

Love at the Crossroads:
A One-Act Play
Brought to you by
Humanities Kansas

CAST OF CHARACTERS

Main Characters:

Narrator - a humorous observer

Holly Kring - an ambitious greeting-card marketing professional
who left her hometown for a job in the big city

Louie - Holly's high-school flame; co-owner of the local auto
body shop

Jessica Kring - Holly's mother, owner of FaLaLaLa Fruitcakes

Supporting Characters:

Mechanic Mike - co-owner of the auto body shop with Louie;
father of Holly's friend from high school

Postmaster Polly - runs the post office and knows everything
that's going on in town

Chris Kring - Holly's father; absent for the last 10 years; has
a not-so-dark secret

Lottabucks - CEO of Cake Empire

LEGEND

Directions: Throughout the script, you will find numbered blanks
that correspond to the numbers in this legend. Fill in the
blanks below, then copy your answers into the blanks in the rest
of the script to customize the story.

- (1) A type of car: _____
- (2) The current month, or any month except December: _____
- (3) The name of your Kansas town: _____
- (4) Describe some sites in town such as shops, attractions,
landmarks, etc.

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-
- (5) Your favorite local spot to get coffee: _____
 - (6) A holiday song of your choice: _____
 - (7) A local park, square, or venue: _____
 - (8) A place to buy decorations/crafting supplies: _____

SCENE 1

NARRATOR

Holly Kring, a hotshot young marketing executive, is fresh off of a successful business trip. She's driving home to Kansas City in a brand-new (1) _____ on a clear, beautiful (2) _____ day. Windows down and radio blasting, everything is going her way. Until..

HOLLY

Uh-oh. What was that sound?

NARRATOR

Yep, you guessed it: car trouble. Come on, you knew something had to go wrong. So Holly pulls her car over to the side of the highway, her engine coughing and trailing smoke.

HOLLY

I'll have to call a tow truck. I *knew* I shouldn't have cancelled my AAA membership!

NARRATOR

In addition to her job as a high-powered marketing exec, Holly enjoys yoga, crafting, and narrating her thoughts out loud.

HOLLY

Except I can't call a tow truck because my phone has no service out here in the middle of nowhere! What am I going to do now?

NARRATOR

Holly is considering panicking when a truck pulls up behind her. And not just any truck: a tow truck. If you think that's an unbelievable coincidence, just wait until you see what happens next.

HOLLY

I'm saved! But wait, there's even more smoke pouring out from under the hood! I think it's gonna blow!

NARRATOR

She runs for her life, taking cover behind the tow truck. The driver gets out to join her, but before he can speak, he stops dead. They both immediately forget about the smoking car in the background.

LOUIE

(stunned)

Well, I'll be darned. If it isn't Holly Kring.

HOLLY

Louie! What—what are you doing here?

NARRATOR

(in a rush)

Long story short: Holly and Louie were high-school sweethearts, but he left town the day after graduation to go back home to Europe (though he'd never quite specified where in Europe he was from). Despite his mysterious origins, he's always been the quintessential Kansas heartthrob: tall, handsome, wholesome, you get the idea. Holly was heartbroken after he left, though you'd never know it now. She's playing it cool.

LOUIE

What am I doing here, as in, on the side of the road? I pulled over to lend a hand.

HOLLY

No, what are you doing just outside of (3) _____? I thought you were gone for good.

LOUIE

I came back a long time ago, not that you'd know anything about that. You haven't been back in, what, ten years?

HOLLY

Nine.

LOUIE

(laughing charmingly)

My mistake. Hop in, and I'll tow you into town. That car's out of commission for at least a few days.

NARRATOR

How convenient.

HOLLY

Into town? No! I can't—!

LOUIE

Come on, Holliday. What other choice do you have?

HOLLY
Don't call me that.
(sighing)
...Fine. Let's go.

SCENE 2

NARRATOR

So they tow the car into (3) _____ and drop it off at the local garage. MECHANIC MIKE whistles and shakes his head when he sees it, then greets Holly with a hearty handshake.

MECHANIC MIKE
Welcome home, Holly. I haven't seen you since your dance recital with my little Becky your senior year. Are you moving back after all this time?

HOLLY
(flustered)
Oh-hello, and say hi to Becky for me—but no, I'm not moving back. I have an important job in the city.

MECHANIC MIKE
Well, it sure is good to see you back in town.

HOLLY
It's good to see you, too. I've...I've missed everyone.

LOUIE
Mike will take a look at your car while I drop you off at your mom's.

HOLLY
My mom's? No, no, I'll just wait here until my car's ready.

LOUIE
Come on, Holliday. You've gotta see your mom.

HOLLY
(defensively)
My mom came to visit a few months ago. Just because I don't come to town doesn't mean I never see her.

LOUIE
But don't you want to see the bakery one last time before it closes?

HOLLY

(shocked)

Before it closes? What's that supposed to mean?

LOUIE

Oh—I thought you knew. I don't know the details, only that she's having trouble and thinking of closing. I'm sorry, Holly.

NARRATOR

Troubled, Holly looks silently out the window for the rest of the car ride. She sees: (4)

5) _____, her favorite place to get a cup of coffee, hasn't changed a bit. After a few minutes, Louie pulls up in front of a little shop. FaLaLaLa Fruitcakes, reads a hand-painted sign above the door. The window display is lit with Christmas lights and plastered with paper snowflakes, even though it's (2) _____.

HOLLY

(tersely)

Thanks for the ride, Louie.

LOUIE

(catching her by the hand)

Wait. I'm glad you're back, Holliday, even if it did take a smoked-out engine to get you here. You've changed a lot in ten years.

HOLLY

Nine years. And you haven't changed a bit.

LOUIE

(with soulful eyes)

No, I haven't.

SCENE 3

NARRATOR

When Holly enters her mother's fruitcakery, she is greeted by the sounds of "(6) _____." The woman behind the counter, JESSICA KRING, is wearing a gingerbread apron and a Santa hat. She throws her arms around Holly and rocks her back and forth.

JESSICA

Holly! What are you doing here?

HOLLY

I had a little car trouble on the highway, so...here I am. But, Mom, Louie told me that the bakery is in trouble.

JESSICA

You've seen Louie?

HOLLY

Mom, that's not the point. Is everything okay?

JESSICA

(subdued)

I'm okay, but...the bakery hasn't been doing so well for the last couple of years. Believe it or not, people just don't feel the Christmas spirit year-round anymore. My sales flatline on January 1st and don't pick up again until the day after Halloween.

HOLLY

Why didn't you tell me? I could have helped out. I could have—

JESSICA

I didn't want to bother you. You're so busy with your big job and your big-city life. I'm fine here, sweetie. Really. I'll sell the place, and things will work themselves out. If only...

HOLLY

If only what?

JESSICA

Oh, it's silly. I know it's been ten years since he disappeared on Christmas Eve, but...I keep thinking, "If only your father were here." Nobody could resist a fruitcake when he was selling it.

NARRATOR

All he left behind was a plate of cookies and a note that read, "Merry Christmas. Don't worry about me. Love, Chris." It was a real tear-jerker, but don't worry: this is a comedy, not a tragedy.

HOLLY

I miss him, too, Mom.

NARRATOR

They share a tearful hug, but Holly's face has settled into lines of determination by the time they pull apart. She looks like she has a plan.

HOLLY

(hands on hips)

I have a plan. I'm not the top marketer at the most famous greeting-card company in the world for nothing. If I can't save FaLaLaLa Fruitcakes, no one can. This town loves you, Mom. I know everyone will help out to keep the fruitcakery in business.

JESSICA

(with a mixture of trepidation and hope)
What's the plan?

NARRATOR

Holly only smiles mysteriously and goes outside to survey the town, measuring tape in hand. By the end of the day, she has pulled some strings to reserve (7) _____ and has filled the trunk of her mom's car with supplies from (8) _____.

She cuts out paper snowflakes, paints banners, and strings lights around fake trees, churning out decorations that Martha Stewart could only dream of.

HOLLY

It's going to be the biggest Christmas-in-(2) _____ festival that Kansas has ever seen. I've already put tickets on sale in the bakery, and they're selling like fruitcakes. I also got permission to use the greeting-card company's social media accounts to advertise the event. We'll raise enough money to save the bakery, I promise.

JESSICA

That's wonderful, honey, but how did you pull all of this together so fast?

HOLLY

(with a twinkling smile)

All it takes is hard work, a creative vision, and the power of community. That, and a whole lot of hot glue.

JESSICA

We're going to need help to bake enough fruitcakes for the festival by this weekend...and I think I know just the person for the job.

HOLLY
Who?

JESSICA
(smiling mischievously)
You'll see.

SCENE 4

NARRATOR

It will surprise no one to learn that Jessica has summoned Louie to the fruitcakery. After bedecking him in a snowman apron, Jessica coaches Louie through the art and science of baking fruitcakes while Holly stands awkwardly to one side. After the first batch is cooling and the second is in the oven, however, Jessica swipes her sleeve across her forehead.

JESSICA
Whew. It's stuffy in here. I think I might walk on over to
(5) _____ for some fresh air and a pick-me-up.

HOLLY
Oh, I think I'll join you. I could really use a-

JESSICA
No!
(conspicuously)
I mean, you stay here and hold down the fort with Louie. I'll bring you something. You want coffee? I'll bring you a coffee. You too, Louie. Both of you, just stay here. Together.

NARRATOR
Then, with as much subtlety as any matchmaking mother could muster, she scurries outside with only three or four backward glances thrown over her shoulder. Holly and Louie are, of course, oblivious.

LOUIE
(stirring a mixing bowl)
So...why did you want my help anyway? I've never baked a fruitcake before in my life.

HOLLY
What, they don't have fruitcake in Montenegro, or wherever it is you're from?

LOUIE

It's Mignon, and we actually invented fruitcake.

HOLLY

You did not.

LOUIE

You sure about that? Christmas is the national pastime.

NARRATOR

They lock eyes, sparks snapping between them. It's a good thing there's no mistletoe overhead. After a pregnant pause, Holly musters up her courage and takes a deep breath. Hold onto your hats, folks; it's the BIG QUESTION.

HOLLY

Why did you leave after high school? And why didn't you tell me you were going? No warning, just goodbye, and then nothing for all these years.

LOUIE

I...I had a duty to my family and my homeland. I didn't want to leave you, but you were going off to college soon anyway, and...it was easier not to drag it out.

HOLLY

What could be so important that you had to leave without any notice? It's not like the fate of your entire country rests in your hands.

LOUIE

Well...uh...

HOLLY

How could you just end it like that?

LOUIE

I tried to call you that summer, but your mom said you didn't want to talk to me. I don't blame you; I didn't handle things right. But Holliday, I came back for you. Five Christmases ago, I came back to (3) _____, and I've been here waiting for you ever since.

NARRATOR

Holly is about to retort when her nostrils flair. Conveniently, a tendril of smoke drifts out from the oven door. She gasps.

HOLLY
The fruitcake!

NARRATOR

It's ruined, of course. There's no better distraction from a surprise love confession than a blackened fruitcake—especially when you've got a fruitcake-themed festival in 36 hours. They work in silence from then on, but they can't help catching each other's eyes now and again. At one point, Louie might even reach over to brush a dusting of flour from the tip of Holly's nose.

(How did that even get there?) Eventually, he goes home, and Holly retreats upstairs to her mom's apartment for a few hours' sleep before a full day of decorating tomorrow.

SCENE 5

MECHANIC MIKE

Hey, there, City Girl! What are you doing with all those snowflakes? Is this part of that Christmas festival Polly was telling me about?

HOLLY

Yes, it is. Spread the word! There'll be holiday games, a reindeer petting zoo, and free cake for everyone! Plus, Michael Bubl 's going to be singing. He's doing it on the house because it's for a good cause, and besides, he really loves fruitcake. I even hired a real Santa from Craigslist to hand out presents. You should see this guy's resume—he's had Santa gigs all over the world! A real professional.

POSTMASTER POLLY

Don't worry, Holly. We'll be at your festival. FaLaLaLa Fruitcakes is the heart of this town, and we don't abide by broken hearts around here.

HOLLY

(eyes sparkling with emotion)
Thank you.

MECHANIC MIKE

Your mom really loves having you home, you know. I haven't seen her this happy in a long time, even with everything that's going on.

POSTMASTER POLLY

You look happy, too, Holly. Have you thought about staying on after the festival? You're not too shabby at the fruitcake-selling business.

NARRATOR

The fact is, Holly is at a crossroads. Will she return to her job in Kansas City, or will she start a new life in the hometown she's always loved, especially now that she's making joyous new memories here?

HOLLY

(conflicted)

I...I can't. I work for the largest greeting-card company in the world. How can they market their cards without me? I have to go back to the city after my car is repaired.

POSTMASTER POLLY

Well, we don't need to get into all that now. Do you need a hand with that snow? I'll go get my ladder.

SCENE 6

NARRATOR

After hours of decorating, the time has come: there's fake snow and giant candy canes all over town, and people are lined up by the hundreds outside of the festival, all of them decked out in ugly Christmas sweaters (and possibly sweating buckets, depending on the time of year). They're buzzing with excitement as they wait for Holly to cut the ribbon and allow them into the festival, but there's just one problem...

HOLLY

(with desperation)

Where is he?!

LOUIE

I'm right here.

HOLLY

Not you! Santa! The Santa I hired hasn't arrived. What am I going to do?

(considering)

Do you have a Santa costume, by any chance? We'd have to stuff your shirt with a pillow to cover up your rock-hard abs, but...

NARRATOR

Before she can take that idea any further, something catches her eye: a man, dressed all in red, steps to the front of the crowd. He has a long white beard and a jolly round belly. Holly almost breathes a sigh of relief, but it catches in her throat.

HOLLY

(whispering)

It-it can't be.

CHRIS KRING

(warmly)

Ho, ho, ho, Holliday. It's good to see you.

HOLLY

Dad!

NARRATOR

With tears in her eyes, Holly runs into her father's arms for the first time since Christmas Eve ten years before.

HOLLY

(emotionally)

Why are you here? Where have you been? And...why are you dressed like Santa Claus?

CHRIS KRING

I've been...up north. But when I heard from one of my elv—I mean, one of my associates about a grand Christmas-in-(2) _____ festival organized by my very own daughter...well, I knew I had to be here. I was the one who answered your ad on Craigslist.

NARRATOR

Gathering all the determination and strength she's honed over many years in the cut-throat greeting-card industry, Holly pulls herself together and hands her father an enormous pair of scissors. Then she turns to the crowd.

HOLLY

Thank you for waiting, everyone! Please give a round of applause and a big ho-ho-ho to Santa Claus, who has come to welcome you to the inaugural Christmas-in-(2) _____ Festival!

NARRATOR

Chris Kring uses the giant scissors to cut the ribbon, and people flood into the festival, oohing and ahing. Children find their way to the games and the reindeer petting zoo, and a line

forms to sit on Santa's lap. Overlaying it all, Christmas carols ring out in Michael Bubl 's buttery voice. Holly and Louie stand at the periphery and watch with pride as the festival unfolds.

Then, suddenly, it begins to snow. She reaches out a hand in wonder to catch a snowflake.

LOUIE

Well, you pulled it off. I knew you could do it.

HOLLY

I couldn't have done it without you.

LOUIE

Yes, you could have, but I'll take the compliment.

NARRATOR

Their eyes meet again, the spirit of Christmas humming between them.

LOUIE

(suddenly dispirited)

So, what's next? Are you really going to head back to the city, even after all this? You've been so happy here these last few days. You've fit right in, and we could really use someone with your drive, creativity, and community spirit around here. You don't need a big city to make opportunities; there are plenty here in (3)_____.

HOLLY

What does it matter to you whether I stay or go? Shouldn't you be headed back to Europe?

LOUIE

(shaking his head)

No, I've abdicated.

HOLLY

Abdicated? What do you mean?

LOUIE

The truth is, the reason I had to leave ten years ago is because my family thought it was time for me to resume my duties as crown prince.

HOLLY

P-prince?

LOUIE

My real name isn't Louie, it's Louis Raphael Philippe Christof Augustin, Prince of Mignon, a tiny kingdom in the Alps. But every time I had tea with the queen of England or partied with the prince of Liechtenstein, all I could think about was you. In the end, I gave up the throne to my sister and came back for you. I've been waiting here for you ever since.

HOLLY

Wait a second. If you're a prince, why couldn't you have just saved my mom's fruitcakery yourself? Why did we have to go through all the trouble of putting together this fundraiser?

LOUIE

If I'd done that, you wouldn't have learned all of those lessons about hard work, loyalty, and the value of community.

HOLLY

And the true spirit of Christmas.

LOUIE

That, too. And anyway, where else can you find a postmaster like Polly, who's willing to deliver fake snow all over town instead of mail? And where else can you find a mechanic like Mike, who'll build an electric sleigh just for Santa to drive around the festival? The moral of the story is that the people of this town can do anything they set their minds to.

HOLLY

But Louie, why are you working as a mechanic?

LOUIE

When I was a prince, all I ever wanted was to run my own business, and I found the perfect opportunity for that right here in town when old Mr. Murphy retired and sold me his garage. All it took was a little entrepreneurial spirit and the desire to give back to the town that helped make me the person I am today.

HOLLY

So how did a European prince end up studying abroad here?

LOUIE

Uh...don't worry about that right now. Come with me, there's someone I want you to meet.

SCENE 7

NARRATOR

Taking Holly by the hand, Louie leads her into the festival. At the fruitcake table, Jessica is chatting with a man in a business suit. Chris Kring is at Jessica's side.

LOUIE

Mr. Lottabucks! I see you've already met Jessica.

LOTTABUCKS

Good to see you again, Your Highness. I've just been telling this nice lady here about an idea I've got for a new fruitcake line at my company.

LOUIE

Mr. Lottabucks is the CEO of Cake Empire.

HOLLY

(awed)

Cake Empire! That's the biggest cake company in the world! You've supplied cakes for all of my office parties.

LOTTABUCKS

(good-naturedly)

Yours and everyone else's.

JESSICA

Holly, Mr. Lottabucks says he wants me to provide fruitcakes to his company. Can you believe it?

LOTTABUCKS

Your mom's fruitcake is a revelation. Who knew a fruitcake genius was hiding in (3) _____? I've got the contract ready to sign today.

CHRIS KRING

I'm going to stick around to help with this new fruitcake operation—at least for eleven months out of the year. I've put my work ahead of my family for too long. Besides, I can always Zoom with my el-my colleagues up north.

NARRATOR

Holly looks overwhelmed by how perfectly all of the puzzle pieces are falling into place. Then she glances at Louie and grows calculating. What could she be up to?

HOLLY

You know, if you're starting a new line of products, you're going to need someone to market them.

LOTTABUCKS

I suppose that's true. Do you have anyone in mind?

HOLLY

You know what? I know the best holiday product marketer in all of Kansas and the Kansas City metropolitan area. But she'll only work for you on one condition.

LOTTABUCKS

What's that?

HOLLY

She has to be able to work from right here in (3) _____, with her family and all of her friends by her side. Because she finally realizes how wonderful this town is and how much it has to offer. It's not perfect, but it's home.

LOTTABUCKS

I think you've got yourself a deal. You are talking about yourself in third-person, right?

HOLLY

Right. Sorry about that.

LOUIE

So you're going to stay?

NARRATOR

He and Holly appear unaware that there's an entire crowd of festival-goers eavesdropping on this conversation.

HOLLY

Yes. I was at a crossroads in my life and my career, but I've finally figured out which path is the right one for me. Everyone I love is here in this town...including you, Louie—I mean, Your Highness.

NARRATOR

I think you know what's coming next. Yep, he's down on one knee, and he somehow found the time to buy a ring even though he had no idea how this whole thing was going to play out.

LOUIE

Holly, you're the jolliest girl I've ever met. Will you be my
Christmas princess?

HOLLY

(choked up)

I will!

NARRATOR

Louie spins Holly in a circle as the townspeople applaud and
cheer.

CHRIS KRING

Merry Christmas-in-(2) _____ to all, and to all a good
night.

**Did you enjoy this script? Tell us how your reading went!
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Officer at abigail@humanitieskansas.org.**