

SCENE 28 - RIGGS HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Jessica charges through the back door and into the kitchen. Steve is right behind her. They're shocked when they see the damage left behind by the errant Prancer.

STEVE

Holy cow.

Jessica runs outside and looks off toward the shed.

JESSICA

Oh, no. He got out!

When Jessica comes back into the kitchen, John comes down the stairs.

JESSICA (CONT'D)

Where is he, daddy?

JOHN

So that was your little secret, was it?

JESSICA

Where is he?

JOHN

You kept that deer out in the shed all week, didn't you?

JESSICA

What'd you do with him?

JOHN

You stole hay from the barn to feed him...

JESSICA

Where *is* he?

JOHN

Skipped school, skipped out on your Aunt Sarah, lied to me...

JESSICA

You wouldn't have let me keep him if I...

JOHN

All 'cause of that deer!

JESSICA

He's not just any old deer. He's Prancer.

JOHN

That thing got into the barn, let Ralph out...

JESSICA

You didn't shoot him, did you?

JOHN

Then I go out to the shed and see a forty pound bag of oats with a Christmas bow on it! You steal that too?

JESSICA

You *did* shoot him.

JOHN

No, I didn't.

JESSICA

You didn't?

JOHN

No.

JESSICA

Oh, daddy. Thank you!

Jessica hugs her father. But then...

JOHN

I sold him.

JESSICA

Sold him?

JOHN

To Herb Drier.

JESSICA

Herb Drier? The butcher?

JOHN

He came out here and offered me two hundred dollars to take him off my hands.

JESSICA

He's a butcher, daddy. He'll cut Prancer up and sell the pieces.

JOHN

It's his deer now. He can do what he wants with it.

JESSICA

Mom would have never done this.

That stops John cold.

JOHN

Listen to me, Jessica. Reindeer don't fly. I hate to be the one to tell you, but they don't.

JESSICA

I wish she were here instead of you!

Jessica runs out of the kitchen and upstairs to her room. Aunt Sarah enters the kitchen from outside. She heard the last part of the argument between father and daughter.

AUNT SARAH

Aw, John, you didn't, did you?

UP IN JESSICA'S BEDROOM

A tearful Jessica runs to her window and stares outside.

JESSICA

I'm gonna die. I'm just gonna die!

Jessica rips the Santa display from the window and throws herself onto her bed.

SCENE 29 - MAIN STREET - CHRISTMAS TREE LOT - DAY

A sign at the front of the lot reads: "The One, the Only, Prancer!" A cage, barely big enough to contain Prancer, has been constructed in the middle of the lot. Prancer lays on the floor of the cage, head hanging low. Drier has put a red collar with bells on it around Prancer's neck.

Attracted by the instantly famous reindeer, a number of people are milling around the lot. The adults are buying trees.