

Falling Together

By Olivia Shake

Copyright © July 2021 Olivia Shake and Off The Wall Play Publishers

<https://offthewallplays.com>

This script is provided for reading purposes only. Professionals and amateurs are hereby advised that it is subject to royalty. It is fully protected under the laws of the United States of America, the British Empire, including the Dominion of Canada, and all other countries of the Copyright Union.

All rights, including but not limited to professional, amateur, film, radio, and all other media (including use on the worldwide web) and the rights of translation into foreign languages are strictly reserved; and any unauthorized use of the material may subject the user to any and all applicable civil and criminal penalties. For any information about royalties or to apply for a performance license please click the following link:

<https://offthewallplays.com/royalties-and-licensing-of-plays-sold-by-off-the-wall-plays/>

Cast of Characters:

Joziah- 18

Karina- 17

Shawn- 15

Julie- Mom- mid to early 40s

Mark- Dad- mid 40s

Mrs. Mackie- 60s

Scene 1

Lights up on JOZIAH and KARINA in the combined living room/ dining room of a house. It's decorated for Christmas. A Christmas tree with presents underneath sits on the side of the living room section.

KARINA is texting and JOZIAH is listening to music with earbuds in. They are sitting in the living room on separate pieces of furniture.

KARINA

Hey, can you toss me the remote? (beat as Joziah doesn't answer) Joziah. (beat) Jo. (annoyed, Karina picks up a pillow and throws it at him.)

JOZIAH

Hey!

KARINA

I was talking to you, Dimwit.

JOZIAH

(taking out an earbud) Well, I'm sorry, *Nitwit*. I didn't hear you.

KARINA

Maybe you should turn your music down.

JOZIAH

Who are you? Mom?

KARINA

Just toss me the remote.

JOZIAH

Why? There's nothing good on. Unless you like Hallmark movies.

KARINA

No one with good taste likes Hallmark movies.

JOZIAH

There we agree.

KARINA

When are Mom and Shawn getting back with the pizza?

JOZIAH

I dunno but I'm freaking starving.

KARINA

Me too.

JOZIAH

You're always hungry.

KARINA

Says the teenage boy.

JOZIAH

Whatever.

KARINA

Why are you so grumpy?

JOZIAH

Why are you so nosy?

KARINA

Excuse me for my concern.

KARINA and JOZIAH start to go back to their previous activities when the sound of a car pulling into the driveway is heard offstage.

KARINA

Is that them?

JOZIAH

Probably.

Sounds of car door closing. Soon, SHAWN and JULIE enter. SHAWN carries two pizzas and JULIE has a plastic bag with a couple two liters of pop. They place the pizzas and pop on the dining room table, then SHAWN goes over to talk to his siblings while JULIE readies everything for them to eat. Karina's line should be said as they enter and the rest of the "background action" takes place during the lines.

KARINA

Woah. Look. It's the brother I like.

JOZIAH

Yeah, Shawn is definitely better than my annoying sister.

JULIE

Nice words, children.

KARINA

Insults are our love language, Mom. (To Joziah) And, c'mon, you couldn't come up with something better than "annoying"?

JOZIAH

What'd you want me to call you?

SHAWN

I think Karina's very partial to "Sewer Goblin".

KARINA

Hey! You're my favorite brother, don't turn on me!

JOZIAH

You're the one who wanted a better insult.

KARINA

But I was saving Sewer Goblin to call Joziah when he wakes up in the morning! Shawn, you ruined it!

SHAWN

Ooops. Sorry.

JOZIAH

(overlapping Shawn) I think I should be offended.

KARINA

It's what you look like in the morning. It's not an insult, it's just the truth.

JOZIAH

Whatever, Weirdo.

JULIE

Alright, if the three of you are quite done, let's eat.

JOZIAH

Don't have to tell me twice.

KARINA, JOZIAH, and SHAWN go over to the table.

Adlib lines as they get their pizza and sit down.

KARINA

(a few beats after they begin eating) Have you heard from Dad? Is he gonna call tomorrow?

JULIE

I... don't know. I...he...

SHAWN

He always calls on Christmas.

JOZIAH

The army doesn't always care about Christmas, Shawn.

JULIE

I'm sure he'll call.

JOZIAH

But don't get your hopes up.

KARINA

Lay off, Jo.

JOZIAH

What? You know just as well as I do--

Knock at the door.

JULIE

I'll get it.

JULIE answers the door and MRS MACKIE is there, holding a plate covered in tin foil.

JULIE

Well hello, Mrs. Mackie!

MRS. MACKIE

Hello, Julie dear. (peaking around Julie) Hello, children.

JOZIAH/KARINA/SHAWN

Hi, Mrs. Mackie.

JULIE

What can I do for you?

MRS. MACKIE

Well, I was doing some baking and thought the four of you could do with some Christmas cookies.

JULIE

That was very thoughtful of you.

MRS. MACKIE

It's my pleasure, dear.

JULIE

Will you come in for a minute?

MRS. MACKIE

Oh, I still have some baking to finish before the family gets here tomorrow. Assuming they can get here. S'posed to snow, you know.

JULIE

Yes, I heard that.

MRS. MACKIE

Well, I'll be seeing you. Merry Christmas.

JULIE

Merry Christmas.

JULIE shuts the door and returns to the table.

KARINA

How is she simultaneously the sweetest and creepiest woman to exist?

SHAWN
Mrs. Mackie isn't creepy!

JOZIAH
No, she's got a point. The way she always says "hello children" is very creepy.

KARINA
Woah, look who agrees with me *again*. Maybe you're not a complete Dunce after all. (*JOZIAH sticks his tongue out at KARINA*. (muttering) Although your report card might say differently. (*JOZIAH smacks KARINA's arm.*) Ow!

JULIE
Stop it! Both of you!

JOZIAH/KARINA
Sorry, Mom.

JULIE
Can we all finish our pizza in peace please?

JOZIAH
(raising his pizza like a toast) Peace on earth, good will to men.

Lights down.

Scene 2

Lights up on KARINA as she enters from SL. SHAWN sits on the couch, unseen by KARINA. It's Approximately 3:00 A.M. The sound of strong wind outside is heard. KARINA goes to the table where the pizza box sits. She opens it and finds, to her disappointment, that it's empty. Instead, she takes a cookie off the plate from Mrs. Mackie.

SHAWN
Couldn't sleep?

KARINA
(startled) Wha- Oh! It's you. (making her way to him) What are you doing up?

SHAWN

Just... couldn't sleep. The wind, you know?

KARINA

Yeah, it's loud. (makes her way to a window) Mrs. Mackie was certainly right about the snow.
It's practically a blizzard out there. I hope her family can still get in.

SHAWN

Yeah.

KARINA crosses down and sits on the couch with SHAWN.

KARINA

(after studying him for a moment) Do you wanna tell me why you're really up?

SHAWN

(with a sigh) Curse you and your all-knowing eyes.

KARINA

You should know by now it's hard to fool me, little brother.

SHAWN

I guess I was thinking about Dad. It's hard when he's not here for holidays.

KARINA

Yeah.

SHAWN

But as hard as it is for us, it's got to be harder for him. To be alone, you know?

KARINA

Yeah. I think about that too.

SHAWN

(observing her) And something else too?

KARINA

Hey, I'm supposed to be the physic here, not you.

SHAWN continues to stare at her.

I guess I... I'm worried about Joziah. He's been a lot mopier recently and that usually means something's wrong.

SHAWN
Mopey?

KARINA
Yeah. Like, he'll sit there with his earbuds in and not talk to anyone. He didn't used to do that.

SHAWN
Yeah I guess not. Have you tried talking to him?

KARINA
No. I don't want him to snap at me.

SHAWN.
He has been a lot angrier recently.

KARINA
He's always angry.

SHAWN
I know. That's why I said angry-ER.

KARINA
Fair. (beat) You know, this reminds me of the beginning of A Wrinkle in Time. Storm outside, being awake in the middle of the night... Dad gone.

SHAWN
Except that was a hurricane, not a blizzard.

KARINA
I know. I was just saying it *reminds* me of it.

SHAWN
Well, if some crazy woman knocks on the door--

JOZIAH
(entering from SL) What about Mrs. Mackie?

SHAWN

We weren't talking about Mrs. Mackie.

JOZIAH

Oh. You said crazy woman and I assumed... (lifts the pizza box lid) No pizza. Disappointing.

KARINA

You could have a cookie.

JOZIAH

Eh.

JOZIAH down to KARINA and SHAWN and sits in the recliner.

KARINA

(as JOZIAH is walking) What are you doing up?

JOZIAH

None of your business, Nosy.

KARINA

Well, I'm sorry, Botheration. I didn't know it was a private reason.

JOZIAH

Botheration? I think you just made that up.

KARINA

Did not! I found it in the Thesaurus.

JOZIAH

Nerd.

KARINA

At least I didn't flunk English.

JOZIAH

D. I got a D.

KARINA

Whatever.

SHAWN

Can we, uh, change the subject?

JOZIAH

What's wrong with you?

SHAWN

I'm just done listening to you two snipe at each other all the time.

KARINA

What? This isn't the epitome of a healthy sibling relationship?

SHAWN

Oh, give me a break.

JOZIAH

Not everyone's as nice as you, Shawn.

SHAWN

What does that mean?

JOZIAH

That maybe if you stuck up for yourself once in a while you might not be the football team's favorite punching bag anymore.

KARINA

Hey! That was uncalled for!

JOZIAH

Am I wrong?

KARINA

Doesn't matter! It was uncalled for!

JOZIAH

Why don't you let Shawn defend himself? If you didn't stick up for him all the time, maybe he'd learn to fight back.

KARINA

What, like you? What do you want him to do? Beat up the bullies and get himself *suspended* twice in one semester, like *you*?

JOZIAH
(freezing, quiet) Shut up. You don't know--

KARINA
You are such a delinquent! Do you know how much you worry Mom?

JOZIAH
(louder) Shut. Up.

KARINA
You can be selfish, you know that?! Would it kill you to stay out of trouble?!

JOZIAH
SHUT UP!

SHAWN
STOP IT!

JULIE
(entering from SL) What one earth is going on out here?

JOZIAH, KARINA, and SHAWN all look very guilty and sit down.

SHAWN
Sorry. Did we wake you up, Mom?

JULIE
Yes. Now, what's going on?

KARINA
Nothing. Just loud... discussion.

JULIE
It sounded like a fight.

SHAWN
It was nothing. Sorry we woke you. Can I get you anything?

JULIE
No. I don't think I'm going back to sleep now that I'm awake.

KARINA

(to JOZIAH, quietly) Nice going, Dunderhead.

JOZIAH

(quiet) Don't act like this is entirely my fault.

SHAWN

(through his teeth) Shut. Up.

JULIE

So, do I get to know what the "loud discussion" was about?

KARINA

Just how much of a delinquent Joziah is.

JOZIAH

I swear! Karina, if you don't--

A knock at the door. ALL freeze and turn to face the door, confused.

JULIE

What on earth?

The knock comes again.

KARINA

I swear if that's Mrs. Mackie...

JULIE

I'll get it.

JULIE crosses to the front door and opens it. A snow-covered figure stands in the doorway in a coat, hat, and scarf covering his face.

JULIE

Hello?

The man removes his scarf. It's MARK.

MARK

Merry Christmas.

JULIE
Mark!

JULIE and MARK embrace then kiss.

KARINA/SHAWN
Dad?

MARK
Hey, kids! Merry Christmas!

KARINA/SHAWN
Dad!

KARINA and SHAWN run over and embrace their dad while JOZIAH stays where he is, frozen. Adlib a few lines of greeting and excitement. After embracing the other two, MARK looks over to JOZIAH.

MARK
Hey, Jo.

JOZIAH says nothing and doesn't move.

MARK
Don't I get a hug?

JOZIAH remains the same.

JULIE
(trying to smooth over) Come in, let me take your coat. (MARK removes his coat and she takes it from him) What are you doing home? I mean, we're happy, but we weren't...

MARK
(still with his eyes on JOZIAH he comes farther into the room with KARINA and SHAWN close behind as he talks.) Called in a few favors. I won't be home for long, but I'm here. I would've been home earlier, but the snow... car got stuck. (turning to KARINA and SHAWN) Look at you! You grow up so much when I'm gone! Shawn, I think you grew six inches!

SHAWN
Three.

JOZIAH
(muttering) I'm going to bed. (exits quickly SL)

MARK
(once JOZIAH is gone) How many?

JULIE
What?

MARK
How many fights? How many suspensions?

KARINA
Two suspensions. A lot of fights outside of school. I kinda... lost count.

MARK
(sighs) I don't know what to do with him.

JULIE
Why don't we all go to bed?

MARK
Excellent idea. (kisses JULIE again)

*MARK hugs KARINA and SHAWN again, then exits SL with JULIE.
KARINA and SHAWN linger for a moment, listening to the wind howl outside.*

SHAWN
Not exactly a Silent Night is it?

Lights down.

Scene 3

Lights up. It's Christmas morning, about 8:00. MARK and JULIE sit at the table, eating breakfast. SHAWN enters.

SHAWN
Good morning.

JULIE

Morning, dear. How are you?

SHAWN

Tired. (seeing the breakfast food) Don't we usually get donuts?

MARK

Look outside. We can't go anywhere.

SHAWN goes to the window.

SHAWN

That's a lotta snow.

KARINA

(entering from SL) Isn't it wonderful! It's a white Christmas, Dad's home... it's great! (she gives MARK a huge hug) I could just die of happiness!

SHAWN

Who are you and what have you done with my snarky and typically pessimistic sister?

KARINA

Shut up and cherish my happiness. It's rare. (beat) Where's Joziah?

JULIE

He's not up yet.

KARINA

It's 8:00 AM on Christmas morning! What's he doing still asleep?

SHAWN

If you recall, we were all up pretty late last night.

KARINA

And yet here we are. I'm going to wake him up. (exits)

JULIE

(calling after her) Karina, let him--

MARK

Let her go.

KARINA

(from offstage) Get up, Birdbrain! It's Christmas! (unheard reply) I don't care! I want to open presents! Now, get up!

JOZIAH

(offstage) Get out of my room! (sound of something hitting JOZIAH) Ow! Come back here!

KARINA runs into the room followed by JOZIAH.

JOZIAH

(stopping) Alright. Congratulations. I'm out of bed.

KARINA

The Cave Troll has emerged from its lair!

JOZIAH

I thought I was a Sewer Goblin.

KARINA

Why not both?

SHAWN

A Sewer-Cave Goblin-Troll. Describes you pretty well.

MARK

Are they always like this?

JULIE

Worse.

JOZIAH, at hearing MARK's voice, stiffens a little and returns to his silence like in the previous scene.

MARK

Well, how about those presents?

ALL go to the living room. JOZIAH lingers where he is until everyone else sits down, then he joins them, sitting on the opposite side of the room as MARK.

MARK

Well, who goes first?

KARINA

Youngest picks first present.

MARK

Right. Shawn--

A knock at the door.

JULIE

I'll get it. (walks over to the door and opens it) (MRS. MACKIE stands in the doorway) Hello, Mrs. Mackie.

MRS. MACKIE

Merry Christmas, Julie dear! (peeking around JULIE) Hello, children.

JOZIAH/KARINA/SHAWN

Hi, Mrs. Mackie.

MRS. MACKIE

Oh, Mark! You're home! How nice.

MARK

(going to the door) Hello, Mrs. Mackie. I think you look younger everytime I see you.

MRS. MACKIE

Oh, well. I don't know about that...

MARK

What can we do for you?

MRS. MACKIE

Well, my family wasn't able to get in, you see. And I have all this food... I was wondering if you like some.

JULIE

That's very kind of you, but--

MRS. MACKIE

It will just go to waste otherwise. You'd be doing me a favor.

JULIE

Well, I suppose--

MRS. MACKIE

Good! Boys, help me bring it over.

JOZIAH and SHAWN get up and go to put on their coats and boots.

MARK

I'll help. I can--

JOZIAH

We got it.

MARK

Joziah...

JOZIAH

I said we got, alright?

JOZIAH and SHAWN exit with MRS. MACKIE. MARK gives JULIE a look.

JULIE

I'll... make some room in the fridge.

JULIE exits leaving MARK and KARINA alone onstage.

MARK

Alright, Karina. I always trust you to tell me the truth. What's going on with Joziah?

KARINA

Let's sit down, Dad.

They sit on the couch.

MARK

So?

KARINA

Honestly, Dad... I don't completely know. You know Jo. He's always had anger issues, they've just gotten... a lot worse, and I have no idea why.

MARK

He's mad at me?

KARINA

Maybe. He was fine a couple months after you left, then he got into a fight at school. After that, things just went downhill. (beat) I think he just needs time.

MARK

I don't have a lot of time here.

KARINA

I know.

MARK

So what should I do?

KARINA

I don't know. (beat) Just know that... he does miss you. I think he misses you a lot, but anger is easier than sadness, so... he punches people instead of crying. Joziah likes to pretend he's really tough and doesn't need anyone, but underneath that... I think he's just a boy that misses his dad.

MARK

And Shawn? How's he?

KARINA

Sweet as always. Honestly helps Mom more than I do. School's been rough for him though.

MARK

Bad grades?

KARINA

No. No, Joziah's got that covered. It's more of a people-are-jerks-to-him-at-school situation.

MARK

He's being bullied?

KARINA nods.

MARK

(gravely) How long has this been going on?

KARINA

A while, I think. He hid it for a long time. I only found out a few months ago. (beat) That's the hard thing with Shawn. He doesn't wear his pain on his sleeve. You know Joziah's angry or hurt because he's yelling or punching someone. But with Shawn? He gets a little quieter maybe, but he doesn't *change*. He just... I don't know. And it's frustrating because I've always been good at reading him. But he managed to keep that from me for a long time. I can read everything else happening with him, but I missed *that*. There was just one day where I happened to say, "You know, Shawn, you've been really quiet recently." Then all of a sudden he was crying and I felt so stupid and guilty for not seeing it sooner.