

GIFT OF THE MAGI: THE MUSICAL

Music & Lyrics by Beverly Bremers

Book by Faith Grant

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"The Magi, as you know, were wise men — wonderfully wise men — who brought gifts to the Babe in the manger. They invented the art of giving Christmas presents...

And here I have lamely related to you the uneventful chronicle of two foolish children in a flat who most unwisely sacrificed for each other the greatest treasures of their house.

But in a last word to the wise of these days, let it be said that of all who give gifts, these two were the wisest... Everywhere they are the wisest. They are the magi."

O. Henry, "Gift of the Magi"

GIFT OF THE MAGI: THE MUSICAL

Music & Lyrics by Beverly Bremers

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Based on the short story "Gift of the Magi" by O. Henry

SYNOPSIS: It's Christmas time in 1905. A group of carolers sing praises of the season, explaining the custom of giving gifts and who the Magi were. (Gift of the Magi) This segues to reveal a busy New York street bustling with shoppers. Della Young, a stunning young woman, strolls along, looking in store windows, lamenting that she only has \$1.87 to spend on a gift for her husband, Jim. Down the street, Jim does likewise, wistfully knowing that the items in the stores that he would love to buy for Della are beyond his means. (Christmas Cheer) Later that day in their modest apartment, Jim and Della decorate a small Christmas tree and chat about their holiday plans. Money is so scarce this year that they must rely on friends to help them put together their Christmas dinner party. Jim checks his watch, a most precious family heirloom, and Della notes that the strap is worn. She fastens a string to make sure Jim does not lose his prize possession. When Della's hair falls loose from her scarf, Jim implores her to leave it down. She boasts the most beautiful long tresses imaginable, and her husband marvels at them. As they decorate their scraggly tree, they express their disappointment that they cannot give each other special gifts. (If Only Money Grew On Christmas Trees) Della visits her best friend, Maddy, who works at Hadley's Five and Ten. Della asks her former boss, Mr. Hunnicutt, if she can work part-time during the holidays to earn some money for Christmas gifts this year. She tells him that Jim's hours at his bank job have been cut, and money is tight for the young couple. Mr. Hunnicutt offers her a questionable job at night stocking shelves, which she refuses. After Della leaves, Maddy begins to close the shop and laments going home to an empty apartment filled with loneliness. (Dinner For One) At Jim's place of business, the Bank of New York, Jim and his friend/co-worker, William, are working hard when Williams's wife, Betsy, and his ill-behaved children, Annabelle and Nestor, cause a ruckus as they enter the bank. Betsy asks her husband for more shopping money as the children run amok and disrupt the professional atmosphere of the bank. William is admonished by his nasty boss, Mr. Porter. After his family leaves, William fanaticizes about pocketing the

banks riches and stealing off to some tropical island to live like a king. Jim joins in on the fantasy, and the two men get lost in the tropical dream, complete with the appearance of hula girls. (King of the Isle) Mr. Porter brings the men back to reality when he asks Jim to lock up the bank that night. Later, Mr. Porter hurries down the street and bumps into Della who is carrying a basket of cranberries for her holiday dinner. The cranberries spill, and Mr. Porter stoops to help her pick them up. The two recognize each other and talk briefly about Jim having to stay late at the bank that night. Mr. Porter wipes his hands on his handkerchief, and Della notices that the cranberries have stained it. She apologizes, and Porter hurries off. Della lingers and peers longingly into a store window. Mr. Hunnicutt strolls along, sees Della, and approaches her. He repeats his offer for Della to help him stock the store, this time, before it opens. He proposes that Della go to the beauty shop to fix herself up, as his treat, and meet him at the store in the morning. He offers to pay her handsomely for her services. (I'll Scratch Your Back) After he leaves, desperate Della ponders Mr. Hunnicutt's offer, while Jim, at the bank, stares at the money he is counting, seduced by the power and possibilities the money could bring him. (The Hardest Thing)

ACT TWO: The next day, Christmas Eve Day, the street is still bustling, but the mood of the shoppers has shifted. Instead of everyone being happy with Christmas cheer, people are rushing about, harried with last-minute shopping, cranky and tired from the demands of the holiday. (Christmas Jeer) Inside the Bank of New York, Jim enters in a cheerful mood. He shares with William that he has found the perfect, lavish gift for Della. William is dumbfounded. Then two police officers emerge from Mr. Porter's office and arrest Jim for stealing money from the bank on the previous evening. Della is startled at her apartment by the police officers who have come to inform her of Jim's arrest and question her about her husband's behavior lately. Della is bewildered and heartbroken. William and Betsy tell their children that the Christmas party at Jim and Della's home has been cancelled. The inquisitive kids ask all kinds of questions. (Why) Later, Jim in jail and Della alone in their apartment, bemoan their situation, since they are now separated on Christmas Eve. (Dinner For One Reprise) Back at Hadley's Five and Ten, Della rushes in to seek support and solace from Maddy. Neither woman feels the situation adds up, so they decide to review the details of the crime. They look through the newspaper and re-read the information printed about the theft, noting that a bloody handkerchief was

found at the scene. Suddenly, Della has a revelation. Cranberries! Della rushes to the police station and recounts her meeting with Mr. Porter on the street the previous evening. She explains that Mr. Porter had stained his handkerchief with cranberries and, she believes, had dropped it in the vault accidentally when he had returned to the bank after Jim had locked up. It was Mr. Porter, not Jim, who had made off with the money. The police ponder her theory and, after hearing her persuasive argument, agree to look into it. (Cranberries) The next day is Christmas. At Jim and Della's apartment, the young couple is ecstatic to be reunited after Jim's exoneration of the bank robbery. They cannot wait to exchange gifts before their friends arrive for their Christmas party and simultaneously tear open their presents from each other. Della excitedly glows at the sight of spectacular jeweled hair combs, and Jim beams as he stares at a striking platinum watch chain. The two suddenly stop in shock as the realization of the ironic situation hits them. Della slowly removes her hat. Her long hair is gone, replaced by a boyish head of tight curls. At the same moment, Jim pulls his make-shift watch chain from his pocket. His watch is no longer on it. Della forlornly explains that she sold her hair to buy Jim the chain, and Jim, touched, relates that he has pawned his watch to buy Della combs for her long hair. Their tears turn to laughter as they realize the irony of the situation. What they find that really matters is not their expensive gifts but their selfless love for each other. (The Gifts You Give Me Every Day) Soon after, Jim and Della's friends arrive, and the spirit of the holiday and joy of togetherness permeates the air. All the characters are blessed with the gift of love, and they know that is the greatest gift imaginable. (The Greatest Gift of All)

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(3-6 females, 6-8 males, 0-1 either; 10-14 total cast; doubling possible)

DELLA YOUNG (f)	18-23; Married to Jim, sweet and gentle, but with spunk. <i>(81 lines)</i>
JIM YOUNG (m).....	20-30; Married to Della, quiet, thoughtful, witty. <i>(48 lines)</i>
MADDY (f)	40-55; Della's best friend, works at Hadley's, wise-cracking, fun-loving. <i>(31 lines)</i>

WILLIAM (m).....	20-35; Jim's best friend and co-worker at the Bank of New York, gregarious, fun. (34 lines)
BETSY (f).....	20-30; William's wife, a little ditsy. Doubles as Hula Girl. (15 lines)
NESTOR (m).....	5-10; William & Betsy's young son. Overly energetic, mischievous. Doubles as Beggar Boy. (20 lines)
ANNABELLE (f).....	5-10; William and Betsy's young daughter, curious, manipulative, feisty. (22 lines)
HUNNICUTT (m).....	40-60; Manager of Hadley's, fancies himself a ladies' man, a bit lecherous. Doubles as Beggar & 4 th Policeman. (11 lines)
PORTER (m).....	35-60; President of the Bank of New York, conceited, snobbish, blunt. Doubles as Beggar, Bank Customer, & 3 rd Policeman. (15 lines)
OFFICER O'REILLY (m).....	40-60; NYC policeman, by-the-book, but kind. Doubles as Caroler, Shopper, & Bank Customer. (15 lines)
OFFICER BROWN (m).....	30-50; NYC policeman, cheerful, eager to help. Doubles as Shopper & Bank Customer. (16 lines)
SANTA/HENRY (m).....	40-55; Cheerful, generous. (5 lines)
ALICE (f).....	18-30; Doubles as Caroler, Bank Customer. Hula Girl, Beggar, and Newsboy. (1 line)
EMILY (f).....	18-30; Doubles as Caroler, Bank Customer. Hula Girl, and Beggar. (Non-Speaking)

(ALL LINE COUNTS ARE APPROXIMATE)

ALTERNATE CAST BREAKDOWNS**CAST OF 13:**

DELLA

JIM

CAROLER/MADDY/HULA GIRL

CAROLER/MR. HUNNICUTT/COP

WILLIAM

BETSY/HULA GIRL/BEGGAR

NESTOR/BEGGAR

ANNABELLE

SHOPPER/MR.PORTER/BEGGAR/COP

CAROLER/BANK CUSTOMER/OFFICER O'REILLY

SHOPPER/BANK CUSTOMER/OFFICER BROWN

CAROLER/HULA GIRL/EMILY/NEWSBOY

SANTA (HENRY)

CAST OF 12:

DELLA

JIM

CAROLER/MADDY/HULA GIRL

CAROLER/MR. HUNNICUTT/COP

WILLIAM

BETSY/HULA GIRL/BEGGAR

NESTOR/BEGGAR

ANNABELLE

SHOPPER/MR.PORTER/BEGGAR/COP/SANTA (HENRY)

CAROLER/BANK CUSTOMER/OFFICER O'REILLY

SHOPPER/BANK CUSTOMER/OFFICER BROWN

CAROLER/HULA GIRL/EMILY/NEWSBOY

CAST OF 11:

DELLA

JIM

MADDY/HULA GIRL/CAROLER

MR. HUNNICUTT/COP/CAROLER

WILLIAM

CAROLER/BETSY/HULA GIRL/BEGGAR

NESTOR/BEGGAR

ANNABELLE

SHOPPER/MR.PORTER/NEWSBOY/BEGGAR/COP/SANTA
(HENRY)

CAROLER/BANK CUSTOMER/OFFICER O'REILLY

SHOPPER/BANK CUSTOMER/OFFICER BROWN

CAST OF 10:

DELLA

JIM

MADDY/HULA GIRL/CAROLER

MR. HUNNICUTT/COP/CAROLER

WILLIAM

BETSY/HULA GIRL/BEGGAR/CAROLER

NESTOR & ANNABELLE – become 1child (ROBIN)/BEGGAR

SHOPPER/MR.PORTER/NEWSBOY/BEGGAR/COP/SANTA
(HENRY)

CAROLER/BANK CUSTOMER/OFFICER O'REILLY

SHOPPER/BANK CUSTOMER/OFFICER BROWN

SETTING: New York City, December 1905 - The story takes place on the 3 days leading up to and including Christmas Day.

AUTHORS' NOTE

We have always loved the writings of author, O. Henry, and wanted to pay tribute to his quintessential Christmas love story, "Gift of the Magi." His message of selfless giving and sacrifice is one that has been told in many forms over the years. Expanding his original work with new characters and plot lines, we worked diligently to stay true to the original meaning and irony in his classic piece, while giving it a more substantial platform. We hope that our musical story will also ring timeless, and be enjoyed for years to come every holiday season by audiences of all ages.

SCENES

ACT ONE

SCENE 1 – In front of the curtain (or at side of stage if no curtain is available.)

SCENE 2 – City Street – December 22, 1905

SCENE 3 – Jim and Della's Apartment–December 22nd, later that night

SCENE 4 – Hadley's Five and Ten – December 23rd, late afternoon

SCENE 5 – The Bank of New York – December 23rd, 4:15pm

SCENE 6 – City Street – December 23rd, 4:50pm

ACT TWO

SCENE 1 – City Street – December 24, morning

SCENE 2 – The Bank of New York – December 24, 9 am

SCENE 3 – Jim and Della's apartment, a while later

SCENE 4 – City Street – December 24th, later in the day

SCENE 5 – Della and Jim's apartment and jail – December 24th, late day

SCENE 6 – Hadley's Five and Ten

SCENE 7 – City Street – Continuous

SCENE 8 – Police Station – Moments later

SCENE 9 – Jim and Della's apartment – Later that day

SCENE 10 – Jim and Della's apartment – Christmas Day

NOTES: Show can also be presented with just suggested sets. Cast can be expanded to eliminate doubling of roles and/or adding an ensemble. Cast size can also be reduced to as few as 10 people.

MUSICAL NUMBERS**ACT ONE**

- SONG #1: GIFT OF THE MAGI**
(CAROLERS)
- SONG #2: CHRISTMAS CHEER**
(FULL COMPANY)
- SONG #2a: CHRISTMAS CHEER PLAY-OFF**
(INSTRUMENTAL)
- SONG #3: IF ONLY MONEY GREW ON CHRISTMAS TREES**
(DELLA and JIM)
- SONG #3a: CHRISTMAS TREE BELLS**
(INSTRUMENTAL)
- SONG #4: DINNER FOR ONE**
(MADDY)
- SONG #4a: SAD MADDY**
(INSTRUMENTAL)
- SONG #5: KING OF THE ISLE**
(WILLIAM, JIM, and COMPANY)
- SONG #5a: OOLA BOOLA HULA**
(JIM)
- SONG #5b: PORTER**
(INSTRUMENTAL)
- SONG #6: I'LL SCRATCH YOUR BACK**
(HUNNICUTT)
- SONG #7: THE HARDEST THING**
(JIM and DELLA)
- SONG #7a: INTO INTERMISSION**
(INSTRUMENTAL)

ACT TWO

- SONG #8: CHRISTMAS JEER**
(FULL COMPANY)
- SONG #8a: CHRISTMAS JEER PLAY-OFF**
(INSTRUMENTAL)
- SONG #8b: THE ARREST**
(INSTRUMENTAL)
- SONG #8c: NEWSBOY**
(INSTRUMENTAL)
- SONG #9: WHY?**
(ANNABELLE, NESTOR, WILLIAM and BETSY)
- SONG #10: DINNER FOR ONE (REPRISE)**
(DELLA and JIM)
- SONG #10a: DINNER PLAY-OFF**
(INSTRUMENTAL)
- SONG #11: CRANBERRIES**
(DELLA, MADDY, and POLICE)
- SONG #11a: GOOD POLICE WORK**
(INSTRUMENTAL)
- SONG #12: THE GIFTS YOU GIVE ME EVERY DAY**
(JIM and DELLA)
- SONG #13: THE GREATEST GIFT OF ALL**
(COMPANY)
- SONG #14: BOWS**
(INSTRUMENTAL)

PRODUCTION HISTORY

Gift of the Magi: The Musical received its world premiere at the Hillcrest Center for the Arts, Thousand Oaks, CA (produced by The Magi Company in association with David Grant and Barry Pearl) on December 5, 2014. The production was directed by Barry Pearl and choreographed by Kay Cole. The set design was by Rei Yamamoto; the costume design was by Natalya Shahinyan; the lighting design was by Shelly Callahan; the sound design was by Christopher Barton, and the prop master was Eric Babb. The production stage manager was Victoria Chediak. The musical direction including arrangements was by Wayne Moore. The original painting of Della & Jim was by Melissa Daye. The cast included (in order of appearance):

CAROLER/EMILY/HULA GIRL/PASSERBY..... Emily Rose Lezin
 CAROLER/ALICE/HULA GIRL/BEGGAR/NEWSBOY..... Jessica Stone
 CAROLER/SHOPPER/
 OFFICER O'REILLY/MAN WITH CANE Ken Johnson
 CAROLER/SHOPPER/OFFICER BROWN Michael B. Levin
 WILLIAM/POLICE OFFICER Alex Camp
 BETSY/HULA GIRL/BEGGAR..... Branda Lock
 MADDY Farley Cadena
 NESTOR/BEGGAR..... Kai Nuki
 ANNABELLE..... Scarlet Spencer
 ANNABELLE/ALT. NESTOR (NETTIE).....Crystal Bateman
 SANTA/HENRY Brooke Bateman
 PORTER/BEGGAR/POLICE OFFICER Kenneth Steven Bernfield
 HUNNICUTT/BEGGAR..... John Content
 DELLA Natalie MacDonald
 JIM..... Kristian Rasmussen

MUSICIANS

Piano – Wayne Moore
 Keyboards – Chris Kimbler
 Bass – Steve Bringelson
 Drums – Scott Mundy

PRE-SHOW: Carolers and other cast members sing traditional Christmas carols and mingle with patrons in the lobby prior to the start of the show.

ACT ONE, SCENE 1
In front of the curtain

AT RISE: It is Christmastime, 1905. Festively-dressed CAROLERS stroll down the aisles of the theatre singing. They eventually assemble onstage and sing "GIFT OF THE MAGI".

SONG #1
GIFT OF THE MAGI
(CAROLERS)

CAROLERS:

LET'S REMEMBER AND REJOICE IN THE
TELLING OF THE STORY,
OF THREE KINGS WHO JOURNEYED FROM DISTANT LANDS
ACROSS THE DESERT SAND.

TO SEE THE NEWBORN BABY IN THE STRAW
BENEATH THE STAR,
AND HOW THEY CHOSE TO SHOW THEIR GREAT RESPECT WITH GIFTS
THEY BROUGHT IN HAND.

THEY EACH MADE A SACRIFICE,
AND BROUGHT THE THINGS THAT THEY MOST PRIZED,
AND ALL PROCLAIMED THAT THEY WERE WISE -- THE MAGI.

SO, LET'S REMEMBER AND REJOICE IN EACH
CHRISTMAS AND ITS GLORY.
FOR WE ALL JOURNEY DISTANCES
THROUGHOUT THE BUSY YEAR.

WE HAVE CARRIED ON THEIR CUSTOM
CREATED LONG AGO,
TO SHOW THE MANY ONES WE LOVE,
HOW MUCH WE HOLD THEM DEAR.

WE SHOULD MAKE A SACRIFICE,
AND GIVE THE THINGS THAT WE MOST PRIZE,
SO WE TOO CAN BE VERY WISE -- LIKE THE MAGI.
GIVING GIFTS OF SACRIFICE.

AHH, AHH, AHH – AHH, AHH, AHH, AHH.
AHH, AHH, AHH – AHH, AHH, AHH, AHH.
AHH, AHH, AHH – AHH, AHH, AHH, AHH.
AHH, AHH, AHH – AHH, AHH, AHH, AHH.
AHH, AHH, AHH – AHH, AHH, AHH, AHH

The curtain opens to reveal people rushing along a busy street. This is a segue into SONG #2, “Christmas Cheer.”

ACT ONE, SCENE 2
City Street – December 22, 1905

AT RISE: *There are several shop fronts on the street. Starting from stage right and spanning across the stage are “Hadley’s Five and Ten, Bebe’s Baubles, Sofronie’s House of Beauty, Gifts From Afar, the Bank of New York, and the NYC Police Station. There is a bench downstage right.*

People dash in and out of stores Christmas shopping and running errands. They sing as they zip about and fill their arms with Christmas packages. Beggars smile as passers-by drop a coin or two into their outstretched hands. Santa rings a bell as he stands by a collection pot. Some people donate, and some pass by without acknowledgement.

SONG #2
CHRISTMAS CHEER
(FULL COMPANY)

WILLIAM:
TIME IS SPEEDING BY SO SWIFTLY,
THERE’S SO MUCH I HAVE TO DO,

BETSY:

MINCEMEAT PIES TO BAKE,
TREE TO DECORATE,

MADDY:

CLEAN THE HOUSE THROUGH AND THROUGH.
THEN IT WILL BE CHRISTMAS EVE,

WILLIAM, BETSY, and MADDY:

WHEN IT'S BETTER TO GIVE THAN TO RECEIVE.

O'REILLY:

SO MUCH SHOPPING TO BE DONE NOW,

BROWN:

TIME TO HANG THE MISTLETOE,

ALICE:

CHRISTMAS CARDS TO WRITE,
MORE GUESTS TO INVITE,

EMILY:

SOON, I HOPE IT WILL SNOW.

ALICE and EMILY:

WEARING MY HEART ON MY SLEEVE,

O'REILLY, BROWN. ALICE, and EMILY:

'CAUSE IT'S BETTER TO GIVE THAN TO RECEIVE.

WILLIAM, BETSY, and MADDY:

PEACE ON EARTH, GOOD WILL TO ALL.

O'REILLY, BROWN. ALICE, and EMILY:

LET BOUGHS OF HOLLY DECK YOUR HALL.

MADDY:

EVERYONE'S FILLED WITH CHRISTMAS CHEER,

ALL:

IF ONLY IT COULD LAST ALL YEAR!

NESTOR:

I JUST WROTE A NOTE TO SANTA,
AND I SAID A LITTLE PRAYER,
MAKE MY DREAMS COME TRUE,

ANNABELLE:

SPECIAL THINGS FOR YOU,
HAPPY SPIRITS IN THE AIR.

ANNABELLE and NESTOR:

EVERYONE'S GOT TO BELIEVE,
THAT IT'S BETTER TO GIVE THAN TO RECEIVE.

The lights go down on the SHOPPERS who continue to move slowly and quietly in the darkness. The lights come up on DELLA YOUNG, a stunning twenty-year-old with long hair artfully tucked under her hat, sitting on the park bench counting her money.

DELLA:

ONE DOLLAR AND EIGHTY-SEVEN CENTS.
THAT IS ALL I'VE SAVED.
AFTER ONE WHOLE YEAR OF PINCHING PENNIES,
FROM THE BUTCHER, AND THE GROCER,
AND THE VEGETABLE MAN
I'VE DONE ALL THAT I CAN,
BUT I STILL DON'T HAVE ENOUGH TO BUY A GIFT
FOR HIM – MY JIM,
AND CHRISTMAS IS THREE DAYS AWAY.

The lights fade on DELLA and come back up on the busy SHOPPERS.

SHOPPERS:

JOY TO THE WORLD AND JINGLE BELLS,
SILENT NIGHT AND SWEET NOELS.
EVERYONE'S FILLED WITH CHRISTMAS CHEER,
IF ONLY IT COULD LAST ALL YEAR!

The lights go down on SHOPPERS and come up on JIM YOUNG, a handsome man of twenty-two, as he peers in the shop windows, stopping to look in Gifts From Afar.

JIM:

THE BEAUTY IS ASTOUNDING,
 SO EXQUISITE, SO REFINED,
 A STUNNING PIECE OF CRAFTSMANSHIP,
 MATERIALS AND DESIGN.
 IT'S THE PERFECT GIFT FOR MY SWEET DELLA,
 SHE'S BEEN ADMIRING IT SO.
 BUT... WHO AM I KIDDING?
 NOT ONLY DON'T I HAVE THE MONEY,
 I CAN'T EVEN AFFORD THE BOW.

SHOPPERS:

PEACE ON EARTH, GOOD WILL TO ALL.
 LET BOUGHS OF HOLLY DECK YOUR HALL.
 EVERYONE'S FILLED WITH CHRISTMAS.....

Lights come up on DELLA and JIM. SHOPPERS, DELLA, and JIM sing simultaneously.

DELLA:

ONE DOLLAR AND
 87 CENTS, THAT IS
 ALL I'VE
 SAVED
 I'VE DONE ALL I CAN
 IT'S THE PERFECT FOR
 HIM
 IT SUITS HIM
 TO A T.

JIM:

THE BEAUTY IS ASTOUNDING
 SO EXQUISITE, SO REFINED.
 A STUNNING PIECE OF
 CRAFTSMANSHIP,
 MATERIALS, AND DESIGN.
 IT'S THE PERFECT GIFT FOR
 MY SWEET DELLA
 FIT FOR ROYAL-
 TY.

SHOPPERS:

TIME IS SPEEDING BY SO SWIFTLY,
 THERE'S SO MUCH WE HAVE TO DO.
 MINCEMEAT PIES TO BAKE,
 TREES TO DECORATE,
 CLEAN THE HOUSE THROUGH & THROUGH
 THEN IT WILL BE CHRISTMAS
 EVE
 WHEN IT'S BETTER TO GIVE
 THAN TO RECEIVE.

DELLA: *(Seeing something in shop window.)*

IT'S THE PERFECT GIFT FOR MY JIM – IT SUITS HIM TO A T!

JIM:

THE PERFECT GIFT FOR SWEET DELLA – FIT FOR ROYALTY.

DELLA and JIM: (*Looking at their money.*)
BUT I STILL DON'T HAVE ENOUGH!

DELLA and JIM: (*Spoken.*) Not even close!

ENSEMBLE:

EVERYONE'S FILLED WITH CHRISTMAS CHEER,
EVERYONE'S FILLED WITH CHRISTMAS CHEER,
EVERYONE'S FILLED WITH CHRISTMAS CHEER,
IF ONLY IT COULD LAST ALL YEAR!

SONG #2a

**CHRISTMAS CHEER PLAY-OFF
(INSTRUMENTAL)**

BLACKOUT.

ACT ONE, SCENE 3

Jim and Della's Apartment – December 22nd, later that night

AT RISE: *The apartment is a small living room furnished stage right with a tattered sofa, armchair, and a small table with a sparse, partially decorated Christmas tree on it. On the stage left area is small dining table with two chairs.*

Jim and Della lovingly decorate their tree for their first Christmas together. Della, with her long hair tied up in a scarf, sits in the armchair and strings cranberries from a basket. Jim arranges handmade ornaments on the branches of the tree.

DELLA: I told you once we got a few decorations on the tree it would look better.

JIM: It still looks a bit ...underappreciated.

DELLA: Of course it does presently, but we're not finished yet.

Jim looks at his wife and smiles.

Trust me, it will be beautiful.

JIM: No, you're beautiful.

DELLA blushes and bends down to pick up an ornament. As she rises, she adjusts her scarf and a long lock of hair falls free. She starts to put it back under the scarf & JIM stops her with a gesture.

JIM: Please, let it down. Please. For me?

DELLA unties her hair and it cascades sensually over her shoulders and down her back. JIM'S eyes widen as he runs his fingers through DELLA'S hair. A bit embarrassed, DELLA changes the subject.

DELLA: Did you ask William and Betsy for Christmas dinner?

JIM: Yes. They're bringing their whole brood.

DELLA: Jim, they only have two children, Annabelle and Nestor.

JIM: Well, that's what William calls them. For only two children, they certainly create a monumental disturbance.

DELLA: So, what did they say ... about the party?

JIM: They said they wouldn't miss it. Betsy offered to bring fresh baked bread and – (*Disgusted.*) potato pie.

DELLA: Potato pie?

JIM nods, almost apologetically.

Anyway, I wish we didn't have to ask them to help with dinner. I would so like to make it a special evening for everyone.

JIM: It will be.

DELLA looks unhappy.

Now, don't start feeling sorry. We are lucky to have such good friends to be with during the holidays -- in spite of Betsy's potato pie.

DELLA: Jim!

JIM: Well, I have just always wondered how Betsy got those kids to sprout so big on her cooking.

JIM and DELLA chuckle. JIM pulls a pocket watch out of his trousers and checks the time. Instead of a watch chain, JIM has fashioned a makeshift fob out of a raggedy leather strap.

DELLA: That strap is wearing thin. Let me give you a piece of string, so you don't lose your watch.

JIM: You always look out for me.

DELLA: Well, I know how precious that watch is. I can't imagine how sad you'd be if it fell out one day and rolled into the gutter.

DELLA cuts a piece of string for JIM.

Would you like me to leave a few cranberries on there for you? It could make a fine decoration.

JIM: And a handy snack.

JIM pops some cranberries in his mouth. DELLA laughs as she hands JIM the string.

Thank you. My watch is dear. Like you, my darling wife.

DELLA: Oh no, I just realized, what about Annabelle and Nestor? We don't have gifts for them.

JIM: How about baking them some of your cranberry cookies?

DELLA: I guess I could do that. I'll wrap them in bright gingham. I may have some scraps of ribbon too.

Jim munches on more of the cranberries.

JIM: I'm sure they'll love it.

DELLA: I'll have to get more cranberries, though. Someone keeps eating my supply. What time did you tell them to be here?

JIM: Around noon.

DELLA: That's perfect. Maddy will be here right around then.

JIM: That will give us some time to exchange our gifts before everyone arrives.

DELLA: Of course - our gifts.

They both stop and stare off wistfully for a moment. Then continue decorating the tree. JIM speaks the following lines as the music of "IF ONLY MONEY GREW ON CHRISTMAS TREES" begins.

SONG #3**IF ONLY MONEY GREW ON CHRISTMAS TREES****(JIM and DELLA)**

JIM: Don't worry about a thing, my love. Our first Christmas together will be just fine.

HALF THE JOY OF DRESSING UP OUR CHRISTMAS TREE
IS THE SHEER ANTICIPATION OF WHAT WILL BE UNDERNEATH.
I WANT TO GIVE YOU ALL THE FINEST LUXURIES.
IF ONLY MONEY GREW ON CHRISTMAS TREES.

DELLA:

IMAGINE IF EACH PART OF THIS SMALL CHRISTMAS TREE
SOMEHOW MAGIC'LLY TRANSFORMED INTO JUST WHAT
YOU NEED IT TO BE.
THEN I'D FULFILL ALL OF YOUR FANTASIES.
IF ONLY MONEY GREW ON CHRISTMAS TREES.

THEN THE BRANCHES OF THIS TREE COULD BE THE SLEEVES
OF THE CLASSIEST SUIT YOU HAVE EVER SEEN.

JIM:

AND THE NEEDLES OF THE PINE COULD FORM A LINE
TO COMB YOUR HAIR UP LIKE A QUEEN.

DELLA:

LOTS OF THESE BRIGHT RIBBONS AS THEY GENTLY FLOAT
COULD BE MADE INTO A SILKY SCARF TO WARM YOUR THROAT
BENEATH YOUR COAT.
TIE CLIPS AND CUFF LINKS MADE OF CRANBERRIES.
IF ONLY MONEY GREW ON CHRISTMAS TREES.

JIM:

ALL THE STRINGS OF POPCORN DRAPED IN SWEEPING SWIRLS
COULD GO DANCING 'ROUND YOUR PRETTY NECK
TO TWIST AND TWIRL AS MILKY PEARLS.
TAKE A PAIR OF PINECONES TO MAKE EARRINGS WITH EASE.
IF ONLY MONEY GREW ON CHRISTMAS TREES.

THEN THE TINSEL STRANDS THAT DANCE ACROSS EACH BRANCH
COULD WEAVE INTO A SHAWL TO DRAPE YOUR ARMS.

DELLA:

AND THIS PAPER CHAIN I HOLD WOULD TURN TO GOLD
TO KEEP YOUR PRECIOUS WATCH SAFE FROM HARM.

YOU DESERVE THE GREATEST GIFTS FROM A TO Z.

JIM:

EVERY FANCY FAD AND FASHION FROM TIFFANY
AND GAY PAREE.

DELLA and JIM:

I COULD GIVE YOU EVERYTHING YOU'D EVER NEED.
IF ONLY MONEY GREW ON,
REALLY TRULY GREW ON,
IF ONLY MONEY GREW ON CHRISTMAS TREES!

The little tree lights up, fully decorated. DELLA and JIM laugh and embrace.

BLACKOUT.

ACT ONE, SCENE 4

Hadley's Five and Ten – December 23rd, late afternoon

AT RISE: *The small dime store has a counter and cash register on one side and a ladder by some shelves on the other. In-between is a row of tables holding merchandise – books, fabric, toys, etc. DELLA enters the store and waves to MADDY. MADDY acknowledges DELLA but is too busy with a customer, ALICE, to break away. She hands ALICE a festively-wrapped package.*

ALICE: Thank you, Maddy. That looks lovely. Merry Christmas!

DELLA then walks over to MR. HUNNICUTT, who is perched on a small ladder, stocking shelves as ALICE exits the store.

DELLA: Good day, Mr. Hunnicutt.

MR. HUNNICUTT, pleased to see DELLA, descends the ladder.

HUNNICUTT: Well hello, pretty lady. How are you doing?

DELLA: Fine. Well, actually ... um...

HUNNICUTT: Yes?

DELLA: I've come to ask a favor of you. The truth is ... my husband and I are in a bit of a financial bind. They cut Jim's hours at the bank, and with the holidays and all ... Well, I was just wondering, if my old job was available.

HUNNICUTT: Della, you know how much I hated laying you off. But business just hasn't been the same the last year or so. I'm struggling just to keep Maddy on full time, and she's been here forever.

Across the store, MADDY hears the conversation and yells.

MADDY: Hey! No comments on a lady's age!

MR. HUNNICUTT lowers his voice.

HUNNICUTT: You know I miss seeing your pretty face here everyday, but business is business.

DELLA: Are you sure?

HUNNICUTT: Yes. I'm sorry.

DELLA: I understand. Well, thank you for your time. (*DELLA sighs and turns to leave.*)

HUNNICUTT: But maybe ... (*Suggestively.*) if you wanted to help me stock, part time, at night. It would only be a few hours, but I might be able to work something out.

DELLA: Nights are the only time I see my husband. Thank you anyway.

HUNNICUTT: Your husband is a lucky fellow.

MR. HUNNICUTT looks lustfully at DELLA as she walks across the store to MADDY. MADDY has finished with a customer, PORTER, and smiles brightly at DELLA.

MADDY: Hey, don't tell me you miss working in this dust hole.

DELLA: It's just that money is so tight these days. Mr. Hunnicutt says I could stock part time at night.

MADDY: No, no, no. Watch out for Mr. Hunnicutt. He's had his eye on you since the day you walked in here.

DELLA: Perhaps. But, when you boil it down, he's my only hope for some extra money.

MADDY: Boiled, baked or fried -- don't you dare trust him alone in the store at night. Listen to your slightly older and much wiser friend on this.

DELLA: I know you're right. I just so wanted to buy something special for Jim, Maddy. It's our first Christmas together.

MADDY: I don't get you, Del. Have you ever seen Jim's eyes when he looks at you? He is nuts -- I mean head-over-heels nuts about you. The only one who looks at me like that is my dog... at feeding time. You don't need to buy Jim some trinket to make him happy. He's already the happiest man around. Boy, what I wouldn't give to have a man love me like that.

DELLA: You're probably right.

MADDY: I'm always right. Look at you -- that face, that hair ... The Queen of Sheba would give her jewels for that hair.

DELLA finally smiles. She proudly strokes her hair.

You, my dear, are all Jim wants for Christmas.

DELLA: Well, I think you're a catch too, Maddy.

MADDY: Yeah, I wish someone would bait the hook already.

DELLA turns to exit.

DELLA: Well, I better let you get back to work, or we'll both be in financial trouble. I'll see you on Christmas Day at our house.

MADDY: It's okay. I'm almost done. Business has been so gosh darn slow, Hunnicutt's been having me close early. See you, dear!

MADDY begins to close up the store. There is a poinsettia plant on the counter by the cash register, and she crosses to the front and talks to her small plant.

MADDY: Hello, Gwendolyn. How are you this evening? Damp enough for you? Anything new in plant land? No? Me neither. *(She pulls up a stool, kicks off her shoes and rubs her feet. Maddy sings, "DINNER FOR ONE.")*

SONG #4
DINNER FOR ONE
(MADDY)

MADDY: *(Singing.)*

DRAG IN THE DOOR, KICK OFF MY SHOES,
OPEN THE MAIL, POUR ME SOME BOOZE.
STEP OUT OF MY CLOTHES, SLIP ON MY ROBE,
TAKE OUT A CHOP, TURN ON THE STOVE.
SET THE TABLE, LIGHT A CANDLE FOR FUN.
NOW I'M READY FOR ANOTHER DINNER FOR ONE.

"HOW WAS YOUR DAY?" I ASK MYSELF.
I SAY "OKAY," NOTHING TO TELL.
GLANCE AT THE NEWS, SKIM THROUGH A BOOK,
STAB AT THE MEAT I OVERCOOKED.
CLEAR THE TABLE, GET MY TWO DISHES DONE,
NOW I MADE IT THROUGH ANOTHER DINNER FOR ONE.

ALWAYS THE SAME OLD SCENE,
WITH THE SAME RECURRING THEME,
PLAYED BY THE FADED QUEEN,
LIKE A BAD DREAM, I COULD JUST SCREAM.

COUNT ALL THE CRACKS CLIMBING THE WALL,
 JUMP AT THE SOUNDS OUT IN THE HALL.
 COMB THROUGH MY HAIR, WASH OFF MY FACE,
 CRAWL INTO BED, MY FAV'RITE PLACE.
 AND TOMORROW WHEN THE DAY HAS BEGUN,
 I'LL GET READY FOR ANOTHER,
 READY FOR ANOTHER,
 I'LL BE READY FOR ANOTHER (*Spoken.*) Perfect
 (*Singing.*) DINNER FOR ONE.

The lights slowly fade on MADDY as she sits alone.

ACT ONE, SCENE 5

The Bank of New York – December 23rd, 4:15pm

AT RISE: *There are two teller's windows center stage, with several customers standing in line. JIM and his best friend, WILLIAM, are each at a window, busy with customers. A counter stacked with papers is on stage left and there is a door upstage left, which leads to an office. The front door to the bank is upstage right. WILLIAM has a cold, and, as soon as his last customer leaves, WILLIAM blows his nose into his handkerchief. WILLIAM'S wife, BETSY, enters the bank and waves at her husband. Their two children, ANNABELLE and NESTOR, 5 and 7, come tearing into the bank like tiny tornados, running amok and creating quite a disturbance.*

WILLIAM: Achoo! (*Quietly to JIM.*) Oh, no! The brood is on the loose.

NESTOR: Papa!

ANNABELLE: Papa! Papa! Show us where they keep all the money!

NESTOR: Look how far I can jump, Papa!

NESTOR jumps around the bank, knocking over everything as he goes. Papers fly as ANNABELLE follows behind her brother, kicking up any obstacles in her path. WILLIAM runs frantically trying to control his children, who ignore him completely.

WILLIAM: Now stop that, children! This is a place of business. Sit down and behave yourselves right now!

BETSY is oblivious to her children's ill behavior.

BETSY: William, I need some more money. I thought I'd have enough, but I've run short, and I still have a few gifts yet to buy.

NESTOR: Yay! Presents! I hope they're all for me!

ANNABELLE: (*Yelling.*) For me! For me!

NESTOR: No, for me!

ANNABELLE: For me!

NESTOR: For me!

ANNABELLE: For me!

ANNABELLE sticks out her tongue at her brother. The two youngsters continue to argue.

WILLIAM: Achoo! Dear, what about the five dollars I gave you this morning?

BETSY: (*Chuckling.*) Oh, that was gone before noon.

NESTOR runs to the front door of the bank and sees SANTA walking by with a donation pot for the Salvation Army.

NESTOR: Papa, can I have a nickel for the Salvation Army?

BETSY: (*Correcting him.*) That's Salvation Army, dear. Salvation is drooling.

NESTOR looks back and points at SANTA.

NESTOR: But he is drooling! (*ANNABELLE laughs.*)

WILLIAM: It is impolite to point, Nestor.

ANNABELLE: (*Loudly.*) Salvation! Salvation!

MR. PORTER, a gruff man, enters from his office, upstage left.

PORTER: This is a place of business, not a playground!

WILLIAM: I'm sorry, Mr. Porter. They're just excited about Christmas.

WILLIAM reaches into his pocket, sighs, and hands a nickel to each of his children and a few dollars to his wife.

Let's go find Santa, children.

NESTOR and ANNABELLE fly out of the bank and run out the front door after SANTA. WILLIAM escorts BETSY out of the bank.

PORTER: My ears are still ringing. What time is it? Shouldn't those brats be in bed?

JIM pulls his watch from his pocket and checks the time.

JIM: It's only four thirty.

PORTER: Jim, I've been meaning to talk with you. Profits have been down this quarter. I'm going to have to cut your hours again. I'm sorry, but I need to watch our bottom line.

JIM: But, Mr. Porter, my wife and I are already struggling to make ends meet. If you cut back my hours again ... with Christmas coming in 2 days...

PORTER: It's done. *(Beat.)* That sure is a mighty handsome watch you have there. If you need some extra money for the holidays, I may be able to take it off your hands.

JIM: No, thank you. It's been in my family for years. My grandfather gave it to my father and, before he passed on, he gave it to me. It's very dear.

PORTER: *(Condescendingly.)* Awfully fancy for a working class man like yourself....

PORTER exits to his office. WILLIAM, who is once again blowing his nose, reenters the bank and joins JIM. The two start counting and sorting piles of the bank's money as they talk.

WILLIAM: Do I look like a rich man to you?

JIM shrugs.

I must look like King Midas to Betsy. I work and work and work just trying to get a few pennies ahead, and she spends and spends and spends.

WILLIAM yells to an imaginary BETSY.

The well is dry, Sweet Pea!

JIM: (*JIM sighs.*) I know how you feel. Porter just cut my hours...again!

WILLIAM: What? That cretin.

JIM: Things were already so tight for me and Della this year. I wanted to buy her something really wonderful for Christmas. She deserves to have fine things, beautiful things -- not second hand clothes and a scraggly Christmas tree.

WILLIAM: Yeah.

JIM: Yeah.

WILLIAM: And the worst part is we're surrounded by all this money -- day in and day out -- seeing it -- feeling it -- smelling it... (*He smells the money.*) Breathing it. And knowing -- none of it's ours! I'm sick of this lousy job. What I wouldn't give to be rich enough to tell old Porter what I really think of him.

JIM: Boy, wouldn't that be something... or rich enough to buy whatever you wanted -- without even asking for the price.

WILLIAM: Or rich enough to send Nester and Annabelle to the finest private schools -- in France!

JIM picks up a stack of money.

JIM: And this is all that's coming between a life of leisure and a life of...

PORTER walks out of his office and yells.

PORTER: Stop your chattering, you slackers! This is a job, not a charity!

JIM: ...that.

WILLIAM: What if one day this (*Indicates the pile of money.*) accidentally slipped into my coat pocket? Who would know?

JIM: William!

WILLIAM: Then I could sneak away... (*Music sting.*), far, far away... (*Music sting.*), somewhere warm – where no one would ever think to look for me.

JIM smiles at the thought. WILLIAM sings “KING OF THE ISLE.”

SONG #5

KING OF THE ISLE

(WILLIAM, JIM, and HULA GIRLS)

WILLIAM:

I WANNA LAY EVERYDAY ON SOME TROPICAL SAND,
BASK IN THE SUNSHINE PERFECTING MY TAN,
AND PLAY THE UKULELE IN A NATIVE BAND.
I WANNA BE KING OF THE ISLE.

I WANNA FEAST ON BANANAS AND SOME JUICY FRUIT,
TRAIN A TALKING PARROT AND A DANCING NEWT,
AND MAYBE TAKE A DIP IN JUST MY BIRTHDAY SUIT,
AS THE KING OF THE ISLE.

As WILLIAM and JIM continue fantasizing, they are “transported” to a tropical island. HULA DANCERS appear offering leis, pineapples and coconuts to the men. The scene becomes a full production number with the dancers (or JIM) playing ukuleles and dancing. WILLIAM and JIM are completely swept away.

MY ONLY WORRY WOULD BE WHAT NOT TO WEAR,
AND WHICH SCENTS OF OIL TO RUB IN MY HAIR.
SEASHELLS WOULD BE MY CURRENCY
IN THE BANK OF THE DEEP BLUE SEA!

I WANNA PLAY A LITTLE GOLF WITH A COCONUT,
 CARVE KOOKY TIKIS IN MY COZY HUT,
 AND IF I HAPPEN TO SLEEP ALL DAY -- SO WHAT?
 I'M THE KING OF THE ISLE.

O'REILLY, enters the bank and is startled by the men's wild behavior. JIM and WILLIAM continue to dance about, and the customer quickly gets "swept up" by the fantasy as well.

I'LL DROP YOU A NOTE ROLLED UP IN A BOTTLE,
 EAT SO MUCH LOBSTER I WALK WITH A WADDLE,
 FOOTLOOSE AND SO FANCY-FREE,
 WITH NO RESPONSIBILITY -- WHEE!

I WANNA GROW MY HAIR TILL IT TANGLES AND TWIRLS,
 SWIM WITH THE OYSTERS, GATHERING THEIR PEARLS,
 AND DANCE THE HULA-HULA WITH THOSE GORGEOUS GIRLS
 AS THE KING OF THE ISLE.... SINGING

WILLIAM, JIM and HULA GIRLS:

OOWA, OO-WAH, OOH, OOH, WAH!
 OOWA, OO-WAH, OOLA, BOOLA, HULA!
 OOWA, OO-WAH, OOH, OOH, WAH!
 KING OF THE ISLE.
 EVEN IF IT'S JUST FOR AWHILE,
 I WANNA BE KING OF THE ISLE!

The tropical scene disappears. The HULA DANCERS exit, and the bank once again returns to normal. WILLIAM gets up, puts on his hat and coat, and starts to leave.

WILLIAM: Well, see you in the morning. Same time, same place, same misery.

JIM: Good night, William. I hope that cold clears up.

WILLIAM waves and sneezes as he exits. MR. PORTER enters from his office, wearing his coat and hat. He stops to talk briefly to JIM on his way out.

PORTER: Jim, I have some things to do this evening. I'll need you to lock and secure the bank tonight. (*Condescendingly.*) Do you think you can handle that?

JIM: Of course, Mr. Porter. (*JIM pulls out his watch and checks the time.*) I should be done with the sorting by five thirty, and have everything locked up by six.

PORTER: Alright then. (*PORTER puts on his gloves and exits.*)

JIM: (*Shivers.*) It's freezing in here!

JIM bundles himself up in his scarf, takes out his handkerchief and wipes down his hands. He takes a deep breath as he returns to counting the money stacked in front of him. He hums to himself as he looks around.

SONG #5a

OOLA BOOLA HULA

(JIM)

JIM: (*Singing.*)

OOWA, OO-WAH, OOH, OOH, WAH!

OOWA, OO-WAH, OOLA, BOOLA, HULA!

OOWA, OO-WAH, OOH, OOH, WAH...

The lights fade. Music Cue:

SONG #5b

PORTER

(INSTRUMENTAL)

ACT ONE, SCENE 6

City Street – December 23rd, 4:50pm

AT RISE: *DELLA enters stage right and walks down the street carrying a basket of cranberries. MR. PORTER enters stage left and hurries down the street as well. DELLA'S attention is on the shop windows, and she bumps into MR. PORTER who is hurrying in the other direction. The cranberries spill onto the street.*

DELLA: Oh!

PORTER: (*Rudely.*) Watch where you're going! (*PORTER looks up at DELLA, and his demeanor softens.*) Sorry, ma'am. How clumsy of me.

They both remove their gloves as they stoop and begin to pick up the cranberries.

DELLA: No, it was my fault entirely. My mind and eyes were wandering. (*She recognizes him.*) Aren't you Mr. Porter from the bank?

PORTER: Yes, I am.

DELLA: I'm Della Young, Jim's wife. I've seen you in there a few times.

PORTER: Ah, yes. I just told your husband to stay late and close up. I have a few chores to do this evening, and then I'm heading home.

DELLA: Oh, I'm sorry. I'm keeping you.

PORTER: It's quite alright, ma'am. See there, we're almost done.

The two put the last of the cranberries back in the basket. MR. PORTER pulls out his handkerchief to clean his hands before he puts his gloves back on.

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