

# LIES FOR THE HOLIDAYS

A Ten-Minute Dramatic Duet

by  
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**CAST: JEB and SARAH**

**SCENE: An airport gate waiting area, featuring a row of vinyl seats. Christmas Muzak plays in the background.**

**AT RISE: SARAH, 30s, dressed in a festive holiday dress waits patiently in her seat, with a large bag next to her. Two seats away is JEB, dressed for business, with a large carry-on.**

JEB: I'm sure that's why you looked familiar. I must have seen your picture in a magazine somewhere. So how long do you think it'll be until you get your first shuttle flight?

SARAH: I'm just about finished with my simulator training, and at that point I'm officially an astronaut. But there's a long lead time—I don't have much seniority. It'll take at least another year.

JEB: And you'll actually fly the space shuttle.

SARAH: Fly in it, anyway. I'm a payload specialist.

JEB: Talk about a dream come true.

SARAH: Yeah. It is a fantasy of so many kids. But look at you—you're doing the same thing, living a dream. Transplant surgeon, holding a man's heart in your hands.

JEB: It's an awesome responsibility. Though you can't think about it at the actual moment—you know, we're just so focused on the details of the procedure. It's only afterwards that I get a chance to try to absorb the gravity of it all.

SARAH: It's good you're getting some time off around the holidays.

JEB: Yeah, time for a giant deep breath. Look at that snow coming down. Do you think our flight will get out of here tonight?

SARAH: Don't worry. The flight attendants look relaxed. If everyone was going to be stuck here all of Christmas Eve, they'd look grumpy and panicked. See, here they go—boarding first class and kids. They'll rush everyone on board, so they can get out of here before the blizzard closes everything down. **(holds out her hand)** Jeb, it has been a real pleasure talking with you.

JEB: **(takes her hand)** No, the pleasure has been all mine, Sarah. I wasn't feeling very ready for Christmas, but meeting you has really... Somehow you've given me a feeling of peace. Peace and Joy, that's what Christmas is about, right? I wish I could see you again. I guess I'll just have to keep watching the shuttle launches on television.

SARAH: Maybe we'll bump into each other again. You never know who you're going to run into at the airport. I assume you're traveling first class. I'm way at the back—you should go ahead and board.

JEB: Oh, I hate sitting up front and having everyone parade by. It makes me feel so pretentious. I'd rather wait. Have they called your row?

SARAH: No. I'll get on last. I hate pressing through the line.

JEB: Right. I understand completely. I'm grateful for a few more minutes together.

**(JEB reaches into his bag and pulls out a wrapped package.)**

JEB: I want to give you this. For helping make my Christmas a little more merry.

SARAH: Oh, I couldn't. This is meant for someone else. I can't take her present.

JEB: Please. To be honest, all these gifts are mostly being given out of obligation. But with you, it's out of genuine sincerity and goodwill. You'd be giving me a gift by accepting mine.

SARAH: All right.

**(SHE takes the package and reaches into her bag and pulls out a rapped box.)**

JEB: I really didn't mean for you to return the favor.

SARAH: I'm not. You beat me to it, but I was honestly thinking about giving you this. But I was too shy. Now it looks like it's just a reaction to your gift, but you have to believe me, please. It would make me very happy if you would accept this. Please.

JEB: If it would make you happy, I will gladly accept. **(HE takes her package)** Would you like to open yours?

SARAH: Should I?

JEB: I think so.

**(SHE opens the gift. It's a beautiful necklace.)**

SARAH: Oh, it's too much. I can't accept this.

JEB: It will look beautiful on you.

SARAH: But this...

JEB: It's okay. Really.

SARAH: Open yours. It's nothing so fancy.

*(HE opens the present—it's a pair of handsome leather gloves.)*

JEB: The perfect gift for a surgeon. Always protect the hands. Thank you.

SARAH: Merry Christmas.

JEB: We should go.

*(They stand and give each other a hug. SHE gives him a peck on the cheek, which surprises him a little.)*

JEB: A very fine holiday. You go ahead before they close the doors—I just need to gather my things.

SARAH: I'll help you.

JEB: I'm fine. Go ahead.

SARAH: They're going to close the doors.

JEB: I'm... I'm not going

SARAH: What?

JEB: It's a long story. I'm sad to say goodbye to you, Sarah. More than you can know. Have a good flight.

SARAH: I'm not going either.

JEB: They won't hold the plane, Sarah.

SARAH: I'm not getting on the plane. I don't have a ticket.

JEB: But you... you said...

SARAH: Let me see your ticket.

JEB: No.

SARAH: Let me see your ticket.

JEB: I don't have one.

SARAH: So this whole time... This isn't right.

JEB: I know where I've seen you before. It was right here, in this terminal. Or maybe on the bus from the subway.

SARAH: What are you doing here?

JEB: Nothing. I'm just here.

SARAH: No, no, no. This is my place. Terminal C is my place, my safe place.

JEB: Where you come to get away from the world, to watch the people, engage in some harmless flirtation? You get past security by using an old ticket, right?

SARAH: It's safe here. Clean. Quiet. No one bothers me. I can be anyone I want.

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