

Snow Tunes

By

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INT. MUSIC SHOP - MORNING

SNOWFLAKES collect on youthful eyelashes.

MOLLY (10) presses both palms against the window of a MUSIC SHOP and peers inside. Molly resembles a porcelain doll, with a full head of strawberry blond curls and bright eyes.

On the interior side of the window, used instruments collect dust against the walls. The music shop is vacant with the exception of the OWNER (70), who sits at a GRAND PIANO with his back towards Molly. The owner has an intimidating stature but a gentle face.

EXT. MUSIC SHOP - SIMULTANEOUSLY

Molly listens to the muffled sound of the song the owner plays. She smiles.

MOTHER (O.S.)  
Come on, Molly. Let's go!

Molly turns to face her MOTHER (35), a statuesque woman who always dresses adequately for the weather. Her mother starts to deposit a coin into a box to retrieve a NEWSPAPER. Her hand hesitates as the coin nears the slot. She replaces the coin in her wallet, and reaches instead for the competitor at no cost. She puts the wallet in her purse and reaches for Molly's hand.

MOTHER  
(kindly)  
You know, sweetheart, it's not very  
polite to stare at strangers like  
that.

Molly shrugs and takes her mother's hand. The two walk away from the music shop.

INT. MUSIC SHOP - SIMULTANEOUSLY

The owner closes his eyes as he effortlessly plunks out a melody on the piano keys. He completes his song.

He turns his head to look at a table that showcases several PICTURES of his family and smiles fondly.

The owner gets up from the piano and heads towards a corner that secludes a section of the shop.

## INT. TINY KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

The owner enters a TINY KITCHEN area. The space includes one cabinet, a small sink, a trash can, a microwave, and a miniature refrigerator. Dishes crowd the sink.

The owner fills a MUG with tap water and puts it into the microwave.

## EXT. GRADE SCHOOL - MORNING

Molly and her Mother approach the front door of Molly's school. They stop on the front stairs. Mother crouches down to Molly's height. Mother tightens Molly's coat and adjusts her scarf.

MOLLY

(teasing)

Too late for the scarf, mom. I'm about to go inside.

MOTHER

(laughing)

True enough. Is anything special happening in school today?

MOLLY

Not really. Oh! But we have music class.

MOTHER

Oh fun. Did the teacher pick solos for the Christmas concert yet?

MOLLY

I didn't get one yet. We're still practicing.

MOTHER

Alright, well I love you sweetie. I'll see you after school.

MOLLY

Okay. Love you, Mom.

Molly wraps her arms around her mother's neck and gives her a kiss on the cheek. As Molly ascends the stairs, her mother taps her on the butt and stands up. Mother turns and walks away.

## INT. MUSIC SHOP - SIMULTANEOUSLY

The microwave sounds and the owner grabs his hot water. He opens a packet of COCOA MIX and makes hot chocolate. He takes a dirty SPOON from the sink, stirs the hot chocolate, and throws the spoon back in the sink.

He sips the hot chocolate and begins to walk out of the kitchen area. He stops and turns on his heels. He opens the miniature refrigerator and takes out a can of WHIPPED CREAM. He squirts an inordinate amount of whip cream onto his hot chocolate and heads back out into the main area of the music shop.

The owner settles in a chair behind the counter and opens a NOVEL to a bookmarked page.

## EXT. MUSIC SHOP - SIMULTANEOUSLY

Mother approaches the music shop. She stops and peers inside. She observes the owner.

The owner looks up from his book and meets her stare.

She smiles bashfully. The man smiles back and returns to his book. Mother hurries out of the owner's sight.

## INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

Molly and her mother sit around a small kitchen TABLE. The majority of the kitchen space is bleak. School pictures of Molly decorate the refrigerator. A recent report card is displayed proudly. A PIZZA BOX is open in the middle of the kitchen table next to a serving bowl filled with SALAD.

Molly looks pensively into her salad bowl and eats slowly. Her mother takes notice and gently nudges Molly.

MOTHER

Hey, Mol, is everything okay?

Molly looks up and nods.

MOTHER

What's the matter?

Molly sighs.

MOLLY

It's really nothing. My friend  
Delayne kept bragging today about

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MOLLY (cont'd)  
how she learned to read music. She takes all these lessons. And she told me since I couldn't read music then I wouldn't aloud to be in the choir when I got to high school one day.

MOTHER  
Delayne is very wrong about that., I promise.

Molly shrugs her shoulders.

MOTHER (CONT'D)  
Music lessons are too expensive for us right now, but maybe we can get you lessons before high school. How's that sound?

Molly nods and takes a huge bite of pizza.

EXT. MUSIC SHOP - MORNING

Mother and Molly walk past the music shop. Molly stops for a moment and looks inside.

The owner is reading and sipping hot chocolate out of a mug.

Molly looks up at her mother.

MOLLY  
Hey mom, do you think that guy gets lonely in there?

They both look in the window. The owner takes a huge sip of his hot chocolate and walks towards his piano. When he lowers the mug, he has a dollop of whipped cream on his nose. Molly and mother both laugh.

As the owner approaches his piano, he looks up towards the window and makes eye contact with his spectators. Molly and her mother smile back, then look at one another and scurry away, holding back laughter until they are out of the owner's sight.

MOTHER  
I don't know. Whipped cream, a good book, and your own music store? It looks like he's living the life.

INT. MOLLY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Molly sits on her bed. She stares at SHEET MUSIC for several moments. She tries humming to herself while following the note with her pointer finger. Frustrated and offbeat, she tosses the sheet music off of her bed onto the floor.

She crawls over to the window and peers down towards the street. The lights are on across the street at the music shop.

INT. MUSIC SHOP - SIMULTANEOUSLY

The owner plays a melody on the grand piano.

INT. MOLLY'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Molly lays down in her bed and looks up at the ceiling. A sly smile comes across her face as she closes her eyes and pulls the blankets up to her chin.

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. GRADE SCHOOL - MORNING

Molly stands on the stairways near the entrance to her school building. Her mother hands her a backpack.

MOLLY

Bye mom.

MOTHER

Bye Molly, have a good day.

Molly's mother walks away from the school building after Molly opens the door to go inside. Molly pauses for a moment in the doorway. Once her mother is out of sight, Molly sneaks away from the building.

INT. MUSIC SHOP - MORNING

The owner plays a melody on the grand piano. Molly enters the building and approaches the piano behind him. She comes around to the front of the piano to face the owner.

OWNER

Well hello.

(CONTINUED)

Molly smiles. The owner continues playing. Molly listens intently and then begins to sing her own song along the piano. The song commences.

OWNER (CONT'D)

You have a beautiful voice there,  
young lady.

MOLLY

Thank you, sir.

OWNER

What's your name?

MOLLY

Molly. Pleasure to meet you.

Molly holds out her hand and the owner shakes it.

OWNER

How old are you, Molly?

The owner gestures to Molly's backpack.

OWNER

You look like you're supposed to be  
in school.

Molly shrugs.

MOLLY

It's parent teacher conference day.

OWNER

Oh, I see. Where did you learn that  
song?

MOLLY

I wrote it.

OWNER

You're a writer?

MOLLY

(embarrassed)

Well, kind of. I can't read the  
notes on the paper or anything, so  
I just wrote the words and then  
just listened and put them together  
with your music.

The owner widens his eyes and opens his mouth as if to  
search for words.

(CONTINUED)

MOTHER (O.S.)  
Molly Marie, have you lost your  
mind!?

Molly and the owner turn to face Molly's mother, who solemnly stands with her hands on her hips.

MOLLY  
(nervous)  
I, um-

Molly looks down at her shoes, disappointed that her mischievous plan had been foiled.

MOTHER  
Your school called me to see if you  
were staying home sick after you  
missed attendance. I was terrified.

The Mother walks over to Molly and bends down to level with her. Owner stands up from the piano, towering over the women.

OWNER  
Oh dear, I'm very sorry, ma'am.  
This young lady had me under the  
impression that she was off for the  
day.

Mother laughs and shakes her head. She straightens up to talk with the owner.

MOTHER  
She's very crafty.

Molly looks down at her shoes.

OWNER  
And very talented, too.

MOLLY  
No I'm not. I can't even read  
stupid music.

MOTHER  
Molly-

OWNER  
I could teach her.

Mother and Owner continue their discussion as Molly strains her neck to look up at them.



MOTHER

(softly)

That's very kind of you, sir. But Molly's father and I aren't in a financial position to pay for music lessons at the moment, with the economy, and Christmas time and everything.

Owner looks back and forth between Molly and her mother.

OWNER

No charge at all. I would love to teach Molly to read music. I do believe it would be a great investment.

The owner glances down towards Molly. Molly's face lights up as she looks at her mother. Her mother nods and smiles back.

INT. MUSIC SHOP - EARLY EVENING

MONTAGE:

- A) The owner teaches Molly to read music.
- B) The two sing and play together.
- C) The two drink hot chocolate and cheers with their mugs.

END MONTAGE.

INT. MUSIC SHOP - EVENING

Molly and Owner sit near the piano.

MOLLY

What's your favorite kind of music?

OWNER

Oh gee, now that's a tough question. Show tunes, probably.

Molly raises an baffled eyebrow.

OWNER

(almost singing)

You know, like, luck be a lady tonight. Luck if you've ever been a lady to begin with-

(CONTINUED)

Molly has both eyebrows raised over wide eyes by now. The owner employs two seconds of jazz hands in a failed attempt to make Molly giggle. He smiles and shrugs his shoulders.

OWNER (CONT'D)  
How about you, Miss Molly?

MOLLY  
Me? I like snow tunes.

The owner chuckles.

OWNER  
What exactly is a snow tune?

MOLLY  
You know! Like-

Molly hums a few notes.

MOLLY (CON'T)  
(singing)  
Dashing through the snow, or, in  
the lane, snow is glistening.

The owner smiles widely as Molly looks at him.

MOLLY (CON'T)  
(matter-of-factly)  
I've done a lot of Christmas  
concerts.

OWNER  
(pensively)  
You know, around Christmas time,  
there are lots of folks who would  
love to go out to Christmas  
concerts, but they just don't get  
the chance. Maybe it would be nice  
to conduct a free concert in the  
store, what do you think?

MOLLY  
Do we have to do only show tunes?

OWNER  
(grinning widely)  
Maybe just one or two. Other than  
that, we can do whatever you'd  
like.

MOLLY  
(beaming)  
Really? We could do that?

OWNER  
Sure! We'll invite the whole  
neighborhood.

MOLLY  
And serve hot chocolate?

OWNER  
Of course. Compliments of the best  
hot chocolate maker in Chicago.

Molly, barely containing herself, throws her arms around the owner's neck and kisses him on the cheek.

MOLLY  
Let's get started.

INT. MUSIC SHOP - LATER

Molly and Owner create decorative flyers on bright sheets of paper. They read: SNOWTUNES: A COMMUNITY CHRISTMAS CONCERT.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Molly hangs flyers on several trees and billboards throughout the neighborhood with the help of her father.

EXT. PLAYGROUND - DAY

Molly hands a concert flyer to her TEACHER, a young women in her 20s, who smiles and nods.

INT. MUSIC SHOP - DAY

Molly and her mother enter the music shop. Molly's mother greets the owner and Molly skips towards the piano. Her mother's arms are full with bulk hot chocolate ingredients and solo cups.

OWNER  
Here! Let me grab that for you.

MOTHER  
I'm alright, just lead the way. I  
don't know where there is free  
space.

(CONTINUED)

The owner leads Molly's mother to a counter top with sufficient space. He begins to unload her arms and organize things on the shelf.

A CHRISTMAS CARD featuring a picture of CHARLOTTE (25) catches Mother's eye. Charlotte has thick, wavy hair and dons collegiate attire.

MOTHER

Who is this?

The owner follows Mother's pointer finger to the picture. He perks up at the mention.

OWNER

That's Charlotte, my youngest.

MOTHER

She's gorgeous.

OWNER

She looks just like her mother.

A melody sounds on piano keys around the corner.

OWNER (CONT'D)

That's my cue.

The mother smiles and nods. She reaches for and sifts through a pile of OPENED ENVELOPES previously resting on the top of the refrigerator. When she sees the name Charlotte scribbled on a return address, she smiles. Mother looks around to make sure she is alone before slipping the envelope into an inside coat pocket.

INT. MUSIC SHOP - EVENING

A CROWD gathers in the music shop. A few ATTENDEES study the instruments along the wall. Molly's mother sits front row near the piano. Molly's teacher and several other PERFORMERS gather with Molly and the owner around the piano.

The concert participants conclude a popular Christmas song and the applause erupts.

OWNER

Our last song is a very special one. It was written by my friend, Molly, who also coordinated this concert. We hope you enjoy it.

(CONTINUED)

DELAYNE (10), a sassy brunette with envious eyes, scoffs at the mention of Molly's composer status. She takes part in the piece, singing. As the song progresses, Delayne's stance softens.

Charlotte enters the music shop and leans against the back wall. She stretches her neck in different directions, scanning the crowd for her father. When she spots the owner, she folds her arms and smiles proudly.

The ensemble performs Molly's song. Mother looks around at the spectators, impressed. After the song is over, everyone takes a bow.

Delayne approaches Molly after the concert's conclusion.

DELAYNE  
(sincerely)  
Molly, that was incredible!

MOLLY  
Thanks, Delayne.

DELAYNE  
Do you think that you could teach  
me to write music like that?

MOLLY  
(grinning)  
Anytime.

Mother and Owner approach Molly after Delayne walks away. Molly hugs her mother. Mother excuses herself briefly to retrieve a HOT COCOA GIFT BASKET from beneath her folding chair.

CHARLOTTE (O.S.)  
Dad!

The owner spins around and takes in the sight of his daughter. Charlotte and her father leap into a strong embrace.

OWNER  
Honey, what are you doing here?

CHARLOTTE  
Well I heard I'd been replaced by a  
new music student.

Charlotte removes a Snowtunes flyer from her pocket and waves it. She looks down at Molly and playfully tussles her curls.

OWNER  
How did you get here?

MOLLY  
We picked her up from the airport!

Mother reenters the conversation, holding the gift basket.  
The owner gets tears in his eyes.

MOTHER  
This is for all your hard work. I  
really appreciate you teaching  
Molly. She loved it.

The owner looks from his daughter, to the gift basket, then  
to Molly and her family.

OWNER  
Thank you.

CHARLOTTE  
(to Molly)  
Molly, that song was pretty  
impressive.

Molly blushes.

MOLLY  
Thanks.

OWNER  
Corinne is a great singer like you  
are.

CHARLOTTE  
I've got a decent voice. But I'll  
tell you one thing, I couldn't  
dream of writing music like that!

The CAMERA begins to dolly back, leaving Molly, Charlotte,  
the Owner and Mother to get to know each other.

MOLLY  
(suspicious)  
Did you guys tell her to say that?

MOTHER  
What? No!

OWNER  
Charlotte, you could be a great  
music writer if you tried.

(CONTINUED)

MOTHER  
(to Molly)  
Sounds a lot like something I would  
say.

MOLLY  
You have to say that, you're my  
mom!

CHARLOTTE  
Exactly.

FADE OUT