

A HOBO FOR CHRISTMAS

Written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. POND - DAY

Frozen over by the winter cold. Surrounded by woods. Fresh snow on the ground. A very serene place where memories are made.

The laughing of children comes near. OLIVIA KRANDALL (7), extra adorable with her blonde hair and blue eyes, dressed for warmth in the frigid temps with her wool coat, scarf, boots, and earmuffs, emerges from the woods with her little brother, COLE KRANDALL (5), energetic.

They stop at the edge of the pond and look out at the glaze that extends for many yards in front of them.

COLE

Cool!

Cole steps onto the pond, his shoes slipping on the icy surface but he retains his balance well.

OLIVIA

Cole, get back here. Mom says to never go out on the pond when it's frozen.

Cole ventures further out like a brave lad.

COLE

It's okay. See?

Olivia is extra cautious but temptation gets a hold on her. She takes a step out onto the ice and falls right away. Unhurt, she laughs at herself. Cole laughs with her.

COLE

Come on, Olivia!

Cole moves further out.

Olivia gets to her feet, doing better now on the surface, and baby steps her way out toward the middle. She joins hands with Cole. They slide about, pretending to ice skate, laughing and having a great time.

They separate as they continue to slide about, drifting further from each other.

With Olivia's back to him, Cole suddenly falls through the ice with a scream.

Olivia whirls to Cole. All she can see is his arms as he holds them up, trying to grip the edge of the hole and failing to do so. He gurgles as he tries to yell for help and inhales icy water in the process.

Olivia is too fearful to move.

IN THE WOODS

EMMA KRANDALL (30), a bundle of happiness, helps her husband, STEVE KRANDALL (early 30s), dutiful husband and father, load a freshly cut Spruce tree, perfect for Christmas decorating, onto a trailer behind their SUV.

EMMA

The kids are gonna love it.

STEVE

I think it's more that they love the presents we put under it.

They laugh.

EMMA

Thinking back, I guess that WAS always the best part.

OLIVIA (O.S.)

Dad!

Emma and Steve pass each other an urgent look before taking off in a run toward the voice.

AT THE POND

Olivia stands frozen where she had been. There's no longer any movement inside the hole.

Emma and Steve race out of the woods and stop just short of the icy pond. Both look out to Olivia.

EMMA

Olivia!

Olivia cries as she points to the hole.

OLIVIA

Cole fell through the ice!

No regard for his own safety, Steve rushes out to the hole, sliding on his knees up to the edge. He looks down into the water for any sign of his son. Not seeing one, he reaches into the freezing water and feels around.

Emma is a little more cautious as she makes her way out to Olivia. She holds her daughter to her as both watch Steve with extreme worry.

EMMA

Where is he?!

Steve tries and tries to reach his boy. The pain from his freezing arm etches onto his face but he keeps trying.

Finally, a horrid realization sets in. He withdraws his arm from the water and turns to the girls with utter devastation.

Emma stares back in shock.

CUT TO:

EXT. KRANDALL HOUSE - DAY

A beautiful winter day. The gorgeous two-story home stands back off of a rural road. Houses in the area are few and far between. Nothing but untamed wilderness behind them. A three car detached garage contains a bonus room above it, accessible from a set of stairs outside.

SUPER: ONE YEAR LATER

A light snow falls, enough to cover the yard and the Krandall's roof. It's a picture perfect image that would look great on a Christmas card.

INT. KRANDALL HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY - SAME TIME

Very inviting with the wood trim and molding. The gas fireplace is at work, giving the appearance of a real fire on this blustery day. A wonderful atmosphere for relaxing while snow is visible through the tall windows as it falls outside.

There's something missing in this home - family pictures. There are none.

Olivia, now 8 years old, wanders into the room with a coloring book and crayons. She lays them on the coffee table. Something catches her eye. The falling snow. She hurries to a window and looks out with excitement.

OLIVIA

Mom! Come quick!

Olivia races to the...

ENTRY HALL

... and removes a pair of snow boots from the closet. She swaps them for the shoes she wears, then hurries to put on a scarf and hat.

Emma, now a dim light on a bright day, hurries through the hall, drying her wet hands on an apron.

EMMA
(worried)
What's wrong?

Olivia grabs her coat and puts it on.

OLIVIA
It's snowing! I'm gonna make a
snowman.

Olivia zips up her coat and turns for the door. Emma catches her by the arm.

EMMA
I want you to stay inside.

Olivia's disappointment shows.

OLIVIA
But Mom...

Emma gets to work removing the extra articles from Olivia.

EMMA
Don't you "but Mom" me. I'm fixing
dinner and can't go out right now.

OLIVIA
I'll stay by the house.

EMMA
You're not going out and that's
final.

Emma has returned everything to the closet, except for the boots. Olivia crosses her arms and sulks.

OLIVIA
You never let me do anything fun.

Olivia stomps back to the...

LIVING ROOM

... the boots making a lot of noise on the hardwood floor. She plops down before the coffee table and gets to work coloring a picture in the book. Her movements are rough, the result of anger.

Emma watches from the doorway, bothered by the sight but not willing to give in.

EMMA

Olivia?

Olivia ignores Emma.

IN THE ENTRY HALL

The main door opens. Steve, dressed in a business suit and coat, enters. Snow has sprinkled his attire.

STEVE

It's really starting to come down out there.

Lost in thought over Olivia, Emma fails to hear him right away. She finally turns to Steve with a blank look.

EMMA

What?

Steve removes the coat, shakes off the snow, and hangs it inside the closet.

STEVE

I said the snow is picking up.

Emma folds her arms and looks back at Olivia.

EMMA

Yeah.

Steve senses trouble.

STEVE

What's going on?

Emma takes Steve by the arm and leads him down the hall to the...

KITCHEN

A chef's dream. Plenty of counter space and cabinets. A double oven with built-in cooktop. A few pots simmer on the stove. A meatloaf is in the oven. A pot of coffee is ready.