

# A Candle in the Snow

## Characters:

- Lucy - An optimistic woman who's down on her luck. Mid-late 30s
- Bruce - Lucy's older brother, a pessimist and a realist. Late 30s-40s
- Dolores - Lucy and Bruce's mother, a worrier who always expects the worst. 50s-60s
- Don - Lucy's cousin, Mara's son, cynical and sarcastic. Late 20s-30s
- Mara - Lucy's aunt, always complaining about something. Late 40s-50s
- Theo - Lucy's son, is distant, 18-22 years old

## Setting:

1. Lucy's Bedroom - Christmas, early morning, the day of the family party.
2. Dolores' Living Room - Christmas, later in the evening, during the family party.

## Act I

### Scene 1: Lucy's Bedroom

*(The stage is set in a bedroom with a bed, dresser or wardrobe closet, and mirror. It is early morning, and LUCY is lying in bed. An alarm clock rings, playing a cheerful Christmas song, "We Wish You a Merry Christmas." She reaches over to turn off the alarm but knocks it on to the floor, and it continues to play. She groans softly)*

**Lucy:** *(Sits up, groggily, but with a smile)* Alright, Christmas spirit, I'm awake.

*(LUCY grabs the alarm and turns it off. She takes a deep breath and stands up, stretching. She walks up to the mirror, looks at herself, feeling insecure but remaining collected. She strokes her hair.)*

**Lucy:** *(To herself)* Another day, Lucy. You got this.

*(LUCY opens a drawer and takes out a small bottle of medication. She takes a pill then glances at a photo of her family on the nightstand. She takes a breath and smiles, then grabs her phone and makes a call.)*

**Lucy:** Hey, Theo, how are you?

**Theo:** *(From offstage, nice but assertive)* Hey, mom, I'm doing good.

**Lucy:** That's good. I was just calling to ask if you were going to be able to stop by your grandmother's house for the Christmas party?

**Theo:** You know I can't, I have Amy's party, I told you.

**Lucy:** I know but you went to Amy's last year, and the year before that. *(Theo starts talking)* Can you at least come this year or at least come by halfway through or I could even pick you up halfway through and bring you or the other way around or -

**Theo:** *(Progressively losing patience)* I know but, no I can't do that it's supposed to snow later, mom, mom, MOM! *(Beat. THEO calms down.)* I can't go, maybe next year. I'll talk to you later, bye.

**Lucy:** Oh ok. Merry Christmas. I love you.

*(The phone hangs up; she sits for a second.)*

**Lucy:** *(Holding back tears)* Yeah, maybe next year.

*(LUCY then begins to get ready for the day. As she dresses, she hums "We Wish You a Merry Christmas." She grabs a brush and starts to brush her hair, but it slips from her hand and falls to the floor.)*

**Lucy:** *(Laughing softly)* Whoops! Butterfingers.

*(She goes to pick up the brush but accidentally knocks over and spills a cup of water on her dresser.)*

**Lucy:** *(Sighing)* Okay, so a little spill. No big deal. I needed to clean this dresser at some point.

*(She quickly wipes up the water, then goes to her closet/dresser. As she pulls out a dress, it tears.)*

**Lucy:** Oh. Well, I didn't want to wear this anyway. *(Trying to stay positive but is a little defeated.)*

**Lucy:** *(She remembers.)* Oh wait!

*(She takes out a dusty sewing kit, blows the dust off and begins to sew the tear back together, humming as she does. Once the dress is secure, she holds it up. It's a poor sewing job, but she's happy with it.)*

**Lucy:** Nothing's going to ruin today!

*(She dresses, and as she finishes, she looks at herself in the mirror one last time, taking a deep breath.)*

**Lucy:** *(With resolve)* Let's do this.

*(LUCY exits the room, the scene fading to black.)*

## **Scene 2: The Living Room**

*(The stage is set with a Christmas tree and lights. The family is gathered, sitting on a couch and chairs surrounding a coffee table, enjoying some eggnog.)*

**Bruce:** *(Looking at his watch)* Lucy's late. Typical. Always has to make an entrance.

**Dolores:** *(Wringing her hands)* I just hope she's alright. The roads are so icy. *(Gasps)* Bruce, what if she got into an accident?

**Don:** *(On his phone)* She probably just got stuck in traffic. It's not the end of the world, Aunt Dolores.

**Mara:** Traffic is horrible everywhere. It took me an hour just to get here from the other side of town. People don't know how to drive anymore.

**Dolores:** *(Getting more worried)* Oh, Mara's right. It's the weather, it's been so erratic. I heard there's a storm coming. We might lose power.

**Don:** My phones already getting no signal.

**Bruce:** Great. Another power outage, just like Thanksgiving last year. Remember that, Don?

**Don:** How could I forget? We spent the entire evening huddled around candles. It was like living in the Dark Ages.

**Mara:** And the food went bad because the fridge stopped working. We had to throw away all those leftovers.

**Dolores:** I just want everything to go smoothly this year. Is that too much to ask?

**Bruce:** Yeah, probably. Things always go wrong.

**Don:** It's like we're cursed or something.

**Mara:** It's the same every year. No matter how much we plan, it always falls apart.

**Don:** (*Sarcastically*) Maybe we should just embrace the chaos. At least then we won't be disappointed.

**Dolores:** I just want one perfect holiday. One without any disasters or drama.

**Bruce:** Well, don't hold your breath, Mom. Life's not a Hallmark movie.

**Don:** Yeah, and if it was, we'd definitely be the dysfunctional family no one wants to watch.

(*The doorbell rings, DOLORES rushes to answer it.*)

**Dolores:** (*Opening the door*) Lucy! There you are. I was so worried something had happened to you on the way. I'm so glad you're safe.

**Lucy:** (*Cheerfully*) Hi, Mom! I'm fine, really. Just a little traffic, nothing to worry about.

**Dolores:** Traffic is dangerous too. So many accidents happen this time of year.

**Lucy:** Well, I'm here now. Let's enjoy the holiday together.

(*LUCY enters the living room, carrying a gift bag of cookies.*)

**Lucy:** Merry Christmas, everyone! Who's ready for some cookies?

(*LUCY trips and falls on the floor, the bag of cookies land on the table or are caught by DON who then puts it on the table. Only DOLORES runs to help LUCY up.*)

**Bruce:** (*Sarcastically*) More sugar. Just what we need.

**Lucy:** (*Getting up from the floor*) I'm ok.

**Don:** (*Grabbing and eating a cookie*) Why are they in a gift bag?

(*MARA grabs a cookie with her eggnog in hand, walks over to the window and looks out of it.*)

**Lucy:** What do you mean? What else would I bring them in?

**Don:** I don't know, maybe some Ziploc bags so they stay fresh. (*DON hits cookie against table, it's rock hard.*) Just a thought.

**Lucy:** It's festive.

**Bruce:** I guess, but it kinda looks like one of the bags I gave you last Christmas.

Lucy: Yeah, well-

**Don:** Speaking of gifts, I didn't see you walk in with an-

**Dolores:** Oh, Lucy, I hope you didn't overexert yourself making those. You always push yourself so hard.

**Don:** Yeah, wouldn't want you to break a sweat over some cookies.

**Mara:** *(Not paying attention, changing the subject)* Gosh, the traffic getting here was horrendous. I swear, every year it gets worse.

*(LUCY grabs a cookie and starts eating it.)*

**Dolores:** And don't get me started on the weather. It's so unpredictable. One minute it's snowing, the next it's raining.

**Don:** *(Sarcastically)* It's like God is conspiring against us.

**Mara:** *(Walking up behind DOLORES, scaring her)* Or the DEVIL!

**Dolores:** Aaahh!!!

*(DOLORES' scream startles LUCY, causing her to bite her tongue.)*

**Lucy:** *(Cookie still in her mouth)* Ow, I bit my tong! --

*(LUCY starts choking on her cookie. DOLORES comes up and pats her back until she spits out the cookie.)*

**Lucy:** I'm ok.

**Don:** And the cost of everything just keeps going up. I went to buy a turkey, and it was practically a mortgage payment. I had to work overtime to cover the cost.

**Bruce:** Ugh! Don't even mention work. My boss keeps piling on more and more, and there's no end in sight. It's like they expect us to be machines.

**Mara:** And this eggnog sucks! *(Takes a sip)*

**Lucy:** Guys, it's Christmas! Let's focus on the good things. We're all together, that's what matters.

**Bruce:** *(Annoyed)* You always try to see the bright side, don't you, Lucy?

**Lucy:** *(Hesitating slightly)* Someone has to, right?

**Dolores:** I just hope nothing goes wrong today. Something happens every year.

**Don:** Last year, the power went out. The year before that, the pipes bust.

**Mara:** And don't forget the time the dog got into the Christmas ham. That was a disaster.

**Dolores:** (*To LUCY*) Now I leave him with your grandpa for the holidays.

**Lucy:** (*Gently*) But we got through it, didn't we? And we'll get through anything else that comes our way.

**Bruce:** (*He's had enough*) Oh my god, SHUT UP! All this (*mockingly*) "We'll get through it guys--we're together--that's all that matters--it's Christmas," CRAP sounds all good and dandy but it's not realistic. Bad things happen, and we can't just ignore them.

**Mara:** You do tend to act like everything's perfect, Lucy, but life's hard, and we can't pretend it's not.

**Don:** Yeah, it's like you're living in a dream world, while the rest of us have to face reality.

**Bruce:** And it's exhausting always being the ones dealing with problems while you twiddle your thumbs ignoring it all.

**Lucy:** (*Defensive*) I'm not ignoring anything. I just choose to focus on the good. Is that so wrong?

**Bruce:** (*Still angry*) It's not wrong, but it feels like you're in denial. We need to be realistic about things; not just hope they'll get better.

**Dolores:** You don't understand, Lucy. I worry all the time. About you, about Bruce...

**Mara:** About the weather.

**Don:** And cookies!

**Dolores:** About everything. It's not easy being the one who sees all the dangers.

**Don:** And I'm tired of always being the one who has to deal with the fallout when things go wrong. It's draining.

(*They all stare at DON*)

**Don:** What?

**Bruce:** We never get any support. We're left to pick up the pieces while you keep smiling.

**Lucy:** (*Tears welling up*) I'm sorry you feel that way but staying positive helps me cope.

**Bruce:** Well, maybe it's time you faced reality, Lucy! Life isn't all sunshine and rainbows!

**Lucy:** (*Breaking down*) You think I don't know that!? You think I don't see the problems? I just... I just want to keep us together, to find at least some joy among all the pain.

**Dolores:** Can we please stop fighting? I just want one peaceful holiday.

(*LUCY sits and starts singing "We Wish You a Merry Christmas" to calm herself down.*)

**Bruce:** It's not about fighting. It's about acknowledging that things aren't perfect and dealing with it.

**Don:** (*Mockingly*) Oh, cause you're so good at dealing with things. You're always the first one to throw in the towel.

**Mara:** You're not exactly Mr. Positive yourself, Don. You've done nothing but complain since you got here.

**Don:** Oh, and what have you been doing this whole time besides stuffing your face and whining, Mara?

**Mara:** I am your mother! You don't speak to me that way!

**Dolores:** (*On the verge of tears*) Please, everyone. This isn't what Christmas is supposed to be about.

**Don:** (*Sarcastically*) No, no she's right guys, Christmas is about spending money and giving each other cheap thank you's over cocoa with whipped cream and cinnamon and chocolate SPRINKLES!

**Lucy:** (*Trying to interject*) Guys, let's calm down...

**Bruce:** (*Mocking LUCY*) Yeah guys calm down, maybe if everyone tried a little harder to be positive, we wouldn't have these PROBLEMS every year.

**Don:** (*Angrily to BRUCE*) And maybe if you weren't such a control freak, we could actually enjoy ourselves for once.

**Mara:** (*To herself, loudly*) And if I had some stronger eggnog maybe I could enjoy myself for once. (*Takes sip*)

**Dolores:** (*Crying*) I can't take this anymore! Every year it's something. I just want one perfect Christmas. Just one!

(*The family's arguing persists, while LUCY tries covering her ears, getting louder and louder.*)

**Lucy:** (*Stands up quickly, even louder, to get everyone's attention*) Stop! All of you, just stop!

(*The family falls silent, looking at LUCY in surprise. LUCY sits down from being lightheaded.*)

**Lucy:** (*Hesitating, looking down*) There's something I need to tell all of you...

(*The rest of the family are still annoyed but concerned.*)

**Dolores:** What do you mean?

**Bruce:** What is it, Lucy?

**Don:** Yeah, you're starting to worry us.

**Mara:** Just tell us, Lucy. We're family. We can handle it.

**Lucy:** I... I.... I.....

(*The doorbell rings. The family looks towards the door. BRUCE goes to open the door. He walks back in with THEO.*)

**Lucy:** (*Gets up and hugs THEO*) Theo! What are you doing here?

**Theo:** (*Accepting the hug, but a little embarrassed*) Hey! I thought about what you said and decided you were right; I've been too distant. I should be present with my family more!

**Lucy:** I'm so glad to hear that! Where's Amy, she didn't come?

**Theo:** Well... (*Trying to think of a lie but reluctantly tells the truth*) Ok, Amy and I broke up. I was running late cause of all the traffic so when I got to her house, I was rushing in but with all the ice being slippery and me holding the Christmas potato salad and her standing in the doorway, well you can imagine my surprise when I'm face down in the snow, there's no bowl in my hands, and every bit of starch and mayo lands right on Amy's head. Her whole family started laughing at her and she got so mad she just yelled at me to leave and never come back. (*Sadly*) I didn't even get to try the potato salad.

**Lucy:** (*Finds it funny but is still supportive*) Wow. I'm sorry that happened, but I'm really happy you're here.



**Theo:** I am too. I love you, mom.

**Dolores:** Yes, we're all happy you're here, Theo. However, Lucy, you said you had something to tell us?

**Lucy:** Oh, yeah, I uh... *(Takes a deep breath, preparing herself)* I have cancer. I'm going to start undergoing treatment soon It's been tough but I'm fighting it with everything I have.

*(The family is stunned into silence, processing the news.)*

**Theo:** What? Since when?

**Lucy:** I just got the news a few weeks ago.

**Bruce:** *(Shocked and softly)* Lucy, why didn't you tell us sooner?

**Dolores:** *(Crying)* Oh, my baby...

**Lucy:** *(Tears welling up)* Because I didn't want to ruin the holiday. I wanted us to have this time together, to celebrate and be happy despite everything. But then we started fighting and I just thought, well I guess I can't ruin the night any more than this and.... I don't know I feel like it sounds crazy when I say it out loud.

**Theo:** Mom, I'm so sorry.

**Don:** Lucy, you're the strongest person I know. If anyone can beat this, it's you.

**Mara:** *(Holding LUCY's hand)* We're here for you. Every step of the way.

**Lucy:** *(Smiling through her tears)* Thank you. I need all of you to believe with me. Hope is what keeps me going.

**Bruce:** Then we'll hope with you. No more negativity. We'll face this together.

**Dolores:** Together.

**Don:** Together.

**Theo:** Yeah, together.

**Mara:** *(Wiping her eyes)* And we'll find joy in every moment, just like you said.  
*(Downs the rest of her eggnog.)*

**Lucy:** That's all I ask. I love you guys! Let's make this the best Christmas yet!

*(The family hugs. The power abruptly goes out.)*

**Lucy:** DAMMIT!

**Everyone else:** (*Surprised but playful*) Lucy!

**End of Act I**

Curtain closes.