

**AUNT SARAH**

I'd appreciate it you went right now. And come right back. You can go sledding after.

**STEVE**

Okay.

*Steve exits. Sarah looks around apprehensively.*

**AUNT SARAH**

I just want to know where she is.

**SCENE 20 - MRS. MCFARLAND'S HOUSE - ATTIC -DAY**

*The attic is dark. Mrs. McFarland opens the door, causing light from the stairway to spill into the room.*

**MRS. MCFARLAND**

Little girl?

*(stepping into the attic)*

Where are you? Are you playing games with me? I don't like people to play games with me.

*Just then, there is a brilliant burst of multi-colored light from hundreds of Christmas bulbs. Stretched from one end of the attic to the other, the string of lights surround Mrs. McFarland and bath her in their intense glow.*

*Jessica jumps into view from a corner of the attic.*

**JESSICA**

Surprise!

**MRS. MCFARLAND**

What is this? Take these lights down.

**JESSICA**

Aren't they beautiful?

**MRS. MCFARLAND**

Didn't you hear me? Take them down. Now.

**JESSICA**

You need to put these up. You would have the best Christmas display in all of Three Oaks. People would come from miles around just to see them.

**MRS. MCFARLAND**

Why would I want people to come from miles around and trample all over my creeping bent?

**JESSICA**

I'll put the lights up for you. I'll only charge you another ten dollars.

**MRS. MCFARLAND**

You will take these lights down, like I told you. Then I will pay you your ten dollars for cleaning up the attic and you will go on home. I'm sorry I ever let you into my house.

**JESSICA**

But why don't you want to put up the lights?

**MRS. MCFARLAND**

There's no point to it, that's why. Now take them down before I really lose my temper.

**JESSICA**

But it's Christmas. If that's not enough of a point for putting up Christmas lights, I don't know what is.

**MRS. MCFARLAND**

*(snapping)*

I don't have a family anymore! Get it?

*Mrs. McFarland wavers suddenly and grabs onto an old wardrobe for support.*

**JESSICA**

Mrs. McFarland! Are you okay?

**MRS. MCFARLAND**

I just... need to rest a bit.

*Jessica runs to a corner of the attic, grabs a wooden straight-back chair from the top of a pile of boxes, and places it next to Mrs. McFarland.*