

THE PREACHER'S WIFE

BASED ON A NOVEL BY ROBERT NATHAN

SCREENPLAYS BY ROBERT SHERWOOD AND LEONARDO BERCOVICI FOR THE BISHOP'S WIFE

NAT MAULDIN AND ALLAN SCOTT FOR THE PREACHER'S WIFE

ADAPTED FOR THE STAGE BY BOB WEIRUP

REVISED 6/11/2020

LIST OF CHARACTERS:

Henry Brown	Pastor, Elm Street Christian
Julia Brown	Henry's wife
Dudley	An angel
Debby Brown	Julia and Henry's daughter
Margaret	Julia's mother
Professor Wutheridge	Philosopher and writer
Brenda	Henry's assistant
Mrs. Hamilton	Rich mean lady
Mr. Perry	Mrs. Hamilton associate
Mrs. Trumbull	Mrs. Hamilton associate
Mrs. Ward	Mrs. Hamilton associate
Mr. Maggenti	Christmas tree seller
William	A cafe waiter
Stevens	Mrs. Hamilton's butler
Various kids	For church choir
Waiter	At Billy's
Billy	Club owner/musician

LIST OF SCENES:

	Page
ACT 1:	
Scene 1 The Tree Lot	2
Scene 2 Meeting Dudley	5
Scene 3 The Hamilton Meeting	7
Scene 4 Henry Meets Dudley	11
Scene 5 Brenda, Dudley & Henry	13
Scene 6 Julia Meets Dudley	18
Scene 7 The Cafe	21
Scene 8 Henry & Margaret	23
Scene 9 Kid's Choir Rehearsal	24
Scene 10 Street Shopping	26
Scene 11 Henry Misses Rehearsal	28
Scene 12 The Professor's House	30
Scene 13 Back At Home	34
Scene 14 Billy's Club	37
Scene 15 End Of The Night	42
ACT II:	
Scene 16 Margaret Tells Dudley	47
Scene 17 Mrs. Hamilton's House	49
Scene 18 Henry Visits The Professor	52
Scene 19 Debby's Story	54
Scene 20 Dudley & Mrs. Hamilton	58
Scene 21 Mrs. Hamilton's Visit	60
Scene 22 Dudley Says Goodbye To Julia	63
Scene 23 Dudley & Henry Reconcile	64
Scene 24 The Sermon	67
Scene 25 After The Sermon	69

THE PREACHER'S WIFE

ACT 1 - SCENE 1 - THE TREE LOT

Urban street scene with a Christmas tree lot. Early December afternoon. People window shopping, kids singing carols, Salvation Army ringer, etc.

PROFESSOR: [approaching the tree lot] "Good day, Maggenti, my old adversary."

MAGGENTI: "Hello, Professor! Merry Christmas. You've come for your Christmas tree, right? Well I'm ready for you. I know exactly the tree you're looking for."

PROFESSOR: "I hope I'm not that predictable. But, as I am here at your Christmas tree lot, one can easily surmised that I am, indeed, looking for a tree. You are an Italian genius."

MAGGENTI: [holds up small tree] "Look at this one! It's the perfect size for you. Don't you love it?"

PROFESSOR: "This is a specimen of the white fir - *Abies concolor*. Surely you, a native Roman, know your Latin?"

MAGGENTI: "Yeah, sure. You wanna buy it or not?"

PROFESSOR: [sees Julia approaching] "Well, if it isn't my dear, beautiful Julia."

JULIA: [Hugging the Professor] "Hello, Professor. What are you doing here?"

PROFESSOR: "I am attempting to purchase a Christmas tree from this botanical cretin."

JULIA: "Hi Mr. Maggenti."

MAGGENTI: "Mrs. Brown."

PROFESSOR: "So, how much are you charging for this miserable weed?"

MAGGENTI: "One dollar and eighty cents."

PROFESSOR: "For this half-hearted twig? Do better than that or I will take my trade elsewhere!"

MAGGENTI: [frustrated with the Professor, turns to Julia] "What can I do for you Mrs. Brown?"

JULIA: [she points] "You can save me that tree. The big one over there."

MAGGENTI: "You got it. Yes ma'am. I'll send it over to your house later today."

PROFESSOR: [To Julia] “Every Christmas for the past 18 years, Maggenti and I have been re-enacting the same argument.”

JULIA: “I didn’t know you celebrated Christmas. I thought you had no religion.”

PROFESSOR: “That’s true, my dear, but I like to have a Christmas tree because it reminds me of my childhood. I feel, for some reason, that this is a good time of year for looking backwards. Can you imagine me ever having been a child? How’s Henry? I haven’t seen him for some time.”

JULIA: “Oh, he’s well, thank you. He’s... he’s terribly tired and worried.”

PROFESSOR: “Is he having difficulty raising money for the new church?”

JULIA: “Yes, it’s very slow work. He’s a great preacher, but not such a great fundraiser.”
[changing the subject to something more pleasant] “How is your book coming?”

PROFESSOR: “Oh, splendidly. Greatest history of Rome since the dawn of time. But, of course, nobody will read it.” [to Maggenti] “Now, my good Mr. Maggenti, I do not choose to prolong this tawdry bickering any further.”

MAGGENTI: “Okay Professor, you win... a dollar sixty.”

PROFESSOR: “Very well, my friend. Here is your blood money? See you next year.”

JULIA: “Merry Christmas. Don’t forget to send my tree over.”

MAGGENTI: “Don’t worry. I won’t. Merry Christmas.” [Julia and Professor move down the street]

PROFESSOR: “Julia, there’s something I’d like you to give Henry for his church fund. It has been my lucky piece - not that it’s brought me luck, except knowing you. It’s an old Roman coin. I picked it up years ago in Brindisi. It has little value.”

JULIA: “It’s a wonderful contribution. Are you sure? It looks valuable.”

PROFESSOR: “Nonsense. It might be called the ‘widow’s mite’ if it weren’t for the fact that I’m not a widow.” [notices a tear running down Julia’s face] “Why, Julia, this is no occasion for tears.”

JULIA: [she looks around] “I love this neighborhood. If only we could spend all our Christmases here. We’re so happy here. With you and all of our friends.”

PROFESSOR: “Now, now, now. That new church won’t be that far away.”

JULIA: "Good night, Professor. I hope to see you again soon."

PROFESSOR: "It can't be soon enough. Good night, Julia."

[Julia exits]

ACT 1 - SCENE 2 - MEETING DUDLEY

Same urban street scene. Dudley approaches Professor just after Julia leaves.

DUDLEY: "Why, Professor! How fine to see you again after all these years. How well you look. How are you?"

PROFESSOR: [a bit startled] "Oh. Never better. And you?"

DUDLEY: "Quite well also, thank you... I don't think you remember me."

PROFESSOR: "Of course I do. [beat] Where did we meet?"

DUDLEY: "Professor, after all these years..."

PROFESSOR: "Just a moment. It wasn't Vienna, was it?"

DUDLEY: "Quite right! Beautiful old Vienna."

PROFESSOR: "It was the university. When I was lecturing there on Roman history."

DUDLEY: "And what great lectures they were. And, as I remember, you were very popular with the ladies."

PROFESSOR: "Fancy you remembering that. I must confess, I did had my moments."

DUDLEY: "And more to come, no doubt. Say, Professor, I couldn't help noticing you are friends with Julia."

PROFESSOR: "You know Julia?"

DUDLEY: "In a way, yes."

PROFESSOR: "Poor child."

DUDLEY: "Is she unhappy?"

PROFESSOR: [still suspicious] "When were you in Vienna?"

DUDLEY: "Oh, I've been there many times. Tell me more about Julia - and Henry. What seems to be their trouble?"

PROFESSOR: “Henry? I haven’t seen him in ages. He has no time for riff raff like me. He now consorts with the vulgar rich, like that Mrs Hamilton. You know she had me fired from the university? Said I was a radical. I, who have never taken any interest in politics since the death of Nero... Look at that. Henry’s current church, Elm Street Christian, perishing from neglect.”

DUDLEY: “It’s such a nice church. Why does he want a new one?”

PROFESSOR: “It’s too little, I’m afraid. It can’t stand up against the march of progress.”

DUDLEY: “All it needs is a little T.L.C.”

PROFESSOR: “If you ask me, I think he’s been coerced into thinking something bigger is automatically better. Well, I must be pushing on.”

DUDLEY: “Delighted to have seen you again.”

PROFESSOR: “The pleasure is mine.”

DUDLEY: “We must meet again and talk about those old days in Vienna.”

PROFESSOR: “By all means!”

DUDLEY: “Good evening, Professor.” [Dudley exits]

PROFESSOR: “Good Evening.” [watching Dudley leave] “I have no recollection of ever meeting that man...”

ACT 1 - SCENE 3 - THE HAMILTON MEETING

Brown family house interior. Later that same day.

MARGARET: [Julia enters] “Well, good evening.”

JULIA: “Hi Mama. Is Debby in bed yet?”

MARGARET: “Yeah, she’s sleeping. That Mrs. Hamilton and her committee are in there with Henry. Dinner’s been waiting a long time. Pretty rude if you ask me.”

JULIA: “Sorry Mama. We’ll have dinner as soon as they leave.”

MARGARET: “But what about the chicken? It’s gonna be like wood.”

JULIA: “Don’t worry about it, Mama, please. I’ve gotta go in there. [Julia enters meeting room] Oh, I’m terribly sorry I’m so late. Good evening, Mrs Hamilton. I was delayed Christmas shopping. Good evening, Mr Perry, Mrs Trumbull. Hello, Mrs Ward. I hope you’ve been having a good meeting.”

MS. HAMILTON: “We most certainly have not! I’ve never in my life encountered such fuzzy thinking.”

HENRY: “I thought we were making progress.”

MS. HAMILTON: “No, we have not.”

HENRY: “But Mr. Perry was just proposing something...”

MR. PERRY: [meekly] “Merely a suggestion.”

HENRY: “But it’s a good one. If Mrs. Hamilton approves, we can place the George B Hamilton Memorial Chapel on the north-east corner, and...”

MS. HAMILTON: “No one will ever see it there, and I won’t stand for it!”

HENRY: “Mrs Hamilton, this new church cannot be designed for the glory of an individual. It has to be created for all the people.”

MS. HAMILTON: “I am very displeased at your attitude. I was instrumental in making you Pastor, although others thought you were too young.” [to Mrs. Ward] “Is that an exaggeration?”

MS. WARD: “Oh, yes, Mrs... I mean, no. You were definitely the guiding spirit. I distinctly remember...”

MS. HAMILTON: "I had confidence in you when you were a poor little assistant minister. I confess my confidence has weakened."

HENRY: "I regret I've been a disappointment to you."

MS. HAMILTON: "Regrets are no good whatsoever. You give me the impression of being confused, indecisive and ineffectual. That is not the kind of leadership we expect from our pastor. And, you'd better remember one thing. You will build that church as I want it or you will not build it at all. That's all I have to say!" [She rises to leave]

JULIA: "Goodbye, Mrs Hamilton."

MS. HAMILTON: "Good evening, Mrs Brown."

TRIO LEAVES: "Good evening, Mrs Brown. Good evening, Mrs Brown." [Hamilton group exits]

MARGARET: "Can we have dinner now?"

JULIA: "Yes, Mama."

MARGARET: "The chicken will be burned to a crisp."

JULIA: "We'll be right in, Mama." [Margaret exits]

HENRY: "Julia, you knew Mrs Hamilton was expected this afternoon."

JULIA: "I know, Henry. I'm sorry I was late."

HENRY: "What a horrible afternoon, and what a ghastly woman. I have no intention of being strangled by her purse strings."

JULIA: "I was proud of you."

HENRY: "I had a most un-Christian impulse to give her a good whack over her... mink coat."

JULIA: "I thought you stood up to her magnificently."

HENRY: "I appreciate your appreciation, but what about my church?"

JULIA: "Your church, your church. That's all you talk about. Can I make a suggestion, Henry? Why not postpone the church 'til after Christmas?"

HENRY: “Impossible. The House of God can’t be put off. This church must rise. The people that can help me, I... I have to appeal to their generous yuletide spirit. It’s a well known fundraising rule.”

JULIA: “I can see it all now. The McWhirters, the Hornes, the Van Deusens, the lunches, the meetings, and you there flattering them. Kowtowing to them, begging...”

HENRY: “It’s got to be done.”

JULIA: “Oh, Henry. I wish you could see yourself.” [phone rings off stage]

HENRY: “Well, you haven’t done very much to help it.” [Margaret enters] “Yes Margaret, what is it?”

MARGARET: “Mr. Trevor is on the phone for Henry.”

JULIA: “Tell him Henry will call him back, please, Mama.”

MARGARET: “I... okay.”

JULIA: “Henry, what’s happened to you? What’s happened to our marriage? We used to have such fun, you and Debby and I. We used to be happy and make other people happy. Henry, that’s your gift. You’re no financier or fundraiser.”

HENRY: “Julia, I see this church standing like a great beacon. I want its light...”

JULIA: [interrupting] “Oh, never mind. Keep that for your next committee meeting. Here... here’s a contribution I collected. [she gives Henry the Roman coin]

HENRY: “What’s this?”

JULIA: “It’s an old Roman coin. Professor Wutheridge gave it to you. Wasn’t that sweet?”

HENRY: “That old fool. What does he think I can do with this?”

JULIA: “Well, it’s a beginning. Now all you need is another four million.”

HENRY: “Julia, don’t be flippant about this! I still have a lot of work to do. [softens] I... I was thinking... tomorrow maybe we could go out together.”

JULIA: [surprised] “Really? Where?”

HENRY: “I don’t know, maybe just walk around the way we used to do. We could go and call on the professor, or go to the park and watch the skaters... that sort of thing. Maybe we could have lunch or dinner. [gets an idea] At Billy’s! How would that be?”

JULIA: “Billy’s? Oh, it’s been years since we’ve been there.”

MARGARET: “Excuse me for butting in, but it’s Mr. Trevor again. He insists on talking to Henry right now. Please talk to him. The man is becoming a real pain.”

HENRY: “Alright, alright... I’ll take it in my office.”

ACT 1 - SCENE 4 - HENRY MEETS DUDLEY

Pastor Brown's office. A few minutes later.

HENRY: [on the phone] "Of course, Mr Trevor. Yes, but... I appreciate your difficulties, but... Very well. I'll be there. Lunch tomorrow, then on to the board meeting. All right. Yes. Goodbye." [hangs up phone, then, in silence, contemplates what to do next. Then prays at his desk]

HENRY: "God, I need some help down here. What am I gonna do? Can you help me? Can you tell me what to do? Oh, God, please help me."

DUDLEY: [he turns a chair around to reveal himself] "What can I do for you, Henry?"

HENRY: [Henry falls out of his chair in fright] "Who are you? How did you get in here?"

DUDLEY: "You asked for help, Henry. I'm the answer to your prayer."

HENRY: [standing up] "What... what... what are you talking about? [he grabs a nearby baseball bat and approaches Dudley] "Now, who are you, and what are you doing here? You a burglar or something?"

DUDLEY: [backing away] "No, no, nothing like that. I'm here to help."

HENRY: "Help? Who are you helping by breaking in to my office?"

DUDLEY: "You, Henry."

HENRY: "What's the deal here? Are you robbing me?"

DUDLEY: "Do I look like a robber, Henry?"

HENRY: "I'll admit, you're a bit over-dressed for a break-in. So what's going on here?"

DUDLEY: "You prayed for help, Henry. I'm your help."

HENRY: "My prayer? For help? Is this some kind of joke?"

DUDLEY: "Uh, no, no. He doesn't make jokes."

HENRY: "He?"

DUDLEY: [pointing up] “Capital “H”, capital “E”. And Henry, I want you to know that together the three of us can help get you through this little crisis you’re having.”

HENRY: “Look, I don’t know who you are.”

DUDLEY: “Dudley, I’m Dudley.”

HENRY: “Or who put you up to this?”

DUDLEY: [pointing up] “He did.”

HENRY: “Look, I’m afraid you picked the wrong day for me to be a good sport. Now, I think it’s time for you to get out of my house.”

DUDLEY: “But, wait... I...”

HENRY: “Let’s go.”

DUDLEY: “I just want to help, and...”

HENRY: “Yeah, sure, keep moving.” [sees him to the door] “Look, you seem a little mixed up. If you want to talk, make an appointment.”

DUDLEY: “Appointment? But, Henry...”

HENRY: “So people won’t think you’re a burglar. Bye-bye.” [he shuts the door on Dudley.] [light goes out on Henry]

DUDLEY: “Wow. Okay. I, uh... I guess I’ll have to try another approach.”

ACT 1 - SCENE 5 - BRENDA , DUDLEY & HENRY

Pastor Brown's office. The next morning. Dudley is in the office.

BRENDA: [She enters office and sees Dudley, who she is not expecting. Screams]"Ohhhh!"

DUDLEY: "I'm so sorry. I didn't mean to frighten you."

BRENDA: "I didn't know anyone was here! You waitin' for Pastor Brown?"

DUDLEY: "Yes, yes. My name's Dudley."

BRENDA: "Brenda."

DUDLEY: "How do you do?"

BRENDA: "I'm the pastor's secretary."

DUDLEY: "Pleasure to meet you." [notices a family photo] "Oh, are these your children?"

BRENDA: "Yeah, that's them."

DUDLEY: "Oh, they're beautiful. Where's your husband? Taking the picture?"

BRENDA: "Mm-hmm. Then he took the car and the waitress at the diner and moved to Florida."

DUDLEY: "I'm sorry to hear that."

BRENDA: "You have any children?"

DUDLEY: "No, no. Never had a chance to settle down. I wanted to."

BRENDA: "You here to see the pastor? Do you have an appointment?"

DUDLEY: "Uh, no, not exactly. I was... sent to help the pastor, like an assistant."

BRENDA: "Assistant? I haven't heard anything about an... Oh, oh no! Am I gettin' fired?"

DUDLEY: "No, no, no. It's just temporary."

BRENDA: "Temporary! I haven't heard anything about no temporary!"

DUDLEY: "Well, there's nothing... Uh, look."

BRENDA: "Oh, I can't believe this."

DUDLEY: "Take it easy. There's nothing to worry about."

BRENDA: "Are you sure?"

DUDLEY: "Yes, of course. The Man upstairs thought you and Pastor Brown could use a little help over the holidays."

BRENDA: "The church council sent you? We've been asking for help, but I didn't hear any reply."

DUDLEY: "The top man Himself sent me. Now, those beautiful children... what are you getting them for Christmas?"

BRENDA: "My kids? I... I don't know. I haven't had time to do any shopping yet."

DUDLEY: "Really? Well maybe you should take some time off and go shopping for them."

BRENDA: "But... I... I have work to do."

DUDLEY: "Brenda, that's why I'm here. To help you and Pastor Brown. Go, take care of your family. I'll take care of the office here. I'm sure Henry would agree."

BRENDA: "Really? Are you sure? I... I... Okay, if you think it's okay. You'll tell Pastor Brown?"
[she's putting her coat on]

DUDLEY: "Yes, of course. I'm sure he'll be more than okay with it."

BRENDA: "Okay. I... I guess I'll see you later. Thank you." [she reaches to shake his hand - she feels a special warm happy feeling when shaking Dudley's hand] "Oooh... I..."

DUDLEY: "You take care of your kids, Brenda."

BRENDA: "I... okay... Thank you, Dudley." [she leaves]

[Dudley walks around the office, checking the place out]

HENRY: [offstage, approaching the office door] "Brenda..." [he comes through the door]
"Brenda, I need you to..." [he sees Dudley and stops] "You! What are you doing here? You're lucky I didn't call the cops on you."

DUDLEY: "Yes, I know, Henry. Thank you for that. Like I said last night, I'm here to help you."

HENRY: "What do you want from me? Who are you? Really?"

DUDLEY: "My name's Dudley, remember? And... I'm an angel."

HENRY: "I beg your pardon?"

DUDLEY: "An angel. You know, like in the Bible?"

HENRY: "Of course you are! The angel Dudley?"

DUDLEY: "Ding!"

Henry: "That must have been that part of the Bible that got lost. I may have to call someone to come get you yet."

DUDLEY: "I knew you wouldn't understand. I know you don't believe me. It's hard, even for you. But angels cannot lie, Henry. We're not allowed to. It's in the angel handbook."

HENRY: "Of course it is... Brenda! Brenda... Where is she?"

DUDLEY: "Oh, I gave her the rest of the day off."

HENRY: "You what?"

DUDLEY: "She needed to do some Christmas shopping, Henry. Besides, I'm here to help now, and I wanted us to be able to talk. Now about the angel handbook, let me show you..."

HENRY: "No, I'm gonna show you. I'm gonna show you right out the door." [starts to usher Dudley out of the room] "Thanks for everything. Say hello to the Big Guy and the Easter Bunny too."

DUDLEY: "Wait, wait. Can I explain, please?"

HENRY: [resigning to listen, he sits down at his desk, looking over papers] "What?"

DUDLEY: "You've got a good heart, Henry."

HENRY: "Yeah, a good heart."

DUDLEY: [Sighing] "Oh boy, do I miss this place, Henry. I had some wonderful times down here, I tell you. Oh, I'm not supposed to go into how I... But, as you can see, I was cut down in my prime."

HENRY: "Clearly."

DUDLEY: “Ever since then, Henry, I’ve been up there... waitin’ in line for a chance to get sent back down here. It’s a long line, too, let me tell you.”

HENRY: “You don’t say.”

DUDLEY: “Oh, I do say. You’ve got no idea what the competition is like just to get sent down here. Everybody wants this job. I don’t know why He sent me, Henry, but I’m glad He did.”

HENRY: “That makes one of us.”

DUDLEY: “And I’m going to do everything I can to help you.”

HENRY: [sarcastically throughout] “Thank you very much. Hey, I’ve got an idea... you want to help? If you’re an angel, you can do miracles, right? So, why don’t you create the new church? You can do that, can’t you? Just wave your hand, right?”

DUDLEY: “And how would you explain it, Henry? You’re going to tell the whole world you’re being visited by an angel who instantly created a new church where there was none? You can’t do that.”

HENRY: “Well, I...”

DUDLEY: “Oh, I almost forgot. I need to go over the rules, if that’s okay with you?”

HENRY: “Do you really have to?”

DUDLEY: “It’ll only take a minute, Henry.” [he refers to his angel handbook]

HENRY: “Yippee.”

DUDLEY: “Rule Number One: We can’t do anything you should be doing.”

HENRY: “That makes sense. If I’m doing it, that’d be two of us, wouldn’t it?”

DUDLEY: “Exactly. Number Two: Everything you do must be done of your own free will. Now, that’s a biggie.”

HENRY: “Tough, but fair. Are there many more?”

DUDLEY: “Just one, when I leave, when the mission is accomplished, you won’t have any memory of me.”

HENRY: “Now, that’s my favorite. Okay, so I’ve got the rules. Anything else?”

DUDLEY: “One more thing, Henry.” [he offers his hand to shake] “I’m glad to be working with you.” [Henry shakes his hand, and feels the same warm happy feeling] “Feel that? Kinda like springtime and Mom’s home cooking all rolled into one, isn’t it?”

HENRY: [sarcasm suddenly leaves, and Henry is startled by what he feels] “I... I don’t feel a thing.”

DUDLEY: “Oh, you will, Henry. You just gotta have faith.”

ACT 1 - SCENE 6 - JULIA MEETS DUDLEY

The Brown's foyer. Minutes later. Julia enters.

JULIA: "Hello Brenda... Brenda? Hmm... where is everybody?"

DUDLEY: [Dudley enters from Henry's office] "Hello, you must be Julia! I'm Dudley."

JULIA: "I... uh... how do you do? I'm sorry to interrupt. I didn't know Henry had a visitor."

DUDLEY: "Not at all, and I'm hardly a visitor. I'm here to help Henry, as his assistant, of sorts. Nice to meet you!" [he extends his hand to shake hers]

JULIA: [she shakes his hand - the feeling surprises her] "Oh, wow, I... uh... You're here to help Henry? That's... That's great! That's what we've been praying for. We asked the church council for help some time ago, but I don't remember Henry saying that someone was coming."

HENRY: [Henry enters] "Oh, Julia. This is... Dudley."

JULIA: "We've just met. I didn't know you were getting more help."

HENRY: "Yes, well... he's come as a surprise to me too. And, I'm not sure what he's going to be doing."

DUDLEY: "Henry, you didn't tell me how beautiful your wife truly is! She is a vision!"

JULIA: "Oh, Mr. Dudley..."

DUDLEY: "Please, just call me Dudley."

JULIA: "Well, Dudley, you have a great gift for flattery."

DUDLEY: "It may be flattery, but that doesn't mean it's not true."

JULIA: "Well thank you just the same. Henry, where's Brenda?"

DUDLEY: "Uh... Henry gave her the rest of the day off. She needed to do some Christmas shopping for her children. I thought it was a very nice gesture."

JULIA: "Yes, Yes, it is. Henry, we're still going out, right?"

HENRY: "Oh, Julia. I'm so sorry... I completely forgot! You know Mr. Trevor called last night. He insisted that I meet him at lunch today. I couldn't talk him out of it."

JULIA: "Henry. You said we were going out... just us. I promised Debby!"

HENRY: "Oh, I'm sorry. Between keeping Elm Street going and trying to get this new church built, I don't know whether I'm coming or going. I have to see Mr. Trevor at lunch, and then on to a board meeting. I don't see any way out of it."

DUDLEY: "Maybe I can help. Could I go to your meetings in your stead?"

JULIA: "That's a wonderful idea! Could he, Henry?"

HENRY: "I don't see how. Dudley doesn't know anything about the new church project."

DUDLEY: "I'm a quick learner!"

HENRY: "No, no... it just won't do. It must be me... I'm sorry..." [gets an idea] "What a minute. Dudley, it would be a great help to me if you would take Debby and Julia to lunch. Do you think you could do that for me?"

DUDLEY: "Well, I... I guess I could, if it's alright with Julia."

JULIA: "I'd be happy for the company."

HENRY: "Splendid! You can have lunch and I'll see you later this afternoon."

JULIA: "Henry, don't forget - you're supposed to come hear the kids rehearse their Christmas song."

HENRY: "Oh, that's right. Thank you for reminding me. 3 o'clock sharp - right? Then you and I can go to Billy's tonight."

JULIA: "That will be wonderful! Now, Don't forget the kid's rehearsal... don't be late."

DEBBY: [Debby enters] "Mom, are we going... oh... hello."

DUDLEY: "Hello, Debby. My name is Dudley."

DEBBY: "Nice to meet you, sir."

JULIA: "Dudley is Daddy's new assistant, Debby. He's going to be helping Daddy."

DEBBY: "Oh, okay." [to Henry] "Daddy, are you ready to go to lunch with us?"

HENRY: "I'm sorry, Honey. Bad news. I've got some very important meetings that I must go to. But, I'd much rather be going with you, if makes you feel any better."

DEBBY: "It doesn't."

HENRY: "But, I have some good news too! Dudley has agreed to take you and Mommy to lunch."

DEBBY: "You're going to lunch with us?"

DUDLEY: "I'd be delighted, as long as it's okay with you. What do you think?" [he extends his hand to her]

DEBBY: [she shakes his hand. She feels it too.] "Yes... Yes! That would be awfully nice."

MARGARET: [entering] "Oh, hello... I... Oh..."

JULIA: "Mama, this is Dudley. He's here to help Henry."

MARGARET: [she's enchanted] "Well, hellooooo Dudley! I might have a few things you can help me with too! "

DUDLEY: "I'll help any way I can."

JULIA: "That's enough of that, Mama."

MARGARET: "Aren't y'all supposed to be at lunch?"

JULIA: "We were just leaving. You want to come?"

MARGARET: "No, I've got some errands to run."

DEBBY: "C'mon! Let's go!" [she grabs Dudley's hand and heads to the door] "Ready Mommy?"

JULIA: "Yes. I guess I am. We'll see you later." [she kisses Henry on the cheek, then turns to leave, then turns back] "Don't forget - 3 o'clock."

DUDLEY: "See you later, Henry. Nice to meet you Margaret." [Dudley, Debby and Julia exit]

HENRY: "Yes, have... have a good time."

MARGARET: "I'll see you later, Dudley." [she looks at Henry] "You're not going?"

HENRY: "Meetings, Margaret... more and more meetings." [he grabs his stuff and exits]

MARGARET: [she stands there shaking her head disdainfully]

ACT 1 - SCENE 7 - THE CAFE

Entering a cafe.

DEBBY: "Mr. Dudley. You're gonna love this place. They have really good ice cream here."

DUDLEY: "Oh, I've haven't had good ice cream in decades. Sounds lovely!"

JULIA: "Decades? You must get out about as much as I do."

DUDLEY: "Less! Even less."

WILLIAM: "Good afternoon. How many?"

JULIA: "Three please."

WILLIAM: "Very good. This way, please."

[They pass a table of Mrs. Hamilton's crew: Mr Perry, Mrs Trumbull and Mrs Ward, who recognize them and start talking. Julia waves to them as they go by. They sit at a nearby table]

WILLIAM: "Right here please. I'm William and I'll be serving you this afternoon. Here are your menus, and I'll be right back to take your order."

DUDLEY: "Thank you, William." [pointing to Mrs. Hamilton's crew] "Friends of yours?"

JULIA: "Yes. They're members of the new church committee. I'm sure they're wondering why Debby and I are here with a strange man."

DUDLEY: "Well, I've been called a lot of things, but never strange."

JULIA: "No... No, I didn't mean it like that." [Dudley smiles at her, Julia smiles back knowingly] "But you knew that." [to Debby] "What would you like, dear?"

DEBBY: "I'll take anything, as long as we get ice cream!"

DUDLEY: "Ladies! Please! Allow me." [he motions to the William]

WILLIAM: "Yes sir?"

DUDLEY: "William, bring us the best lunch you can think of. And, please, make sure it includes ice cream at the end."

WILLIAM: "Yes sir. Very good, sir."

JULIA: [she looks over at Mrs. Hamilton's group] "I just know they're talking about us. I... I feel..."

DUDLEY: "I'll take care of it! Excuse me, ladies." [he gets up and approaches the other table] "Do forgive me coming to your table. My name is Dudley. I believe you're all friends of Julia's? Yes? Well then, would you care to join us?"

M.TRUMBULL: "Oh, no, we couldn't impose."

DUDLEY: "Nonsense! No imposition at all."

MRS WARD: "All right, well..." [she looks at the other two] "That'd be lovely. That's very nice of you."

DUDLEY: "Excellent! Julia will be delighted. Right over here." [he ushers them to the table and pulls up the chairs. They all exchange hellos.]

JULIA: "I'd like you all to meet Dudley. He's Henry's new assistant."

MR PERRY: [he is a bit skeptical of Dudley] "I didn't know Henry was getting a new assistant. What happened to Brenda?"

DUDLEY: "Oh, Brenda is still with us and is doing great work. I'm kind of a special assistant. The Top Man sent me here."

M.TRUMBULL: "Are you helping with the new church project, Dudley?"

DUDLEY: "I'm helping with any number of things, Mrs. Trumbull."

MR PERRY: "So, Dudley, what exactly are your capabilities?"

DUDLEY: "Oh, well... I hope, Mr. Perry, that you'll find that I have a one or two skills that will come in handy here." [he reaches out to shake his hand] "I hope you'll find me capable."

MR PERRY: [reacts to handshake] "Yes... yes! I... I'm sure you're more than capable."

DUDLEY: "That's very nice of you to say." [William comes by. Dudley stops him] "Ah, William, my good man. Make sure everyone here gets some of your wonderful ice cream!"

WILLIAM: "Yes sir. Very good, sir."

ACT 1 - SCENE 8 - HENRY & MARGARET

Henry's foyer.

HENRY: [entering] "Brenda... Bren... wait, that's right. Dudley gave her the day off. Just when I need her the most..." [he moves to his office]

MARGARET: [enters] "Henry? I thought you had meetings this afternoon."

HENRY: "I met with Mr. Trevor, but they moved my board meeting back to 3 o'clock. It seems some of them had plans for a long lunch. I've got a lot of preparation before then. Are Julia and Debby back?"

MARGARET: "I haven't seen them. Why was Dudley going with them?"

HENRY: "With my meetings I couldn't go... I sent Dudley with them."

MARGARET: "I thought he was supposed to be working with you."

HENRY: "Yes, well. I asked him to take them because I couldn't do it because of Mr. Trevor."

MARGARET: "You know, Henry... You might want to make some time for your family."

HENRY: [perturbed] "Yes, Margaret, I know. I know... but this church project is eating up all my time."

MARGARET: "It's eating up more than your time, Henry. Looks like it's eating up everything else you love too."

HENRY: [sarcastically] "Thank you for pointing out my lack of priorities, Margaret. Is there anything else?"

MARGARET: "No, that's it..." [she moves to the door] "... for now." [exits]

HENRY: [sitting dejectedly at his desk as light blacks out.]

ACT 1 - SCENE 9 - KID'S CHOIR REHEARSAL

Entering the kids choir rehearsal at church.

JULIA: "What a delightful lunch. I've never seen Mr Perry, Mrs Trumbull and Mrs Ward that pleasant."

DUDLEY: "Yes, they warmed up nicely, even after having ice cream, which, by the way Debby, was as good as you said it would be."

DEBBY: "Told ya."

[choir kids enter]

JULIA: "Hi kids. C'mon in. Get lined up." [she checks her watch] "Where is Henry?"

DUDLEY: "He'll be along shortly. Probably got caught up in all the Christmas traffic."

JULIA: "Well, we can't wait. All the kids are here." [to the kids] "Okay, quiet down. Find your places."

DUDLEY: [he and Debby move to the side. To Debby] "What part do you play?"

DEBBY: "A sheep."

DUDLEY: "Any lines?"

DEBBY: "Baaaaaaahhhh."

DUDLEY: "Wow. That's really good."

JULIA: [leanding the kids] "Does everybody know their parts? You know your part? Where's my shepherd?"

KID 1: "I'm a shepherd."

JULIA: [pointing to a spot] "You're right here."

KID 2: "I'm the angel."

JULIA: "You're back there."

DUDLEY: [to Debby] “Angel? You have Angels in this number?”

DEBBY: “Sure.”

DUDLEY: “Well, all right!”

JULIA: “Debby, get in your place, please. Alright. Let’s try this.”

KIDS SING: [they sing Who Would Imagine A King] “Mommies and daddies always believe, that their little angels are special indeed...”

JULIA: “Smile!”

KIDS SING: “And you could grow up to be anything. But who would imagine a king.”

JULIA: “Everybody.”

KIDS SING: “It was so clear when the Wise Men arrived... and the angels were singing Your name. That the world would be different ‘cause you were alive. That’s when heaven stood still To proclaim.”

JULIA: [Whispering, pointing at the girl who plays Mary] “Jessica.”

JESSICA: [singing] “One day an angel...”

JULIA: [encouraging them] “Keep smiling.”

JESSICA: [singing] “Said quietly that soon he would bring something special to me. And of all of the wonderful gifts he could bring. Who would imagine a king.”

JULIA: [beaming] “Beautiful.”

DUDLEY: [applauding] “Bravo! Bravo! That was spectacular.” [to Julia] “That was great! You must be so proud.”

JULIA: “Yes, thank you, I am.” [slight change to a hint of sadness] “I just wish Henry would have been here to see it.”

ACT 1 - SCENE 10 - STREET SHOPPING

Walking on the street after the rehearsal.

DUDLEY: "I can't believe how well you have those kids singing."

JULIA: "Thanks. Yes, they sounded great today. They've really come a long way."

BRENDA: [approaches from opposite direction carrying shopping bags] "Hi Debby, Julia. Hi Dudley."

JULIA: "Hi Brenda. Wow! That's a lot of stuff."

BRENDA: "I know. I finished all my Christmas shopping. It was amazing. I found everything I was looking for, and it was all on sale too! It was like magic. I've never had it go so smoothly."

DEBBY: [tugging on Julia's coat] "Mommy, I'm tired."

JULIA: "Oh, well, okay. I... I was hoping to do a little shopping myself, but..."

BRENDA: [interrupting] "Oh, I can walk Debby home, Julia. I'm going that way anyhow. Is that good with you Debby? Can you carry a bag for me?"

DEBBY: "Sure." [takes a bag] "Bye Mommy. Bye Dudley." [Debby and Brenda exit]

DUDLEY: "Bye Debby. Bye Brenda."

JULIA: "I'll see you at home Honey. Thanks Brenda." [turning and looking in a shop window at an evening dress] "Oooo. Look at that!"

DUDLEY: "Beautiful, isn't it."

JULIA: "It sure is."

DUDLEY: "Go in and try it on."

JULIA: "Oh, no, no, I couldn't. Besides, I'm supposed to be shopping for Henry."

DUDLEY: "You with that dress on is all the gift Henry will want. Trust me on this."

JULIA: "I'm looking for a gift to Henry... *from Debby.*"

DUDLEY: “Oooooohh. Okay... uh... yeah. That might not be quite right under those circumstances.”

JULIA: [sees Professor Wutheridge approaching] “My old friend, the professor.”

DUDLEY: “Hello, Professor.”

PROFESSOR: “Julia! Are you with this man?”

JULIA: “Yes, of course. This is Dudley.”

DUDLEY: “The professor knows me well. From the University of Vienna.”

PROFESSOR: “I’ve been thinking about that. I’m not sure I believe you’ve ever been to Vienna.”

DUDLEY: “He always pretends he’s never seen me before.”

PROFESSOR: “I’m not sure I really know this man, and I’m not sure I trust him.”

JULIA: “Professor, he’s Henry’s new assistant.”

PROFESSOR: “Oh. You really know this fellow?”

JULIA: “Of course I do.”

PROFESSOR: “And he’s okay with you?”

DUDLEY: [they’re talking about him] “Standing right here.”

JULIA: “Yes. Yes.”

PROFESSOR: “Well, in that case, how about the both of you dropping in for a Yuletide visit?”

JULIA: “Oh I don’t know. I really need to go home.”

DUDLEY: “We have a little time, don’t we Julia? How often do you get to see the Professor?”

PROFESSOR: “Yes, quite right!”

JULIA: “Well, perhaps just for a few minutes.”

PROFESSOR: “Good. Come along.” [all exit together]

ACT 1 - SCENE 11 - HENRY MISSES REHEARSAL

Back at the Brown residence.

[Debby and Brenda enter the house. Henry hears someone coming in and gets up to see who it is]

DEBBY: "Hi Daddy!"

HENRY: "Hi Honey! Brenda... are you... where's Julia?"

BRENDA: "Hi Pastor Brown. I was out doing some Christmas shopping and ran into Debby, Julia and Dudley. Julia wanted to do a bit of shopping, so I brought Debby home."

DEBBY: "You missed the rehearsal at church, Daddy."

HENRY: [just now remembering] "The choir rehearsal at 3... that's right... oh, honey, I'm so sorry I missed it. How was it? How did you do?"

DEBBY: "I was fabulous!"

HENRY: [laughing] "Fabulous? I'm sure you were." [phone rings]

MARGARET: [off stage] "I got it."

BRENDA: "Well, I have to be going. Bye Debby. Bye Pastor Brown, and thanks for the day off. It really made a difference."

HENRY: "I... uh... you're... a... you're welcome." [Brenda exits]

DEBBY: "Are you and Mommy going out tonight, Daddy?"

HENRY: "Yes, I hope so."

MARGARET: [entering] "Debby, you go on upstairs and get changed." [Debby exits] "That was Tom Frasier from church."

HENRY: "Is everything okay?"

MARGARET: "I'm afraid not. His wife Monica has taken a turn for the worst."

HENRY: "Oh no. She's been in the hospital for two weeks. We were hoping she would be going home before Christmas."

MARGARET: “Well, it doesn’t look like that’s going to happen. He asked if you could come to the hospital. I told him I would ask you.”

HENRY: [resigning to go] “I... I’ve gotta go.” [he gets up to get his coat]

MARGARET: “You do.” [beat] “Do you want me to tell Julia?”

HENRY: “We were supposed to go to Billy’s for dinner tonight. I... yes, Margaret. Please apologize for me. Tell her I’ll make it up to her.”

MARGARET: “I will Henry... I know you have to go, that’s what a good pastor does. But, I also know this... your ‘make it up to Julia’ list is getting longer by the day. When do you think you’re gonna start whittling it down?”

HENRY: [putting his coat on and leaving] “You’re right. I know you’re right. I’m so busy I can’t see straight, Margaret. I’ll... I’ll just have to do better... somehow.” [he moves to exit] “Good afternoon Margaret.”

MARGARET: “Good afternoon, Henry. Give Monica and Tom my best. Tell ‘em we’re prayin’ for them.”

ACT 1 - SCENE 12 - THE PROFESSOR'S HOUSE

The Professor's residence.

DUDLEY: "Professor, I see you're a religious man."

PROFESSOR: "What makes you think that?"

DUDLEY: "You have an angel on your Christmas tree."

PROFESSOR: "Julia gave me that years ago."

JULIA: "Your tree is beautiful."

PROFESSOR: "It's disgraceful. However, it gives me the illusion of peace on earth, goodwill toward men."

JULIA: "Why don't you show us the manuscript of your book?"

PROFESSOR: "My book?"

JULIA: "Yes."

PROFESSOR: "Oh, no, no. I couldn't."

DUDLEY: "You're writing a book?"

PROFESSOR: "Yes. You didn't know?"

DUDLEY: "You didn't tell me."

PROFESSOR: "I described that book in detail at the lectures I gave at the University of Vienna. All my pupils heard me. Now I'm certain this fellow's an impostor."

DUDLEY: "You're still working on *that* book? I thought you'd finished that one years ago."

PROFESSOR: "Yes, well, I'll tell you... I'll tell you about my book. For 20 years I've been talking about it and promising the publishers it'll be delivered next spring. The funny part is that I haven't written one word. Not one word."

JULIA: "Why not?"

PROFESSOR: "I couldn't think of anything original to say. Just the same old monotonous history. Dry as dust, just like me. That's the whole story of my life. Frustration. It's a chronic disease and it's incurable. [beat] Would you believe that once I was madly in love with a beautiful young lady. My friends, and she was a vision of delight. An absolute enchantress."

JULIA: "You never told me about it."

PROFESSOR: "That's the trouble. I never told her about it either. I couldn't find the words. So she married an athlete. A great hulking oaf of a man who never even finished the eighth grade. But he knew how to say "I love you." Same trouble with my book. Can't find the words."

DUDLEY: "Even when you had this coin to inspire you?"

PROFESSOR: "Why, that's the one that I gave to Henry."

DUDLEY: "Yes. I borrowed it off his desk."

PROFESSOR: "You wasted your time. It's worthless."

DUDLEY: "On the contrary, this is one of the rarest of all antiquities. Only one hundred of these coins were minted by Julius Caesar 2,000 years ago. That was when Cleopatra visited Rome. Presumably, these were used to pay her hotel bill."

PROFESSOR: "I never knew that."

DUDLEY: "Nobody knew... except Caesar's wife."

PROFESSOR: "She was suspicious?"

DUDLEY: "What do you think? She did not share her husband's admiration for Cleopatra. So she had every one of these coins destroyed - melted into ornaments for herself. Or so she thought. This is the one she missed. It's an unwritten chapter in history and you, Professor, are the perfect man to write it."

PROFESSOR: "Do you know any more stories like that?"

DUDLEY: "Any number of them."

PROFESSOR: [eyeing Dudley] "You're a curious fellow, Dudley."

DUDLEY: [smiles] "You've just begun to notice?"

PROFESSOR: "What's your background?"

DUDLEY: "My background?"

PROFESSOR: "Yes! Where do you come from?"

DUDLEY: "Well..."

PROFESSOR: "And don't tell me more about Vienna because I don't think I'll believe it."

DUDLEY: "All right. If I told you I came from another planet, would you believe me?"

PROFESSOR: "I don't know."

JULIA: "I'd believe you, Dudley."

DUDLEY: "And you'd be right, Julia, as always. We all come from our own little planets. That's why we're all different. That's what makes life interesting."

JULIA: "Oh, it's getting dark. Henry will be worried. We must be leaving."

PROFESSOR: "Oh, no."

JULIA: "Yes. I'm sorry, Professor, but we must."

PROFESSOR: "Dudley?"

DUDLEY: "Yes, my friend."

PROFESSOR: "There's one thing that troubles me."

DUDLEY: "What's that?"

PROFESSOR: "I'm an old man. Writing that history is a tremendous task. I wonder... will I have time to finish it?"

DUDLEY: [reassuringly, he shakes the professor's hand] "You'll finish your history, Professor. You'll have time."

PROFESSOR: [feeling Dudley's handshake] "I... I don't know why, but I believe you, Dudley. For quite a while now, every time I passed a cemetery, I've felt as if I were apartment hunting. But now... now I have a quest."

JULIA: "I'm sorry we have to run. Goodbye, Professor."

PROFESSOR: "I can't thank you enough. You've given an old man a very happy afternoon. God bless you both."

DUDLEY: "Thank you. I'll make sure I pass that recommendation along."

ACT 1 - SCENE 13 - BACK AT HOME

Dudley and Julia arrive back at the Brown residence.

JULIA: [entering] “Whew! It’s getting really cold out there.”

DUDLEY: “Can’t hide a warm heart, though! And, what a pleasure it was to run in to the Professor.”

MARGARET: “Well, it’s about time. Where have you two been?”

DUDLEY: “Good evening, Margaret.”

JULIA: “Hi Mom. After the rehearsal, I did a bit of shopping, and we ran in to Professor Wuthridge and visited with him for a bit. Is Henry getting ready?”

MARGARET: “Uh... no... not exactly. He got a call from Tom Frasier. Monica has had a setback.”

JULIA: “Oh no. She’s been in the hospital for a while.”

MARGARET: “Henry had to run off to the hospital. Don’t know how long he’ll be.”

JULIA: “Yes... I... he had to go... well, I guess Billy’s will have to wait.”

DUDLEY: “Uhh, you know. I don’t have any plans tonight. Could I pinch hit for Henry one more time?”

JULIA: “Oh, I don’t know, Dudley. It’s been a long day, and...”

DUDLEY: [interrupting] “But you were looking forward so much to going out. And besides, I want to see this Billy’s place for myself. You’ve told me so much about it. Couldn’t you do it... just so I can see it?”

JULIA: “Well... I was looking forward to it...”

MARGARET: “Oh, go on. You know you want to. Get upstairs and get changed. I’ll occupy Dudley for a minute... or fifty.”

JULIA: “Okay. I’ll only be a minute.” [she exits quickly]

DUDLEY: “So, Margaret. How did Julia and Henry meet?”

MARGARET: “They were in adjoining strollers, and, uh... and one day Julia took his pacifier, and he made a really big noise about it.”

DUDLEY: “Who wouldn’t?”

MARGARET: “You know, when Henry was about ten, he started wearing suits to school.”

DUDLEY: “Why?”

MARGARET: “He was trying to impress her.” [Laughing]

DUDLEY: “Obviously, it worked.”

MARGARET: “He’d walk her home from school everyday...” [laughing] “He was so clumsy and goofy back then. Skinny as a rail. Ears out to here. And a haircut only a mother could love.”

DUDLEY: “Sounds like true love to me.”

MARGARET: “My husband said they were born for each other.”

DUDLEY: “He did a lot for Henry, your husband.”

MARGARET: “Well, I’ll admit that I’m a little biased. But my husband was the best... just the best.”

DUDLEY: “He was a preacher too, right?”

MARGARET: “Yes. Yes. He was a true man of God... the pastor at Elm Street before Henry. He preached there for 37 years. [shakes her head] I doesn’t seem possible now. Those were great years... the best years...”

DUDLEY: “When did you lose him?”

MARGARET: “Seven years ago... cancer got him. That was a long time ago.”

JULIA: [re-entering] “Okay. I’m ready!”

DUDLEY: [she is stunning] “Oh. Oh my.”

JULIA: [examining herself] “What... What’s wrong.”

DUDLEY: “Nothing. Not a thing. You look lovely.”

MARGARET: “Girl, I can remember when I looked that good. Maybe a little better, even.” [she laughs]

JULIA: “Well, thank you both.” [to Dudley] “Are you ready?”

DUDLEY: “Uh... yeah. Let’s go.”

MARGARET: “Have fun. Don’t mind Debby and I. She’ll get her bath and then we’re playing Monopoly.” [she gets up to leave and calls to Debby off stage] “Debby! Get out the Monopoly game! And we’re playing with real money this time...” [all exit]

ACT 1 - SCENE 14 - BILLY'S CLUB

Billy's - a restaurant/cabaret. Night club music throughout.

WAITER: "Welcome to Billy's. Two?"

DUDLEY: "Yes, Thanks."

JULIA: "Thank you." [they are led to their table and sit]

WAITER: "Here you go. I'll be right back with menus."

DUDLEY: [looking around] "This is nice, huh? Good food, good music."

JULIA: "Yes, I love this place."

DUDLEY: [notices her hands] "Julia! That's the most beautiful nail color."

JULIA: [she looks at her nails] "Oh... really?" [Dudley reaches out for her hand, she reaches out to his] "Oh!"

DUDLEY: [reassuring] "It's okay." [holding her hand] "Yes, just lovely. Julia, have you ever had your palm read?"

JULIA: "Ahh, no..."

DUDLEY: "Well let's see" [he takes her hand in his, palm up, but he only looks at her eyes] "I never noticed how green your eyes are."

JULIA: "But what about my palm?"

DUDLEY: "Okay, here we go... I see a beautiful woman with a good heart. She only has to open her eyes to realize that everything she ever wanted... she already has."

JULIA: "You didn't even look at my hand."

DUDLEY: "But I held it."

JULIA: "Do you see Henry's church?"

DUDLEY: "I'm afraid that's a little fuzzy."

JULIA: "How about Henry and I?"

DUDLEY: "Hmmm... let's see. - Ow! Ow! Ow! Oh, it's so hot, I had to let it go."

JULIA: "You must be talking about our past. Every fire dies sometime, Dudley. You know that. What do you do when the flame seems to be dying out?"

DUDLEY: "What do you do?... I'll have to think about that. But right now I just want to know one thing... Do you dance, Julia? I bet you're an excellent dancer."

JULIA: "Oh, It's been a very long time."

DUDLEY: "You want to dance?"

JULIA: "Why not?" [Laughs]

DUDLEY: "Well, all right."

JULIA: "Let's give it a shot."

DUDLEY: "I haven't been dancing in a long time, too. I've got some steps I wanna try."

JULIA: "Oh? Okay. Well... [Dudley starts to dance erratically]

DUDLEY: [dancing throughout] "Oh, yeah. Yeah." [Snapping Fingers] Yeah. [changes steps]

JULIA: "Oh, my."

DUDLEY: [changes steps again, even more bizarre]

JULIA: "What's that one?"

DUDLEY: "I call it The Dudley Shuffle. I just made it up. You like it? I can teach it to you."

JULIA: "The Dudley Shuffle. Uhhh..." [Laughing] "I think I'll just enjoy you doing it."

DUDLEY: [Screams] "Here we go!" [Billy enters behind Julia]

BILLY: "Julia!"

JULIA: "Billy! How are you? I can't believe it. Are you still running this place? You look well."

BILLY: "Never been better. And look at you. How come I haven't seen you and Henry around here?"

JULIA: "Henry's been real busy trying to get that new church built. But it's great to see you!"

BILLY: "You too! How you doing?"

JULIA: "I'm okay." [introducing the men] "Oh, Dudley, Billy. Billy, Dudley."

BILLY: "Oh, hey. How ya doin'?"

DUDLEY: "A pleasure, a pleasure."

BILLY: [to Dudley] "You know, If Henry hadn't helped me early on, I never would've gotten this place up and running. I tell you, I owe that man everything."

JULIA: "You should call him and tell him."

BILLY: "Well, I will."

JULIA: "Do that. He'd love to hear from you."

DUDLEY: "Hey, why don't we all just sit down and visit?"

JULIA: "Yeah."

BILLY: "Okay." [they all sit at the table]

JULIA: "So, Billy, are you and Maxine still together?"

BILLY: "Oh, you better believe it. She still calls six times a day to make sure I'm being a good boy."

DUDLEY: "Fine woman, Maxine. I'm sure."

BILLY: "You married, Dudley?"

DUDLEY: "No, no. No, I've never been lucky enough to meet someone like Maxine... or Julia."

BILLY: "Ain't that the truth? Used to be a time this little girl would come by here every night."

DUDLEY: "Yeah? Every night?"

JULIA: "Sure. Henry proposed to me right over there, in that booth."

DUDLEY: "Are you kidding? Right over there?"

JULIA: "That's right. Those were the good old days, huh?"

BILLY: "Sure were. You couldn't squeeze a dime between you two." [points to where a stage would be] "And Dudley, this girl used to get up there and sing her heart out."

DUDLEY: "Wait... you used to sing here?"

JULIA: "That was a long time ago."

BILLY: "The best singer to ever walk through the door. Now she just sings for the Lord. Not that that's a bad thing." [Laughs]

DUDLEY: "No, no, no. That's a good thing."

BILLY: "Let me tell you something, Dudley. If you ever want to know what love really sounds like... it's her right there. She's got that secret in her voice."

JULIA: "Oh, Billy, please."

DUDLEY: "Why don't you share that secret with us, Julia?"

BILLY: "Yeah, come on, remind us."

JULIA: "No. It's been years, a long time."

BILLY: "I know you can still do it."

JULIA: "No, no, Billy. I don't do that anymore."

DUDLEY: "Well now, I, for one, would like to know what 'love' really sounds like."

BILLY: "Well, there you go. Don't dissapoint the man, Julia."

JULIA: "Billy. I don't remember any of those songs."

BILLY: "I don't want to hear another word, c'mon." [He's helping her out of her chair]

JULIA: "I don't..."

~~DUDLEY: "We want to hear you sing. You sang it for Henry, right?"~~

JULIA: [getting up] "I should be going home."

BILLY: "I'll be right here with you. Just follow me."

DUDLEY: "Go on, sing it like Henry was here."

BILLY: "Here we go."

[Julia sings and BILLY accompanies (song to be determined)] [Dudley is mesmerized]
[people applaud at the end]

JULIA: "Thank you. Thank you very much." [laughing]

ACT 1 - SCENE 15 - END OF THE NIGHT

Back at the Brown residence. Later that evening.

[Margaret is sitting in a chair listening to music. Henry enters]

MARGARET: “Good evening, Henry? How’s Monica?”

HENRY: [he is dog tired] “She had some complications today, but I think she’s going to be all right.”

MARGARET: “You been at the hospital this whole time?”

HENRY: “No. I ran into Harold when I came out of the hospital. He had a load of blankets for the old folks home. I took them over and handed them out. They sure were happy to get them. Did Julia go to bed already?”

MARGARET: “Ah... Julia... she’s... she’s not home yet.”

HENRY: “Not home? Where did she go.”

MARGARET: “She went out to dinner... with Dudley.”

HENRY: “Dudley?”

MARGARET: “Henry, she was looking forward to going out, and... and you couldn’t go. And Dudley didn’t have anything to do tonight, and... and they went.”

HENRY: “And they’re still out... for dinner. Julia and Dudley...”

[Julia and Dudley enter, laughing]

JULIA: [speaking as they come through the door] “Did you have a good time?”

DUDLEY: “Are you kidding? I had a great time. You?”

JULIA: “I had a ball.” [they notice Henry and Margaret] “Oh, hi Henry...”

HENRY: “Well, there’s no doubt you had a good time tonight.”

JULIA: “We did. We went to Billy’s, and...”

HENRY: “You’ve been at Billy’s?”

JULIA: "Yeah. Yeah. Billy was there too."

DUDLEY: "You should've heard Julia, Henry. She sang beautifully."

HENRY: "Wait, wait. You went singing at Billy's all night?"

DUDLEY: "Well, you couldn't go, and Julia really wanted to go, and I didn't have any plans..."

HENRY: "Not to the place where I proposed to her!"

JULIA: "Henry, we had fun. It reminded me of when we used to go there."

HENRY: "But honey. Billy's?"

JULIA: "Henry - we had dinner with Billy, listened to some music, sang a few songs. It was fun, and that's all. Now I'm tired and I'm going up to bed." [to Dudley] "Thanks Dudley." [she exits]

MARGARET: "Oh, yeah... I... uh... I think I'll turn in too. Good night." [she exits]

DUDLEY: [to the women] "Good night." [to Henry] "She had a good time, Henry."

HENRY: "Oh, really?"

DUDLEY: "Yeah. She told me about how you proposed. She even showed me the booth."

HENRY: "The booth?"

DUDLEY: "Don't you want her to have any fun, Henry?"

HENRY: "Of course I do. But I'd like for it to be with me every now and then."

DUDLEY: "She talked about you the whole time."

HENRY: "I'm sure she did, or so you say..."

DUDLEY: "Henry, it's the truth. I already told you... I can't lie."

HENRY: "I don't believe this entire situation!"

DUDLEY: “No, you don’t, Henry. That’s your trouble right there. You don’t believe in much of anything anymore, do you? You don’t believe in yourself. You don’t believe in me...”

HENRY: “Give me some proof, then!”

DUDLEY: “What?”

HENRY: “I want proof you’re an angel. Go ahead...” [he looks around the room] “make... make that desk fly around. Prove it to me!”

DUDLEY: “I’m not going to do any silly tricks, Henry.”

HENRY: “That’s what I thought. You know what? I don’t believe you’re an angel. I think you’re a demon straight out of...”

DUDLEY: “Oh, Henry. Don’t say that.”

HENRY: “So. I’m just not the fun loving guy that I used to be! I guess I’m just too busy to have any fun!”

DUDLEY: “I guess that’s your problem, Henry. You’re just too busy, period. Your wife feels like she’s in a marriage by herself. Your daughter is growing up right in front of you - have you noticed? What are you doing about that, Henry?” [beat] “Hey, you don’t have to listen to me.”

HENRY: “You’re right. I don’t.”

DUDLEY: “Don’t listened to me, then. But you ought to listen to them!”

ACT 2 - SCENE 15

The Brown residence. the next morning. Henry and Julia are arguing.

HENRY: "Look, I know things have been tough around here lately, and that's my fault. But everything is gonna be all right."

[phone ringing]

MARGARET: [off stage] "I got it."

JULIA: [in Margaret's direction] "Thanks Mama." [to Henry] "If only you saying it made it all right."

HENRY: "You see? If you'd listened, you'd have heard an apology."

JULIA: "Uh-huh. No, what I heard is a man saying..."

HENRY: "Julia, I'm doing the best I can..."

MARGARET: [off stage] "Yes, I'll give him the message. I..." [she enters] "That was the lovely and ever so pleasant Mrs. Hamilton."

HENRY: "Mrs. Hamilton? What did she say?"

MARGARET: "She needs to meet with you at her house."

HENRY: "When?"

MARGARET: "Now."

HENRY: "What did you tell her?"

MARGARET: "Nothing. She hung up on me."

HENRY: "Now? Good grief. Julia, we'll finish this later. I promise." [he hurries out]

MARGARET: "So you were out a little late last night..."

JULIA: "I know, Mama. I'm sorry, but we had such a good time... just being out again. We saw Billy. I danced..."

MARGARET: “Wait. You danced? You and Dudley? You failed to mention that little detail.”

JULIA: “It was fun, Mama. We had a nice evening... that’s all. Where are you going with this?”

MARGARET: [beat] “Henry needs you now, Julia. He’s struggling a bit, if you haven’t noticed. You might want to stay a little... a little closer to home.”

JULIA: “All Henry cares about right now is that new church. Oh, mama, he’s gonna build that monument to Mrs. Hamilton out in that wretched suburb, and he’s gonna move us all out of this neighborhood... this house... all to chase his dream of being the preacher in some mega-church.”

MARGARET: “Julia! Preaching God’s word is never wrong, no matter where you do it. You should have learned that from your father.”

JULIA: “I know, Mama, I know. It all just seems so... so wrong. Chasing their money... do you think Mrs. Hamilton’s heart is in the right place? Is she doing it because of her faith? Do you, Mama?”

MARGARET: “Julia, don’t even suggest that you know what’s in that woman’s heart. I’ll admit, she isn’t the nicest person I’ve ever met, but you’ve never taken a step in her shoes.”

JULIA: “You’re right. I know you’re right. I’m just... I don’t know what I am...” [she exits]

ACT 2 - SCENE 16 - MARGARET TELLS DUDLEY

The Brown residence. A few moments later.

DUDLEY: [entering] “Good morning.” [sees Margaret] “Well, good morning Margaret.”

MARGARET: “Hey there Dudley. Can we step outside for a moment.”

DUDLEY: “Well, actually, I was just...”

MARGARET: [interrupting] “Let’s go.”

DUDLEY: “Delighted.” [they both step outside]

MARGARET: “Now, you know I don’t usually pry into other peoples’ business.”

DUDLEY: “So I’ve been told.”

MARGARET: “Now... what are you trying to do to my daughter?”

DUDLEY: “Margaret, it’s all right, I promise you.”

MARGARET: “Nothin’ is all right, Dudley, and you don’t seem to be helping things much.”

DUDLEY: “But that’s exactly what I’m doing... tryin’ to help them, that’s all.”

MARGARET: “You seem to be doing more harm than good, Dudley. You understand what I’m sayin’ to you?”

DUDLEY: “I think so.”

MARGARET: “I hope you do.”

DUDLEY: “Look, I’m havin’ a little trouble tryin’ to get through to Henry. Now, Julia, on the other hand, she’s wonderful. She deserves...”

MARGARET: “What are you talkin’ about what Julia deserves and what she doesn’t? She’s Henry’s wife, not yours.”

DUDLEY: [it’s starting to sink in] “Don’t worry. I... I’m sure she’ll forget me as soon as I leave.”

MARGARET: “Let me spell this out for you, Dudley. You’re supposed to be here to help Henry, and I hope you do just that. But as for Julia... well... Dudley, you are an extremely charming person. You go charm somebody else. Okay?” [she walks back in the house]

ACT 2 - SCENE 17 - MRS. HAMILTON'S HOUSE

Mrs. Hamilton's residence. later that morning.

STEVENS: "Pastor Brown, madam." [Henry enters]

M. HAMILTON: "Thank you Stevens." [to Henry] "I'm glad you could come on short notice, Pastor Brown, but I have to tell you... the last meeting at your home did not sit well with me."

HENRY: "Mrs Hamilton, I've come to tell you..."

M. HAMILTON: "You've come to apologise, I trust."

HENRY: "Exactly. Upon consideration, my objections seem petty compared to your generosity."

M. HAMILTON: "I'm very much relieved to hear that. Sit down, Pastor Brown. What hurt me most was to think that my instinct had betrayed me in recommending you for head pastor."

HENRY: "I'm more grateful for that than you'll ever know."

M. HAMILTON: "Now, I'm taking it for granted that the George B. Hamilton Memorial Chapel shall be located..."

HENRY: [interrupting] "...Just where you specified."

M. HAMILTON: "You no longer feel the effect will be that it was built in my husband's honor?"

HENRY: "I said that when I was upset, and that was wrong. What matters is the church be built."

M. HAMILTON: "Good. Now... I will not have Mr. Hamilton's name on some horrid little brass plaque."

HENRY: "No, no. It'll be incised in marble. Large letters. Gilded."

M. HAMILTON: "And that large stained glass window depicting St. George and the dragon. I should like that the face of St. George look like my late husband."

HENRY: [caught off guard] "You want St. George to look your dead husband George?"

M. HAMILTON: "Exactly. Well, he shouldn't look dead, of course, but... yes."

HENRY: "Oh... okay... Do you have anyone in mind for the dragon?"

M. HAMILTON: "What? Oh. Anyone will do for the dragon. Now, let's get the blueprints."

HENRY: "Oh, Mrs Hamilton. As we're in agreement, would you mind if we postpone discussing the details? I've got to work on my Christmas Eve sermon."

M. HAMILTON: "Very well. We can go over the plans when we transfer the funds."

HENRY: "Thank you. And I'm so glad we've settled our differences." [he tries to stand, but the seat of his pants is stuck to the chair]

M. HAMILTON: "Is anything the matter?"

HENRY: [the chair is stuck to him] "Well... something doesn't seem quite right."

M. HAMILTON: [she sees the problem] "Oh. Stevens. There's something wrong about the pastor's chair."

STEVENS: "Madam, it must be the new varnish. The finisher was here earlier today. He should have warned us or put a sign up."

HENRY: "I do hope I'm not harming the chair."

M. HAMILTON: "No, no, not at all. Stevens - send to a furniture shop or a plumbers or... Turpentine. Anything! We need to do something."

STEVENS: "Yes, madam."

M. HAMILTON: "Oh, dear."

HENRY: "I, uhh... I wonder... Would you mind giving it a pull at the back?" [she tries to pull the chair off of Henry. I doesn't budge]

M. HAMILTON: "This doesn't seem to be working." [she stops pulling] "Are you all right?"

HENRY: "Yes, thanks for trying."

M. HAMILTON: "Whatever is keeping Stevens?" [Stevens re-enters] "Oh, Stevens. There you are."

STEVENS: "I'm sorry, madam, but the furniture shop is closed until after New Year, I can't find a plumber and we seem to be out of turpentine."

M. HAMILTON: "This is preposterous! What can we do?"

HENRY: "I have an idea. Can I use your telephone?"

M. HAMILTON: "Of course. It's right here."

HENRY: “Brenda? Yes, it’s me.” [beat] “I’m at Mrs. Hamilton’s. Will you bring me another pair of trousers?” [beat] “Yes... I’ll explain later. Please, just bring me another pair of trousers.” [beat] “Yes, okay.” [beat] “Thank you.”

M. HAMILTON: “I’m so very sorry this has happened.”

HENRY: “It just seems to be the way today is going for me...”

ACT 2 - SCENE 18 - HENRY VISITS THE PROFESSOR

The Professor's residence. Later that day.

HENRY: [at the Professor's door] "Hello, Professor."

PROFESSOR: "Henry! Come in, my dear fellow, come in. Sit down. Let me take your coat. Well, this is a surprise, and an honor."

HENRY: "No, thanks. I wanted to ask..."

PROFESSOR: Henry, listen to this. It's something that even you can't explain with all your vast ecclesiastical knowledge. I just finished three chapters of my book. Thirty years I haven't been able to write a word, and then, boom... I write it, just like that. It just poured out of me. How do you account for that? "

HENRY: "Oh, I think I can account for it. Dudley's been here, right?"

PROFESSOR: "Yes, he has. He told me things about history that opened my eyes. Today I went up to the university library and looked into some ancient texts which no scholar has been able to decipher. Suddenly, I found that I could understand them. Let's face it, Henry. This Dudley is no mortal man like the rest of us. Who is he? What is he?"

HENRY: "He says he's an angel."

PROFESSOR: "An angel?"

~~HENRY: [to himself] "Nothing stopped me from saying it."~~

PROFESSOR: "An angel from heaven?"

HENRY: "That I'm not sure about."

PROFESSOR: "An angel... That's too bad. He's such a nice fellow. I should have known it. Nothing less than an angel could have put me to work like that."

HENRY: "I'm glad he's done some good. He's brought nothing but disaster to me."

PROFESSOR: "That's absurd. He and Julia were in here the other day and she seemed happier than she's been in years. Quite like her old delightful self."

HENRY: "She's a different person when she's with him. He's turned her from me."

PROFESSOR: "Are you sure he has done that?"

HENRY: "You think it's my own fault?"

PROFESSOR: "I didn't say that. Hmmmm. This is a mystery beyond my powers of comprehension."

HENRY: "I suppose I am to blame for everything. I asked for this in more ways than one. I suppose that Dudley came to me to confirm that I'd already lost the love of Julia and Debby. I've got a confession to make, old friend. You sent me a coin - that was generous of you - and I was mean and petty enough only to see its commercial value. Now I don't know what's happened to it."

PROFESSOR: "Well, I do. Here it is."

HENRY: "Where did you find it? Oh, don't tell me."

PROFESSOR: "Yes. And Dudley told me what it is - a museum piece, worth a fortune. No. I insist you keep it. You and Julia keep it as my Christmas present. It might bring luck to you both. It seems strange, you being a pastor and I a broken-down old scholar, but I feel terribly sorry for you. I wish there was something I could do to help."

HENRY: "Thank you, but there's nothing."

PROFESSOR: "There must be. You and Julia love each other. You always have."

HENRY: "That's only partially true. I love Julia."

PROFESSOR: "Then... then fight for her."

HENRY: "How can I fight against an angel?"

PROFESSOR: "But you have a tremendous advantage, Henry."

HENRY: "Advantage? Over an angel?"

PROFESSOR: "That's precisely it. He's an angel. Julia is a creature of Earth. She's a woman, Henry, and you are a man. You must fight for her. If you do, you can't lose..."

ACT 2 - SCENE 19 - DEBBY'S STORY

The Brown residence. Later that day. Dudley is with Debby.

Debby: "Dudley, can you tell me a story."

Dudley: "Right now?"

Debby: "Don't you know any stories?"

Dudley: "I know hundreds of stories."

Debby: "Tell me one. Please."

Dudley: "All right. Let me think. This happened many, many years ago."

Debby: "That's not the way to begin. Stories start with "Once upon a time"."

Dudley: "Oh, you're right. Once upon a time there was a little boy and he lived in a little town."

Debby: "What was his name?"

Dudley: "His name was David. He was a shepherd. The town was called Bethlehem."

Debby: "I know Bethlehem. That's where the star was."

Dudley: "That's right. Only David lived there long before the star. One night, David was out in the hills tending his sheep. He was playing the harp and singing."

Debby: "Was he singing "Jingle Bells"?"

Dudley: "No, no. "Jingle Bells" hadn't been written then. David was singing songs that he wrote himself. Suddenly, an angel came down and spoke to David."

Debby: "How did David know it was an angel?"

Dudley: "That's just it! He didn't know. And that's the way it always is. Angels come and put ideas into people's heads and people feel very proud of themselves because they think it was their own idea. This angel said to David "One of your lambs has strayed." So David put aside his harp and went into the darkness to find the lamb. The angel guided him. And when David found the lamb, he saw a great big ferocious lion."

Debby: "Oh!"

Dudley: "I know! So David said to the lion "You get away from that lamb." And the lion said "You get away from me or I'll eat you too."

Debby: "Did David run away?"

Dudley: "No. You know why? Because the angel put another idea into his head. So David took out his sling and he hurled a stone and hit the lion right between the eyes."

Debby: "I bet that lion was surprised!"

Dudley: "He sure was! And so was David because he didn't know an angel had helped him. Well, he picked up the lamb and took it back to the fold. Then he felt so happy that he made up another song. It started out: "The Lord is my shepherd. I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures..."

[Henry enters]

Dudley: "... He leadeth me besides the still waters. He restoreth my soul... You can tell her the rest of this, right Henry?"

Henry: "That is a great song, by a true man of God."

Debby: "Hello, Daddy."

Henry: "Hi Deb. I need to talk to Dudley in my office. Would you excuse us please?"

Debby: "Okay."

[Henry ushers Dudley in to his office]

DUDLEY: "Did you have a successful meeting, Henry?"

HENRY: "Very successful."

DUDLEY: "Splendid. Now, Henry..."

HENRY: "What are you doing here?"

DUDLEY: "I'm... I'm here to help you."

HENRY: "Are you kidding me? Is stealing my wife and my daughter part of your help? Is that part of the normal duties of an...? ...of an angel?"

DUDLEY: "Henry, that's not what I'm..."

HENRY: "Stop! Stop right there. You can go now. I've solved my problem."

DUDLEY: "Have you?"

HENRY: "I have. Mrs. Hamilton is giving me the money for the new church."

DUDLEY: "That was a foregone conclusion if you were willing to sacrifice your principles."

HENRY: "Don't you think it's worth it?"

DUDLEY: "Henry, I'm not sure that it is. These are lean years for the world. So many people need food. So many people need shelter. And that's true right here in this neighborhood. That big roof could make so many little roofs."

HENRY: "We're dealing with a materialistic, selfish woman. She wouldn't listen to that."

DUDLEY: "Did you try?"

HENRY: [unmoved] "It's all arranged. It's finished, Dudley! You came so I could have a new church and now I want you to go. I want you to get out of my life and away from me and Julia and Debby."

DUDLEY: "Suppose you pray for that? It was your prayer that brought me here."

HENRY: [prays] "I wish Dudley to be gone. I no longer need his assistance. Amen."

DUDLEY: "Mm-mm. Henry, that was no prayer."

HENRY: "It was right from my heart. I want you to go."

DUDLEY: "Are you sure, Henry?"

HENRY: "I said get out! Get out now!"

DUDLEY: "Alright." [he exits]

[Julia enters after a few tense, quiet moments]

JULIA: "What's all the noise down here? Did I hear Dudley?"

HENRY: "Yes."

JULIA: "Well, where is he?"

HENRY: "He's gone."

JULIA: "Gone? Where?"

HENRY: "How should I know?"

JULIA: "Why did he leave so suddenly?"

HENRY: "I told him to go away. I fired him."

JULIA: "Why?"

HENRY: "He's incompetent... no good at his job. He could not handle the job he was sent here for."

JULIA: "Dudley wouldn't leave us without saying a word."

HENRY: "Maybe he's not the man you think he is. I think he had us all fooled."

ACT 2 - SCENE 20 - DUDLEY & MRS. HAMILTON

Mrs. Hamilton's residence. later.

STEVENS: "One moment, please. Is Mrs Hamilton expecting you?"

DUDLEY: "No, but she'll wish to see me. I'm the pastor's assistant."

STEVENS: "The pastor might be expected, but not the assistant."

DUDLEY: "I told you, Stevens, she'll wish to see me." [he reaches out to shake Stevens' hand]

STEVENS: [feeling the power] "Yes.?"

DUDLEY: "Yes, please." [Stevens shows him in]

STEVENS: "Wait here please."

DUDLEY: [finding a piece of sheet music with an inscription written on it - reading] "This was composed for you, my darling, and you only. Love Allan." Hmm... Her husband's name was George." [he starts humming the tune from the sheet music]

M. HAMILTON: "That song you're humming. No one living but me knows that song."

DUDLEY: "I saw this music lying here. It's wonderful. It's a shame that only you and I appreciate the lost genius of Allan Cartwright."

M. HAMILTON: "You know... about Allan Cartwright?"

DUDLEY: "Oh, yes. The world lost a brilliant young composer when he was... when he died."

M. HAMILTON: "That was over 40 years ago. How could you have known him?"

DUDLEY: "I'm much older than you think. Please, can we sit?"

M. HAMILTON: "What is your name?"

DUDLEY: "My name is Dudley. But, please, tell me about Allan and you... Please."

M. HAMILTON: [speaks with a far away look and tone] “Allan Cartwright was the only man I ever loved. We were engaged to be married and I got frightened. He had nothing and I was afraid of being poor. I turned him away, and I never saw him again. I hate to say it, but I never loved George Hamilton. He was very much in love with me, and he was wealthy. I’ve spent a fortune honoring his memory in empty monuments. It hasn’t helped my conscience at all.”

DUDLEY: “You need to talk to Pastor Brown. You need to tell him.”

M. HAMILTON: “Oh, no, I couldn’t. I would be much too embarrassed.”

DUDLEY: “Oh, I think you can do it.” [he reaches out and shakes her hand]

M. HAMILTON: “No, I couldn’t... Oh, yes. I guess I could.”

DUDLEY: “That’s right, Agnes. Just go see them and greet them in your usual warm-hearted manner. Maybe go see him at church tonight and hear him preach. I know you can do it. Now, I have to go.”

M. HAMILTON: “Oh. Can’t you stay for dinner, Dudley? I’ve enjoyed our conversation so.”

DUDLEY: “I’m afraid I can’t, Agnes. I have a great deal of work to do. But thank you for the invite. Good afternoon.” [he exits]

M. HAMILTON: [calling] “Stevens!”

STEVENS: [entering] “Yes, madam?”

M. HAMILTON: “Pull the car around, please. We’re going to church.”

STEVENS: “Church, madam?”

M. HAMILTON: “Yes, church.”

STEVENS: “Yes, madam. Very good.”

ACT 2 - SCENE 21 - MRS. HAMILTON'S VISIT

Henry's office.

HENRY: [Henry is at his desk, working on his sermon] "Christmas is supposed to be... the most joyous day of the year."

JULIA: [she enters] "Henry?"

HENRY: "Yes, honey."

JULIA: "Would you like some hot chocolate?"

HENRY: "Yes, thank you. [remembers suddenly] Oh, I've got to check the fuse box. If we put any more lights on that Christmas tree, we're gonna blow up the house. I'll be back in a minute."

JULIA: [sneaking around to Henry's desk and reading his sermon] "'Christmas is supposed to be the most joyous day of the year...' Is that all he has? We're in trouble." [there is a knock at the door.] Julia goes to answer it]

M. HAMILTON: "Julia! How nice to see you. Merry Christmas."

JULIA: [surprised] "Oh, Mrs. Hamilton. Uh... Merry Christmas, won't you come in?"

M. HAMILTON: [she enters] "Thank you, my dear. You look lovely today." [Henry enters]

HENRY: "Mrs. Hamilton? Is everything okay?"

M. HAMILTON: "Henry! Merry Christmas. Do you have a moment for me?"

HENRY: "I... Yes, of course, Mrs. Hamilton."

M. HAMILTON: "Come, Henry, we're very old friends. Please, you must call me Agnes. And you too, Julia dear."

JULIA: "Yes. Yes, of course. Thank you."

M. HAMILTON: "Henry, I had the most remarkable visit from your assistant today."

HENRY: "My assistant? Who?"

M. HAMILTON: "Dudley."

HENRY: "Dudley visited you? I should have known."

M. HAMILTON: "He's a delightful man. I enjoyed our time together immensely. And he must be a hard worker too."

HENRY: "He... he what?"

M. HAMILTON: "He said he had so much work to do. Today, on Christmas Eve. You must make him take some rest."

HENRY: "I've been trying to do just that."

M. HAMILTON: "I can't thank you enough for sending him to me. My dear, meeting Dudley has been the greatest spiritual experience of my life."

HENRY: "I'm so glad."

M. HAMILTON: "How did you ever find him, Henry?"

HENRY: "It was by accident as much as anything."

M. HAMILTON: "Talking with this wonderful, understanding man has... it's hard to explain. But, Henry, I've changed my mind about the new church. I'm going to give my money to those who need it. To the poor and the homeless and the unappreciated people in the city... in this neighborhood! And I want to start with **your church!** I want to renew it to its former splendor. And, Henry, I want you to direct the spending of the money. I trust you to do the right thing."

HENRY: "That's... that's wonderful, Mrs. Ham... Agnes. I... I really don't know what to say."

JULIA: "I... are you sure, Agnes?"

M. HAMILTON: "Oh, quite sure, my dear. And I feel great about it. I feel better today than I've felt in 40 years! And now, I'll let you get back to your afternoon, but I'll see you later in church tonight. I can't wait to hear your sermon, Henry."

HENRY: [under his breath] "Yeah, me too."

M. HAMILTON: "Goodbye." [she exits]

JULIA: "Thank you, Agnes. Goodbye..."

[there is a thick silence for a moment. Henry sits down at his desk. Julia waits for something to happen.]

JULIA: "Are you okay, Henry?"

HENRY: "You see what Dudley has done?"

JULIA: "Yes, I see. I just don't know if it's a good thing or a bad thing."

HENRY: "I... I don't know myself. Let me... uh... let me think on it. Besides, I can't worry about that now. I've got to finish this sermon for tonight."

JULIA: "Is there anything I can do?"

HENRY: "No, thank you."

JULIA: "Okay, I'm... I'm here if you need me. Just call."

HENRY: "Thanks, Hon. I appreciate it." [Julia leaves the office. Henry sits in the quiet for a long moment, not being sure what he's going to do. He looks up to the ceiling and says a silent prayer, then he starts to type.]

ACT 2 - SCENE 22 - DUDLEY SAYS GOODBYE TO JULIA

Brown foyer. Julia has just left Henry's office.

JULIA: "Oh! Dudley, you startled me."

DUDLEY: "Julia. I wanted to see you to say good-bye."

JULIA: "No, no. I'll call the council and tell them that we still need you."

DUDLEY: "Well, this is over the council's head. Way over their head. Besides, it's time."

JULIA: "How can it be time?"

DUDLEY: "It just is. It's funny, you know, I spent the last few years... thinking I'd be happy if I could just get back to someplace like this."

JULIA: "Here? The council must send you to some dead neighborhoods."

DUDLEY: [Chuckles] "Well, dead is a relative term. But now I know where I belong."

JULIA: "Did... did I have something to do with this?"

DUDLEY: "No, no, no. But I did want to say one more thing to you. You remember when you asked me what you do... when the flame between two people goes out?"

JULIA: "Yes."

DUDLEY: "The answer is: You don't let it. You just don't let it. You understand me, Julia?"

JULIA: "Yes... I do." [beat] "Will we ever see you again?"

DUDLEY: "I don't know. I would think not."

JULIA: [beat] "How can I thank you?"

DUDLEY: "You already have."

JULIA: "God bless you, Dudley."

DUDLEY: "Thank you. I'm gonna say goodbye to Henry, now." [he moves to Henry's office]

JULIA: "You be careful in there, Dudley."

ACT 2 - SCENE 23 - DUDLEY & HENRY RECONCILE

Henry's office.

DUDLEY: [he enters] "Good afternoon, Henry."

HENRY: "I've never had to fight an angel, but take off your coat. I told you to go, now let's go."

DUDLEY: "Hold on, Henry. Why do you want to fight me?"

HENRY: "Because you're a thief. Trying to steal my wife, my child, everything I love."

DUDLEY: "Don't you realize that as an angel, I could destroy you with a bolt of lightning in a split second?"

HENRY: "I don't care. Julia means more to me than my life. I'm not going to lose her. Not without a fight."

DUDLEY: "Well it's about time... I'm glad you finally remembered that. And with that, I have good news for you, Henry. I'm going."

HENRY: "I'll believe it when I see it."

DUDLEY: "Henry, you don't still think you need to build that big new church, do you?"

HENRY: "I... it's my job... my calling... reach more lost people... grow the Kingdom."

DUDLEY: "What's wrong with growing it right here? There's a lot of growth potential in this neighborhood. Mrs. Hamilton thinks so... and so do I."

HENRY: "I love this neighborhood... Elm Street too. I... I just thought that my place was in..."

DUDLEY: "I... We... we think your place is here, with your family. Your happy family. You wanna be happy, don't you Henry?"

HENRY: "I want to be effective!... and... being effective would make me happy."

DUDLEY: "Can't you do both?"

HENRY: "I used to think so. But now..."

DUDLEY: "Now is when you really get going. You got a good family. You got a good church. You got good people supporting you. This is a good spot for you, Henry."

HENRY: [contemplating this thought] “You really think so?”

DUDLEY: “I don’t think so, I know so.” [he reaches out to shake Henry’s hand]

HENRY: [Henry slowly reaches out and shakes] “There it is... how do you do that?”

DUDLEY: “Do what, Henry?”

HENRY: “That handshake thing. It makes me think everything’s alright.”

DUDLEY: “That’s ‘cause it is.”

HENRY: “I want a handshake like that.”

DUDLEY: “Whoa, Henry. Let’s not rush things.”

HENRY: “So how do I know you’re really leaving.

DUDLEY: “Trust me, Henry. I told you, I can’t lie. And, your prayer has been answered.”

HENRY: “That’s not true. I prayed for a new church. I prayed for you to leave. Neither prayer was answered.”

DUDLEY: “No, Henry. You prayed for help... for guidance. That has been given to you. Goodbye, Henry.”

HENRY: “I’m not sure if this is good or bad, but I’ll never forget this... or you.”

DUDLEY: “Sure you will Henry. Don’t you remember Rule 3? When I’m gone, you will never know that an angel visited your house. Not you, not Julia, not Debby... no one.”

HENRY: “Dudley, if we should need you again, will you come back?

DUDLEY: “Oh no, not me. I’m asking to be assigned to the other end of the universe.”

HENRY: “Is it... because I was so difficult?”

DUDLEY: “Oh, no, Henry. The difficulty was in me. When an angel envies the mortal entrusted to his care, well... it’s a danger signal. You and Julia were made for each other. You take her in your arms and hold her tight. You’re a lucky man, Henry... Oh, one more thing.”

HENRY: “What?”

DUDLEY: "About your sermon tonight..."

HENRY: "My sermon!" [takes a quick look at his watch] "Oh, I've got so much to do. I've barely got a paragraph."

DUDLEY: "Yeah, uhh, I took the liberty of adding a few things. I hope you don't mind" [he rises to leave] "Goodbye Henry. Merry Christmas!" [he exits]

HENRY: "Merry Christmas..." [he sits back at his desk and looks at the paper on his typewriter. He begins to smile broadly]

ACT 2 - SCENE 24 - THE SERMON

Elm Street Christian sanctuary.

HENRY: [he is delivering the Christmas Eve sermon] “Christmas is supposed to be... the most joyous day of the year. But let me tell you something... God never promised anyone a perfect life. He’s saving that for the hereafter. While we’re here on... on this Earth... there’s some things we’ve just got to work for. Am I right about this? It could be a job. It could be a church. It could be a community. Could be a marriage.” [he looks toward Julia and shares a look]

[Dudley enters from the rear of the room, walking down the aisle, listening to Henry’s sermon. He smiles]

HENRY: “But the good news is, God gives us three secret weapons. Faith, hope & love. Faith... well how can I explain that? I think faith shows the reality of what we hope for. And hope is not just a person’s wish or a desire, hope is so much more, it is a confident expectation of what God has promised, ~~and its strength is in God’s faithfulness to us~~. Faith and hope... well, they are the real essence of prayer, and through God’s power of love - there is forgiveness. Jesus died to forgive us and we in turn forgive others. Through faith, hope and love we receive what all mankind yearns for... especially at Christmas time... joy and peace... Joy is so much greater than mere happiness, and it is peace that truly warms our heart. ~~Both are the reward of our faithfulness~~.

And Love... love is the greatest of all. Sometimes we take it for granted don’t we, and we forget to cherish the ones that are dearest to us. Love is shown in so many ways, but I think we show our love when we are kind to each other... And sometimes that means showing kindness to those who haven’t been so kind to us. That’s tough, isn’t it? But when that happens - love blossoms. And one of the real miracles of this life is love... when we love someone... we are also loving God.

“Look in wonder at those you love... for they are the face of God. And when the path is dark... and the road bends... we will let the Lord show us the way. ~~He will give us heart and make us whole~~. You see, I know this... You know how? Because He did it for me! You may ask me, “How?” You see, He’s... He’s got these angels... Waitin’ in this long line... for the chance to come down and help each and every one of us!”

Dudley: [he throws up his hands in triumph] “Yes!” [then he turns around and walks with purpose back out of the rear of the house, smiling all the way]

Henry: [he points to Dudley] “That’s right, brother... they do! So you see, my friends, today I am truly blessed. Blessed with faith and hope... Blessed with love... And blessed with a belief that I can make a difference! All of us can!”

“So we will help our poor! Oh, yes! We will help our young! And our lonely and our needy! So in the most celebrated time of the year, let us begin again. Let us go forward. Forward in faith, forward in hope, forward in love... The big three! And forward into the new days of our lives! God bless you all, and Merry Christmas.”

ACT 2 - SCENE 25 - AFTER THE SERMON

Elm Street Christian sanctuary. After Henry's sermon. Henry, Julia and Debby are greeting the leaving congregation. They file by, like a reception line.

BRENDA: "Good sermon, Pastor. Hi Julia."

HENRY: "Thank you, Brenda. Merry Christmas."

JULIA: "Merry Christmas."

MR. PERRY: "Well done, Pastor. Julia. Debby. Merry Christmas to you."

HENRY: "Thanks so much, Mr. Perry."

M. HAMILTON: "Oh, Henry, you were marvelous!" [she gives him a big hug]

HENRY: "Thank you, uh... Agnes."

M. HAMILTON: "Julia, dear Julia. Merry Christmas." [hugs her too]

JULIA: "Merry Christmas."

MR. MAGGENTI: "Merry Christmas, Julia."

JULIA: "Thank you Mr. Maggenti. And look at you Professor. Visiting a church!"

PROFESSOR: "I thought I should see how the other half lives! Henry, you are indeed a gifted orator."

HENRY: "Thank you, Professor. I appreciate it. Please come again."

PROFESSOR: "You know Henry... I just might do that."

DUDLEY: "Good sermon, Pastor. Merry Christmas." [he reaches out to shake hands]

HENRY: [they shake hands] "I.. thank you. Merry Christmas."

DUDLEY: "You've got a good handshake, Pastor. I like that. [tips his hat to Julia and Debby]
"Ladies." [he exits]

HENRY: [he looks down at his hand, then turns toward the direction of Dudley's exit]

JULIA: "Do you know that man, Henry? I don't recognize him."

HENRY: "I... I don't recognize him either, but there's something very familiar about him."

JULIA: "Maybe he's new to the neighborhood. I hope we see him again. Let's go, Debby." [they all exit]