

Scene 1-- Sheldon's Bunker

(Sheldon is happily humming,)

[SFX: shuffling of boxes, buttons being pressed -- light holiday music comes on. Bells, etc.]

SHELDON Hey mom, It's me, Shelly. I'm getting out the Allmas decorations. I finally found the bells... they were in the same place I put them last year -- you know me, your silly Shelly always forgets.

[SFX - boxes drop -- more humming.]

SHELDON Oh! Dad! Last year I did that thing with the Allmas lights where you wrap them around a coat hanger so they don't get all tangled. It is going to make it so much easier for us to put them up this year.

[SFX -- ornaments jingling about as they are pulled out of boxes.]

SHELDON Oh yeah, Mom! My job at the Library has been going really well! I haven't broken anything, I'm not afraid of the staircase anymore...I met a really nice girl, but I don't know if she even noticed me. **[SFX: untangling lights]** But... but...that's okay. It's just like you always say, Mom -- Whatever will be will be.

[SFX: pots and pans banging around]

SHELDON Hey guys! Tonight I'm making Tinned Sardines and Lentil Beans. Again, I know. Sorry that's the usual meal around here... but we have so much in the bunker. Might as well use it.

(Sheldon continues to hum along with holiday music -- he is very off-key.)

SHELDON Hey mom, remember that time Dad and I brought home a Douglas Fir before realizing you're allergic to them? That tree was so beautiful and green and dad and I were so proud of it. We laughed so hard while we were chopping it up because you couldn't stop sneezing. So we got this big ol' fake tree that makes music and turns and the lights are already on it. This year I've added more lights... I've made some ornaments out of some stuff I found outside. It's going to be super amazing. I even stuck my action figures of Major Adams and Colonel Lovemore up there.

SHELDON Did I tell you guys I met Major Adams?! It was soooooo cool. He was such a man's man -- ya know? The kind of man that I always thought maybe someday I could be... kinda like you, mom... but in a totally not mom, more man way.

[SFX: tree shifting around as Sheldon fumbles to pull things out of bags, boxes, etc while also trying not to knock over the tree]

SHELDON I'm going to ask her out. The girl. She'll probably say no -- but that's okay. **(pregnant pause -- almost whispering)** Do you think she would want to live in the bunker with us? It's cozy. It's safe. There are at least a thousand comic books down here and I don't really know what else a girl could ask for. Maybe I should get her an Allmas Gift. What do girls want for Allmas anyway? I could go scavenging. I bet I could find some Tea... maybe a bottle of perfume. Or... will that make it sound like I think she needs perfume? She doesn't. She smells like sunshine and motor oil and something I can't place...but maybe like... a garden in the summertime.

(Sheldon clears his throat and continues to decorate in silence for a little bit. He hums along with the music ever so slightly. He is crying)

SHELDON Mom, do you think I could grow a garden this spring... like you used to? The house is gone, I mean -- you already knew that. The house went KABOOM **(makes a bunch of unnecessary explosion sounds)** oh yes it sure did -- but Dad, you were totally right about the bunker. This bad boy **[SFX hits the side of a metal wall]** withstood the entire thing. I still got enough beans and rice and sardines to last another year or two if I wanted to.

SHELDON Anyway, the house is gone, but I'm afraid the ground is still really irradiated. I'm going to check out a Geiger counter from the Library after the last Nuclear Frost and see if the ground is okay to start growing again. I don't know what I'm doin', but I think Dr. Brittle -- he's one of my co-workers, might be able to help me.

[SFX train set, the midi-tinkling of Allmas music and the soft clinking of the ornaments as they tap each other lightly]

SHELDON **(whispering)** Mom... Dad... I wish you were here. The bunker looks beautiful. Everything is glowing and your favorite song has been on loop for a while, Mom. And I can just see you and Dad dancing in the kitchen while you make cookies. **(sighs)** I can't make cookies. I can't make much of anything... Oh, but a mess. I can make a mess. I sure can.

SHELDON I'm sorry. I wish I had been here when the shelf fell over. **(he is softly crying to himself)** I'm a big guy... I could have pulled it off of you both and I could have saved you. BUT... but... instead... When I came home, you were both... G-O-N-E.

SHELDON **(sniffing)** I wish I hadn't been such a coward. I wish I had given you a proper burial... I guess I kinda hoped that maybe you weren't really gone. Maybe if I let you both lay there long enough, under those industrial-sized bags of black-eyed peas... maybe their new years' luck would rub off and you would...wake up.

SHELDON **(Groaning as he stands up, walks over to the wall and bangs on it ever so slightly)** Instead... I built a wall. I built a wall and you're both back there. You're both back there as who knows what and I'm over here just... putting up the Allmas decorations... Wishing on shooting stars and broken clocks and all of the irradiated four-leaf clovers I can find...

SHELDON **(Takes a deep breath)** I'm not okay. But, this year I promise I will put you both to rest just like you deserve. I... I never liked black-eyed peas too much anyway.

Outro

This has been an Atomic Library BookEND. The Atomic Library is created, written and produced by Chriss Chaney and Lara Tabri. Editing and sound design by Chriss. Chriss also voiced Sheldon.

The Atomic Library will take a short break and return in mid-January, 2020. In the meantime, you can follow us on Twitter @AtomicLib, or visit us at TheAtomicLibrary.com for news and updates. Thank you so much for listening. Have a wonderful Alliday season. And remember, check on your neighbors.