

[Upbeat Christmas music plays]

Kyle

Welcome to Hallmarked! I'm Kyle.

Hallie

And I'm Hallie, ranking all the Hallmark Channel original movies from A Storm in Summer to Miracle in Bethlehem, PA! That's Pennsylvania, but it's spelled P-A so it's just Miracle in Bethlehem "PAH!"

Kyle

So Hallie, it's been a year since we did the last episode of this show.

Hallie

Sure has been, since the military one, yeah.

Kyle

Yeah, since Christmas Bedtime Stories.

Hallie

I think about it all the time.

Kyle

Yeah, so um... since that time, I counted 104 Hallmark original movies have been produced.

Hallie

Oh my goodness.

Kyle

So I'd say we're moving at a pretty good rate.

Hallie

Yeah! No, we'll catch up.

Kyle

We'll catch up.

Hallie

Yeah.

Kyle

We'd have to do this every three and a half days to just be current. Not even to catch up, to be current.

Hallie

Well... What is it like to be able to produce 104—? God, Hallmark, how do you do it?

Kyle

You know there's somebody who's watched every single one.

Hallie

Mm-hmm.

Kyle

And they're not even doing a podcast about it. They just do it because they want to.

Hallie

No, they just have. I'm jealous.

[Music ends.]

Kyle

Anyways, we watched one.

Hallie

We watched one! I have watched more, but we are talking about one.

Kyle

One that you forced me to watch, so you're gonna do the summary and I'm gonna be like "oh, what, that happened?" As if I've never heard of this before.

Hallie

Yeah. Lie to the audience, because you watched it with me.

Kyle

Yeah, this ungodly long movie.

Hallie

It was pretty long for a Hallmark.

Kyle

I don't know how long it was. It felt like it was two fucking hours long.

Hallie

It's hard because sometimes Hallmark movies, like, sometimes they take up that time slot but at least one third of that is commercials. This was genuinely two hours long without the commercials, so that's a solid 30 minutes over the perfect movie length, especially for a Hallmark movie.

Kyle

Especially for a Hallmark.

Hallie

Especially for a Hallmark.

Kyle

What IS the average Hallmark movie length?

Hallie

You know what? Let me google it. I want to say 80 minutes.

Kyle

I thought it would be closer to 60, which would make sense because this would be like a double feature then.

Hallie

Yeah, it was a really special one.

Okay, so far most Hallmark movies are apparently filmed in 15 days. It got confused about the length that I wanted. But like, props to them. I could make a movie in two weeks... if I had the resources.

Kyle

Could you?

Hallie

Yeah! I'd have a crew, I'd have the moxie and I have the charming location on hand already.

Kyle

This is the same energy that when we were in college and I said hey, write me a five-minute script and you came back with 15 minutes of content.

Hallie

Yeah!

Kyle

And I'm being generous saying it was only 15 minutes.

Hallie

Yeah! I've gotten better about that, but...

Kyle

“Gotten better,” she says, after just saying ‘I could film a movie in 15 days.’

Hallie

Yeah, but okay, I could is the thing. I’ve gotten better about writing things that are the right length. That’s what I’m saying. I’ve nailed that part down. Speaking of, the summary for this movie is 2.5 pages.

Kyle

What are we talking about today, Hallie?

Hallie

We’re talking about a wonderful Hallmark movie, a Hallmark movie about an athlete. You don’t get those all the time.

Kyle

Give me the title drop and then let’s get into it.

Hallie

The title’s called Evergreen Springs because that’s where this takes place. That’s the charming small town.

Kyle

[Laughs.] I personally prefer A Miracle in Bethlehem “PAH!”

Hallie

“PAH!”

Kyle

But Evergreen Springs will suffice.

[Christmasy stinger plays.]

Hallie

As is customary, our protagonist in Evergreen Springs is this hotshot professional from the big city, but as I mentioned he's an athletic celebrity and we don't normally get those. Liam is a professional racecar driver, and he's determined to win this big race. So, we know what a cocky little motherfucker he is at the beginning. He gets too cocky, ignores the advice of his team...

Kyle

His pit crew.

Hallie

His pit crew, yeah, that's what they're called.

Kyle

Yeah. He does to the pit crew what you would do to the professionals working on your 15-day movie.

Hallie

Okay, but the difference is that I'd be right.

Kyle

[Laughs.]

Hallie

And Liam is wrong. Because Liam is wrong, as you well know, because I forgot you watched this one with me, he ends up tying in the race instead of outright winning.

Kyle

He like blows a tire right at the very end, right?

Hallie

He does. He blows a tire right at the very end because he ignored his racing team slash pit crew. It's a pretty effective way to show that he's a jackass. It's more effective than a lot of Hallmark movies where

they just play musical cues while someone runs around with coffee and papers. It's like, okay, this is a real thing, this is a real thing.

So, since he tied, there will be a tiebreaker race in one week in California, and he is definitely gonna win that. You may be thinking California doesn't feel like a Hallmark location.

[00:05:00]

Liam has to get to California, but the actual location of this movie is this random small town off the highway. What highway? Who knows. Just a highway, because that's how you get to California.

Kyle

Yeah. Highways aren't small towns. Highways, foreshadowing, destroy small towns.

Hallie

Highways destroy small towns, as we find out, because Liam ends up in one of those little small towns after a breakdown. Unfortunately for him, when his car broke down it also caused a lot of damage to the town because he ran into a bunch of stuff. So, he is straight-up arrested and held against his will which is also a beat that's different from regular Hallmarks. I was like, okay, he's forcibly detained. Usually you're there for work or a family member calls you and begs you to come home one last time for the holidays or something like that, but nah, he's just like arrested.

Kyle

All Hallmark towns have weird culty vibes when you think about them.

Hallie

Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

Kyle

This one is no different.

Hallie

Nuh-uh.

Kyle

Like, the jail thing is weird. He's in jail, but they don't, like... they have a cop, but the cop doesn't watch him. It's just some random dude from the city.

Hallie

Um, that's Nate. That is his best friend who I will get to. This is a very structured summary. Instead of the sheriff, whose job this is, they have Nate come in and watch Liam. Like... okay. Okay, Evergreen Springs, fine. Fine! You do things a little differently. You know what, that's fine. That's fine. So, none of these people in Evergreen Springs know who Liam the hotshot racer man is, including the love interest.

Kyle

I mean, racecar driving has nothing to do with Christmas.

Hallie

It's true.

Kyle

Or small towns.

Hallie

Or the highway!

Kyle

Except for my small town which did have a racetrack.

Hallie

I wanna go to a racetrack in a small town.

Kyle

You can come to my small town. We have a racetrack.

Hallie

[Gasps.]

Kyle

I won't say what it is, but I will say that people around, if they recognize my hometown, it's because of the racetrack.

Hallie

Oh my god. I love that for you. I'm gonna come race and it's gonna be amazing and I'm gonna be even better than Liam.

Kyle

[Laughing.] Just come visit during the four days I'm home with my family.

Hallie

[Chuckles.] Okay, that's true.

Kyle

Hey, here's Hallie, too. We're gonna go to the racetrack.

Hallie

Yeah! That also happens in Hallmark, though. People will just be like, here's a person, the more the merrier, merry Christmas.

Kyle

I'm gonna see if there's a race when I'm home.

Hallie

Yes! Yes! Yes!

Kyle

It's gonna be cold as shit, but...

Hallie

But I'll suck it up. Google that.

Kyle

Okay.

Hallie

Okay, while you're googling that, you may be wondering if the whole holding him against his will thing is legal. The answer is I don't know, I truly don't. As we said, Hallmark town, it's like a cult. He's definitely responsible for destruction of public property and I guess a fine is appropriate. I don't know if you can just arrest a guy and make him fix what he broke, but that's what they do. He's trapped there and he has to fix the road and a bunch of other stuff he damaged. Nobody knows who he is, because as we just said, yeah, it's a small town.

Kyle

Yeah. Why doesn't he just leave if it's not legal?

Hallie

Oh, no, they like detain him. They have an escort watching him all the time. They handcuff him a lot. It's kind of bad. I don't know who wrote this.

Kyle

It's weird. I remember, like—

Hallie

You know why I'm struggling to explain how they detain him. Like...

Kyle

Yeah... They make a lot of very weird comments about him looking drained, "oh man, you're drained of the Christmas spirit" and stuff, and it feels like they're talking about blood.

Hallie

It feels a little bit like they're implying that they siphoned off his blood so he can't get away!

Kyle

But he's just drained of the Christmas spirit, don't worry about it.

Hallie

I don't know if the writers thought that one through...

Kyle

No.

Hallie

...but I'm glad that they didn't because we got to say, yes, this Hallmark protagonist is trapped in a small town because they drain his blood. No, it's not a Halloween movie.

Kyle

And they just have Nate there to watch him, just Nate.

Hallie

Yeah, they just have Nate. Just Nate.

Kyle

He doesn't work there. He's just Nate. He has nothing better to do.

Hallie

He's just Nate. He's like a mechanic and he's got nothing to fix because it's a small rundown town.

Kyle

Yeah. It keeps Nate from tipping cows.

Hallie

It keeps Nate from tipping cows which we'll get to later in my very structured summary.

Kyle

[Laughs.]

Hallie

So, you may be wondering! I know that they said that he's drained of the Christmas spirit, and this is a Christmassy small town, because of course it is, it's called Evergreen Springs, but Hallmark towns are usually pretty lively as well. Small towns, for all they say "oh, we don't have fancy lattes or taxi services here," they're clearly quite bustling.

Kyle

Yeah.

Hallie

This one is not, which was another key difference that was interesting.

[00:10:00]

It is only a shadow of what it once was during its heyday which is an indescribable amount of time ago. I do not know when this heyday was, it's just heralded some point in decades past.

Kyle

I mean, it's Hallmark, they don't have that much of a budget. When we do see the flashback, it just has all of the same actors looking the same with the exception of the love interest because that's the only character who explicitly said she wasn't here at that time.

Hallie

Yeah.

Kyle

What's her name again, by the way? We haven't mentioned her name.

Hallie

Oh yeah. Again, this is a structured summary. Susan. Her name is Susan.

Kyle

Okay, Susan.

Hallie

Susan! So, Susan's the only one not in the flashback and that's because she's the one who talks about it eventually, but this was important context to give for what Evergreen Springs is like because part of the plot is fixing up Evergreen Springs, not just from Liam who is being forced to do this but, like, as he fixes it up other small business owners and residents are like wow, the road looks nice, what if my shop also looked nice. And it's cute. I really like when there's a communal effort. You know?

Kyle

Yeah. It is cute, and they do handle it well where they'll do it after he fixes some of the road so you don't see some guy on his knees with a spackle and a giant industrial-grade cement mixer just on his hands and knees sweating as people look down. "Wow, he sure knows his stuff. I'm gonna clean up." It's always like, oh, it's nice now.

Hallie

Yeah. We never see the actual work, we're just told that Liam does it.

Kyle

We see him half-ass it once.

Hallie

We do, we do, which is what I'm getting to. He's a little bit mad that he's being kept against his will. He has to get to his big race.

Kyle

That he's being kept hostage and being talked about how his Christmas spirit is drained.

Hallie

Yes. But listen, but listen, he's a grouch in a Hallmark movie, so whatever opinion he has, we as the audience know it has to be wrong.

Kyle *[Laughs.]* That's fair.

Hallie

So, when he half-asses it, there's this doctor in town whose name is literally just Doc. They don't call him anything else. He challenges Liam to the only language Liam knows, a race. If he wins, Liam has to undo everything and then redo everything right. If he loses, Liam can leave.

Liam of course accepts this because no way can this old man beat him in a race, but psyche, this is a dirt road, you idiot. The wise old racer man knows his way around a dirt road. Liam is used to his big polished racetracks, not the country, so Liam loses and it's great. It's a moment of humility for him, and then he's even madder, but because it was a race, this decision he respects. The first one was technically a legal one. The doctor's also the judge.

Kyle

But this one's legal by the laws of the street.

Hallie

This one's legal by something Liam respects, which is yes, the laws of the street, the fast and the furious of it all.

Kyle

As you're summarizing this, I'm realizing what a missed opportunity it was to not have Doc at the very least suggested to be a secret Santa Claus. I am very baffled that it did not happen.

Hallie

[Laughs.] I mention this later. I mention that he's not Santa. Because Hallmark will sometimes have some kind of an old person mentor. Often that person is Santa. Sometimes it's an old family member, and sometimes it's just like a café owner.

Kyle

In all the ones I've seen, when it's been Santa, he has been in there for two seconds, either to give good advice or in that one really weird one to create an alternate dimension where she was married to her high school sweetheart or something.

Hallie

Yeah!

Kyle

Or fix a car. Santa showed up to fix a car in one movie. That's all he did.

Hallie

Yes!

Kyle

Anyways, Doc kicks his ass at racing.

Hallie

Okay! Doc kicks his ass at racing, so Liam has to go back and take his time and do the work, which gives a lot of time for the colorful cast of folks and town members who are going to help Liam grow as a person. There's the doctor whose name is Doc, we just talked about him, and then there's the sheriff who everybody just calls Sheriff. There is a folksy café owner, but she's not as old as the folksy café owners I'm thinking of that sometimes show up in Hallmark.

Kyle

Yeah.

Hallie

She's got a cool husband who has a barber shop kind of thing. There's a cute firefighter, his name is Ted. He doesn't talk much and I wish that he did, but he's very—

Kyle

He just cries.

Hallie

He just cries! But like, we love when men cry. Good on you, Hallmark. We love Ted.

Kyle

Then there's your favorite, the European guy.

Hallie

The European guys? Because you don't ever see European guys in Hallmark movies.

Kyle

What were their names again?

Hallie

Uh... their names are Alessandro and Angelo.

[00:15:00]

I love them because they're just... they're just European. They make a living out of being European. They're my favorite because nothing they say ever makes sense.

Kyle

No.

Hallie

They're kind of the only ones who, like... I mean, people are mean to Liam in that he's forcibly detained there, but they also just straight-up tell Liam "eh, you're not that cool." Which is great. Love that. There's more, there are more side characters, but really the only last two who are important are the love interest, Susan, and Liam's new best friend, Nate, the person who doesn't work at the jail but who watches over Liam anyway.

Nate is one of those characters who refuses to take a hint or see the worst in people. He's just really nice and genuine, so he can't tell that Liam just hates him, which makes him the perfect foil for an asshole learning to love again. He's fine. He has annoying moments, but he takes a shine to Liam. He's cute. Shows him the joys of simple country living such as cow tipping.

This is the point in the movie where he takes him cow tipping, as you foreshadowed, and this softens Liam up because he has a nice time before he spends the night with his love interest. But psyche, they don't spend the night together, like "spend the night together," it's just that she owns a hotel.

Kyle

I mean, he already spent his night with the love interest. I genuinely—We'll get to this when we rank. If Nate was the love interest, this would get full marks from me.

Hallie

Mm-hmm!

Kyle

Unironically would get full marks from me.

Hallie

Unironically.

Kyle

But, Susan's so boring by comparison. She's so...

Hallie

Susan's just kinda boring.

Kyle

She's got "girl" energy.

Hallie

I know! Ugh. And it sucks because Susan is also a Hallmark protagonist. She just had her Hallmark movie before the events of this Hallmark movie. So, she hangs out with Liam and she mentions that she ended up here because she was running away from the stresses of her high-profile lawyering in the city but then she broke down here also, and then the café owner took her in, and she just fell in love with the landscape and how cute it is.

Kyle

Do you think there's a secret cult aspect of this? Like, they set up some sort of raise to get cars to break down right outside of this town.

Hallie

That would be so funny, though. I would watch that over and over.

Kyle

That's why no one ages.

Hallie

Oh my god!

Kyle

That's why no one ages.

Hallie

Evergreen Springs! They're evergreen! Oh my god, we cracked it!

Kyle

[Laughs.] We cracked the case.

Hallie

Did the writers know? Did the writers know? No, they didn't know.

Kyle

No. No. They absolutely didn't.

Hallie

They didn't know.

Kyle

I can tell you, and I'll explain more in detail later, with 100% certainty that they did not know.

Hallie

That they did not know what they were doing. Oh my god, Evergreen Springs is a cult town where they just get people to break down and then stay there. God, that's so much more interesting than Susan! I'd be so much more interested in Susan if she was the victim of a cult. I know how shitty that sounds to say, but she's just like... fine. She's just a girl boss.

Kyle

Yeah, the very boring kind of girl boss, too.

Hallie

And that's the thing, Hallmark doesn't write good characters. She's not the fun kind of bad Hallmark character either, she's just a solid middle. There's no real chemistry between them, but they're also not awkward and there are no musical cues like there sometimes are for Hallmark couples, so it's not even like a fun bad awkward, she's just a solid middle.

Kyle

Yeah. I feel like the most is sometimes there are looks that, and I don't know if this is intentional, but are far hornier than any Hallmark movie has any right to be.

Hallie

[Laughs.] Yeah! I think the actors were stretching their limits. I think they were like, how can we get away with not just being flirty in a Hallmark but how can we communicate we want each other carnally.

Kyle

The one unique thing she has, she has a small tattoo.

Hallie

She does! A Hallmark protagonist having a tattoo? Again, she should be way up there on the Hallmark list.

Kyle

But the way he looks at it, you know?

Hallie

Eh, it's weird.

Kyle

It's weird.

Hallie

I respect the actors for experimenting, and this is technically a unique thing they add to the relationship that should make me like them more than other Hallmark couples, but like, eh.

Kyle

I think the big thing is Nate's there.

Hallie

Nate's there.

Kyle

Who we want... Liam-Nate, Nate-Liam?

Hallie

Niam?

Kyle

Maybe there's a Hallmark shipping wiki where I can find their ship name.

Hallie

[Laughs.] I bet there is one.

Kyle

Continue.

Hallie

Okay. So, that's all happening while Liam is doing his stuff. He's on route to finishing, but he needs something from Doc and Doc can't help him right away and whatever. So, Liam accidentally gets into Doc's woodshed that he just has because he's a folksy old man.

[00:20:00]

There's old racing stuff in there? He's like an old racer that Liam recognizes immediately. He's just this old racer who now lives here under a pseudonym. Also, an unexpected twist from a Hallmark movie, because again, there's no sage old wise man mentor, usually, unless that man is Santa, or an angel. Sometimes they do angels. Doc is neither of those things, he's just a former professional and it's this whole thing. Liam tells everybody, and they're like "nah, that's crazy," and then other stuff happens, but the other stuff is just fluff nonsense that you need in a Hallmark movie.

Basically, Liam and Doc fight and Doc is like "this life ruined me, I never went back. They cast me out because I had an accident and got too old." And then Liam is like, but it's racing, and Doc yells at him and

then calls him out specifically for only caring about himself. What's actually nice is that Liam listens. He gets yelled at, and then you see from the very next set of scenes that it got to him. It's nice when you say something and it gets to a man. It's nice when a man listens. Only in Hallmark.

Liam finishes his work, but then everyone thinks he left without saying goodbye, and then he appears out of nowhere. Like, they're all sad. They're like "oh, we're gonna miss him," and then Ted cries because that's all he ever does. But then Liam's like, oh, why is everyone so sad? And it's really cute. I think that's another one of those types of scenes that I really like.

Kyle

Yeah.

Hallie

So Liam, he's happy, he's back. Everyone's like, ah-ha, Liam, we were gonna miss you. Then he buys stuff from all their shops and hangs out from everyone. To show that he was listening, like a Hallmark man, he's also enlisted everybody's help to refurbish the pretty town lights and stuff so that it looks like it did during the unestablished glory period of the past. This makes Susan happy. This was her gift, because the hotel is doing fine.

Kyle

Yeah. It's a nice hotel.

Hallie

It's a nice hotel. He makes everything else nice, and they're happy, and they're about to kiss when oh no, now we need the Hallmark complication slash misunderstanding.

Kyle

Shockingly late in the movie, too.

Hallie

It is pretty late in the movie.

Kyle

It's like 15 minutes before the end, which would be fine if this was a 60 minute movie.

Hallie

Right, but this is... it's not that. It's a two-hour film.

Kyle

We're an hour and 45 minutes in.

Hallie

And then zip, reporters, news copters. They're flying in and they're like "we found the famous racer, Liam McClane!" Because his last name is McClane, just like Die Hard, for some reason.

Kyle

[Laughs.]

Hallie

Liam McClane!

Kyle

This whole thing is tangentially Christmas already.

Hallie

It's true. So, famous racer Liam McClane, because he's been missing for a week, and apparently that's a thing the world was upset about. So, they find him and he's more or less bullied into returning for the race. Ugh, it's one of those things. He could just be like, oh, you know, this race is really important to me and had some life-changing experiences, but I still want to do my race. You guys should all come watch me, or I'll come back after my race. Nah, that's not a thing that's said. It's like, you have to go to the race or stay in Evergreen Springs. So, he goes to the race and then everybody's sad because, you know, they're from two different worlds. There's no way this will work.

After he leaves, it's revealed that Doc is the one who called the press to let them know where Liam was. He wanted Liam out of town because he was getting under his skin, and then Susan gets big mad and delivers a real doozy of a line that calls him out for being selfish too. He's like, it's best for everyone, and she's like "best for everyone, or best for you?"

Kyle

Get his ass, Susan. It's the one time she's good.

Hallie

Get his ass, Susan! It's the one time!

Kyle

The one time she's good!

Hallie

The one time she's good. She calls him out. So, Liam has been kind of socially bullied from the small town back to his racetrack, but he's sad and he's off his game during the race. He keeps imagining the town and thinking if everybody, including Nate, including Nate... he also gets little flashbacks to Nate.

Kyle

It should have only been Nate. It should have been solely Nate.

Hallie

It should have only been Nate! But whatever, fine. This is nice too because we don't always get actual reflections or memories from hallmark characters when they're making their big decision pivot. We really just see the decision pivot, like someone will be back from the airport, we don't see him walking through the airport and deciding I need to go back. So, this was nice, this was a nice moment.

Luckily, he doesn't have to make that decision because his new friends come to him! It's so cute! Doc and Nate and company, they come to watch his race and they cheer him on through the power of friendship. They help him out because he doesn't have a pit crew because he fired them. Liam starts racing a lot better after they show up because, again, the power of friendship.

Kyle

When your film crew from your 15-day movie quits, are you gonna find a band of folksy people of differing careers and also a Nate in order to make your movie?

[00:25:00]

Hallie

Okay, so the thing about that is that you're my band of folksy people with different careers. You're just gonna be called in to help me finish the movie, when my strong opinions that are correct inevitably lead to heated tensions behind the scenes and people abandon me because they just can't handle what a star I am.

Kyle

Okay. Who do I get to be, then?

Hallie

Okay, so...

[Exhales.] It's weird if I say Nate because we talked about how much we want Nate and Liam to get together. And you're not, you're not, like... a simple country boy. You're just nice, and you're supportive.

Kyle

[Laughs.] I'm gonna say—

Hallie

I'm right!

Kyle

No-no, it's not that. You were moving to a different detail about Nate, but with the way you started it, I thought you were gonna somehow reject your married friend. Be like, "you know, they're romantic and just... ugh, I don't want to say this, but you're just not my type." And I'm like... what?!

Hallie

[Laughs.]

Kyle

And that's not the direction you went, but for some reason that's where my mind went.

Hallie

[Amused.] Why are you like this?

Kyle

Hey! Hey. It is a reasonable way for me to go because you spent so long thinking after saying it would be awkward because of 'this.'

Hallie

Right.

Kyle

“And just...” And I’m like, she is struggling to say something.

Hallie

Yeah, because like, you don’t fit anybody. Maybe Ted. He cries a lot.

Kyle

[Laughs.] That’s the one thing I can’t do.

Hallie

[Laughs.] It’s not that they lack personality, there’s just not enough there.

Kyle

Maybe I get to be... Liam had one friend before the movie started, his one friend from the big city. Maybe I get to be that guy.

Hallie

Um... Marv? You get to be Marv.

Kyle

Yeah, I get to be Marv.

Hallie

You never see Marv, you just hear him over the phone. You could be such a good Marv!

Kyle

I could be a great Marv.

Hallie

The fast-talker.

Kyle

Yeah. Anyways, I'll let you finish this.

Hallie

Liam is just racing better. He doesn't actually win, he does not win the race, instead another racer crashes and he helps out that racer to show what a good person he has become. He knows what matters. Doc is there, and he's like, smiley face, I've grown too, I'm still grumpy but the youthful vigor of this young person has caused my optimism to grow too. So actually, many people benefit from this Hallmark movie, not just the couple.

Kyle

Yeah. We didn't do the Hallmark skip to where it just skips to him returning from the airport for Liam, but we did do that for Doc. We never see Doc's change of heart.

Hallie

Yeah. We never really see that. No, he's just there, and he's like ah, you're not so bad, kid, I'm gonna help you. It's fine. It's fine. Susan and Liam end up together. Liam implies he's gonna move back to Evergreen Springs and put his racing headquarters there, a thing that once again he could have planned from...

Kyle

At any point.

Hallie

...when they came and took him, but fine, whatever.

Kyle

At any point.

Hallie

At any point. But it is at this point.

Kyle

It's not like they were holding him hostage taking him to the racetrack.

Hallie

It's not like they were— *[Laughs.]*

Kyle

I mean, it did kind of feel like they were, though.

Hallie

I mean, they kind of were.

Kyle

It did feel... yeah.

Hallie

But also, it's within his power to, when he's back at the racetrack, be like hey, send these invites to Radiator—fuck, to Evergreen Springs, and everything's great. Okay, well, I made it through the whole summary, though.

Kyle

You did.

Hallie

I did. I made it through the whole summary. If you'd like to watch this Hallmark movie, Evergreen Springs, you can also find it under the name Disney Pixar movie 'Cars,' because that is the movie that I just described with only a few name changes. Cars, as we discovered when we went to Disney Land this summer, fall-ish, is just a Hallmark movie.

Kyle

It's just a Hallmark movie.

Hallie

It's just a Hallmark movie!

Kyle

It's just a Hallmark movie.

Hallie

A good Hallmark movie.

Kyle

A good Hallmark movie.

Hallie

A good Hallmark movie, and I made it through that entire summary—

Kyle

[Laughs.] Until the very end.

Hallie

Until the very end when I said Radiator. Ugh! It's Evergreen Springs not Radiator Springs.

Kyle

Which I might keep that fumble in because it's at the very end.

Hallie

It's kind of funny.

[Christmasy stinger plays.]

Kyle

Before we get to ranking, a couple of things. Yeah, some of those were just overt lies like draining of the Christmas spirit, but they do drain his gas which feels a lot like bloodletting.

Hallie

Yeah. That's why I left that out. I was like, I can't spin this in a way that sounds like I'm talking about a person.

Kyle

Just like you couldn't spin the blowing the tire into the equivalent, which is him fracturing an ankle or something.

Hallie

Fracturing a bone! Right. I had to just be like, he raced a car and it broke.

Kyle

Cars is very weird when you think about it.

[00:30:00]

Hallie

Cars is so weird, which is why we were okay saying this Hallmark's kind of weird, because it is.

Kyle

Cars is strange. Tattoo? Absolutely is real.

Hallie

That's real.

Kyle

But specifically, Sally is the name of the love interest.

Hallie

Sally, yes.

Kyle

She has a tramp stamp.

Hallie

She's got a tramp stamp.

Kyle

I don't know why.

Hallie

I don't know why. When I said the actors were trying to be horny with each other, actually the writers were just trying to see what they could squeeze in there.

Kyle

Lightning McQueen gets literally flashed at the beginning of the movie.

Hallie

Yeah!

Kyle

If you haven't seen Cars, the main character's name is Lightning McQueen.

Hallie

Oh yes, I'm sorry, Liam McClane is actually Lightning McQueen.

Kyle

He's played by Owen Wilson. His friend played by Larry the Cable Guy is Tow Mater. And tragically, I could not find a ship name for Lightning McQueen and Tow Mater.

Hallie

That feels like it should be a popular ship.

Kyle

The issue is there's a young and small UFO called Mator who has a mama called Mama Ship which is a massive UFO from one of the Cars shorts, unidentified flying Mator.

Hallie

What?! That's not even...

Kyle

So, when I looked up Lightning McQueen and Mater ship name, I see either that or I see Tony Trihull from the Pixar Cars wiki.

Hallie

I can't believe that comes up before any ship names.

Kyle

Hallie, how many things did you have to make up on the fly because I referenced them?

Hallie

Okay! I hadn't included Guido and Luigi, the Italian cars, in my thing because I was like—

Kyle

I could tell.

Hallie

It is too weird for a Hallmark to have Italians.

Kyle

[Laughs.]

Hallie

[Laughs.] I didn't think it was gonna do that.

Kyle

I like that, the rest of this, you're like we can make this work. A racecar driver? Sure, why the fuck not? Even though that's way too high budget. But, god forbid we have Europeans. God forbid we have Italians in this movie.

Hallie

Okay! No. Because Hallmark movies, if they involve countries that aren't America, it's always made-up and is vaguely British, if the prince is from that country, or it's like a destination film, like they go to Ireland or they go to Scotland. They are a couple over there and then there are Scottish and Irish people around.

Kyle

Okay, that's fair.

Hallie

But like, there's never just been an Irish or an Italian or a Spanish person in a Hallmark small town. There's just never been. So, I was like I'm gonna skip it because they don't do anything that directly affects the plot except for the pit stop moment, but even then I can say his friends cheered him on through the power of friendship. So, I just skipped them, and then you asked about names, and I couldn't think of Italian names for two men that weren't Mario and Luigi. I had to google "Italian names" and then all of them were female, so I was like... uhh.

Kyle

I heard you and I was just like I'm just waiting, I'm just gonna wait.

Hallie

I know you were. You were very patient. You were very patient.

Kyle

That's how I knew that the writers didn't think of Evergreen Springs because I could hear Hallie realizing it as I made the joke.

Hallie

[Laughs.] Yeah! I thought of Evergreen Springs, and Kyle. I thought Evergreen Springs was a really nice name.

Kyle

It is. It is a very nice name.

Hallie

Yeah.

Kyle

Anyways. I fought Hallie on this, but it's in the podcast so we're gonna rank it.

Hallie

Yep.

Kyle (as Santa)

Ho, ho, ho! Merry Marketability!

Kyle

Starting with Merry Marketability. Merry marketability is how much this fills you with the Christmas spirit, specifically how much you want to buy Hallmark products. So, Cars has nothing to do with Christmas.

Hallie

Nothing!

Kyle

It takes place by California off the highway. So anyways, I looked up Pixar's 'Cars' on the Hallmark website, and that's how we're gonna rank this category.

Hallie

Okay.

Kyle

We have three things. We have Disney's 100th Anniversary little golden books, which has... just some books. We have the Disney Pixar 'Cars' mater vampire Halloween card for grandson.

Hallie

Awesome.

Kyle

It's just Mater who's just a tow truck, so Nate.

Hallie

Yes.

Kyle

Mater in a vampire outfit, and it says "truck or treat," which is pretty good.

Hallie

Awesome.

Kyle

And then the Disney Pixar 'Cars' Radiator Springs pals ornaments, set of three. They don't have Lightning McQueen or Liam, they don't have Nate or mater, they have Doc who is just Doc in both movies.

Hallie

Yeah, I didn't change that. I felt like I could get away with it.

Kyle

They have Sally or Susan, and then they just have the café owner's husband.

Hallie

Raymundo!

Kyle

Why are those the three ornaments?

Hallie

I don't know. They're keepsake.

[00:35:00]

The thing is, I like these ornaments, though. I think these are nice.

Kyle

I don't.

Hallie

No?

Kyle

I think Sally looks off, and I would prefer Doc if it didn't have his Hudson Hornet racer name on the side.

Hallie

You mean because he doesn't like that legacy and he fights the whole movie to not have that legacy?

Kyle

No, I just think he looks better without it.

Hallie

Alright, fair enough.

Kyle

Looking at what Hallmark has for sale, I'd buy this box set but not for Cars. I mean, the Cars one is definitely better. There's a Lion King one, and I'm like okay, that's just a really old one. The Cars one looks

okay. The truck or treat... the more I look at it, the more I appreciate it. And, Doc is fine. Doc looks fine in the ornaments. Though, \$30? Jesus Christ!

Hallie

Oh wait, it's \$30?! That's \$10 a car!

Kyle

It's \$10 a card.

Hallie

For Raymundo and Sally?! And Doc? What? I was charmed by the random cars they chose to represent the film in this set, but no, I have to take points away from that. However, I do want to say, I know we're not talking about Cars 2, but in Cars 2 there is a Popemobile which implies Christianity formed in the Cars universe the same way that it formed for us as humans.

Kyle

There's a lot of implications.

Hallie

There's a lot of implications, which means Christmas can be real, and you can actually say Merry Chrysler to each other like the meme.

Kyle

One of my favorite things when watching Cars was seeing all the car-themed names. They go on the highway and there's Radiator Springs, Pothole Country or County or whatever. That wasn't an actual one, but as an example. And then just... California.

Hallie

Yeah, just California.

Kyle

A bunch of unique names and then California.

Hallie

It was great.

Kyle

Anyways. I will be generous. Out of 10, I will give them a 2 for Merry Marketability.

Hallie

I also am gonna do a 2.

Kyle

Yeah, I'll give 1 for Doc and 1 for grandson trunk or treat.

Hallie

[Laughs.] Grandson truck or treat. One of mine is for those two things combined. The other one is just, well, Disney likes to market. I know we're talking about Hallmark specifically, but it feels like... No, you know what? One point, they're getting 1 point.

Kyle

They're getting 1 point?

Hallie

Even with Disney they couldn't do this? No, 1 point.

Kyle

Alright, I'll hedge my bets, I'll stick with 2, so that way they can get a 3, but that's because it's not gonna get a lot of points in...

Kyle (as Santa)

Ho, ho, ho! Carey-ism!

Kyle

Carey-ism! This is how the romance is. I'm not joking. It didn't need to be romantic, it could be platonic, but if Sally or Susan was not in this movie and the closest thing to a quote-unquote "love interest" that we had was a fucking tow truck played by Larry the Cable Guy named Tow Mater, this would get like 8 points.

Hallie

Do you remember when he got to ride in the helicopter and you got emotional?

Kyle

He did! He did get to ride in a helicopter because he's talking to Lightning. "Oh man, I'd sure love to be in a helicopter one day." And Lightning's like yeah, sure, I can make that happen. And Sally, or Susan, is like were you telling the truth or were you just telling him what he wanted to hear. And Lightning McQueen, or Liam, was kinda like eh, implying he was just telling him what he wanted to hear.

Hallie

Yeah.

Kyle

At the end of the movie he pulls in a favor and it is solely to get Tow Mater on a sentient helicopter, because of course helicopters are also alive.

Hallie

It's so... Yeah, I don't like thinking about it. It's so cute though! That to me also shows character growth in the way that the big "I'm gonna push the king across the finish line" does. And it means so much because it makes Mater happy. I don't love Mater, but I like what he means to Lightning, and I like what Lightning means to him, and I think they should mean more to each other.

Kyle

I feel like he is... Sally, or Susan—because I'm trying to do both names in case someone got through this and had no exposure to Cars, Disney Pixar's 'Cars,' the movie about cars.

Hallie

The movie about cars.

Kyle

Sure, she kinda talks about it from a perspective he can understand, because as you said she went through her own Hallmark movie, but I just find I'm gonna bond with this country hick, this hillbilly, and genuinely form a meaningful relationship with him.

Hallie

Mm-hmm!

Kyle

I just think there's a lot to that.

Hallie

Tons!

Kyle

And like, Mater is not smart, he's not particularly cunning. Lightning tricks him.

Hallie

Like two or three times.

Kyle

Yeah, but he is still someone who inherently... I'm talking about a fucking tow truck.

Hallie

Yep.

[00:40:00]

Kyle

He is someone who inherently has value.

Hallie

Mm-hmm.

Kyle

Even though no one knows what the fuck he does.

Hallie

No, I was just bullshitting with mechanic. He has a Tow Mater shop, and he helps, but...

Kyle

Yeah, because he was played by Larry the Cable Guy.

Hallie

Yeah, I'm very clever.

Kyle

But we can't talk about them. We've spent all this time talking about them to avoid talking about the actual romance.

Hallie

Yeah, because it's nothing! She's "fine." She's fine. It's fine.

Kyle

It's fine.

Hallie

It's fine. It's fine!

Kyle

It's fine. It's serviceable. It hits all the beats.

Hallie

Yeah. The thing is, I don't think she's even in the second one very much. She might...

[Mumbles.] I have to google this.

Kyle

I don't think Lightning's in the second one much, isn't he? Because it's about Mater.

Hallie

So yes, but like, Mater is traveling with Lightning who's doing a world circuit race.

Kyle

Oh, okay.

Hallie

So Lightning is the B-plot and it will cut back to him from time to time, and then their stories will intersect. I actually kind of prefer when Lightning is the side character just doing his racing thing and he's like "ah, Mater, I'm doing a race." It's great.

Kyle

It's very funny that the movie escalates from... it goes from small town Hallmark movie in the first one to spy movie in the second one. Are we gonna watch the Cars trilogy now?

Hallie

Yeah. Okay, maybe not the whole trilogy. I didn't like the third one.

Kyle

I don't know much about the third one.

Hallie

The third one promises something it does not deliver and it makes me so mad. When they advertised that, it was Lightning gets in a career-ending car accident during a race, and the trailers used the wording "things will never be the same." Things are the fucking same! I was like, oh, are they going to explore living with disabilities? I gave it too much credit. I gave the Cars trilogy too much credit.

Kyle

To be fair, we see a lot of crashes in the first movie and they all seem fine.

Hallie

Oh. Yes, but like, the first movie didn't advertise "things will never be the same." The first movie's just like, look at these cars. The third movie's like, hey, you like Lightning? What if he doesn't race anymore.

Kyle

Anyways. We've already gone off on another tangent unrelated to Sally, so I'm giving her a 1.

Hallie

Sally's at the beginning, but she doesn't come with Lightning on the world tour for some reason, so I'm also gonna give her a 1.

Kyle

I'm giving it a 1. It's bad. I'm expecting a little more from it being a Pixar movie.

Hallie

Mm-hmm.

Kyle

That being said, there is one point where it may get more points than the standard Hallmark movie, which is:

Kyle (as Santa)

Ho, ho, ho! The Hans Gruber Memorial Award for Compelling Conflict!

Kyle

The Hans Gruber Memorial Award for Compelling Conflict is basically how good the story's conflict is.

Hallie

Yay.

Kyle

I believe when I wrote this it was meant to be the pitch. Oh, you were transported into that alternate dimension that I keep talking about, because that movie really messed with me. Or... there wasn't really a conflict in Christmas Bedtime Stories. I forget what we considered that one.

Hallie

It's a forgettable movie. Ugh, it's not a forgettable movie. I've thought about it every day since.

Kyle

[Laughs.]

Hallie

But like, I don't know, the pitch is just, like, woman reminisces while telling her child bedtime stories, which is cute and slice of life, but I don't remember what we rated it.

Kyle

In either case, so this one we've got a couple of conflicts. We've got the big race, which I really do like the shithole race driver that is just an absolute jerk.

Hallie

Chick Hicks!

Kyle

There are two others he races against and one is a conventional bully and the other is just a nice old guy who's about to retire.

Hallie

I also didn't include describing the other races Liam was up against because I was like this is gonna be too specific and it's gonna give us away.

Kyle

I was gonna say that didn't matter, but actually, the stuff before they get to Radiator Springs, or Evergreen Springs, was probably my favorite part of the movie. I just really like that part. But, the conflict I think was... I liked the conflict in the movie. I liked his personal conflict of learning not to be a selfish guy. The only thing I would realistically dock it points for... It's not amazing, but it's good. The only thing I'd dock points for is Doc's arc is so... Doc's arc was the only part of the movie that, like, he appeared and was like "I don't like racers." And I'm like, that guy was a racer.

Hallie

Yep.

Kyle

It was the only part of the movie where it was predictable in a way that I noticed. The movie is very stock...

Hallie

It's a Hallmark.

Kyle

...but that was the only part where, for some reason, it stuck out to me that it felt kind of stock or rote.

Hallie

Yeah. It's a good Hallmark movie. Obviously it's a cut above what's produced in 15 days for the Hallmark movie channel.

[00:45:00]

Kyle

[Laughs.]

Hallie

But like, I mean, there's a reason we like Hallmark movies. We like seeing terrible people change for the better. We like seeing men listen when they're called out on their shit. I think its plot is pretty good! Aside from Sally, just cut her out. I hate saying that about a female character, but just let it be Mater.

Kyle

Yeah, just let it be Mater.

Hallie

And aside from Doc. I agree. I get really hyped in the beginning because I really like the song Real Gone by Cheryl Crow which is what plays when he races that first race.

Kyle

[Laughs.]

Hallie

I'm like yeah, this is great. 'I'm Lightning McQueen, ah-ha!'

Kyle

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Hallie

I don't know, I just get excited, I get caught up in it. It's a great song and I like it a lot. And then I get so excited when they show up as his pit crew. It's just like... there's real emotion there. There's a lot of heart and a lot of spirit. It's just that Doc needed a little bit more.

Kyle

Yeah, he needed more time in the oven. I'm very torn with my rating because I would... I keep coming back to 6, but part of me is like, am I judging too much by movie standards and not Hallmark movie standards.

Hallie

Right. I am giving it... ugh, 8 might be too high but that's what I want to give it. I docked it a point for being weird and horny, because it is. I guess that's not a plot thing.

Kyle

[Laughs.] That has nothing to do with the conflict.

Hallie

[Laughs.] But I don't like it.

Kyle

Not a single thing to do.

Hallie

Okay, and then I dock it for being two hours, because it doesn't need to be two hours.

Kyle

It doesn't need to be two hours.

Hallie

It does not need to be two hours. So, I'm giving it an 8. I'm also very used to watching Hallmark movies, so watching this as a Hallmark movie was a really nice break. For you, a 6 is probably correct. For me, an 8 is probably correct, because I'm exposed to more.

Kyle

Yeah. Okay, we'll do that. We'll do that. Alright, so that's a 14 out of 20.

Kyle (as Santa)

Ho, ho, ho! Fridge Placement!

Kyle

Fridge Placement is what we think of the cover. Now, this is gonna be hard for Cars because with Hallmark movies they have a single cover. There are a handful of Cars posters. So, I'm gonna share three that I saw with Hallie. Hallie, I'd like you to describe each of these as they appear. The first one is in the chat.

Hallie

Okay. This is the original one, I think, which I think is actually a pretty solid cover. It's all red and Lightning McQueen is kind of at an angle and he's doing his Lightning McQueen smirk at you. He's also red, and then the Cars logo is also red but somehow all three of the reds really work together.

Kyle

I really love the Cars hood ornament. I think it looks really neat. It's got that kind of 50s retro vibe which is what Evergreen—Fuck!

Hallie

Ha-ha!

Kyle

—Radiator Springs is like.

Hallie

Yeah. I don't know, this is gonna sound so silly, but that one logo is very effective for a movie called Cars.

Kyle

It is.

Hallie

Because again, the plot has nothing to do with them being Cars, but I was like should I give it a point for them being cars? Because like...

Kyle

[Laughs.] You forget that they're cars.

Hallie

You forget that they're cars! The animation is genuinely very good. I know that it's silly and we talk about them draining the gas tank being like siphoning someone's blood and all of the implications that a lot of the writing choices have made, but I mean, the cars are animated so well.

Kyle

Yeah, you forget that they're cars and that's a little upsetting.

Hallie

A little upsetting. Remember, too, when you noticed that Lightning McQueen's headlights were different than everybody else's and then it was revealed later they were stickers?

Kyle

Yes. Yes!

Hallie

Yeah! Yeah. That's... I can't believe that's high-quality animation, but that's such high-quality animation.

Kyle

Oh my god. Alright, so that's poster number one.

Hallie

Poster number one!

Kyle

Poster number one. I think that's my second favorite. Poster number two is gonna reveal more characters that we forgot like the hippy and the war vet.

Hallie

I also couldn't think of, like... I didn't think they were important...

Kyle

No, that's fair.

Hallie

...yeah, to like the understanding of this one. Okay, this one has the same hood ornament but it's on the bottom of the poster this time. Lightning is above it. He's giving a genuine smile this time, not like an "I'm about to race you" smirk, and then all of Radiator Springs is behind him, all the cars from there and the actual town. It's very pretty scenery. It's like orange bluffs in the background, lots of clouds.

Kyle

Yeah.

Hallie

All his friends are there. I'm docking this one points because Sally is in front of Mater.

Kyle

[Laughs.]

Hallie

Even though she is the love interest over the friend interest, Mater plays a more significant part in the story I think and so should be further forward.

[00:50:00]

Kyle

Yeah. It sucks that the big speeches or big moments where he seems to have revelations come with Sally. I can't believe we're back at—We already gave her 1 point.

Hallie

We already gave her 1 point!

Kyle

But I wanna go back and talk more. Anyways.

Hallie

This one's fine, but it somehow doesn't have the same energy as the first one.

Kyle

Yeah. Okay, now the final one. This one is my favorite, and this one might be a 10 out of 10 for me.

Hallie

Oh my god!

Kyle

[Laughs.]

Hallie

I cannot fucking believe that this poster's gonna win. The all-new 2006 Cars. What...? Oh my god. Okay, so this one's blue instead of red. This one's got a blue background. Lightning McQueen is facing you but he's covered by a blue drape so you can only see half of his "I'm gonna race you" smirk. Above him it says "the all-new 2006," and then underneath Lightning it says "Cars," so it's like the all-new 2006 car. I cannot believe how effective this poster is.

Kyle

It's so scary.

Hallie

It's so scary.

Kyle

It's so—! Like, the movie makes you forget that this is a humanoid car. This does the fucking opposite.

Hallie

This does the opposite. Okay, if I were truly marketing the film, I would choose the first one. The first one is objectively the best. This one has a certain je ne sais quoi. Okay, the first one is Disney Pixar 'Cars,' this one feels like Dreamworks 'Cars.'

Kyle

[Laughs.] No, that's the best way to summarize it. It's so scary.

Hallie

I think it's effective in being like, oh-ho, how did they make anthropomorphic cars, but not in the way they want you to be curious about anthropomorphic cars. He's gonna come at you.

Kyle

I adore this poster so much. I realistically should give the three of them combined a 6, because their best poster is just an image of Lightning McQueen turned a little bit to the side...

Hallie

It's just an image of Lightning! Yeah, turned, but it's such a...

Kyle

...but the Cars logo is so good and this last one is so scary that I'm gonna give it an 8. I'm gonna give it an 8. I have to.

Hallie

Same. I'm up there with 8. You shouldn't be able to make a poster that's as effective with just one character and one color, and yet... yeah, 8.

Kyle

Alright. In this one we average our result, so that's 8 out of 10.

Hallie

Yep.

Kyle (as Santa)

Ho, ho, ho! Bonus!

Kyle

Finally, we have a bunch of bonus rounds. Cars, I'll just say this right-out, gets none of them.

Hallie

Nope.

Kyle

I have a question for you, Hallie.

Hallie

Yeah?

Kyle

Is Lightning McQueen a Christmas name?

Hallie

No.

Kyle

Is Sally a Christmas name?

Hallie

No it is not, but Liam McClane was close.

Kyle

So that's gonna be a 0.

Hallie

Sally is not a Christmas name, no.

Kyle

Is there a tragic child?

Hallie

Unless you count Mater...

Kyle

See, I was gonna say unless you count the firetruck, so if we can't even agree on the child—

Hallie

[Laughs.] The firetruck doesn't do enough to be considered a tragic child.

Kyle

That's gonna be a 0. They were also not saved by the Christmas magic.

Hallie

They were not saved by the Christmas magic. It was the friendship.

Kyle

Finally, is there a magical or upsetting Santa Claus?

Hallie

[Dejected.] No.

Kyle

So, the one other movie we ranked, Christmas Bedtime Stories, an actual Hallmark movie, got 31 out of 80 points. Despite not being about Christmas and not being Hallmark, Cars was 4 points less than Christmas Bedtime Stories at 27 out of 80.

Hallie

Only 4 points less?! I really thought it was gonna swing past, Lightning McQueen style. Ka-chow!

Kyle

And 10 points were off the table. The bonus points, it was never gonna get.

Hallie

So, if it got the bonus points, it should have beat Bedtime Christmas Stories.

Kyle

Literally... I feel terrible saying this. Sally is the only thing weighing this movie down.

Hallie

Oh no!

Kyle

If Sally was not in this movie, it would have blown past Christmas Bedtime Stories.

Hallie

Oh man!

Kyle

But tragically...

Hallie

Sorry, Sally. She's like the only notable female character. Why do writers do this?

Kyle

The only one!

Hallie

Why?! Why do writers do this?! Ugh! Why do we live in a patriarchy where a movie about cars has one female character and she sucks? I'm so mad.

Kyle

Alright, we have one final point which is, is this movie:

Kyle (as Santa)

Ho, ho, ho! Naughty or Nice!

Kyle

Naughty or Nice is basically not if this is good or not but does this deserve to be remembered in the Hallmark canon.

Hallie

[Laughs.] It's nice.

Kyle

No!

Hallie

What do you mean, no?

Kyle

It's not a Hallmark movie!

Hallie

It's a Hallmark movie! It deserves to be remembered in the Hallmark canon!

Kyle

If someone is gonna say—

Hallie

It's Cars!

[00:55:00]

Kyle

If someone's gonna say I want to watch the most important Hallmark movie so I know exactly what a Hallmark movie is, you're gonna tell them go watch Disney Pixar 'Cars'?

Hallie

Yes! I'm gonna say that, and then I'm gonna say, okay, the remaining Hallmarks will never be as good as that one. Yes.

Kyle

You're not gonna budge on this, are you?

Hallie

No, I'm not. I'll race you. I'll race you.

Kyle

Alright, give me one second.

Hallie

On a dirt road.

Kyle

Give me one second. Hallie, do you have access to the internet?

Hallie

Yeah?

Kyle

Do you have your Switch?

Hallie

Yeah?

Kyle

Pull up Team Sonic Racing.

Hallie

[Laughing.] I was about to ask, Mario Kart or Team Sonic Racing. Okay!

Agh! Okay, recorders... listeners. We're the recorders. Let me grab my frickin' Switch.

Kyle

So, if we want, we could spend \$40 each to buy Cars 3: Driven to Win, and we could race in that to see.

Hallie

[Shrieks in delight.] The worst part is that, if it was \$20, I'd consider it.

Kyle

Alright. Let's do Race Setup, it's a Standard Race. There are no computers. It is just you and me.

Hallie

It's just us two.

Kyle

And then I gotta select a character. We gotta figure out who represents the Cars universe best.

Hallie

Right. So, Sonic is Lightning. Right? That's... right?

Kyle

Okay, yeah, yeah. Which of these characters—? Vector is gonna be Tow Mater.

Hallie

Eh...

Kyle

No?

Hallie

There's no one better.

Kyle

Because we can do a different character as well. We can do Amy as Sally, because girl.

Hallie

[Amused.] Because girl. The thing is, I wanna... I don't have any basis for this, but I feel like Silver is Tow Mater.

Kyle

Silver is very easily tricked.

Hallie

Yeah, you know? He's gullible, and he's just a good boy.

Kyle

Hear me out, though. Doctor Eggman as Doc Hudson.

Hallie

[Laughs.]

Kyle

Alright. Do you wanna be Sonic or Silver?

Hallie

I wanna be Sonic.

Kyle

Okay. I will be Silver. Then, I need to find the most Cars-like racetrack out of this list. We have Planet Wisp, Seaside Hill—maybe, Glacier Land, Casino Park... Oh, Sandopolis! That would be it. We're just gonna do Sand Road.

Hallie

Sand Road~!

Kyle

Alright. I'm glad—this is great podcasting. This is great audio.

Hallie

"Now that's podcasting."

Kyle

They're not even gonna see. I'm gonna have to narrate literally everything that happens.

Hallie

I know.

Kyle

Can you do the special race trick that Lightning McQueen does? Who knows. Will we have a massive drop-off in listenership at this point? No, it probably happened about 20 minutes ago.

Hallie

[Laughs.] When they were like, ah, this is about Cars.

Kyle

This is about Cars.

Hallie

Fuck this!

Kyle

By the time we're done, we will be only 30 minutes shorter than Cars in our recording time.

Hallie

Oh no!

Kyle

Alright. Alright.

Hallie

I'm going. I'm going.

Kyle

Mater's off to a strong start.

Hallie

Oh no, I'm stuck in the sand! Uh-oh.

Kyle

Just like Lightning McQueen, you can't drive in the sand.

Hallie

No! The prophecy is fulfilling. It's okay, like Lightning McQueen, I'm a badass. I'm coming, Silver, if I could ever get another item, because this game does not—

Kyle

Wait, wait, wait.

Hallie

Ha-HA!

Kyle

I wanted to try something. Okay, it's too slow. I was like, what if I spent the whole time driving backwards like Mater?

Hallie

Like Mater does? I thought about trying that, but I care too much about winning.

Kyle

See, that's the thing. I care immensely about wining, too, because I'm like Lightning McQueen before he was good. That is the one shame about this not being a video podcast. I can't pull it up anyway because I don't have a recorder for my Switch, but imagine you're watching a podcast and just suddenly it becomes a fucking let's play out of nowhere.

Hallie

Suddenly it just becomes Sonic Racing. Agh! I drifted the wrong way.

Kyle

I swear to god, if I end up losing because I wanted to be an ass and go backwards...

Hallie

[Laughs.] Because you wanted to try...

[Rockabilly music begins.]

I mean, that is how Lightning McQueen lost in the first race.

Kyle

Okay, you're right. You are right.

Hallie

You know? He was an ass.

Kyle

Okay. You're right, you're right, you're right.

Hallie

Yeah! I'm always right.

Kyle

I will not break my ankle, though.

Hallie

I'm the winner. You will not just fracture your whole leg.

Kyle

Yeah.

Hallie

Ugh!

Kyle

This is so close and it's deeply upsetting. God, no, no, no!

Hallie

Go, Sonic! Go, Lightning! Go!

Kyle

No, no, no!

Hallie

YEAH! I won. Cars goes on the Nice Hallmark list.

Kyle

[Disappointed.] We'll see you all next year, everyone.

Hallie

[Laughs.]

[Music swells and carries out.]