

62 INT. TESS' BEDROOM - NIGHT - SECONDS LATER

Mindy enters with the glass of water.

MINDY

Honey, you gotta get to sleep. It's so late.

TESS

I was. But my mouth is so dry that it woke me up.

Tess takes a big gulp of the water. Mindy places her hand on Tess's forehead.

MINDY

Well, you don't have a fever.

TESS

I'm not sick. It's from this old heating system and the dry heat from the pipes. It will evaporate most of the condensation in the room which is exactly why it's important to stay hydrated.

She finishes up the glass of water.

MINDY

Which probably means a trip to the bathroom at 4 am. How does it feel to know everything already at age eight?

TESS

It might be a good idea to get a humidifier for the winter season.

MINDY

Oh, sure, Tess. I'll get right on that. Put it on my Christmas list to Santa.

Mindy takes the glass and gets up to go refill it but really to hide the emotional well that has risen up suddenly inside her.

MINDY

I'll get you a refill.

Mindy goes to the kitchen and refills the glass. She notices a missed call on her phone and checks the number. When she realizes that it's Colin, she smiles slightly.

MINDY

Hmm. No message.

She walks back into the room and sets the glass on the night stand next to Tess's bed. She gives Tess a hug and kiss.

MINDY

Alright, young lady. Close your eyes and get to sleep. We're going to grandma's for breakfast in the morning.

TESS

And then I'm going to be stuck there while you go to work. I know the protocol.

MINDY

We've got to pay the bills, honey. That's what adults do.

TESS

I'm old enough to take care of myself.

MINDY

You're a child, Tess. If I left you alone here I would go to jail for negligence.

Mindy kisses her on the forehead and tucks Tess in.

TESS

I wish you didn't have to work all the time.

MINDY

Me too. But Christmas is here and the only way to have it is to work.

TESS

I thought that was Santa's job.

MINDY

Yeah. Well, everybody needs a little help. Go to sleep. Enough talk.

TESS

Love you, mom.

MINDY

You're my greatest gift, Tess. The best present anyone could get. Goodnight, baby.

Mindy walks out of the room and leaves the door slightly ajar so a little light from the hallway gets in.

MINDY

Is this good?

TESS

Yes.

Mindy smiles then walks down the hallway to the living room. She looks at her phone again and contemplates calling Colin back for a moment before deciding against it.

She gives a heavy sigh, then goes back to writing out checks for the bills.

CUT TO:

63 INT.FREIDBERG HOME - LIVING ROOM - MORNING

Colin enters the room getting ready to leave for work. His mother is cooking scrapple. She is in a white gown. The mini Christmas tree is lit up and positioned on the table next to where the couch is.

He kisses his mom on the cheek.