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Your commentary should be focused on *prepositions and adverbial particles*.

After lunch on Christmas Eve, Sara rode her bike up the hill to the top of Meadow Close, and by the time she got out to the main road she didn't feel the cold anymore. She rode along the thin shoulder to the traffic light, across the five-way intersection where she always got honked at, over the highway bridge, and into town. There was very little parking for cars along the narrow main street, especially at this time of year, so behind the row of storefronts on the north side of the street it was all municipal parking lots, as if the town itself was just a façade built like a movie set. Sara cut behind the hardware store and rode through the silent lots all the way across town, even though she sometimes had to get off the bike to cross a guardrail or to thread her way between empty cars, because doing so reduced the chances of seeing anyone she knew. She passed the emergency exit behind the movie theater and kept going, past the blank rear walls of the jeweler and the Starbucks and the pharmacy, until she got to the lot at the back of a little family-owned Polish grocery all the way at the far end of Main Street, a mysteriously durable place where no one ever seemed to shop, with two small tables in the back in case someone wanted to sit and have a cup of Polish coffee. Sara leaned her bike against the concrete wall behind the recycling bins and walked through the back door, blowing on her hands, and there, standing up from one of the two little tables, was her father.

"Hi, sweetheart," he said. He must have just gotten there himself, because his overcoat, though open, was still on; he held out his arms and took her inside it, and the sensation of being warmed in that way struck something too deep in her, so that she stepped back out of his embrace almost right away.

He stood there grinning stiffly. "You look great," he said.

"Thanks," said Sara, and remained standing.

30 After a few silent seconds he laughed and asked, "And? How do I look?"

She considered it. "Less tired," she said.

"Thank you for coming," he said, which was such a weird thing for your father to say to you. They took off their coats and sat; the owner brought him a coffee and her a hot chocolate, which irritated her because coffee was what she wanted, but then he brought over these two amazing hot rolls with some kind of cream inside. She ate hers and started in on his. He brought out a tiny giftwrapped present and said, "Merry Christmas." She licked her fingers before taking it from him and put it straight into her pocket.

"Fine," he said, "but just be careful where you open it. I don't think you want your mom to find out it's from me. It's why I didn't get you something bigger."

"Are you coming home?" Sara said abruptly. "I mean just for Christmas Day or whatever?"

Ben flushed. "I don't think so. I don't see that happening. Not this year, anyway."

"Did you even ask her?" He shook his head no. "Why not? Afraid she'd say no?"

50 "Too soon," he said simply. "Too soon to ask her for anything, after what I did." He watched her eat. "Why," he said, "do you think she would have said no?"

"Probably, yeah," Sara said. "But anyway, not this year pretty much equals never, because Mom's selling the house. She says we're moving to the city." He didn't look as surprised by that as she expected him to.

"The thing I was really afraid she'd say no to," he said, "was this. Seeing you. Which is why I texted you directly, which I probably should not have done. But I don't want to talk about me anymore."