

An older woman with an unruly mane of grey hair, grasping a small pet carrier in both hands and dressed in drab clothing, stalks down the sidewalk. She turns into the Christmas tree lot and disappears among the trees.

CAROL

That was Mrs. McFarland, wasn't it?

JESSICA

Yeah. She never comes to town. What a sighting!

CAROL

She gives me the creeps.

JESSICA

She gives everyone the creeps. Hey, I just got a great idea.

CAROL

What?

JESSICA

We're going sledding tomorrow at Mrs. McFarland's.

CAROL

What? No way! Why would you want to go there?

JESSICA

Her back yard has the best sledding hill in town.

CAROL

That woman's crazy. For real. Besides, didn't your dad tell you to stay away from her place after you...

JESSICA

That's what's gonna make it all the more fun. I'm not supposed to go there, and Mrs. McFarland is crazy. 'Course if she catches us she'll kidnap us and make us prisoners in her attic.

CAROL

Stop it, Jess.

JESSICA

You know what Mrs. McFarland really for real does, though?

CAROL

What?

JESSICA

Keeps all her dead cats in her attic.

CAROL

Okay. I've heard enough.

JESSICA

I'm serious. She has 'em all stuffed, in all different kinds of positions, and she puts 'em in her attic.

CAROL

Stop talking.

Just then, there is a commotion down at the end of the block. One of Santa's reindeer has broken away from the display and falls to the ground with a thud! Jessica and Carol run to the scene of the accident.

Herb Drier appears from his butcher shop.

HERB DRIER

Look at this! I've been telling the council for years we need a new Santa display.

Jessica walks toward the fallen reindeer.

HERB DRIER (CONT'D)

Stay away from there, Jessica. It's lucky no one was hurt already.

JESSICA

They're going to fix him, aren't they?

HERB DRIER

Of course they'll fix him. We can't have Santa missing one of his reindeer, now can we? I'm going in and calling the Mayor right now.

Drier heads back into his store. Jessica watches as a crew worker picks up the fallen reindeer.

CAROL

I gotta get home, Jessica. I'm already gonna catch it for being late.

JESSICA

Okay, Carol. See ya tomorrow.