

For Goodness' Sake

Written By

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OVER BLACK:

The opening strings of Bing Crosby's "It's Beginning to Look Like Christmas."

FADE IN

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

The camera moves over a beautiful, picturesque Thanksgiving feast, with a huge turkey, stuffing, cranberry sauce, etc. in slow motion.

It's off-putting with the backing music. There's already a Christmas tree looming in the background, a wreath on the wall.

A family - MELISSA, 35, OWEN JR., 9, and JESS, 6 - shovels the food into their mouths. The chair at the head of the table is empty.

MATCH CUT TO:

EXT. TARGET - NIGHT

OWEN, 37, is a hefty, normally affable guy wearing a light winter coat and sitting in a folding lawn chair, pretty close to the front of the line for Black Friday.

He pulls a piece of paper out of his pocket and looks it over - it's got a myriad of expensive items written on it, listed under Melissa, Owen Jr., or Jess. He eyes the other people in line nervously.

Meanwhile, at the end of the line, REGINA, 28, dressed warmly, steps in line, checking her watch.

REGINA

Dammit.

INT. OWEN'S CAR - DAY - THE NEXT DAY

A 2014 Kia Sedona minivan, the backseat filled to the brim with bags, appliances, video games, a Dyson vacuum. There is space for one more box in the center of the backseat.

Owen scowls while he stares in his rearview mirror at Regina, who's packing her relatively modest Black Friday haul into her Hyundai Sonata.

He watches as she finishes packing it, and as she pulls out of the space, he starts his engine. The music ends as he carefully exits his parking space.

EXT. REGINA'S HOUSE - LATER

There are some sparse decorations around - some lights, a wreath on the door.

Regina gets the bags from her car and struggles to close the trunk. She waddles to the door and her phone starts ringing.

She uncomfortably shifts all the bags into her left hand and fishes out her phone. She picks it up and holds it against her ear with her shoulder.

REGINA

Hey, babe. No, yeah, I just got back.

She opens the door after some effort. A Kia Sedona is parked across the street.

INT. REGINA'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Small, but cozy, with a well-decorated Christmas tree in the corner and stockings pinned above the fireplace. There's a photo of Regina with MATT, 26, on the beach. They're both smiling from ear to ear.

She tries to close the door with her foot as she carries the bags in, but it remains slightly ajar. She laughs. It's beautiful.

REGINA

No more guessing. I did get a pretty good deal on what I got you, though. And it was the last one. Had to fight for it, too.

(beat)

And you'd better not snoop around. Especially around the hall closet.

EXT. REGINA'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

Owen exits his car, zipping up his jacket. He makes sure the car's locked. He waits as a car passes and crosses the street.

INT. BEDROOM - AFTERNOON

Regina sighs in relief. As she puts down the bags, we see a sparkling ENGAGEMENT RING on her finger.

REGINA (CONT'D)
 No, I'm fine. The stuff's just a
 little heavy.
 (beat)
 No, that's not a hint.

She sits down on the bed. She turns on the radio - Nat King Cole's "The Christmas Song."

REGINA (CONT'D)
 I don't know, for all my bitching
 and moaning about commercialism,
 today really got me into the
 Christmas spirit.

In the other room, we hear THE DOOR CLOSING. Regina stops in her tracks, her eyes darting to the living room.

REGINA
 Did you just come home?

The sound of footsteps. Her eyes widen.

REGINA (CONT'D)
 Don't mess with me, Matt.
 (beat)
 There's someone in the house.

She tiptoes to the closet and grabs an old BASEBALL BAT and readies it. The footsteps get louder and louder. She tightens her grip.

She realizes the music is still playing. She gulps as it plays, she's too far away, the footsteps are drawing nearer, they're at the door --

CUT TO:

INT. REGINA'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

CU: The photo of Matt and Regina.

A GUNSHOT in the other room. The music continues to waft in.

Owen comes around the corner, an espresso machine from Regina's bag under his arm and a pistol in his hand. He passes through the house, satisfied.

INT. OWEN'S CAR - LATER

Owen places the espresso machine in its designated slot in the backseat. Now the myriad of gifts is complete.

Owen gets in the front seat and puts his gun back in the glove compartment, then he turns on the radio. It's Frank Sinatra's "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas."

He whistles along as he pulls out his list and checks off next to "espresso machine." He smiles and starts to drive away.

CUT TO:

INT. OWEN'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

Owen walks in and hangs up his coat. His kids run up happily to hug him.

OWEN

(smiling)

Hey, guys. Listen, I heard it on good authority that if you two keep being such good kids, Santa's gonna bring you something *really* cool this year.

OWEN JR.

We missed you last night, Daddy.

OWEN

I know, kiddo. I missed you, too. But you know what? While I was in line, I was thinking about how thankful I am to have you guys, so it's almost like I was eating here with you.

He tousles his hair.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Owen walks over to the Christmas tree, where Melissa is fixing some of the ornaments. He kisses her.

MELISSA

Get everything you needed?

OWEN

Just about. Couple of snags here and there but I figured it out.

He sighs contentedly.

OWEN (CONT'D)

Got any leftovers left?

MELISSA

Lots. No one else was really around
to eat them.

OWEN

Good. I'm starving.

He leans in closer to her.

OWEN (CONT'D)

And I heard that Santa's bringing
you something nice, too.

MELISSA

Is he, now?

OWEN

Well, only if you're good.

MELISSA

Well, I could say the same for you.

He nods and smiles lovingly at her.

OWEN

I'll do my best.

CUT TO BLACK.