

RAW PROVOCATIVE HUMANE PLAYS

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Cake

a very short holiday play by Cavan Hallman

Christmas Eve, 1981. Everything about the family room is old, well-cared for, but old. The couch, the recliner, the art hanging on the walls – all old. Even the short silver tree in the corner is old. AMY, 22 and fit, sits on the couch watching MATT, also 22. He is 5’8” and 375 lbs.

Amy You’re fidgeting. *(beat)* You’re nervous.

Matt You think? *(beat)* I’m sorry. I just... confrontations with him. They’re a trigger. My brother... *(beat, trailing off)* It’s a trigger...

Amy You’re doing great.

Matt We shouldn’t have invited him. He’s gonna be awful. I’ve never lost any weight before.

Amy Never lost anything before?

Matt I guess I did once. When I had mono.

Amy *(hopping in his lap)* That’s the kissing disease. *(She demonstrates)* Listen, losing anything at all... I’m really happy for you, as long as you feel good about it. I loved you two weeks ago. I love you now. Any size. *(beat)* And he’ll be nice. It’s Christmas.

Matt I forgot. You grew up in a magic land where everyone is nice because they’re family and Santa Claus and picket fence gumdrop dreams. *(beat)* Sorry. I’m freaking out. *(beat)* Let’s put on a record.

Amy Sure. What do you want?

Matt Bread.

Amy You told me not to buy any. The Whatsisname Adkins thing–

Matt No. Bread. The band. “Best of Bread.”

Amy gets out a record, drops the needle. As it plays, she shoots Matt a look that says, “This?”

Matt *(cont’d)* I need to relax.

Amy No one needs to relax this much.

The door bursts open and Amy shrieks. CHET, 32 and chiseled like a professional athlete, enters. He wears a tank top that reads "Let's Get Physical."

Chet Gobble, gobble, gobble!

Matt Crap, Chet! You scared us.

Chet Good! A big bro's gotta keep a little bro on his toes, no matter how big the little bro is.

Matt And you got the wrong holiday for "gobbling."

Chet Doesn't look like it stopped you, dude. *(laughing)* Just joshing. Who's this?

Amy I'm Amy.

Matt It's my girlfriend.

Chet Really? Nice.

Matt You should've rung the doorbell.

Chet At my own house?

Matt You haven't lived here for a long time.

Amy It's okay, Matt. Let's stay... calm.

Matt You're right... We're gonna be nice. Eat a nice healthy dinner, and talk and—

Chet A nice what? Did I hear you say...?

Matt ...and everything's okay!

Chet Of course it is. It's Christmas! *(looking around)* Dude, you haven't changed much, huh? Don't like wait for my vote on it or something. I mean, it's been long enough—

Matt The funeral was just three months ago.

Chet That's long enough. And I'll bet you if there's a heaven or something like that, if that's for real, then Mom wouldn't mind if you changed the curtains or something.

Matt You have no idea what she would want. No idea.

Amy Who's hungry? Huh? Everyone loves to eat, yeah?

Matt I could wait.

Chet You know it's better to eat more often. Small regular meals is how you can, like, keep your metabolism at a good level. Tips, dude. I got 'em.

Matt I'm doing fine on my own.

Amy He's doing great.

Matt Thanks, honey.

Chet Yeah, bro. You're fit as a fiddle.

Matt Get off my case, Chet. Enough with the fat jokes.

Chet I actually don't think it's a joke at all. Trying to motivate you, dude. Trying to help you.

Matt I don't need your help.

Chet You're right. What you need is a forklift. But I didn't think it would fit under the tree. Merry Christmas!

Amy Matt lost twelve pounds.

Chet That must've been one hell of a dump. I don't think my hole can even open that big.

Matt Okay, Chet, here's a real "Merry Christmas" for you. This house is mine. I don't need "your vote" for squat. All of it's mine. Mom willed it to me because she knew what you're doing with your life. I know. She knew. And she didn't want her house to be a drug den.

A beat.

Chet Mom really left it to you?

Matt Yep. Whole thing. And all the contents therein. So just, go ahead. Go to your room. Get your crap. Load up your truck. I want you out of my life forever. And make it fast before I have to call the cops. Lord knows what they'd find on you.

Chet I don't have the truck any more. I've been doing well lately. Bought a DeLorean.

Matt Of course you did.

Chet What does that mean?

Matt It means you're an idiot.

Chet Seriously with this? I just got here. *(beat)* You got a girlfriend and all of a sudden you gotta prove you have a big one or something? You wanted to just embarrass me? On Christmas, dude?

Amy Matt wanted to be nice. We cooked dinner. Wanted to ease into the idea. That was my suggestion. I was wrong. You deserve no kindness. None at all.

Matt This could've been easy, Chet. If you just acted like a human being for once. I'm trying to improve my life. If I'm gonna do this – I am gonna do this – I need to cut out anyone who can't support me.

Chet Well it's gonna take someone a lot stronger than her to support you, bro. This chick tries to give you a spot she'll probably break in half.

Silence.

Chet *(cont'd)* No? That one was right there.

Amy You're a terrible person. And a worse brother.

Chet I'm sorry. Okay? Let's talk about it, dude. Dudes. Matt... A...Apri–

Amy Amy.

Chet Right. Totally.

Matt Did you know that if you use a home to commit a felony, the house can be repossessed by the government? Mom wasn't really excited by the idea of her home being seized by the government.

Chet Whoa, dude. What are you, like, a lawyer or something now?

Matt I start law school next fall.

Chet So the answer is “no.”

Matt No, Chet, I’m not a lawyer. Not yet.

Chet Well, alright then. My point exactly.

A long silence.

Chet *(cont’d)* I guess I’ll be heading out.

Chet exits slowly, then immediately pops back in.

Chet *(cont’d, to Amy)* You’re not gonna change him, you know. I been trying to get Fatty Matty here to shape up ever since he was a kid. Nothing can motivate this kid. Not even a good piece of tail. I even tried throwing a couple of those his way before. Nothing changes. Nothing.

Chet walks out. A beat.

Matt I never could’ve stood up to him without you here. You really... With a woman like you...

Amy I’m here for you, honey. Oh, I’m so proud of you. Let’s celebrate.

She disappears and comes back with a gleaming Red Velvet Cake.

Matt I asked you to not get any sweets.

Amy But it’s your favorite. And it’s Christmas. You’re doing so well, I thought that maybe it would be nice. Twelve pounds is a great step. A little cake won’t hurt. I thought you’d like it.

A beat.

Matt *(struggling, stopping and starting)* I think. You. Need to go home. Okay?

Amy Did I do something wrong?

Matt Yeah.

Amy What? It's just cake.

Matt Yeah. If you don't know why that's a problem I don't think I can make you understand.

Amy exits to the kitchen, returning with a purse and a sweater. She walks to the front door.

Amy I'm sorry, Matt.

Matt nods. A beat.

Amy *(cont'd)* I... where am I supposed to go? I stayed with you. I wanted to have Christmas with you. Help me understand.

Matt I'll call you tomorrow, okay?

Amy Screw you.

She slams the door on her way out. Matt stares at the Red Velvet Cake, begging to him. After 15 seconds he exits to the kitchen, returning with a trash bag. He uses a fork to slide the cake off its platter into the garbage. Matt throws the bag out the front door, slamming the door behind him. His gaze is drawn to the table and he picks up the fork, covered in cake and frosting. He holds the fork close to his face, thinking, then opens the front door and tosses the fork out too.

Fade to black.

END OF PLAY.