

CARTER (*offstage*). I guess they do those things. Let's get this over with. I'd like to spend Christmas in Elmira with my family.

GEORGE (*an exchange of looks with TILLY*). Absolutely. Uncle Billy'll be here any minute. He's at the bank making a deposit right now.

(*GEORGE exits L. The lights come down on the Building and Loan and the set moves off. The lights come up RC. UNCLE BILLY, with an armload of newspapers, is standing near a teller cage. The teller, HORACE, stands behind the grill.*)

UNCLE BILLY. Good morning, Horace!

HORACE. Good morning, Mr. Bailey.

UNCLE BILLY. I've got eight thousand dollars in an envelope here someplace, Horace.

HORACE. You've got quite a cargo there Mr. Bailey.

UNCLE BILLY. Huh? Oh! (*He wrestles with the papers, making matters worse.*) These are newspapers all about my nephew Harry! Here ... there's one for you, Horace. (*He makes a show of poking a newspaper through the grill.*)

HORACE. Thank you, sir.

UNCLE BILLY. Careful now ... I'm mixin' up all the ... (*A bulky manila envelope falls to the floor.*) Ah! There it is! (*He picks it up just as POTTER comes wheeling in downstage, his chair pushed by REINEMAN.*) Oh! Look who just came in!

HORACE. What?

UNCLE BILLY. Not what ... who.

HORACE. Who what?

UNCLE BILLY. Came in.

HORACE. When?

UNCLE BILLY. Just now ... um ...

(*UNCLE BILLY moves out of HORACE's line of sight and pulls bits of newspaper out of the grill. POTTER sees him and signals REINEMAN to stop.*)

UNCLE BILLY. Can you see now?

HORACE. Ah! Yes! It's Mr. Potter. Our major stockholder.

UNCLE BILLY. And that weasel Reineman's with him. I'll be right back, Horace.

HORACE. Yes sir, Mr. Bailey.

(*UNCLE BILLY strolls over to POTTER and REINEMAN.*)

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UNCLE BILLY. Well, well, well, good morning, Mr. Potter.

POTTER. Bailey. You know my property manager, Mr. Reineman.

UNCLE BILLY. I do, indeed. Mr. Reineman.

REINEMAN. Mr. Bailey.

UNCLE BILLY. I see you have the morning paper, Mr. Potter! (*Grabs POTTER's paper.*) What's the news? Oh, wait a minute ... (*He pulls his own copies from under his arm.*) I have a few copies of that myself. (*He gets the papers mixed up as he tries to fold a page up to read.*) Let's see ... Ah! "Harry Bailey wins Congressional Medal!" Well sir, you just can't keep those Baileys down, can you, Mr. Potter?

POTTER. And how does George, the 4-F slacker, feel about it?

UNCLE BILLY. Oh, very jealous, very jealous. He only lost three buttons off his vest puffin' his chest out. Course, George wanted to go fight ... and if he had, he'd've gotten two medals! Here you go ... (*Hands Potter a few more pieces of the various newspapers.*) Some extra copies of the paper to send to your ... friends. If ya got any. And some for you, too, Mr. Reineman.

REINEMAN. Keep 'em. No skin off my nose.

UNCLE BILLY. All right. Have it your way. I've got plenty of 'em if y'change your mind. Yes sir, George fought the war here in Bedford Falls ... 'cause not *every* villain is overseas! (*POTTER seethes.*) Well ... gotta go make a deposit. You have a good day, Mr. Potter!

*(Chuckling to himself, he moves back to the teller's cage. POTTER and REINEMAN move toward C as POTTER folds the newspapers.)*

UNCLE BILLY (*cont'd*). My, oh my, oh my ... now ... where was I? Oh yes ... the deposit. Here's my deposit slip, Horace ... and the bank book.

HORACE. Did you forget something, Mr. Bailey?

UNCLE BILLY (*holds up both hands. Each finger is tied up with string*). I don't ... I don't think so.

HORACE. It's usually customary when you're making a deposit to bring some money with you.

UNCLE BILLY. Oh! Course! I've got the money right ... (*He looks for the envelope.*) ... um ... it's in this pocket, I guess ...

*(POTTER suddenly comes up with the envelope. Shows it quickly to REINEMAN, who reacts. POTTER shushes him and quickly tucks it out of sight just as UNCLE BILLY turns to look in his direction.)*

UNCLE BILLY (*cont'd*). It's ... it's ... I know I had ... Oh no ... oh no! (*He runs off DR.*) Where ... where is it? Where is it? Where is it?

*(REINEMAN pushes POTTER off around the teller's cage, UR, as the lights fade to black.)*

*Lights up L, the Bailey Building and Loan. TILLY is on the headset, still talking to HARRY. GEORGE and VIOLET stand downstage in the main part of the room. GEORGE hands VIOLET an envelope.)*

GEORGE. There you are, Vi ... I wrote you a glowing character reference. I even put it in a fancy Building and Loan envelope. That'll impress 'em.

VIOLET. Character reference! If I really had any character I'd ...

GEORGE. Now, now, just, just don't be so hard on yourself. It takes a lot of character to leave the security of your hometown and start all over again. I just hope that helps. (*Takes out his wallet, removes some money and hands it to her.*) Here ... here's a couple o' bucks to ...

VIOLET. No, George ...

GEORGE. Well, you're broke, aren't ya?

VIOLET. Sure, but ...

GEORGE. Whaddya wanna do? Hock your furs and that hat? Wanna *walk* to New York? You know they charge for meals and rent in New York City same as they do in Bedford Falls. Now, take it. It's a loan. That's my business ... building and *loan*.

VIOLET. All right then ... thanks, George.

GEORGE. Besides, you'll get a job. I've got faith in you.

VIOLET. You've *always* had faith in me, George ... me and lots of others. It's hard to live up to sometimes, you know? But ... but I don't know what I'd be without you in my corner. I'm glad I know you, George Bailey. (*She kisses him on the cheek.*) Well ... better go ... I guess ...

GEORGE. Say hello to New York for me. And be sure to write and let us know how you're doin'.

VIOLET. I will.

GEORGE. Merry Christmas, Vi.

VIOLET. Merry Christmas, George.

*(She exits. GEORGE, wiping his cheek with his handkerchief, crosses to L office.)*