

HOME FOR CHRISTMAS

by Rebecca Kane

Rebecca Kane
31-11 12th St.
Astoria, NY 11106
(561) 843-0969
kane.rebecca.b@gmail.com

CHARACTERS:

SOPHIE: Teenager, woman, any race.

SIENNA: 20s, woman, any race.

CHRISTY: Early 40s to late 50s, woman, any race.

MIKE: Early 40s to late 50s, man, any race.

SETTING:

Location: Upscale suburbs of New Jersey.

Time: Modern day.

SYNOPSIS:

Sienna is finally visiting home for Christmas after several months of seclusion and silence. She's s behaving strangely, but there's hope for a nice family dinner! As long as Dad comes home with the turkey soon...

[Lights up on SIENNA and SOPHIE sitting in their living room around the coffee table. Christmas music plays in the background. There is a platter of lovely holiday snacks on the table. Sophie sips from a large mug of hot chocolate but Sienna just stares at hers sitting on the table. Sienna clutches her purse in her lap and a couple gift bags sit at her feet. When Sophie speaks, it makes Sienna jump, and then so does Sophie.]

SOPHIE:

Do you want— sorry, didn't mean to scare you.

SIENNA:

You didn't. It's fine.

SOPHIE:

Do you want to put your presents under the tree?

SIENNA:

No, I was planning to give them to you guys soon.

SOPHIE:

Is there something wrong with the cocoa?

SIENNA:

No, I'm just not hungry. Or thirsty. Or whatever. I'll have some soon, Sophie.

SOPHIE:

Oh, okay. I could go see if mom found any marshmallows—

SIENNA:

It's great.

[Sienna reaches for it and lightly tries it.]

SIENNA:

Just like how I remember.

[At that moment, their mom CHRISTY walks in with a tray of cookies.]

CHRISTY:

Sienna, I know we don't have a lot of your usual favorites on here but I wasn't able to get to the grocery store since you mentioned yesterday you decided to come by after all—

SIENNA:

It's fine, it's great—

CHRISTY:

But I think you'll be pleasantly surprised by these, I tell you I could not believe that these were from Target, or I would have not believed it—what is that? Would have? Not believed it? What am I talking about these days?! What I'm saying is, if I hadn't bought them myself, I'd never know they were from Target and not a bonafide bakery. Then again, they can do anything there, if you ask me. Anything, I'd try it once. Especially if you put it in that dollar, dollar fifty section, and—you know, girls, I think I have marshmallows for that cocoa—

SIENNA [*cracking*]:

IT'S GREAT.

SOPHIE:

Don't yell at mom.

SIENNA:

Sorry.

SOPHIE:

What's wrong with you?

CHRISTY:

Sophia.

SIENNA:

She's right. I'm just tired.

CHRISTY:

Tired? Why are you— never mind. Never mind all that, I was blathering on and on. About Target of all things. Love them, but it's neither here nor there. We're just happy you're back, Sienna, sweetheart. [*As Sienna opens her mouth to correct Christy:*] Visiting! We're happy you're visiting. That's what I meant by back.

SIENNA:

I'm happy to be here.

[*She doesn't look it.*]

CHRISTY:

Sophie's happy too.

SOPHIE:
Yeah.

[She really doesn't look it.]

SIENNA:
Do you guys want your gifts yet?

CHRISTY:
Oh, well— now?

SIENNA:
Sure. Where's dad again?

CHRISTY:
Just out picking up the turkey, dear.

SIENNA:
When is he coming back?

CHRISTY:
It'll probably be in about fifteen, twenty minutes. Sophie, when did he leave—eleven?

SIENNA:
He's just picking up the order? That's all? He's just going to Whole Foods and coming right back?

CHRISTY:
You know he's coming right back. He wants to spend time with you very badly. He missed you so much this past year.

[No one responds. Sienna looks at her phone, then around towards the window or door. Christy goes back toward the kitchen.]

CHRISTY:
I'll be back, I'm just going to look for marshmallows—

SOPHIE:
Mom, the cocoa's amazing. It doesn't need anything.

CHRISTY:
I'll also just look for a little hummus or dressing or something for the veggies. And for the cat! Maybe Marcy's in a better mood now. Sienna, how's that finger?

SIENNA:
It's fine. She didn't break the skin.

CHRISTY:

She didn't mean it. She missed you. She just got startled—the weather has been—

SIENNA:

I missed Marcy too. I snuck up on her. Leave her alone.

CHRISTY:

Okay. Who wants cocoa freshened up while I'm in?

SIENNA:

Still working on mine.

SOPHIE:

I'll take another.

[Christy is visibly relieved to be of service as she exits to the kitchen. The second she's fully out of earshot, making noise in the kitchen, Sophie leans toward Sienna.]

SOPHIE:

If you're not happy to be here, why did you come back?

SIENNA:

I'm not *back*, I'm just visiting.

SOPHIE:

Oh my god, you know what I mean! I'm not stupid, obviously I mean you're just visiting.

SIENNA:

Obviously Mom and Dad don't!

SOPHIE:

Are you calling them stupid?

SIENNA:

God, why did I come here?

SOPHIE:

Sienna, of course they want you to come home fully. I do too. We haven't heard from you in almost a year.

SIENNA:

Six months is not almost a year.

SOPHIE:

Eight months.

SIENNA:
I texted back in June when you—

SOPHIE:
We both know that wasn't you.

SIENNA:
This again.

SOPHIE:
Yes, this again! Your fucking fake ass husband sent that! I can't believe you still think we don't know when the text sounded nothing like you!

SIENNA:
Delusional.

SOPHIE:
I'm delusional?!

SIENNA:
I would normally insist, yet again, that Adam was not texting you on my phone, but I know you won't listen. Besides, how would you know what he talks like? You refused to get to know him.

SOPHIE:
Wasn't much time. [*Sips her cocoa and tries to clock Sienna's reaction to that. Sienna is looking at her phone.*] Before he pretty much kidnapped you to that place.

SIENNA:
I'm not responding to that.

SOPHIE:
Before he got you on all those weird mind control drugs.

SIENNA:
It's called taking supplements and you'll find a majority of women do it. Or they should - I'm sure some vitamin D would help your skin.

SOPHIE:
Before he and your freaky cult leader started controlling everything you did because it's easier to let your man decide what you eat and what you wear and what you think and when you're allowed to use emojis

SIENNA:
Adam does not think for me!!

[Christy re-enters, arms comically overloaded with snacks.]

SOPHIE:
Then who does?

CHRISTY:
Sophie, we promised your sister.

SIENNA:
Thank you, that's right.

SOPHIE:
I don't know why we did that. How can anyone possibly not ask a question for an entire night?

SIENNA:
Just a day.

SOPHIE:
Oh, I'm aware.

SIENNA:
I'm leaving before dark.

SOPHIE:
I heard you the first hundred times.

CHRISTY:
Girls, please. If your father comes back in from the cold and sees you fighting, how is he going to be able to concentrate on the turkey? You want cold turkey for Christmas dinner?

SOPHIE:
No. Okay.

[She fixes her new cup of cocoa with a lot of marshmallows.]

Although it doesn't sound too different from Thanksgiving - what was it - 2017?

SIENNA:
Yes. It was 2017. I could never forget.

CHRISTY:
Be nice now! It was his first year doing a whole turkey!

SOPHIE:
I kind of miss the grocery store pre-cooked turkey actually.

CHRISTY:

It was good, but your father really has the seasoning down now, I think.

SIENNA:

Was he picking up the turkey at the usual Whole Foods next to the Joann's, or was he going to a different one?

CHRISTY:

He'll be back soon, I'm sure. I bet there's a big line.

SOPHIE:

It's Christmas, not Thanksgiving.

CHRISTY:

People still eat turkeys on Christmas. Also we didn't have your sister on Thanksgiving -- we thought it would be nice to combine the holidays, sort of, do a little stuffing and cranberry sauce too--

SIENNA:

We don't eat gluten. Over at the--... over in Lancaster.

SOPHIE:

Oh, right. No one in Lancaster, Pennsylvania eats gluten.

CHRISTY:

You don't have to eat the stuffing, Sienna. We'll just have some leftovers, that's fine. Can we send some leftovers for Adam?

SIENNA:

He's eating kind of a strict diet right now.

SOPHIE:

Good news. Souls are gluten-free.

CHRISTY:

Sophie.

SOPHIE:

What? It's not a question.

CHRISTY:

Why don't you load up the video of your concert for your sister?

SIENNA:

What concert?

CHRISTY:

Chorus. She had the big solo!

SOPHIE:
I don't think she'll want to watch.

SIENNA:
I do.

[Sophie comes closer to Sienna with her phone and plays the video. Christy looks over their shoulders to watch.]

SIENNA:
Where was this?

SOPHIE:
That's the school's theater.

SIENNA:
That's the Woodbridge High theater?! Wow, they remodeled since I went there.

CHRISTY:
Wait, listen to her sing.

SIENNA:
That's you singing? Right now?!

SOPHIE:
Yeah! Who else?

SIENNA:
What-what is this? What are you singing?

SOPHIE:
Billie Eilish.

CHRISTY:
I think Sophie sounds better.

SIENNA:
I do too. Soph, have you been taking more lessons?

CHRISTY:
Twice a week, every week.

SOPHIE:
For eight months.

[Sienna doesn't notice the pointed tone of that because she's getting emotional over the video. They're all kind of lost in a

*nice moment until Sienna's phone rings. She
wipes her eyes and goes right to it.]*

SIENNA:

[to phone] Hi, love. Yes... Yes, don't worry... I haven't, it's going--... they're fine... by eight P.M. I think. [to Christy] Do you think Dad can have dinner ready by six?

CHRISTY:

I'm not sure—I can call him. But isn't that a little—can't you just—

SIENNA

[to phone] I can be home by eight P.M. I'll call if it's going to be later. Yes, I'm still going to service tomorrow morning, of course. Yes. Love and power to you too.

*[Sophie cringes at that sign off. She puts
her phone away and occupies herself with
snacks and putting more marshmallows in her
cup.]*

CHRISTY:

Why do you have to be there by eight P.M.?

SIENNA:

Because it's my home. It's normal for people to be with their husbands on Christmas Eve. And to do attend a service on Christmas Day. There's still ice on the road, so it's also normal for me to want to leave at a certain time. This is all normal.

CHRISTY:

I didn't say it wasn't.

Maybe I could make us some more--

I think it's nice to attend a service, Sienna. Where is it?

SIENNA:

You said no questions! You promised if I came you wouldn't ask me questions about Adam, or the services, or anything about my life! If I knew you wanted to just interrogate me all night, I wouldn't have texted back, I wouldn't have come, I, I would have. I don't know. Stayed at my compound—at my condo I mean—and had a nice night in with Adam and our friends from the church.

CHRISTY:

You're right, I'm sorry. I won't ask any more questions. But you're right, the roads, they're icy and I just think it could

be better, it could be nice if you stayed the night. And got some sleep, here, at home.

SIENNA:

I don't need sleep. I get plenty of sleep there, with Adam. THAT's my home!

[This stabs Christy in the heart and Sienna has to turn away from it.]

Where is Dad??

SOPHIE:

Probably driving slowly because of the ice you keep mentioning. Even though it's like forty-five degrees out.

SIENNA:

You don't even have your license. Do you?

SOPHIE:

No. I failed the test.

[Back to some sisterly ribbing in her tone:]

SIENNA:

You failed your driver's test?

SOPHIE:

Yeah. Dad wasn't a very good teacher.

SIENNA:

You can say that again. I had to go to driver's ed.

SOPHIE:

I didn't know that.

SIENNA:

Mom, just send Sophie to driver's ed.

CHRISTY:

She's been busy with the vocal lessons and the fall musical.

SIENNA:

Also busy putting marshmallows in her cocoa, it seems.

[When they all look to see that her cup is overflowing at this point, it does a nice job making everyone laugh and breaking the tension.]

SIENNA:

Gift time! Before I forget.

[She gets the gifts out and gives a nice big elaborately packed gift to each of them. They go to work unwrapping.]

SIENNA:

Now, you guys have sort-of matching gifts, obviously I got Dad something a little different. I think he'll really like it. You'll see in detail later, but it's a nice new customized piece for his bar. Our church hates drinking, so it was a little bit of work getting it made and keeping it hidden, but I think it'll be worth it.

[They've finished unwrapping the gifts. A wildly expensive designer purse –something like a huge Louis Vuitton– for Sophie and a smaller but more tasteful equally expensive version (like a scarf, wallet, or set of a couple things) for Christy. Sophie is over the moon, jumping up when she realizes what it is, but Christy is a little too shocked to stand.]

SOPHIE:

OH MY GOD OH MY GOD OH MY GOD! How did you get this? Even Giovanna Wexler is only on a waitlist for this! She's gonna flip when she sees it! Mom! I can't even!

CHRISTY:

Sophie, you can't take that to school.

SOPHIE:

No, yeah, of course, I'll just use it to like, parties. Gi's Sweet Sixteen is coming up, she's gonna DIE! Thank you, Sienna, thank you!

[They exchange an earnest hug. Christy stays far away.]

CHRISTY:

Where did these come from?

SOPHIE:

Mom, come on, this is really nice.

CHRISTY:

Sienna Katherine Smith. Where did these gifts come from?

SIENNA:

I've been saving money.

CHRISTY:

That isn't true. I found tax papers online for the Dahvian Temple of Lancaster. I know how much you all give to that—that MAN who runs it. I know how much money it makes. I've seen the outside of your complex and I know how poorly maintained it is. The grass is brown and there are broken windows. You don't have this kind of money. He has it all.

How

did

you

get

these?

SIENNA:

You promised no questions.

CHRISTY:

You are in my house and you will answer!

SIENNA:

Fine. I'll answer honestly if you answer honestly. Where is Dad, really?

SOPHIE:

Whole Foods. I'll text him now. I bet he's on his way back.

SIENNA:

I'm sure he is. With some sort of squad of people he's fooled himself into thinking will help me. A lot of effort to put in but I've told you all time and time again - I don't need help. I chose to be with Adam in the D.T. I chose where we live. And most of all, I chose to find my higher purpose. These are my choices, not yours, and that's the real reason you're upset.

CHRISTY:

Do you choose what you wear? Do you choose what you eat? Do you choose when you can see your own family?

SIENNA:

I'm here now.

SOPHIE:

But we hadn't seen you for eight months.

SIENNA:

Did it occur to you that I also chose that for myself? Before I joined Dahvian?

[Before anyone lets the devastation of that sink in, the door opens. Sienna jumps away from it and grabs her phone and purse. She whips pepper spray out of her purse. But it's just their dad, MIKE. He's got his unthreatening puffy winter coat on, a Whole Foods bag, and a bag or box from a bakery.]

MIKE:

Sienna?

SIENNA:

You took so long. I thought—

MIKE:

I forgot we ordered a cake. Had to turn around.

[Sienna drops everything and runs to hug her dad. During their exchange, Sophie goes to look inside the bag from the bakery, then goes to sit heavily on the couch.]

SIENNA:

Your beard has gotten so—

MIKE:

Thought I'd try it out, your mother's not a fan.

CHRISTY:

I like him clean-shaven, you know that.

SIENNA:

I do but I think it looks good! I thought about getting you something like a shaving kit for Christmas, that would have been perfect, but oh well— here, open this.

[He opens his gift.]

MIKE:

Well, that's just the sweetest thing I ever—

SIENNA:

Adam helped pick it out.

MIKE:

Did he now?

SIENNA:

You know, we can't drink for our first three years in the D.C., but once that's over with I'll be right back here to help you break it in!

MIKE:

In three years, huh?

CHRISTY:

Well, we're very happy and grateful to have Sienna here today. [to Sienna] I won't question it. I'll just be thankful. Even for just a few hours with our daughter. With *both* of our daughters.

SIENNA:

Actually, I decided- it couldn't hurt to spend the night. Just once. I could say I had car trouble. Or I'll just tell Adam I needed a little more time. As long as I'm back by services in the morning. Not because they're making me. Just because...

CHRISTY:

The questions. I understand.

SIENNA:

I just put these gifts on a credit card. That's all.

CHRISTY:

Of course.

SIENNA:

Maybe we could watch *Home Alone* like we used to on Christmas.

MIKE:

I'd love that.

CHRISTY:

I'll make popcorn.

SIENNA:

Mom, you've already made such an amazing spread. When do you think the turkey will be ready? I haven't had that in so long.

MIKE:

I'll get it going now. There's just some more groceries in the car. Can you come help, Sisi?

[Hearing the nickname makes Christy need to turn away, even as Sienna gives her a brief touch as she follows her dad outside.]

SIENNA:

Come on, Mom. Tonight will be fun.

[Christy acknowledges this, then goes to watch at the window.]

We hear the sounds of shouting, both from Sienna and men.]

DAD [OFF]:

Sienna, don't fight it! It's over!

SIENNA [OFF]:

You promised! You said it was just today!

DAD [OFF]:

We don't want to hurt you!

SIENNA [OFF]:

LET GO OF ME! I NEED MY HUSBAND! GIVE ME MY PURSE! SOPHIE! HELP!
THEY'RE HURTING ME!

CHRISTY *[to Sophie]*:

Do you want a fresh cup of cocoa?

SOPHIE:

No, thanks.

[Sophie has been starting to clean up. She nudges or breaks down the bakery box, indicating it was empty from the start. She sees the look on her mom's face.]

SOPHIE:

Actually, that'd be nice.

[Christy exits to the kitchen. Outside, Sienna has devolved into crying, nonsensical pleading, and praying. She gets more distant until the sounds of car doors shutting drowns her out.]

Sophie goes to look at her dad's gift - a cocktail shaker or rocks glass with WORLD'S BEST DAD emblazoned on it.

*Sophie cleans up all the gifts with the
trash, starts to sing along with the
Christmas music:]*

SOPHIE:

"I'll be home for Christmas..."

End of play.]