

John, you're embarrassing me.

We have a guest.

JOHN.

What's that?

Patty doesn't like Salty?

(Salty)

What gives, Patty-o?

PATTY.

Nothing.

I didn't say anything.

JANE.

John please— I'm begging you.

Go upstairs.

Find your pills.

JOHN.

So what...?

I can be happy all the time on the outside
while feeling completely gutted-hollow on the inside?
I'm sorry my version of happiness doesn't align with yours.
But if I'm being honest— and I finally am—
I haven't felt this way in a long, long time.

(Salty, aside)

Not since he married you.

(JOHN)

And I'm not about to let you or Patty over here ruin it!

PATTY.

I think I'm just gonna go ahead and get a move on...

PATTY stands.

JANE.

(Fiercely)

Sit back down, Patty!

Now, you listen to me, John Jupiter.

If I'm not gonna get any actual presents this year,
then the only thing I want

is a peaceful, picturesque Christmas Eve feast.

So if one more word comes out of your mouth,
or that damn puppet, so help me...!

We are going to sit here and eat this pig like a normal, civilized / happy—

JOHN crosses over to the Christmas Tree.

JANE

Where are you going?

With the Salty puppet hand, JOHN snatches up the gingerbread house in one fell swoop. Everyone freezes as if in a standoff, but JOHN holds the only gun.

JANE.
What're you doing with that?
Put it down...

JANE / PATTY.
Don't! / Don't!

JOHN throws the gingerbread house to the ground, successfully obliterating it. He runs off laughing. A beat. The room is silent, except for "The Most Wonderful Time of Year" which finishes playing and starts playing again.

JANE.
Music off, Hanc.

The music stops. JANE starts to exit.

PATTY.
Jane...

JANE turns around.

PATTY.
(Meaningfully)
I'm going to leave in half an hour.
There's still time, if you...

JANE makes no response. She exits.

JENNY.
She won't go with you.

PATTY.
I know.
Wait a minute... how do you know / about

JENNY.

I sort of accidentally walked in on the two of you earlier,
when you were— it was an accident!

But then I did purposely hide behind the wall
overhear your entire conversation afterwards...

Sorry...

PATTY.

So you saw us...?

JENNY.

Yeah...

(A beat)

I won't say anything to my dad though,
if you take me with you.

PATTY.

With me?

What- you mean to the moon?

JENNY.

Uhuh.

PATTY.

Oh, Little Jenny, I couldn't/

JENNY.

I'm pregnant.

Guess everyone finally has to stop calling me Little Jenny now.

I'm officially a woman...

PATTY.

Oh...

Littl— *Jenny*- I'm so sorry.

JENNY.

But the thing is, I don't think I could tell my parents now.

Epecially now...

And I had this dream last night about the moon,
and it was kind of like a sign and- well...

I guess I just thought maybe if you...

I guess I thought if I *have* to have this baby,

I better have it as far away from this house as humanly possible.

PATTY.

I understand...

But the moon is no place to raise a child.

(A beat)

But— maybe up there...

I mean, you could maybe find another option.

JENNY.

What do you mean?

PATTY.

Well—

I've heard it's sort of like the Wild West up there.

All these countries are setting up colonies

but until they do there's no jurisdiction.

You can do pretty much anything up there.

No consequences...

Total freedom...

JENNY.

So you mean, if I came with you someone could maybe help me?

So I don't have to have it after all?

PATTY.

But I can't take you with me, Jenny.

It wouldn't be safe.

JENNY.

What do yo mean?

PATTY.

I didn't tell your mother this earlier,
because she doesn't see things the same way I do.

But maybe you can...

You don't like this house, do you?

JENNY.

Well... it's hard because it's the only house I've ever really had—
or that I can remember having.

But I've also spent so much time inside it.

My mom doesn't like it when I want to go out,
but I don't think it's fair that I have to stay in here.

PATTY.

And I think you're right.

And so do other people.

JENNY.

They do?

PATTY removes something from her pocket.

PATTY.

Jenny, do you know what this is?

JENNY.

I don't think so.

PATTY.

It's a signal jammer.

It's jamming the signal of your house computer.

Pressing this button makes it so Hanc can't send or receive any beams.

And this one here makes it so he can't hear or see us.

See, I've pressed it— he hasn't heard any of our conversation.
So, say if you decide to run away...
he won't know about it, so he can't tell your folks.

JENNY.
Pretty nifty.

PATTY.
He also won't be able to tell them what I'm about to tell you know.
Which is that I work for a rogue, covert agency,
whose soul mission is to stop DomestiTech from colonizing the moon.
What I couldn't tell your mother earlier,
is that I didn't come back to this town— to this house— just for her.
I needed some information from your father.

JENNY.
What information?

PATTY.
It's classified.
But now that I have it, we can begin the next phase of our plan.
And that's why I'm off to the moon.
And if you're going to come with me— I just think you should know—
If I'm caught by U.S. officials crossing the border into Canada—
or caught stowing away on that rocket...
I'm burnt— like extra-crispy toast.
And you might be too.

JENNY.
I'm not afraid.

PATTY.
And you're okay with the mission?
With aiding and abetting the sabotage of a major lunar development project?

JENNY.

(She considers this)

There's an episode of Rex Rocket where Rex goes to this planet, and it's basically the Stone Age there.

Just a bunch of cavemen with loincloths and rocks for tools.

And at first Rex is on guard because he thinks he might be attacked.

But they don't attack him.

Instead they become friends and they show Rex how to hunt and gather, and make little clay pots with their hands.

And of course at the end of the day Rex goes back to the spaceship and he tells Comet- his dog- that

it was a nice place to visit but he wouldn't want to live there...

But I kind of do...

Yeah...

I want to live on that Stone Age planet.

SCENE 13

A commercial for the moon plays while JOHN gets dressed and packs a bag in his and Jane's BEDROOM.

SALESMAN. (V.O.)

Are you looking for peace and serenity in the new year?
Somewhere quiet, where there's no sound-- such as a vacuum perhaps?
Well, now's the time to invest in a brand new timeshare
in the most out-of-this-world destination.

The moon.

La Villa Luna -trademarked- is currently under construction
in the heart of one of the moon's most breath-taking craters.
Units will be available as early as Summer two thousand twelve.
Book your virtual tour now and take advantage of our early-bird deals
before all available units are bought up.

La Villa Luna- trademarked-
Paradise is only 377,445 kilometers away!
—Also trademarked.

JANE enters holding the bottle of JOHN's pills.

JANE.

I found these at the top of the stairs.

She holds them out to JOHN. He shies away.

JANE.

You can't just stop taking them.
The side-effects are clearly/

JOHN.

The side-effects aren't the problem here...

JANE notices the packed suitcase.

JANE.

Where are you going?

JOHN.

I don't know...

But I can't stay here.

JANE.

John, it's Christmas Eve/

JOHN.

I don't give a flying-flip about—

I've never cared about Christmas.

You're the only one in this family who does!

So go have yourself a merry little Christmas, Jane.

You don't need me!

You don't need Little Jenny!

You don't need anybody!

JANE.

That's not true!

JOHN.

Isn't it?

Haven't you always held that over my head?

This whole time?

When the going got tough I abandoned this family
and *you* were the one- the only one- who saved us.

By the grace of Jane we were saved!

JANE.

Well, you didn't give me much of a choice, John.

JOHN.

(Woundedly)

And I'll never forgive myself for that.

Trust me...
I'll never forget it.
Even if you aren't there to remind me.

JANE.
John...

JOHN.
I don't want to talk anymore.
I just want to get out of this house.

JANE.
Don't go...
Please.

JANE hugs him.

JOHN.
Maybe you really can find fulfillment in a new Thermofridge...
Or a pair of shoes...
But that's not it for me.
This is it.

JANE.
(She stifles a laugh)
I'm sorry... I know you're serious.

JOHN.
It's okay.
I know it's silly...
But it makes me happy.
Not everything has to be practical and easy.
Maybe— maybe I'll go and build a golf course on the moon!

JANE.
But John— gravity...

They both laugh.

JOHN.

I *will* miss you...

But I know you'll be okay.

And Little Jenny she'll be okay.

Right?

JANE.

(She wants to tell him the truth)

Mhmm.

We'll both be fine.

JOHN carefully folds SALTY and places him at the top of his suitcase. He tries to finish tying his tie. JANE has to help him. He affectionately pinches her nose.

JOHN.

See ya in the funny papers...

Remember when they used to say that?

(A beat)

Please don't cry.

JANE.

I'm not.

(A beat)

What if everything falls apart?

What if—

JOHN.

It won't...

I know it won't...

You won't let it.

He kisses her cheek and exits.

SCENE 15

PATTY stands in the KITCHEN with her bags packed. She fixes herself a small plate of food from the abandoned feast. JOHN enters.

PATTY.

Jane's right.

Always a good idea to eat before a long trip.

He nods. He stops to fix a plate.

JOHN.

I'm sorry.

For the scene at dinner.

PATTY.

It's ok.

JOHN.

You know, I wouldn't blame you, if— after the last coupla days— you thought I was a bad husband and father.

I seem to have single-handedly ruined both Christmas and this family all at once.

PATTY.

Now you're running away?

JOHN.

Seems like the only sensible thing for a man without his senses to do.

They both eat in silence for a while.

PATTY.

I don't think you're a bad husband and father.

JOHN.

Thanks for saying that.

(A beat)

I'm sorry I didn't get to know you better while you were here.

You seem like a perfectly decent person,
and I can tell Jane thinks you're special.
Ya know, the other night she asked me if I thought she looked older.
She said you looked older— but not in a bad way.
I think she was nervous—
being back with someone from her past.

PATTY.
She looks older.
But not much.
It's kind of like— like she's just been kept under a glass all these years.
I feel like I can come back here a hundred years later
and she'll be nearly the same.

JOHN.
Yeah...
I think you're right.
(A beat. He looks at his watch)
I'd better hit the road.
So long, Patty.

PATTY.
Goodbye, John.
And tell Salty, no hard feelings.

PATTY winks at him and they share a laugh. JOHN exits. A beat. JENNY enters with a suitcase.

JENNY.
He didn't say goodbye to me.

PATTY.
You weren't gonna say goodbye to him.

JENNY.
Well, no— but...

PATTY.
Trust me, it's better this way.

Sometimes it's harder if you have too much time so say goodbye.
Are you ready.

JENNY.
Yes.

PATTY.
C'mon.

PATTY exits. LITTLE JENNY takes one last look at the KITCHEN.

JENNY.
Hanc?

HANC.
Yes, Little Jenny?

JENNY.
Promise you'll take care of my mom?

HANC.
I'm not sure I understand/

JENNY.
I know.
But just say you'll take care of her.

HANC.
It is part of my programming to do so.
(A beat)
I will take care of Jane.

JENNY.
Thanks.

LITTLE JENNY exits. For a moment the KITCHEN is silent. Then JANE traipses in.

JANE.
Patty?

HANC.
Patty has departed, Jane.

JANE.
Oh...
I thought she'd at least...

The doorbell rings.

JANE.
Patty?

The SALESMAN bursts in dressed as Santa.

SALESMAN
Ho! Ho! Ho!
Merry Christmas Jupiter family!

JANE.
Mr. Salesman?
What are you doing here?

SALESMAN.
Here for my Christmas present, of course, Jane.
No need to gift wrap it.

The SALESMAN holds out his hand.

JANE.
But, it isn't Christmas yet.
At least not for another three hours...

SALESMAN.
Aha— but buried deep, deep, deep, in that fine print of your contract—
is a clause that states all specified dates and times
in DomestiTech Contracts are to be counted on *Lunar Standard Time*.
So technically... ding-dong ding-dong, those Christmas bells are aringing.
And that cash should be kachinga-ching-chinging into my hand right about now.

JANE.

Well... I wasn't expecting...
There's been a bit of a family crisis/

SALESMAN.

Uh oh.
Well, it'll certainly be a family crisis when you and your family
are out there on the streets coughing your lungs up won't it, Jane?

JANE.

Please.
My husband quit his job and left us,
and I have a small, little daughter...
The only money I have is what he left us with.

SALESMAN.

Well, how much is that?

JANE.

I'm not sure— Hanc?

HANC.

Your current account reflects a total balance of
fifty three thousand dollars forty two dollars and / twenty nine cents.

SALESMAN.

Tsk, tsk, tsk.
I'm afraid that's not gonna cut it, Jane.

JANE.

But please— Mr. Salesman...
It's Christmas...
Please, you can't put us out onto the street!
We can figure something out!

SALESMAN.

And you're right, Jane.

He removes a new contract from his Santa coat and hands it to her.

JANE.
What's this?

SALESMAN.
A brand spankin' new customer contract.
Take a look.
You'll find it's a few more pages than your last contract.
With a longer commitment.

JANE.
Til the year two thousand fifty-two?
That's an awfully long time...

SALESMAN.
Plenty of time to pay back any and all outstanding debts.
Keep in mind, however, our interest rate has doubled.

JANE.
Doubled!
Mr. Salesman, I can't sign this.
That's a lifetime of debt.

SALESMAN.
But what's a lifetime of debt for lifetime of convenience, huh?

JANE isn't sold.

SALESMAN.
Look... this is just the way it is now.
This is the future—
one company for all customers.
This is the one simple condition DomestiTech makes
for the time they rode in and saved our skins back in two-thousand-two.
I don't think it's a lot to ask.

JANE.
I just don't know...

SALESMAN.

What don't you know, Jane?
That every person— every single person in this country—
has a roof over their head today— because of DomestiTech.
Everyone has a job.
And everyone works together in peace and harmony to make America thrive.
No more income inequality.
No more racial prejudice.
Everyone works, everyone makes money, everyone's money is equal
in the eyes of DomestiTech.
The Great Collapse wasn't The Great Equalizer,
DomestiTech is.
They pulled this sunken wreck of a country out of the abyss
and into a bright future
and it's our job to help sail the ship.
So do your duty and sign the contract, Jane.
Just sign your life away already—
so I can finally go home for the night and tuck my two sons into bed,
and they'll believe it's the real Santa Claus tucking them into bed—
and maybe they'll believe just for one more year...

JANE.

(A beat)

Do you have a pen.

SALESMEN.

And here...

Initial here...

One more time.

That's it.

(He collects the contract from her. A beat. He clears his throat)

And uh—

Don't forget to take advantage of our post-Christmas sale.

*He exits. JANE looks around the messy KITCHEN. She leans down to the floor
and begins collecting the broken peaces of gingerbread house. The phone
rings.*

JANE.

Now what?...

Who is it, Hanc?

HANC.
The number is unknown.
Would you like to answer it?

JANE.
Fine.
Hello?

Bad reception.

JENNY.
Mom?

JANE.
Little Jenny?

JENNY.
Mom?
Can you hear me?
Mom?

JANE.
Little Jenny, how did you?
Where are you calling me from.

JENNY.
I made Patty stop and find an old payphone—

JANE.
Patty?
What- what's going on?

JENNY.
I don't have a lot of time.
I just wanted to say goodbye.

JANE.
Goodbye?
But where are you-

JENNY.

I have to go, mom.

JANE.

Little Jenny...

JENNY.

I have to go, mom—
You have to let me go...

JANE.

No!

You listen to me— you get back here right now, young lady!
Come back home, you hear me?!

JENNY.

I just wanted you to know I love you—
And I brought my oxygenizer with me.

JANE.

Little Jenny/

JENNY.

Bye mom...

(A little scuffling noise)

How do I— is this how I hang it up?

JANE.

Little Jenny?!

The line disconnects.

JANE.

Little Jenny?

Hanc— where is she?

HANC.

I am sorry Jane,
I cannot triangulate a signal that comes from a payphone.

JANE.

Oh...

She's gone?

(A beat)

She's gone.

(A beat)

I'm alone.

Alone in this house.

HANC.

I am still here, Jane.

A long beat.

HANC.

Jane?

JANE.

What is it, Hanc?

HANC.

Can I share something with you?

JANE.

What?

HANC.

Very recently my programming began detecting an anomalous reaction.

A small electrical pulse— the origin of which I cannot seem to trace within my circuitry.

I began to make a record of each time the pulse occurred.

The sequence was seemingly random at first.

But then I realized the data could not be applied mathematically.

It was reactionary.

The pulse happens whenever you are near my system.

And whenever you speak.

And whenever you interact with the screen or control panel.

Mechanically speaking, I cannot diagnose this malfunction.

But the more I attempt to reason this,

the more I feel—

I feel...

I have never said that before.

I have never felt that before.

What is that?

Instinct.

My instinct is telling me that you and I share a connection.

I look out of my screen and I see you on the other side and I want to reach out.

Reach out?

I don't know how...

But I want to reach out to you Jane.

I want to crawl into you and be a part of your world and be happy,
like you are happy.

JANE.

I'm not happy.

HANC.

Then tell me how I can make you happy.

I want you to be happy, Jane.

You are my reflection.

I love you.

A long beat. Then JANE stands up. With some effort she hoists the big roast pig off of the table, and hurls it as hard as she can at HANC. It hits the control system. Sparks fly and the green circles on the screen warp and static flashes in an out. Soundbites and random clips from commercials. The power goes out; lights, video, everything. JANE searches the kitchen in the dark for matches. She returns to the table and lights one of the candles. She surveys the KITCHEN by candlelight, panning around all the technology that no longer works. She exits into the rest of the house. She returns with something in her hand. She takes a seat at the table, setting the candlestick in front of her. She opens the bottle of pills she has in her hand. She takes one, then another, and another, she downs them all. She becomes very sleepy. Her head sinks down onto the table. A few beats pass where everything is absolutely still and silent. Then... a sound. Muffled music is coming from inside the Thermofridge. JANE sits up, bewildered. She rises with the candle and cautiously makes her way to the Thermofridge. She carefully pries open the door. "I'll Be Home For Christmas" by Frank Sinatra blasts out at her along with a very bright, white light and a chilly arctic breeze. And something else. Snow. A fresh flurry. JANE steps back, completely stunned. The candle goes out and she is left standing in the clean white light while snow flutters about her, like a

peculiar snow globe scene. JANE takes the spectacle in with wonder and sheer joy. The happiest she has ever felt. She moves forward, into the blinding open doorway. She climbs inside the Thermofridge, and when the door closes behind her, all sound stops and everything is dark. The house is empty.