

DECK THE HALLS 3

Ep 5. The Gang

EXT. JACKIE'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

WE HEAR: nighttime sounds. Crickets, light traffic, etc.

WE HEAR: Stu park his van, bass lightly thumping inside. He cuts his engine, stopping the music.

NOTE: We hear Stu and Emma singing inside after the engine cuts, still muffled. When the car doors open, we hear them clearly.

WE HEAR: Stu and Emma open the doors, carrying paper grocery bags.

They're singing "Jolene", sort of.

EMMA AND STU

Jolene, Jolene, Jolene,
Joleeeeeene, I beggin' you oh
please don't steal my man. Your
eyes are red, your hair is gray,
you're ten feet tall and stacked
like hay, Jolene, don't take him,
even though you can--

WE HEAR: Stu and Emma walk up and ring Jackie's door bell.

EMMA

(still singing)
Iron teeth and jaws like steel,
You'll eat his heart like a banana
peel--

WE HEAR: Stu pick up a big cardboard box (full of cereal).

STU

Hey! My package arrived!

EMMA

You had mail delivered here?

WE HEAR: Stu rip open the cardboard box and pull out a box of cereal.

STU

The grocery stores in Houston only
have Franken Berry. I've got enough
Count Chocula here to last us the
whole weekend!

EMMA
That's like 12 boxes.

STU
Three people. Four days. One box
each a day. 12 boxes.

EMMA
When's the last time you had a
dental checkup?

WE HEAR: Emma ring the bell again a couple of times.

STU
(calling)
Jackie! Fair queen!

EMMA
Let down your hair!

STU
Blessed dove! Giant slayer--

WE HEAR: Jackie run up, fling the door, open.

JACKIE
What do I always say?

WE HEAR: Jackie run back to the kitchen. Emma and Stu enter.

EMMA
Restaurant mints are free for a
reason?

JACKIE
(distant)
Besides that!

STU
Towels aren't the same thing as
napkins?

JACKIE
(slightly crazed laugh,
then very low)
Cake, cake. What do I say about
cake?

WE HEAR: light "kitchen disaster" sounds coming from the
kitchen. Pans banging, dishes thrown in the sink, oven doors
open and shut, etc.

Note: kitchen sounds start out slightly distant, but by
Emma's line here, we're in the kitchen.

WE HEAR: a springform tin fall on the floor and roll.

EMMA

Oh. My. God. Springform tins.

WE HEAR: Stu set his big box down.

STU

Are you making... food?

JACKIE

I'm not a baker. I'm not a cake baker. I didn't get into event planning to bake wedding cakes, it's not the same job.

EMMA

Never bake a cake.

JACKIE

WHAT DO I SAY?

STU

Never bake a cake!

EMMA

This isn't for *tomorrow*?

JACKIE

Total disaster. Nine foot chocolate cake, 400 guests, column tiers on the third and fifth layer. And the bakery burned down with the cake sitting right there in the cooler!

STU

No!

EMMA

We can find another kitchen! A restaurant. The hotel! Is the baker alive?

JACKIE

He's in jail.

EMMA AND STU

What?

JACKIE

For arson!

WE HEAR: Jackie slam the oven door and set a baking sheet on the stove top.

JACKIE (CONT'D)

And attempted murder. Or conspiracy to commit murder. He was gonna use the insurance money to hire someone to kill his wife's tennis instructor.

EMMA

Why?

JACKIE

He thinks she's having an affair.

STU

She's not?

JACKIE

Not with *that* tennis instructor. Bail is set at half a million dollars and believe me, around 4 o'clock I started thinking about trying to pay it. Everywhere but the discount grocery is closed until after the holiday. I gave up on making a cake. Then I tried to frankenstein together some Ho-Hos. I've tried cutting brownies into the cake form and stacking them. Then I thought I could get away with putting frosting on styrofoam, but they keep breaking down. Then I tried cardboard, but the icing sluices right off. I'm running out of cocoa powder. Did you bring food?

WE HEAR: Emma unpack her grocery bag.

EMMA

I got stuff to make grilled cheese--

JACKIE

Perfect.

WE HEAR: Jackie tear into the loaf of bread and cheese, eating.

EMMA

Woah! I can make you a sandwich right now.

JACKIE

(mouth full)

No time. Are there pickles?

WE HEAR: Emma take a jar of pickles out of the bag and unscrew the lid. Jackie takes one and eats it in three bites.

STU
I've got Count Chocula.

JACKIE
(still chewing)
I *know*. They've been delivering it all day.

WE HEAR: the doorbell ring, Stu opens the door just in time to hear a truck RUMBLE AWAY (could beep the horn).

WE HEAR: Stu drag the box inside, shut door, rip open box.

STU
I only ordered 12 boxes.

JACKIE
Twelve. Boxes.

EMMA
Each with 12 boxes of cereal *in them*.

STU
Oh. So... that's...

EMMA
144.

JACKIE
You ordered a gross.

STU
AMAZING.

WE HEAR: the doorbell ring again.

JACKIE
Lucky me, they're running trucks til midnight.

DELIVERY GUY
(very faint)
DHL!

JACKIE
(calling)
LEAVE IT ON THE STOOP.
(to Stu)
Well, that's eight so far.
(MORE)

JACKIE (CONT'D)

Maybe it'll snow tonight and the last couple of boxes will get stranded.

STU

It never snows in Houston.

JACKIE AND EMMA

Shut up Stu.

STU

You know what you need? Cup s'mores.

JACKIE

I need more coffee.

STU

Em, can I borrow some of the butter you brought?

EMMA

Knock yourself out.

JACKIE

You should be able to order wedding cakes through Amazon Prime.

WE HEAR: Stu busy himself making a microwave coffee cup s'more: open cereal box, pour cereal in a coffee cup, put butter in it.

WE HEAR: Emma make coffee. (keep the brewing sounds going in the background for a while)

EMMA

What about gingerbread?

JACKIE

It's supposed to be chocolate.

EMMA

I was just thinking of things that are easy to frost. Whose wedding is it?

JACKIE

It's not a wedding.

WE HEAR: Stu and Emma pause in their work to look at Jackie.

EMMA

Then what are we talking about?

JACKIE
It's a funeral. A wedding-themed
funeral.

EMMA AND STU
Whaaaaaaaaaaaaat.

WE HEAR: Stu dig into the box of cereal, like he's eating
popcorn.

JACKIE
Betty Joule Maryweather, the Sweet
Tea Baroness.

STU
She got rich off tea?

JACKIE
Colonics.

EMMA
Ah.

STU
Ugh.

WE HEAR: Jackie whip some frosting, taste it. Mild,
continuing kitchen noise as Jackie puts another pan of
brownies in the oven.

JACKIE
And she invented some kind of
electric exercise belt in the 70s,
rolled that into a big diet pill
company in the 80s. Virilist?
Virtulium?

STU
Vitastic!

EMMA
Didn't they take those off the
market because it was leeching
marrow out of people's bones?

JACKIE
I think that was actually in the
marketing. "Big Boned? No problem!"
Can you believe it? She had 3
husbands, not one of them was
poisoned.

EMMA AND STU
(reverent)

Aw.

JACKIE

Getting married was her favorite thing to do and she was planning on husband number 4 when she fell off the diving board at Caesar's Palace. So... wedding funeral. Open casket where the head table would be. Brand new huge poofy wedding dress. Veil, make-up, and all her rings. It's creepy as hell.

EMMA

How poofy?

JACKIE

Crinoline, baby. I don't know how they're going to get the lid shut when it's time to bury her.

STU

So... is there... is there a dinner?

JACKIE

No. But there's a DJ and a dance floor. Britney Spears' Toxic has already been requested.

WE HEAR: Emma pour Jackie a cup of coffee.

EMMA

Hazelnut creamer.

JACKIE

Bless you.

WE HEAR: Jackie finally sit down and exhale.

EMMA

Hi.

JACKIE

Hi. Drive okay?

EMMA

Oh yeah. We made up new words to Jolene.

STU

Not new words, new verses.

WE HEAR: Stu mashing up cereal and butter in the cup.

STU (CONT'D)

In our version, Jolene turns out to be a cyborg from the future come to wipe out Dolly Parton's husband, who turns out to be the future assassin of our cruel bionic despot...

EMMA

Ronald Ray-Gun.

STU

Yes! But Jolene and Mr. Parton are psychically connected because in the future they actually do fall in love and have a baby and that baby saves the world, so if Dolly Parton destroys Jolene, it could be the end of the world.

JACKIE

And she knows this?

EMMA

She realizes it when he's calling out Jolene's name in his sleep.

STU

And she sees a newspaper from the future.

EMMA

She has no choice but to unite her husband with Jolene.

STU

For the good of humanity.

EMMA

Knowing it will be the end of their love.

WE HEAR: Stu put the coffee cup of butter and cereal in the microwave and press start.

JACKIE

(moved)

Oh, Dolly.

EMMA

(misting up)

I know. She's... she's so brave.

STU
Five minutes!

JACKIE
What are you microwaving?

STU
Cereal and butter.

JACKIE AND EMMA
Eugh!

STU
It turns into a s'more! Sort of.
Didn't you guys ever go to camp?

EMMA
Yeah.

JACKIE
We made s'mores over the fire.

STU
Not like in the woods. Day camp.
When I worked at the Y, we made
these every day.

EMMA
For the kids?

STU
Of course. Except we used Golden
Grahams and mini marshmallows. But
then we ran out and I invented
Chocumores-- anyone else want a
pat?

WE HEAR: Stu pour a cup of coffee, cut a piece of butter.

EMMA
Hey!

JACKIE
Eugh! Don't put butter in your
coffee!

STU
It's good. It makes the coffee
richer.

JACKIE
So would cream cheese.

STU

Ooh.

JACKIE

You'd never spill coffee on your pants again. You could just eat it with a spork.

STU

The ultimate convenience.

EMMA

Don't say that. He'll do it. He's got Trip buttering his coffee too.

JACKIE

Why?

EMMA

I don't know. They started lifting weights together, now there's all this beef jerky in the cabinet and they text each other about protein.

JACKIE

(low)

Is it working?

EMMA

Kind of? He's got one of those stripey muscles under his arm, you know, that goes around the rib?

JACKIE

Oooh. Lats.

EMMA

(louder)

But it's not the butter that's doing it.

WE HEAR: Stu stir his coffee take a sip.

STU

(satisfied)

Ahhh. Filling. Just needs a dab more of the yellow stuff--

EMMA

No more. We're not gonna have enough butter left to make grilled cheese.

STU
You're crazy for using butter
anyway. Mayonnaise is better.

EMMA
Gross.

JACKIE
Eh, he's right about that.

EMMA
You never use mayonnaise.

JACKIE
I don't use butter either. I just
spray the bread with Pam and throw
it in the toaster oven.

EMMA AND STU
Eugh!

JACKIE
You liked it.
(turn)
It can't be healthy to put butter
in your coffee every day.

STU
I don't put that much in.

EMMA
Yeah, but every day.

JACKIE
Several times a day.

STU
I don't drink as much coffee as
you. Katie says it's all right.

JACKIE
Katie.

EMMA
Katie!

JACKIE
You saw Katie again?

STU
(bashful)
I'm "seeing" Katie again.

Emma and Jackie shout/cheer, jump all over Stu.

JACKIE
WHAAAAAAT

EMMA
WE SANG ABOUT ROBOTS FOR THREE
HOURS YOU COULD HAVE BEEN TELLING
ME ABOUT THIS.

STU
It's not... It's not that big a
deal...
(bubble over)
Okay, it's a really big deal. I'm
so excited. I missed her so much
and she missed me back and now we
go to the movies and make spaghetti
and I already texted her twice on
the drive over and she sent me a
baby penguin video!

WE HEAR: Stu pull out his phone and show the clip. "Cheep
cheep!"

JACKIE AND EMMA
Aww!

JACKIE
Oh, Stu.

WE HEAR: All three hug. (mash faces together)

STU
This is okay, right? It's going to
be okay? Sometimes it feels like
I'm on a roller coaster and my
heart is racing too fast.

EMMA
Stu's in love!

STU
My chest feels tight.

JACKIE
Okay, I'm taking the cereal away.

WE HEAR: Jackie take the cereal away.

STU
I can't stop listening to One
Direction. I really "get" those
songs now, you know?

JACKIE
 (blushing)
 Yeah. I know.

EMMA
 Jackie?

JACKIE
 It's nothing yet. Just a few dates.

STU
 Woah!

EMMA
 With who?

JACKIE
 Remember Runaway Bride?

EMMA
 Oh *my* god. *Gretchen*?

JACKIE
Right?

STU
 The girl who got kidnapped?

JACKIE
 She fell asleep in a cab, her mom called the feds, then everyone freaked out when the helicopters showed up. It could happen to anyone.

EMMA
 Wasn't she kinda... y'know... "Lands End"?

STU
 Fox News.

EMMA
 She had a boat named The Impudence.

JACKIE
 That's window dressing. She has a nose ring now and her own credit cards and I mean, we're taking it slow, but she doesn't live with her parents anymore and dude, she's going full Bill Pullman...
 (MORE)

JACKIE (CONT'D)
(in style of movie
Independence Day)
Today is Our Independence Day.

EMMA
And you forgave her? For... y'know.
Ghosting. And breaking that window
latch? And stealing our towels.

JACKIE
I'm still working through that a
little. But I get it. It's
humbling. I didn't think people
change. I don't think people
change, but their circumstances do
and... and... it's like night and
day.

STU
Ice can cut you and steam can burn
you. But a nice cool glass of
water? We need that to live.

JACKIE
Yes! Exactly.

EMMA
That's so insightful.

STU
I did a science project in school.

JACKIE
It actually gives me hope for the
future. The last time I saw Gretch
was on the worst day of her life.
And I assumed... I don't know... I
couldn't have pictured a happy
ending. But she did it. Hostile
takeover of her life. I keep
thinking about that. The worst day
of your life could be the open
window to...

STU
A tongue ring!

JACKIE
Nose ring.

WE HEAR: the microwave go off. Stu shuts off the timer.

JACKIE (CONT'D)
Who knows? I might actually join
you and get married someday.

EMMA AND STU
Really?

JACKIE
Maybe. Don't hold me to that. It's
just because the house smells like
chocolate.

WE HEAR: Stu open the microwave, run a knife around the edge
of the s'more bake into the cup.

STU
Perfect! Then brace yourself for a
taste of true love.

WE HEAR: Stu fork up a bit of the microwave s'more. Jackie
takes a bite.

It sounds like she's chewing a rice krispie treat.

JACKIE
(chewing)
That's not a s'more.

STU
I know, I told you, I invented
them. They're called Chocu-mores!

EMMA
Lemme try this.

WE HEAR: Emma fork up a bite.

STU
It's like a cake when it's hot, but
then it gets like a Rice Krispy
treat when it's cold. I made a big
pan one year on the last day of
camp and we ended up having to cut
it out of the pan with scissors.

JACKIE
Scissors!

EMMA
It's so light.

JACKIE
And it holds its shape?

STU

Yup.

WE HEAR: Stu tap a piece of treat on the counter. (Again, rice krispy treat.)

STU (CONT'D)

Like a delicious hockey puck.

WE HEAR: Stu take a bite.

EMMA

Jackie.

JACKIE

Emma!

EMMA

Grab all the boxes!

JACKIE

We gotta get some more butter!

EMMA

We'll mix it the ice chest!

JACKIE

We're gonna need more cake pans!

STU

We're gonna make Count Chocumores?
For a wedding cake?

JACKIE

It's perfect. Stu, you're a genius!

WE HEAR: general clatter of the gang clearing counter space and opening boxes of cereal.

Music swell for final credits.

Fin.