LIZA
Come on!

SAM, 7, her brother, tiptoes on, also in pajamas.

SAM
Joel’ll be here in a minute. He said he had to get ready. I’m not really sure what that means.

JOEL, 5, walks on, a pair of underpants on his head like a hat.

SAM
Wait, are you wearing my underwear?

JOEL
I have to disguise my scent. I don’t want Santa knowing I was trying to spy on him.

SAM
Is he really good at smelling or something?

JOEL
I don’t know! Rudolph probably is!

SAM
Well then that’s not fair! I don’t want to get in trouble twice!

JOEL
Too bad!

SAM
You’re stupid!

LIZA
Guys! Be quiet! Let’s not forget why we’re here…

JOEL
To see our presents!

SAM
A whole ten hours before we open them.
LIZA
And how about Santa? To see if Santa is real?

JOEL
I thought it was just to see Santa.

LIZA
Well, if he’s real, we’ll see him.

JOEL
So we’ll see him.

LIZA
Unless he’s not real.

A pause.

SAM
Liza, are you sure this is the best idea?

LIZA
What do you mean? Don’t you want to see Santa?

SAM
Well, I guess so. But Joel has a point with the underwear: I don’t think we’re supposed to see Santa.

JOEL
My other point with the underwear was that I look better in your underwear than you do.

SAM
Take it off! I’m not letting you get me in trouble again.

LIZA
Sam’s right, Joel. If you’re mature enough to see Santa, you’re mature enough to take responsibility for your own actions.

JOEL
I don’t know what those words mean, but okay.

LIZA
So do you really think we won’t get presents if Santa finds out we tried to see him?

SAM
I don’t know. But doesn’t this feel wrong to you? Like we’re being bad?
JOEL
I know I feel worse now that I don’t have your underwear on.

LIZA
But why would Santa need to keep his identity a secret if he’s real?

JOEL
Like Batman!

LIZA
What does he have to hide from us?

SAM
I don’t know. It’s kind of part of his appeal, I think.

JOEL
Maybe it’s because he smells bad.

LIZA
No. There has to be something more. Something bigger.

SAM
And if he’s not real, what will you do? Will you stop celebrating Christmas? Will you refuse to open your presents?

JOEL
Will you give them to me?

SAM
And what’ll come next? No more Easter Bunny? No more Tooth Fairy?

JOEL
No more monsters under your bed?

SAM
Joel, those don’t exist. Liza, this is risky stuff. One wrong move and you’ll be smoking cigarettes and drinking coffee before you know it.

LIZA
It doesn’t matter. I’m already grown up. Only twenty-two days until I’m ten.

SAM AND JOEL
Double digits!

JOEL
I can’t even imagine what it would be like to be ten. It’s so many!
SAM
Getting older is like climbing that rope in the gym. Every knot feels like a big accomplishment, but then you look up and you’ve barely made any progress. You just have to keep going.

JOEL
And your hands get all red! And then you get scared and the gym teacher has to come get you down!

SAM
Did that happen to you?

JOEL
And all the other kids laugh at you and you cry.

LIZA
I’m not going to cry. I want to grow up. I’m ready. I want to. I want to.

A pause.

SAM
Well, I don’t think I do.

LIZA
Seriously?

SAM
Yeah! I’m happy the way things are. I don’t need to run around spying on Santa. I’m going to bed. And when I wake up in the morning, I’m going to go downstairs, eat a donut, drink some juice, and open my presents. And those presents will be from Santa Claus.

LIZA
Fine.

JOEL
Good night!

SAM
Night, Joel. Night, Liza.

He leaves.

LIZA
Whatever. Now it’s even more of a secret. Right, Joel?
JOEL
Right!

LIZA
We don’t need Sam.

JOEL
Nope! But even if we get caught and don’t get any presents, we can still eat donuts and drink juice tomorrow, right?

LIZA
Right.

A pause.

JOEL
But we’ll probably still get presents, right?

LIZA
I don’t know! If I knew exactly what was going to happen I would have bothered to stay up so late.

A pause.

JOEL
I’m tired. I think I’m gonna go to sleep.

LIZA
Don’t lie. You’re just scared you won’t get any presents.

JOEL
Whatever. You think you’re so special just because you almost have double digits.

JOEL leaves.

LIZA
You better not try to pull any tricks on me, Santa. I’m right here. I’m waiting. And if you’re not real, I’ll be the first to know.

SAM enters. He stands behind LIZA and looks at her for a moment before speaking.

SAM
Liza? Come back to bed.

LIZA gets up and they exit together.