

HOLLY. It's no use. No matter how much I try to get this place ready, I can't do it by myself. I'm afraid I might have to . . . close the inn.

(NARRATOR 1 *shakes the jingle bell.*)

I'm sorry Mom and Dad, I tried to keep this place going. There just isn't enough Christmas spirit left.

(NARRATOR 1 *shakes the jingle bell.*)

I guess I'll just have to . . . torch the place for insurance money.

(LAERTES, *a real estate developer in a suit, enters.*)

A customer!

Hi there! Welcome to the Evergreen Inn! My name's Holly and I'm the owner, although not for long since business is so bad!

LAERTES. Oh I won't be staying.

(*He takes out a tape measure and begins measuring things.*)

HOLLY. Really interested in layout, huh?

LAERTES. How much?

HOLLY. Well it's two hundred for a night, but—

LAERTES. No I mean how much for the entire place?

HOLLY. The . . . whole . . . inn?

LAERTES. I've got a vision for fixing this place up. Well, first bulldozing it into dust and then rebuilding. Two words for you: artisanal smoothies. Kale smoothies over here, and the quinoa smoothies over here. And we'll have a primitive grains station over here. Everyone will be so darn regular.

HOLLY. You want to bulldoze the Evergreen Inn?

LAERTES. No no no. First the wrecking ball, then the bulldozers. This place is going to look amazing as a pile of rubble in a landfill.

(*He laughs rather evilly.*)

People from the big city need their juices, and they will trample anyone who tries to stop them.

HOLLY. But the Evergreen Inn is a staple of Hopewood Falls, Vermont, and my grandfather built it by hand!

LAERTES. Your grandfather was terrible at building inns.

HOLLY. You can't do this! I'll never sell!

LAERTES. Oh I think you will, Mrs. . . . Gooden.

HOLLY. It's Miss Gooden. Just Miss.

*(She gets sad.)*

I'm not married. Even though I'm really, really attractive. I'm also single—you see I've had a hard time finding love since my parents died and this inn has been the only thing keeping me going.

*(NARRATOR 1 rings the jingle bell.)*

LAERTES. Well you've got 24 hours to sell it to me before I take it using eminent domain.

HOLLY. I'll fight this!

LAERTES. Here's my card, Holly. And . . .

*(With an evil gleam in his eyes:)*

Happy . . . Holidays . . .

*(Laughs evilly.)*

HOLLY. You monster!