

Tess McNulty

Age: 17, Grade: 11

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Category: Dramatic Script

Thanksgiving Miracles (or lack thereof)

FADE IN:

1. INT. KITCHEN/DINING ROOM - DAY

LINDA (57), short and plump with thinning blonde hair is pulling a hot PUMPKIN PIE from her oven with lovingly used red plaid oven mitts.

Her kitchen looks straight out of a thanksgiving T.J. Maxx catalogue, with coordinated orange and maroon dish towels, fake candles “burning” on decorated candle holders, and an autumnal centerpiece on the nearby dark oak dining table. There’s cloth napkins and her “special occasions” plates and silverware waiting to be set on the table.

On the olive walls of the dining room is a CROSS, large and domineering, central to an array of FAMILY PORTRAITS; the typical caucasian family, a mom, a dad, and a son.

Dishes upon dishes are sitting on the stovetop, an uncooked, stuffed and barely seasoned turkey on the countertop waiting for its turn in the oven. Linda sets the pie on the counter to cool, pulls off her oven mitts, and with a stressed exhale, turns her attention to the carrots on the cutting board. She starts chopping methodically and quickly when suddenly

A DOORBELL RINGS.

A BOSTON TERRIER yaps loudly and runs out of the kitchen, his collar jingling and nails tapping against the hardwood floors.

LINDA

Oh, quit your yappin’ Biscuit.

Linda smiles, gently placing the knife down and cheerily following BISCUIT into the foyer.

INT. FOYER - DAY

Linda’s slippers slap against the floor as she makes her way to the door. Her smile suddenly drops into a look of shock when she lays her eyes on

FAITH (23).

Faith wears a corduroy skirt and lavender sweater that compliments her blonde hair that looks just like Linda’s. Her legs are short, her height petite like Linda. Biscuit wags his tail and barks, putting a smile on Faith’s face.

FAITH

Happy thanksgiving, Mom.

LINDA

(stern)
What are you doing here.

Faith strolls into the home, shocking Linda who barely allows her in and quickly closes the door behind her.

FAITH
(to Linda)
No hello? No how are you?
(to Biscuit, squatting down to pet him)
Hey, Biscuit!!

LINDA
What are you *DOING* here?? Your father and Matthew will be home soon from the airport, you know how he'd feel seeing you here.

FAITH
I just wanted to talk to you. And Dad...
Linda makes a face of terrified worry.

FAITH (CONTD)
...or maybe not Dad, yet.

LINDA
Jesus, Mary and Joseph...

Linda stomps to the nearby sitting room, distressed. Faith and Biscuit follow.

INT. SITTING ROOM - DAY

LINDA (CONTD)
Sit, I suppose. You know you can't stay for long...

They sit across from one another on parallel wine colored, itchy-looking couches. Linda checks her wristwatch, and Biscuit jumps up on the couch and sits down with Faith. Faith smiles and starts petting him.

FAITH
Yeah, I know.

LINDA
So... How's Boston treating you?

FAITH
Good, yeah it's good... Much, dryer, and colder than the sunshine state though. Took some getting used to.

LINDA
Oh, I'll bet! I'll bet.

Linda fake-chuckles awkwardly.

FAITH
How's business? You busy nowadays?

LINDA
Oh, it could be a lot worse. But it could certainly be better, ever since that Publix opened up only a couple of blocks away, people don't want to go to their local bakery anymore.

FAITH
Geez, that's tough.

LINDA
Yeah, well, that's how it is. It's easier to pick up a cheap dozen of manufactured cupcakes with the rest of your

groceries, I suppose. But Publix can't beat our quality!

FAITH

Ha, that's for sure. I've missed your macrons. How's Dad?

LINDA

Oh, better than ever. Blessed be His name, he's as strong as an ox. Finally got off those cigarettes.

FAITH

Oh wow, really??

LINDA

Yes ma'am!

FAITH

(chuckling)

I can't believe it, never thought I'd see the day!

LINDA

Right??

Linda and Faith share a genuine, warm chuckle, until an awkward silence falls over them once again. Linda looks down, wringing her hands. She checks her watch nervously once again.

LINDA (CONTD)

(nervously, quietly)

Speaking of your father though, he really will be coming home soon...

Faith picks up a small framed photo sitting atop a pile of home-living magazines on the coffee table. When she picks it up she has to stop petting Biscuit; he whimpers quietly and wags his tail. The picture is a portrait of Linda, her husband FRANK (50s) and their son, MATTHEW (30s), tall like Frank and blonde like Linda, wearing a cap and gown and many cords.

FAITH

(cutting her off slightly)

Matthew's graduation. I remember that day. Cruddy weather, it was so sweaty and muggy.

Faith smiles, reminiscing, before realizing something was off in the photo. Her gentle smile drops, and she looks up at Linda.

LINDA

Your father couldn't stand to see you in our family memories anymore. I'm... sorry, honey. We have the original photo somewhere...

FAITH

No, I get it. Erasing me from the narrative. What could I expect.

Linda looks down, ashamed. The room is filled with uncomfortable silence. Linda is tapping her leg against the ground as she checks her watch again. She looks up.

LINDA

Gosh, we don't have much time here... Matthew's flight landed a bit ago...

Linda looks out the window, as if to make sure the car isn't coming down the street at that very moment.

LINDA (CONTD)

So, did you come to repent?

FAITH

What?

Faith is taken aback.

LINDA

Did you come to your senses about... him? Or Him?

Linda gestures to a cross hanging on the wall.

FAITH

No, Mom just listen... I actually--

LINDA (CONTD)

Your father might find it hard but we're ready for you to come back, Faith, to us, to Christ--

FAITH

No, Mom. Please, that's not why I came all the way out here--

LINDA

We told you to come back when you were ready to get over your silly phase and silly Protestant boyfriend and come back to the Church, the community... You could find a man like Greg, you just need to find yourself a good Catholic--

FAITH

--Mom I'm telling you that's not why--

LINDA

(speaking over FAITH)

--If you found yourself a good man LIKE Greg, but a Catholic, then--

FAITH

Could you just listen to me for once?! God DAMN it I just feel so SUFFOCATED around you--

LINDA

You come to MY home uninvited and use His name in vain?!

FAITH

Shit-- I mean, damn- I mean--

LINDA

(Appalled, looking up into heaven)

Lord have MERCY! I suppose you haven't changed one bit since-

Faith stands.

FAITH

You're damn right I haven't changed, I refuse to be an adult completely controlled by my mother and my pastors! I refuse to have to choose between my boyfriend and my religion--

Linda stands as well.

LINDA

WELL I'M SORRY WE WANT TO SEE YOU IN HEAVEN WITH US WHEN IT'S TIME--

FAITH

Oh come ON! Don't you give me that SHIT again I've heard ENOUGH OF IT LIVING WITH IN THIS PLACE FOR 19 YEARS--

LINDA

Oh, well then I guess I'm sorry then for being such a TERRIBLE mother--

FAITH

Seriously?? SERIOUSLY?? e**NOUGH** of this guilt tripping! Do you understand--

LINDA
What I understand is that you're 23 now still acting like a CHILD-

FAITH
We're getting married!

Silence fills the room as Linda feels her heart shatter.

LINDA
What?

FAITH
December 14th. A winter wedding in Vermont.

Linda sits down slowly, wearing her shock on her face. Faith makes her way around the coffee table to sit with her. It's awkward. Biscuit gets comfortable and adjusts after Faith left her spot on the couch.

FAITH (contd)
Me and Greg want you, and Dad, and Matthew to be there.

LINDA
A Protestant wedding?

FAITH
No, but it's not Catholic, either - It's at this wonderful ranch. I'm still a Catholic, just because I love a Protestant doesn't make me any less Catholic.

Faith grabs her mother's hands. Linda can't look her in the eyes.

FAITH (CONTD)
"Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins."

Linda smiles, still not managing to make eye contact.

LINDA
Peter 4:8.

Faith smiles, finally feeling close to her mother again.

FAITH
Ha, yeah.

Linda looks up.

LINDA (CONTD)
December 14th?

FAITH
Yep.

Linda squeezes Faith's hand, then lets it go.

LINDA
I'm going to be quite busy with work this December. You know how it gets during the holiday season...

Faith is shocked for a moment, looking down. The tenseness in the room returns. She exhales deeply, lets go of Linda's hands then stands up.

FAITH
Well... Okay, then. I guess.

Linda is silent.

FAITH (CONTD)
I'm sorry for bothering you.

Faith gets up, absorbing her surroundings, knowing it has been long since she's been there and it will be long before she returns, if ever.

Biscuit hears her making her way out and runs up to Faith energetically. Faith pats him on the head for a moment before she gets to the foyer. Her flats clack against the hardwood floors and we hear the large door SLAM as she leaves her mother on the itchy wine colored couch.

FADE OUT.