

GEORGE. Wish I had a million dollars. *(He triggers the lighter, igniting a flame.)* Hot dog!

*(They laugh. A mark tree bar chime run, and GEORGE and GOWER freeze in place. CLARENCE enters from an unlikely direction.)*

CLARENCE. Why did you stop it?

JOSEPH. Take a good look at that face.

*(CLARENCE moves to GEORGE, gets close. Looks into his eyes.)*

CLARENCE. It's a good face. I like George Bailey. Did he ever tell anyone about the pills?

JOSEPH. Not a soul.

CLARENCE. How about that girl? The one who loves him? Did he ever ...

JOSEPH. Clarence.

CLARENCE. Yes?

JOSEPH. Wait and see.

CLARENCE *(stepping away from GEORGE. With a sigh)*. While it's true I died over 200 years ago, Joseph, my habits didn't. Old habits die hard.

JOSEPH. Clarence ...

CLARENCE. Joseph, I was a clockmaker. I have always been very good at measuring time, but I have never been very good at putting up with it. For two hundred years I have waited in the wings ... for my wings.

JOSEPH. You know what the boss says.

CLARENCE. Yes. "A thousand years are as a day." And, I guess they are to the boss. But, I'm not the boss, Joseph; to me two hundred years are as *two hundred years*. Sometimes even more. And I still don't have my wings.

*(A bar chimes run and GEORGE and GOWER come back to life. GEORGE moves away. CLARENCE moves out of the way just in time, throwing a dirty look heavenward.)*

GEORGE. Oh! Say, look at the time. I've gotta go.

GOWER. Packing for your big adventure, eh?

GEORGE. Yessir, and now I got a good suitcase! This ... this is my flying carpet ... for a thousand and one nights, with plenty of room to stick on labels from Italy and Baghdad and Samarkand ... My life's about to begin! Thanks again, Mr. Gower! *(Moves to exit.)*

GOWER. You're more than welcome, George! Oh, hey, what boat you sailing on?

GEORGE. I'm working my way across on a cattle boat.

GOWER. A cattle boat?

GEORGE. OK, I like cows. *(As they both laugh.)* Thanks, Mr. Gower!

*(GEORGE moves downstage, arcing DL as the Gower Drug set moves off UR. A bench rolls in DL. An attached sign reads, "Taxi Stand." ERNIE the cab driver sits reading a newspaper. BERT the cop is standing with one foot on the bench, writing in a small notebook.)*

SIDE 6

GEORGE. Hey, Ernie!

ERNIE. Hiya, George!

GEORGE. Hi, Bert!

BERT. How's it goin', George?

GEORGE. Hey, you boys aren't busy or anything, are ya? I mean ... you're not givin' Ernie a ticket, are ya, Bert ... 'cause I could come back later.

BERT. Naw. Just makin' up the grocery list.

ERNIE. Just passin' the time, George.

GEORGE. Ernie, I'm a rich tourist today. Figure to ride in style.

BERT. Gonna ride home in that?

GEORGE. No, that's my new suitcase.

BERT. Big enough to ride home in.

GEORGE. I figured to ride home in Ernie's cab instead. How about it, Ernie?

ERNIE. Sure, I'm just parked right over there.

BERT. Illegally parked right over there.

ERNIE. It's OK. I got connections in the police department.

BERT. Tonight's your brother's graduation dance over at the high school, isn't it?

GEORGE. Yeah. Harry's chairman of the eats committee.

ERNIE. You goin'?

GEORGE. To a high-school dance? Mè?

ERNIE. I just thought ...

VIOLET (*all grown up and grown up well, entering from L and crossing*). Good afternoon, Mr. Bailey. Are you going to the graduation dance?

GEORGE. No, I ... Oh. Hello, Violet. Hey, you look good. (*VIOLET stops and turns.*) That's some dress you got on there.

VIOLET. What? This old thing? I only wear it when I don't care how I look. Well, goodbye, George. See you at the dance.

*(She crosses and exits R. The men stand dumbfounded.)*

GEORGE. Only wears it when she ...

BERT. Yeah.

ERNIE. Ready, George?

GEORGE. Yeeeah. Let's ... let's go, Ernie, before I forget where it is I'm goin'.

ERNIE. Yeah.

*(GEORGE and ERNIE exit L. BERT stays onstage, watching after VIOLET, taking a step or two in her direction. ERNIE re-enters and calls to him.)*

ERNIE (*cont'd*). Bert!

*(BERT comes to himself, turns and exits quickly off L. The lights come down on the park bench area. The bench scoots offstage.)*

*Light up C on the front porch of the BAILEY home. GEORGE is leaning on the porch railing, looking out. From inside, thuds and crashes are heard.)*

MOTHER BAILEY (*offstage*). Harry! You're shaking the house down!

HARRY (*offstage*). Mother!

MOTHER BAILEY (*offstage*). What?

HARRY (*offstage*). Where are my good shoes?

MOTHER BAILEY (*offstage*). They're in the closet!

HARRY (*offstage*). No they're not, I'm looking in the closet! Oh! Never mind!

*(More crashing.)*