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For Emma

Cast of Characters

SOLEMN MALE VOICE

SANDRA

CAROL

GREGORY

GRACE

BOB

MRS. HOFFMAN

OLD TIMEY VOICE

SAM

FIGURE / MAH-LI'S DELIVERY BOY

WINKLE / GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST / PERSON 1

PAST CAROL

PAST SANDRA

PAST SAM / BULLY 2

BULLY 1

LITTLE TIM

LICORICE / THE GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT / PERSON 2

MAX / THE GHOST OF CHRISTMAS FUTURE

TOWNSPEOPLE, SINGERS, ETC.

Time / Place

Now / Nantucket

Production Notes*Special Effects:*

Theatrical fun and playful metaphor should be embraced.

Miniatures of ferry boats, jet skis; bowls of snow and spritz bottles of 'ocean' water; flashbulbs and steel sheets hit with hammers—

Let the imagination provide the magic.

Animals:

May be portrayed by puppets, costume elements, shadows, etc.

This play has a talking hamster. Take that as a good clue that your creativity is paramount.

A CHRISTMAS FOR CAROL

by Michael Mitnick

(Darkness.

The sound of a radio changing stations is heard.

The radio lands suddenly on a recording of "Deck the Halls."

The radio changes stations again.

Now, it lands on "We Wish You a Merry Christmas."

The radio changes stations again.

It lands on "Silent Night."

The radio changes stations again.

It lands on a SOLEMN MALE VOICE, close to tears:)

SOLEMN MALE VOICE. And...and when I came home from work...he was just sitting on the couch and, I'll tell you, Sandra, the kid looked at me...

SANDRA'S VOICE. Go on.

SOLEMN MALE VOICE. He looked at me...and his eyes were full of...my son's eyes were full of *scorn*.

SANDRA'S VOICE. Oh I'm sure that's not true.

SOLEMN MALE VOICE. It *is*, Sandra, it *is*. He *hates* me. My own son *hates* me.

SANDRA'S VOICE. Have you tried talking with him?

SOLEMN MALE VOICE. Yes!

SANDRA'S VOICE. And does he understand where you're coming from?

SOLEMN MALE VOICE. I don't think he understands me at all! Honest to— Just to see those hateful eyes staring at me—so full of *scorn*. He's had it in for me ever since the day he was *born*. *Born*. *Scorn*.

SANDRA'S VOICE. That rhymes. Oh Donald, tomorrow is *Christmas*. I think you two should bundle up, put on your muglugs and go for a nice long Christmas walk and ask him to really tell you what's on his mind.

SOLEMN MALE VOICE. That's the most idiotic thing I've ever heard.

SANDRA'S VOICE. What—

SOLEMN MALE VOICE. He can't *walk*. He can't *talk*. The kid is *two months old*! Are you outta yer—

(The bursting sound of teenage laughter over the phone line.)

SANDRA'S VOICE. You kids! Stop calling! Do you understand? This is a serious—

(The radio changes stations again.

It lands on "Jingle Bells."

Like an old metal lever being flipped,

a clang and lights suddenly up on a veterinarian office.

CAROL REZENBEEN, 30s-40s, is eating a yogurt and listening to the radio.

After a verse, she turns the 'power' knob and "Jingle Bells" disappears in a 'pop.'

CAROL stands there, staring out, eating yogurt.

She looks off.

She sighs.

Suddenly, a siren is heard and a huge red light begins to flash.)

CAROL. Oh no. Oh no. Oh no. Oh no...

(CAROL throws the yogurt.

GREGORY, late 60s, scrambles in, pushing a wheeled operating table, upon which sits a pile consisting of surgeon's scrubs, a hair net, a surgical mask, and rubber gloves.

GREGORY. Code red, code red!

(The siren wails.

GREGORY helps CAROL into her scrubs.)

CAROL. Where are Grace and Bob?!

(From the other side, GRACE and BOB, both 20s, fall onstage, having been interrupted mid-make-out.

They try to compose themselves.

GRACE buttons the top button of her shirt. BOB adjusts his hair.

They scramble to their feet and help CAROL into her gear.)

GRACE. Sorry—Bob was helping me reach the paper towels on the top shelf.

BOB. Why I'm wearing lipstick? What is this—the inquisition? Sometimes a man enjoys wearing lipstick, Carol, gosh!

GRACE. *(To BOB, hitting him:)* She didn't ask!

CAROL. Gloves! Hair! Mouth!

(CAROL's arms are outstretched and GRACE puts CAROL's hands into the gloves; from behind, BOB affixes CAROL's mask and hair net.

CAROL *looks at her watch. The other three look to her.*)

CAROL. 5, 4, 3, 2...

(An old woman, MRS. HOFFMAN, bursts on carrying a heap in her arms, wrapped in a Christmas quilt.

BOB and GRACE quickly spread a white sheet out on the operating table.)

CAROL. Put him here, Mrs. Hoffman!

(MRS. HOFFMAN carefully sets down the bundle as BOB and GRACE raise the sheet such that the heap is masked from the audience.)

MRS. HOFFMAN. *(Through tears:)* He was fine all afternoon, but when I came home from the market...he was sitting on his big green pillow and, oh Carol, Max looked up at me with those beautiful hazel eyes and he suddenly collapsed.

CAROL. *(To GRACE and GREGORY, with asides to MRS. HOFFMAN:)* Grace, hold the hind legs. Gregory—the front. How long was he out? Gregory—your elbow is putting pressure on his trachea.

GREGORY. Sorry!

MRS. HOFFMAN. I...I don't know...

CAROL. Did he eat anything out of the ordinary? Bob—stethoscope!

BOB. Huh?

CAROL. Cratchit! Gimme your stethoscope right now!

(BOB removes the stethoscope from his neck and hands it to CAROL.)

CAROL. What were you doing with my stethoscope anyway?

(GRACE looks away, guiltily.

CAROL smells it a minute, looks confused, then puts it to the mound.)

CAROL. Breathing irregular!

MRS. HOFFMAN. Oh dear! Oh dear! Oh dear!

CAROL. *(Tapping joints behind the sheet:)* Reflexes...irregular!

MRS. HOFFMAN. Lord, please save my dog!

CAROL. Gregory—please!

(GREGORY moves out of the way.)

CAROL. I'm going to check his throat.

(Behind the sheet, CAROL moves to the 'head' of the dog and is seen to reach inside.)

MRS. HOFFMAN. Oh Max! My Maxie!

CAROL. There's nothing blocking the breathing...there's nothing...

GRACE. Carol!

(CAROL rushes to GRACE, who is pointing at the 'abdomen.')

CAROL. Oh no!

MRS. HOFFMAN. What is it?

GREGORY.

BOB.

That's—

Oh, gross...

CAROL. Tourniquet! I need a tourniquet!

(Everyone rushes around looking.)

CAROL. Where is it? Quickly!

GRACE. I—

BOB. It was just—

GREGORY. Maybe—

CAROL. Move!

(CAROL rips a sleeve off her scrubs, forming a makeshift tourniquet. She affixes it behind the sheet, while addressing MRS. HOFFMAN.)

CAROL. Did you leave his pills at a height Max could reach?

MRS. HOFFMAN. The—

CAROL. The canine ulcer medication!

MRS. HOFFMAN. I don't...I don't know—

CAROL. He's going into shock. Move!

(CAROL reaches under the table and produces a big bag containing a defibrillator.)

MRS. HOFFMAN. Do something!

BOB. *(Shocked.)* Carol, where in the world did you get a defibrillator?

CAROL. Internet. MOVE!

(CAROL quickly rubs the paddles together.)

CLEAR!

(ZAP!)

CLEAR!

(ZAP!)

C'mon, Max. C'mon!

MRS. HOFFMAN. Oh...I...

CAROL. Grace! Get her outta here!

GRACE. Come, Mrs. Hoffman, let's step outside...

(GRACE leads her off.)

CAROL. Clear!

Bob, I need mouth-to-mouth!

BOB. Can't it wait till we're alone?

CAROL. The dog, Bob! The dog!

BOB. (*Backing off:*) Whoa! You want me to give mouth-to-mouth to a dog?!?

CAROL. You wanted this job to pay for Tim's surgeries—

BOB. No way! Absolutely not. That's gross. That's sick.

(CAROL looks at him an instant, then pushes him out of the way. She performs mouth-to-mouth on the dog as GREGORY pushes on the 'chest' thrice.)

GREGORY. 1, 2, 3!

(CAROL blows in the 'snout'.)

GREGORY. 1, 2, 3!

(CAROL blows in the 'snout'.)

CAROL. We're losing him!

GREGORY. 1, 2, 3!

(CAROL blows in the 'snout'.)

GREGORY. 1, 2, 3!

(CAROL blows in the 'snout'.)

Lights slowly fade as GREGORY's "1, 2, 3" becomes only a motion and CAROL continues to try to save the old dog's life...

Lights fade out.)

(In darkness:)

SANDRA'S VOICE. So you're saying her singing career is completely stagnant even though she has the voice of an angel?

MALE VOICE. Yes, Sandra, that's precisely what I'm saying.

SANDRA'S VOICE. Sometimes, talent isn't enough. It's a competitive world out there and sometimes those who deserve things most find themselves disappointed. Your wife must stand up for herself—get out there, audition—send, I don't know, send tapes to the radio stations. Heck, send one to me.

MALE VOICE. To you?

SANDRA'S VOICE. Yes, send it to the station, care of me, Sandra Rezenbeen. I'll play it on the air.

MALE VOICE. You don't know how much that means to us! Now we're just going to need to convince that angelic voice to sing, sing, sing!

SANDRA'S VOICE. Excuse me?

MALE VOICE. Oh I'm sorry. This is common misunderstanding. My wife has the *actual voice of an angel*. It is in a mayonnaise jar. We keep it on top of the refrigerator.

SANDRA'S VOICE. You kids! Stop calling! This is a *serious radio show!*

(Voices: laughter, bursting out.)

SANDRA'S VOICE. OK, OK. You got me. Very funny.

(Lights fade up on MRS. HOFFMAN, sitting, holding a paper cone of water.

She takes small sips as GREGORY tries to comfort her.)

GREGORY. A great, great dog. I remember when you and Bill would walk Max down Orange Street.

MRS. HOFFMAN. Sunday ice creams. It was a ritual.

GREGORY. He's a very old dog.

MRS. HOFFMAN. 14 years.

GREGORY. No!

MRS. HOFFMAN. Yes!

I never thought he'd outlive Bill.

Did you know Max's nose went from black, to pink, to almost *white*.

GREGORY. The most handsome Labrador I ever did see. Even in old age. Regal. I think of him as the Senator of Nantucket Island.

MRS. HOFFMAN. He isn't *Regal!* He's no Senator.

He's...he's just my Max.

(CAROL enters, pulling off her mask and removing her gloves.

MRS. HOFFMAN *stands*.

CAROL *shakes her head*.

MRS. HOFFMAN *sits down and begins to cry.*)

CAROL. He put up a good fight.

He...he clearly didn't want to go.

I did everything I could.

MRS. HOFFMAN. (*Looking up:*) I know you did.

Did you have to... Oh I hope you didn't have to... I really hope you didn't have to...you know?

CAROL. Nature took care of it.

(MRS. HOFFMAN *digs in her purse for a Kleenex, looking down.*
GREGORY *looks at CAROL.* CAROL *shakes her head.*)

Not much of a Christmas present is it?

Do you have someone at home to—

MRS. HOFFMAN. My daughter is coming in on the Ferry tonight. We always spend Christmas Eve together counting down the minutes.

CAROL. Good.

MRS. HOFFMAN. (*Wiping her eyes:*) Do *you* have anyone, Carol?

CAROL. Who, me?

(BOB *enters.*)

BOB. Hey Carol, if it's OK with you, I think I'm gonna head out.

CAROL. What do you mean? It's only 3 o'clock.

BOB. Yeah, but it's Christmas.

CAROL. I thought...I thought you and I were going to—

(BOB *pulls her to the side.*)

BOB. It's just my boy. Little Tim. He's still hurting from that leg operation.

(MRS. HOFFMAN *looks suspiciously at BOB.*)

Um...*fifth* one this year.

CAROL. Oh no! That didn't work either?

BOB. Uh, no. Doctors say he may never walk again. And it's too bad. You should have seen Little Tim before he got hurt. He was gonna be quite the lawyer.

CAROL. Huh? Well...*someone* needs to stay on duty tonight. Even kittens get sick on Christmas.

(To GREGORY and MRS. HOFFMAN:)

Sometimes people try to giftwrap them.

BOB. Well, thank goodness for Gregory and Grace.

(BOB *grabs his bag, then sidles up to CAROL, throwing an arm over her shoulder.*)

Oh and, Carol, MAJOR BREAKTHROUGH IN SCIENCE! Turns out this fantastic new doctor is moving to the Island who claims to perform a special surgery only practiced in *Denmark* that could restore Little Tim's walk back to one-hundred-and-fifty percent.

CAROL. What! Bob! That's great news!

BOB. It is. Yes, Carol, it sure is and I'm so glad you agree. The problem is this doctor, um, he costs a lot of money...

CAROL. Well... How...how much do you need?

(BOB *whispers an amount in her ear. Her eyebrows rise.*)

BOB. You can just add it to my tab. I'm good for the money. You know it. I just...I don't want to deprive Little Tim one single day of walking—

CAROL. Say no more—

(*She pulls out a checkbook and writes.*)

Here.

BOB. (*Looking at the check:*) You're a real pushover, Carol.

GREGORY. What?

BOB. Isn't that a compliment?

GREGORY + MRS. HOFFMAN. No.

BOB. Oh. Well.

(*He gives CAROL a slow kiss on the cheek. She tries not to melt.*)

Thank you, Carol. You don't know how much this—

CAROL. Go! Just go! Go... Go home. Give Little Tim my best. Merry Christmas.

BOB. Merry Christmas, Carol. You're one of a kind.

(BOB *exits.*)

CAROL *watches him go.*
A moment, a sigh.)

CAROL. Well. I guess Grace can—

(GRACE enters.)

GRACE. Did you just say my name?

CAROL. Yes.

GRACE. I'm hyper-attuned to when people are talking about me.

CAROL. I was saying that you could take the night shift in case any animals—

GRACE. It's Christmas!

CAROL. It's Christmas, *tomorrow*.

GRACE. Carol! Like, this is totally, like, I'm almost sure there's a discrimination law that makes it illegal for you to—like—*we don't even get MAIL tonight*.

CAROL. We never get mail at night. I just need you to be here for the night shift; I'll pay overtime...I'll even come in early to—

GRACE. Why do you even care?

CAROL. Well...I'm...I'm the *boss* and I don't think it's out of the question to—

GRACE. No way. This is—my loser boyfriend has finally promised to be romantic for once instead of wanting to eat chicken nuggets all the time. He's cooking a big meal. A ham, Carol, a *ham*.

CAROL. I'm a vegetarian.

GRACE. But why must we all *pay* for that? It's not like you have anyone waiting for you at home. Why deprive the rest of us from being with our loved ones on Christmas and eating romantic hams? Don't be such a...a...

GREGORY. Scrooge?

GRACE. I was gonna say jerk, but I guess that works.

(CAROL sighs.)

CAROL. Ok, go! Just go...

GRACE. (*Doing a little dance:*) Yes!

(GRACE skips over to CAROL and kisses her on the other cheek.)

You're one of a kind, Carol! Thank you, thank you, thank you!

Oh! Can I borrow your car so we can drive to White Goose Cove if things go well?

CAROL. Oh fine. Here are my keys. Now—go!

GRACE. Is there gas? Last time I borrowed I had to put a full tank—

CAROL. I just filled it—now go. Go you crazy kid. Merry Christmas. Enjoy dinner. I hope the ham is...hammy. I actually don't know what ham is like.

GRACE. I'm sorry I said that no one loved you.

CAROL. You didn't say that.

GRACE. Oh. I guess I just like screamed it in my head. Bye!

CAROL. And I want to meet this new boyfriend of yours. So I can see if he's good enough for our Grace.

(GRACE spins around once. She's wearing a sweater.)

GRACE. New sweater. Do you love?

CAROL. We love. Now bring that boy by! I want to meet him!

GRACE. Oh, um. Yeah. I'll totally do that.
Bye!

(GRACE exits.)

CAROL. Well, I guess Gregory, you can—

GREGORY. It's Christmas.

CAROL. You're Jewish.

GREGORY. C'mon. I'm old. I'm tired. I have a date with a microwave dinner and a hot bath.

CAROL. You eat in the bathtub?

GREGORY. Yes I eat in the bathtub. So what? Is that a *crime*? Is that in our Constitution? Thou Shalt Not Eat in Tubs? Please don't judge me, Carol. My psychiatrist says—

CAROL. It's fine. Well, maybe I could come over and if you have anything in your icebox, I could whip up—

GREGORY. Two words: Bathtub. Dinner. Please don't take away my only happiness.

(Sound of GRACE backing Carol's car into a bunch of garbage cans.)

GRACE. *(Off.)* Carol! Why'd you park so close to all these steel garbage cans! I almost sent the craziest text message!

*(Sound of car driving off.
CAROL sighs.)*

CAROL. Goodbye, Gregory! Merry Christmas...or Happy Hanukkah or—

(GREGORY exits—door slams.

MRS. HOFFMAN and CAROL look at one another.)

MRS. HOFFMAN. How's your sister?

(CAROL shrugs.)

You two still not talking?

(CAROL shakes her head.)

How long has it been?

CAROL. Too many to count...

14 years.

MRS. HOFFMAN. It's a small island. How can you possibly avoid Sandra so well?

CAROL. It's my only talent.

(Collecting her things.)

MRS. HOFFMAN. That's not true. You are a wonderful vet.

CAROL. Not wonderful enough to save—

(MRS. HOFFMAN hugs CAROL.)

MRS. HOFFMAN. He was an old dog.

But *you*, Carol, are not.

(MRS. HOFFMAN goes to exit.)

Perhaps there are some new tricks for you yet.

Merry Christmas.

(She exits.

CAROL strolls around the room.

She picks up the fallen yogurt.

She considers eating it.

She tosses it in the wastebasket.

She goes to the radio.)

She flips it on—)

OLD TIMEY VOICE. Once upon a time—on Christmas Eve—old Scrooge sat busy in his counting-house. It was cold, bleak, biting weather: foggy: and he could hear the people outside, go wheezing up and down and stamping their feet upon the pavement stones to warm them.

(CAROL lifts the receiver and dials a number from memory.)

OLD TIMEY VOICE. The city clocks had only just gone three, but it was quite dark already.

CAROL. Hello—is this Mah-Li’s Chinese Take-out?

OLD TIMEY VOICE. “A merry Christmas, uncle!” cried a cheerful voice. It was the voice of Scrooge’s nephew.

CAROL. Yes this is Carol. How’d you... Oh. You recognize my voice. Hmm.

OLD TIMEY VOICE. “Bah!” said Scrooge, “Humbug.”

(CAROL turns down the radio.)

CAROL. You’re the only place open on Christmas Eve. Well, I guess I’m open too.

(She looks around the office.)

Very busy around here. Good thing I stayed in tonight. So, so busy. Would you want to talk with me for a while?

(...)

Oh, yes, I’d like to place an order. I’ll have...um... General Tso’s Tofu. Sesame Tofu. Mah-Li’s Special Bean Curd. Um... probably some Veggie Lo Mein. And Fried Rice.

(...)

That’s it. Oh! And Eggplant in Spicy Garlic sauce.

(...)

What do you mean how many is this for? It’s for *one*. *Me*.

(...)

Yes I’m sure I don’t need nine sets of silverware, plates, and fortune cookies. Just. One.

Me.

(...)

Merry Christmas to you too.

(She hangs up.
To herself—)

Nine people. *Nine!*?

(She puts her hands on her belly, seeing if she has a bit of tummy.)

Hmmm.

*(She looks around the office.
Straightens a chair.
Then, turns the radio back on.)*

OLD TIMEY VOICE. “Why did you get married?” said Scrooge.
“Because I fell in love.”

CAROL. Ha!

OLD TIMEY VOICE. “Because you fell in love!” growled Scrooge, as if that were the only thing in the world more ridiculous than Christmas. “Good afternoon.”

“I want nothing from you; I ask nothing of you; why cannot we be friends,” said his nephew.

“Good *afternoon*,” said Scrooge.

“And a Happy New Year,” said—

*(There is a rapping at the door.
CAROL jumps.
She turns off the radio.)*

CAROL. Who is it?

VOICE FROM OUTSIDE. It’s Sam and it’s so friggin’ cold. Please let me in.

CAROL. Sam! Oh Sam.

*(She rushes to the door, then away from it to a mirror.
She adjusts her hair quickly, then rushes to the door.
Then, as she’s about to open it, she rushes back to the mirror for a second look.
She adjusts her hair again and runs to the door, stopping halfway—
unsure.)*

VOICE OF SAM. Are you running laps? I can see you through the window.

*(CAROL opens the door; SAM enters.
SAM is rugged, 30s-40s, like a lumberjack who wears a baseball cap.)*

SAM. The snow is really coming down! Like the Lord has dandruff or something. Ha.

(He brushes it out of his hair.)

Anyway. I. Uh.

I saw you through the window as I was passing and I thought I’d say hello.

CAROL. Hello.

(The two stare at each other a moment.)

CAROL. Oh! Can I get you anything! I feel like I should have said that earlier. Please forgive me. Can I get you anything? Would you like a nightcap?

SAM. What do you have?

CAROL. Um...rubbing alcohol.

SAM. No thanks.

CAROL. Goldfish?

SAM. The cheesy crackers?

CAROL. No. Goldfish Goldfish.

SAM. No thanks.

(A moment.)

Been a long time since we talked.

CAROL. Yeah well...

SAM. I mean, we've seen each other but...

CAROL. I wave hello at the market but...

SAM. Your sister?

CAROL. Yeah well...

SAM. You know she and I are separated?

CAROL. What?

(Silence.)

SAM. Seven months now.

CAROL. I...didn't know that.

SAM. Are you alone for Christmas?

CAROL. No.

SAM. Oh.

CAROL. I'm very happy. I have a...I have a great boyfriend.

SAM. You do? Oh. Well, that's wonderful. What's his name?

CAROL. Max.

(Silence.)

SAM. I didn't want to bother you. I just...

CAROL. Look, Sam, I'm really busy around here...

(She gestures to the big empty room.)

The operating room is like a jungle right now. I got...dogs...a tiger.

SAM. A tiger?

CAROL. Three tigers.

SAM. Three—?

CAROL. A baby hippo.

(She curses herself for lying.)

(What!?)

SAM. Oh, then I guess...I'll just go back to the Ferry.

CAROL. I guess that's one way we're the same. We'll do these things till the day we die.

SAM. Actually. I'm quitting. I'm leaving tomorrow morning for good. On the 10 AM.

CAROL. For good?

SAM. I think it's finally time for a change.

(He heads for the door, he turns before exiting.)

Remember when we were kids and I tried to teach you to ride my jet ski and...

(He starts laughing so hard at the memory.)

And you were SO SCARED and kept tipping into the water, saying you were gonna get run over by the motor and then I had to jump off the dock and save you? Remember?

CAROL. No.

SAM. Oh.

You look really nice, Carol.

(She doesn't say anything.)

Ya know, I'm so egotistical I sometimes, when I'm lying in bed trying to fall I asleep, I think about you—

CAROL. You think about me?

SAM. Yeah and I think that...that you never left the island because you were trying to avoid me down at the Ferries.

CAROL. I don't believe in Ferries.

(Silence.)

SAM. Merry Christmas.

(He opens the door and exits.)

CAROL immediately starts to walk in small, tight circles.)

CAROL. Stupid, stupid, stupid!

"I don't believe in Ferries!?"

What was that!!

Ugh!

(She flips the radio back on.)

OLD TIMEY VOICE. Scrooge paused before he shut the door and closed it with a bang.

The sound resounded through the house like thunder.

He closed his bedroom door, and locked himself in; double-locked himself in, which was not his custom. "Humbug!" said Scrooge; and walked across the room.

CAROL. Humbug.

OLD TIMEY VOICE. He sat down again.

(CAROL sits down.)

As he threw his head back in the chair, his glance happened to rest upon a bell.

It was with great astonishment, and with a strange, inexplicable dread, that the bell rang out loudly, and so did every bell in the house.

(A bell sounds loudly and CAROL jumps from her seat.)

CAROL. Ahhhhhh!

(She goes into a karate pose.)

The bell sounds again and again and again.)

OLD TIMEY VOICE. The bells were succeeded by a clanking noise, as if some person were dragging a heavy chain. Scrooge then remembered to have heard that ghosts in haunted houses were described as dragging chains.

(The sound of a huge chain is loudly heard.)

CAROL. Holy Mother of—

(She frantically paces.)

Then comes a barrage of bangs on the door!)

CAROL. Ahhhhhh!

OLD TIMEY VOICE. A face appeared before Scrooge. "I know him! Marley's ghost!"

VOICE FROM OUTSIDE. Mah-Li!!!

CAROL. Marley?!?! (*Screamed:*) Ahhhhhhhhhhhh!!

OLD TIMEY VOICE. “What do you want with me?”

(*CAROL backs away from the door.*)

CAROL. What do you want with me?

VOICE FROM OUTSIDE. Mah-Li!!!

(*Farther...*)

OLD TIMEY VOICE. “Who are you!?”

CAROL. Who are YOU?

(*Farther...*)

VOICE FROM OUTSIDE. It’s Mah-Li!!!

OLD TIMEY VOICE. “Ask me who I *was!*”

CAROL. I’m gonna die!

(*A final huge BANG! and the door flies open.*)

In the falling snow stands a figure with chains wrapped around his waist.)

CAROL. AHHHHHHHH!!!!

FIGURE. AHHHHHHHH!!!!

CAROL. AHHHHHHHH!!!!

FIGURE. AHHHHHHHH!!!!

CAROL. Who—

FIGURE. (*Mah-Li’s Delivery boy:*) Please, lady. I have your *delivery.* From Mah-Li’s Takeout.

CAROL. Oh.

Oh.

CAROL. Come in.

(*He enters. He’s shivering and carrying a HUGE paper bag of Chinese Food.*)

MAH-LI’S DELIVERY BOY. I’m freezing my nutcrackers. Here.

(*Hands her the bag.*)

CAROL. That...*chain.*

MAH-LI’S DELIVERY BOY. For my bicycle. *Don’t steal my bike. Someone keeps stealing my bike.*

CAROL. I won't.

MAH-LI'S DELIVERY BOY. Sixty-eight bucks.

CAROL. Sixty-eight?

MAH-LI'S DELIVERY BOY. Plus tip. And...

(Eying her money.)

Shipping and handling.

(CAROL starts to count out money. MAH-LI'S DELIVERY BOY carefully observes and CAROL hands him bill and after bill after bill – much more than she owes.)

MAH-LI'S DELIVERY BOY. *(Indicating to the massive bag of delivery food:)* Do you expect to be snowed in for the week?

CAROL. This is JUST FOR ME. JUST FOR TONIGHT. Do you have a problem with that!?

MAH-LI'S DELIVERY BOY. No, ma'am. No I don't. Merry Christmas.

(He exits, closing the door.)

CAROL. Ugh. When did I become a "ma'am."

OLD TIMEY VOICE. We will return, right after this:

(A spooky rendition of "God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen" plays. The lights slowly fade to half as time passes...)

CAROL takes out container after container of Chinese food. They are already open and have chopsticks in each one. She is surrounded by food.

She slowly lowers herself to the floor.

A sole fortune cookie is placed on the chair.

She takes a few bites from one container, and then more from another.

She falls asleep as the music transitions into...)

OLD TIMEY VOICE. And ever afterwards, it was always said of him that he knew how to keep Christmas well, if any man alive possessed the knowledge.

May that be truly said of us, and all of us!

And so, as Tiny Tim observed, God bless Us, Every One!

(After a moment of total silence, the radio show transitions to: A LOUD VERSION OF "FELIZ NAVIDAD"!)

CAROL awakens with a start!)

CAROL. Ah!

(She sits up. Looks around her. Sees the wreckage of her eating binge.)

Ughhhh... What did I do...

*(She stands and switches off the radio. It goes with a 'pop.'
She looks out the frost-covered window to the street. Silence.
She picks up a carton of Chinese food and walks to the wastebasket,
but, instead, walks to the rear where there's a microwave and puts
the container inside [even though it has the metal handle].*

She nukes it, then settles back onto the floor.

Childish laughter is heard in the street.

A snowball slams against her window.)

(CAROL sighs.

Her eyes wander to the fortune cookie on the chair.

She stares at it a moment.

She slowly picks it up.

It seems to GLOW [!!!!!!!!!!]

*Unseen by CAROL, the microwave behind her begins to smoke
–starting to fill the room with white fog...*

*CAROL lifts the cookie to her eyes and a chorus of heavenly
"AHHH'S" starts to sing.*

It grows more.

It glows more.

It grows more.

It glows more.

And more...until...

Finally, she CRACKS THE COOKIE.

The "AHHH'S" stop.)

CAROL. Huh.

(Unseen by CAROL, the smoke fills in the rear of the office.)

*(CAROL stands and starts to pull the fortune from the cookie, but
instead of the fortune sliding out simply, the paper keeps going...*

And going...

And going...

*Till CAROL is standing in a big long ribbon of paper that surrounds
her like a streamer.*

*Suddenly, the slip begins to fly out of the cookie, taking a life
of its own, floating up into the air like a fountain of paper and
surrounding her.)*

Oh no. Oh no. Oh no!

(She turns to see the room filling with smoke.)

Oh no, no, no, no, no!!

(She runs to the microwave and pops it open, the smoke pours out.)

My food!

(Tearing her OTHER sleeve off, she begins to fan away the smoke. Emerging in an explosion of white light is THE GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST.

It looks surprisingly like a large hamster.

It wears a candle extinguisher on its head.)

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST. *(In a very high, Chipmunks-esque voice:) Carrrrrrrooolllllllll.*

CAROL. Ahhhh!!

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST. Carrrrrrrooolllllllll.

CAROL. Who...who are you?

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST. Look into my eyes and tell me who I *was*.

CAROL. You...wait. Are you the tin man?

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST. No! Look at my eyes... You *know* me. You've never forgotten one of us.

(She stares into its eyes.

Their heads rotate a few times.)

CAROL. Now to the side, please.

(The GHOST shifts its neck.)

Winkle? Is that you?

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST. Wiiiiiiiiinnnnnkle was my name on Earth.

CAROL. But you were Danny Jenkin's hamster. We had to...put you to sleep. I did everything I could—

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST. I knowwwwww youuuu didddd. You're a niceeeeeee perrrrrrson. Now I am The Ghost of Christmas Past.

CAROL. That's quite an upgrade.

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST. Carrrrrol, do you knowwww where yourrrr problemmmms began?

CAROL. *(Holding her stomach:)* The moo-shu tofu?

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST. Not thooooose problems. Biggger! Cossssmic!

CAROL. No.

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST. Come with me. Time is short. Come! Come! Before it is too late!

CAROL. Winkle, you'll have to forgive me. This is a lot to take in at once...

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST. Sign this consent form. It's pretty standard stuff.

(In a haze, CAROL signs.)

Now commmmmmme!!

(As if tossed by an unknown power, the two begin to rotate in circles as the vet office disappears.)

(Two children are playing in a street, tossing snowballs and giggling. It is Christmas, years earlier...)

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST. Do you recognizzze those childddrennn?

CAROL. That's...oh. Oh my...
That's *me*.

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST. And.

CAROL. My little sister. Sandra.

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST. What do you see?

CAROL. She...she's so little.

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST. You are little too.

(CAROL is mesmerized by the sight.)

You have a mean curveball.

CAROL. Thank you.

PAST SANDRA. Say cheese!

PAST CAROL. Provolooney!

(Craning her little arm around, PAST SANDRA uses an old-style camera to take a photo of the two of them.)

PAST SANDRA. What a neat present!

PAST CAROL. Sandra. Why are you avoiding what I'm saying?

PAST SANDRA. It's just...those boys are so mean.

PAST CAROL. Sooooo, if those bullies keep on at you, here's what you do...

(She gathers snow into a ball in her mittens.)

PAST SANDRA. Make a snowball?

PAST CAROL. Oh no. You make a *special* snowball.

(Bends to snatch up some stones.)

Sneak a few pebbles into the center of the snowball so when you throw it—

(She throws the snowball off. It clatters.)

It leaves a mark.

PAST SANDRA. Isn't that cheating?

PAST CAROL. Is it fair for them to pick on you just because you're smaller?

PAST SANDRA. Um—

PAST CAROL. No! The answer is NO.

PAST SANDRA. Oh no, Carol, look!

(Two male BULLIES approach. They are bigger than PAST SANDRA.

They're bundled up in winter coats and gloves.)

BULLY 1. Hey Sandy.

PAST SANDRA. Um...hello.

BULLY 2. *(Indicating to CAROL:)* Sandy, who's this?

PAST SANDRA. My sister.

BULLY 2. She's cute.

PAST SANDRA. Gross!

BULLY 1. Hey Sandy. I'm in love with you. Did you know that?

(PAST CAROL observes. CAROL observes PAST CAROL.)

PAST SANDRA. No.

CAROL. Don't believe them!

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST. They can't hear you.

PAST CAROL. *(To PAST SANDRA, quietly:)* These are those jerks, right?

PAST SANDRA. Yeah but, maybe they were mean to me because they liked me.

PAST CAROL. *(To BULLY 2:)* Hey.

BULLY 2. Hey.

PAST CAROL. What's your name?

BULLY 2. *(Sam.)* Sam.

(Now recognizable as the PAST SAM, he is dressed similarly to his future self.)

PAST CAROL. You want a kiss, Sam?

(SAM looks at BULLY 1.

BULLY 1 shrugs.

PAST CAROL approaches PAST SAM and closes her eyes and leans a bit forward, puckering.)

PAST SANDRA. Carol...

(SAM hesitantly approaches.

Just as PAST CAROL and PAST SAM are about to kiss, PAST CAROL produces a snowball from behind her back and thrusts it into his face, like a cream pie.)

PAST SAM. Ahhhh! Are there rocks in this??

(He spits out gravel.)

PAST CAROL. Stay away from my sister!

PAST SAM. *(To BULLY 1:)* Let's get out of here.

BULLY 1. Yeah, these girls are losers.

(They run away.)

PAST SANDRA. Carol! I was gonna get a kiss!

PAST CAROL. It was a trick.

PAST SANDRA. No! I was gonna get a kiss!

(PAST SANDRA storms off. After looking a moment down the road where PAST SAM ran to, PAST CAROL pursues her sister.)

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST. Did you see that?

CAROL. I was so young.

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST. You stood up for yourself.

CAROL. I was just protecting my sister.

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST. You saw that those boys were going tell the whole school that she tried to kiss them. That she was pathetic.

CAROL. I didn't know that I...I just felt like something wasn't right.

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST. You're too nice, Carol.

CAROL. Too nice?

Did you see how little Sam was? He was so...so little.

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST. Take my hamster-ghost paw.

(CAROL sighs and takes GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST's paw.

A flash of light and they are taken to—

A dock.

PAST CAROL is in a swimsuit and life jacket. It's summer.

SAM is in swim trunks.

They're 14 or 15. Young. Happy.)

PAST SAM. It's like a motorcycle that rides on *water*. Jet ski. You have to try it.

PAST CAROL. No way. We don't even have our learner's permits yet.

PAST SAM. It's not dangerous.

PAST CAROL. Can't I just watch you do it?

PAST SAM. You can do this on your own! Be brave! Look.

(PAST SAM and PAST CAROL sit on the jet ski together.)

Put your arms around me.

(Tentatively, she does so.)

This is the speed.

This is the brake.

And this...

(He turns.

They stare at each other a moment.)

Was a kiss.

(CAROL quickly kisses him again.)

PAST CAROL. I've wanted that to happen for so long.

PAST SAM. Me too.

And I also think that...I think that I really like—

(CAROL accidentally hits the gas and the jet ski erupts away, carrying CAROL.)

PAST CAROL. *(Speeding away!)* Ahhhhhhhh!!!!

PAST SAM. *(Screaming:)* Hold on!!!

(The lights fade on them a bit.

CAROL is sniffing.)

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST. Kleenex?

CAROL. *(Accepting one:)* Thanks.

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST. They make us carry them because of an unfortunate lawsuit some years back.

CAROL. Can we stop, please?

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST. I'm afraid we're only getting started...

(A flash of lightning and a bang of thunder.

A pop version of a Christmas song plays, something like "Jingle Bell Rock."

A Christmas dance.

This time, CAROL steps into her own memory.

Her hair is permed in a hilarious 80s way, as is her sister SANDRA's.

PAST SANDRA is played by the actor who will play present day SANDRA.

They're both dressed in baggy bright sweaters with sagging necklines, and ripped jeans.)

CAROL. *(Turning to THE GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST:)* Ugh!! What the heck am I wearing??!

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST. You all wore that.

(Both PAST SANDRA and PAST CAROL are bobbing their heads to the music.

They hold cups of punch.)

CAROL. I look like a jazzercizing clown.

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST. Do you remember where you are?

CAROL. This is...

(She looks around.)

High school... Oh no...

I want to leave. Please, Winkle, take me away from here. I'm so sorry you died on my table. I did everything I could.

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST. You performed mouth-to-mouth on me. A hamster.

CAROL. I didn't want to lose you.

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST. I assumed you were just EXTREMELY lonely.

You need to see this.

CAROL. I hate this!

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST. Shhh! Sandra is about to say something.

PAST SANDRA. Can we go, Carol?

(GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST stares at CAROL, as if to say, "You will answer the way you did then." CAROL sighs.)

PAST CAROL. No, Sandy. I'm worried about you. All you do is sit home writing letters to the newspaper's advice columnist.

PAST SANDRA. I like how she has all the answers. She always knows what to do. I was born without that skill. I have no common sense.

PAST CAROL. You need to be social. You need to talk to people. You need to make friends.

PAST SANDRA. I have you. I have Mom.

PAST CAROL. This is a Christmas dance *full of boys*. You should ask one to dance.

PAST SANDRA. Easy for you to say. You have Sam.

PAST CAROL. Hey kid. Go get us some more punch.

(PAST SANDRA takes both plastic cups and exits.)

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST. Now see what happens...

(On a skateboard, PAST SAM, played by the older SAM, skates over and hops off his board. He's wearing a tuxedo T-shirt, tight cords, and big neon goofy sunglasses.)

PAST SAM. Carol. You wallflower! When are you gonna stop babysitting and come dance with me?

PAST CAROL. Sam. I...I can't just let Sandra bob her head all alone while everyone dances.

PAST SAM. It's the Christmas Dance. I've been looking forward to this forever. I even found a cigarette we can smoke later.

PAST CAROL. That's...so cool, Sam.

PAST SAM. Did you ever think that she'll maybe figure things out for herself in time? You can't stand next to her helping her all the time.

PAST CAROL. I know.

PAST SAM. Come dance with me.

PAST CAROL. Will any of your friends dance with her?

PAST SAM. Oh heck no. They think she smells like vinegar.

PAST CAROL. She doesn't!

PAST SAM. She sort of does, Carol.

PAST CAROL. Well, will you dance with her?

PAST SAM. But I wanna dance with *you*. This is important to me. I...ugh.

CAROL. (To GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST:) Please don't make me hear this again. *Please*.

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST. I'm sorry. But I can't change the past; I can only show it to you.

CAROL. But I *don't want to see*.

PAST SAM. I...I think I'm in love with you.

PAST CAROL. I know.

(To GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST:)

CAROL. Did I really say that?

(THE GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST *smiles*.
PAST SAM *laughs*.)

PAST SAM. Dance with me. We're gonna graduate and you're gonna leave the island and—

PAST CAROL. No I'm not. I've been thinking. I'd like to become a vet.

PAST SAM. Don't you have to fight in a war first?

PAST CAROL. No you goofball. A *veterinarian*.

PAST SAM. Fine. But you're gonna move to some big city and be a big deal veterinarian, leaving me here. I know it.

PAST CAROL. No. I want to stay here. With you.
Or you could come with me!

PAST SAM. Yeah right. I gotta run the Ferry. My grandpa did. My Dad does. It's the family business. And I'm OK with that. I like being the link between the island and the rest of the world. And I like how on fall evenings, the water is black and the sun is orange and you can smell the sea and feel the spray on your neck if you lean just a little too far over the rail.

I like the routine. The regularity. And I like hearing the chains when we're docking and I like feeling the rumble of the motor under my feet when we cut through the ocean. I belong on the water. Not on the mainland, not on the island. I belong on the water. Always in-between.

(PAST CAROL *and* PAST SAM *kiss.*)

PAST SAM. I love you so much.

(*A VERY fast version of "Santa Claus Is Coming To Town" begins to play.*)

PAST CAROL. One dance with my sister. She has a crush on you. It would mean the world to her. Give her confidence...

PAST SAM. One dance? Heck. No problem. What's one dance?

PAST CAROL. Shhh! Here she comes.

(PAST SANDRA *returns, with three cups of punch.*)

PAST SANDRA. Hi Sam! I noticed you. I mean, I noticed you talking to Carol. So I brought you some punch in case you...were thirsty for punch.

(PAST SAM *takes the punches out of her hands, drinking one and handing the other two to PAST CAROL.*)

PAST SAM. Oh I wouldn't drink that if I were you. It's spiked.

PAST SANDRA. Whoa! You mean with...*alcohol*?

PAST SAM. Yeah.

PAST SANDRA. How do you know?

PAST SAM. Because I did it.

PAST SANDRA. Oh.

PAST SAM. Hey Sandra, can I dance with you?

PAST SANDRA. Wh...what?

PAST SAM. It's just this is my favorite song and Carol can be...

(*Playfully rolling his eyes and then winking to PAST CAROL.*)

...a drag.

(*He begins to pump his fists wildly and dance like a maniac.*)

PAST SANDRA *giggles.* PAST CAROL *tries to stifle a laugh.*)

PAST SAM. C'mon Sandra! All the boys see you over here by yourself and they're obviously too intimidated to ask you. But I'm not. Carol, you don't mind do you?

PAST CAROL. Haha. No. Please. Go right ahead.

PAST SANDRA. Are you sure, Carol?

(CAROL smiles and nods.)

PAST SANDRA. I don't know how to fast-dance.

PAST SAM. Then we'll slow dance.

(He grabs her and the two of them start to slow dance to the very fast "Santa Claus Is Coming To Town.")

Then lights dim to something more romantic.

"Santa Claus Is Coming To Town" fades into a slow "Silent Night." Maybe a mirror ball descends.

Slowly, PAST SANDRA puts her head on PAST SAM's shoulder.

It's all like slow-motion.

Holding two cups of punch, PAST / PRESENT CAROL watches her sister dance with PAST SAM.

She smiles at first, but as the dance continues and PAST SAM's eyes close, she becomes uncomfortable. She shifts restlessly watching the dance.

It goes on...)

CAROL. *(Shouting towards the two:)* Ok! Ya mind if I cut in?

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST. Uh-uh. That's not what happened. You can't make new stuff up.

CAROL. You expect me to just stand here and *watch*? You realize *this* is when it all truly began, right?

(CAROL watches them dance.)

Of course you know.

(The dance ends.

PAST SAM stares into PAST SANDRA's eyes.)

PAST SAM. See. I told you. Now...now all the boys are looking over here. They're jealous.

(PAST SANDRA is staring at PAST SAM, smitten as all get out.)

PAST SANDRA. That was...I think that was the best moment of my entire life.

PAST SAM. Then why don't we try to top it?

(PAST SAM skips over to PAST CAROL.)

You don't mind, Carol, do you? (It's just your kid sister!)

PAST CAROL. Mind? Why should I mind? I...I asked you to do this.

PAST SAM. Get those dancing feet ready. You're next!

(PAST SAM grabs both punch cups out of PAST CAROL's hands and downs one, then the other.)

Woooo!

C'mere!

(PAST SAM grabs PAST SANDRA and they dance—this time it's to an upbeat Christmas hit, like the Chipmunks singing.)

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST. Oh I love this one.

What happened next?

CAROL. I...wanted to ask to cut in but I saw how much fun she was having.

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST. What else did you see?

CAROL. How much fun *he* was having too.

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST. So you left.

CAROL. What else was I supposed to do? I was trying to be generous. To share him.

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST. But he was your lifelong crush and that was the first time when you finally told him how you felt, and the first time you heard what he thought of you! You can't share a love like that.

CAROL. So I was supposed to just pull my own sister off him? What, go smoke a dumb cigarette in the parking lot and believe that the rest of my life would be happy?

(The music becomes more of a far-away echo and the dancing more of a dream.)

I want to go.

(THE GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST offers its paw. She takes it. A flash of light.

A porch swing descends from the sky.

PAST SANDRA and PAST SAM, bundled up, sit down on it.

Flakes fall.

Red and green lights line the roofs around the swing.

Behind the swing stand CAROL and THE GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST.

One Christmas later.)

PAST SANDRA. It will break her heart.

PAST SAM. I'm tired of sneaking around. A whole year.

PAST SANDRA. She's...she's my sister.

PAST SAM. And what am I?

PAST SANDRA. Not?

PAST SAM. We have to make a decision. It won't be easy but...life surprises us and... LOOK—let's get on a Ferry and sail away from here. Come with me.

PAST SANDRA. She'll never speak to me again.

PAST SAM. Sometimes a great sacrifice—

PAST SANDRA. Don't quote *Star Wars*.

PAST SAM. Tell me right now that you want me to leave you alone? Tell me right now and I'll do it. I'll spend all my time with Carol and when we see each other, I'll wave and you'll wave that's all we'll be. Just two little waves. Like the millions I see from the boat. Two little waves that disappear into nothing.

PAST SANDRA. Two little waves.

PAST SAM. Two...little...waves.

(He leans in and they kiss.)

CAROL. No!

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST. And then what happened?

CAROL. When...when Sandra came to see me...

(The lights shift.)

CAROL is now holding a small, wrapped present.

PAST SANDRA approaches PAST CAROL.)

PAST CAROL. This...is for you.

PAST SANDRA. Oh thanks.

(PAST SANDRA doesn't take it.)

I need to tell you something.

PAST CAROL. *(Laughing:)* OK, but hurry. We're late to go caroling at the Old Folks Farm.

(Moving off.)

PAST SANDRA. I'm in love.

(CAROL stops in her tracks.)

I'm in love with Sam. We've been seeing each other. He's not in a bowling league. I'm sorry I lied to you. I didn't know what to do. You always had boys interested in you. I never had...anyone and I *know*

this isn't an excuse and I *know* you'll never forgive me but—he likes me. He loves me. Oh Carol, I don't want this to come between us.

(CAROL *faces away*.)

CAROL. I hate you. I will never forgive you.

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST. That's not what you said. You have to say what you said.

PAST CAROL. I...I understand.

PAST SANDRA. You do?

CAROL. Hey, it's...just a boy.

He's...just some *boy*. They fall like snowflakes.

(PAST CAROL *hands* PAST SANDRA *the little present*.)

Merry Christmas.

(PAST SANDRA *throws her arms around her sister then runs off, seemingly going to tell* PAST SAM *the great news*.)

CAROL *starts to cry*.)

CAROL. Can we go please? I need...I need to go.

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST. And you never stopped behaving this way. Being the martyr. Letting people take away what meant most to you.

CAROL. I'm a veterinarian. I do so much *good*. I am spending my life helping defenseless creatures who can't *say* what's *wrong*.

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST. Sound familiar?

CAROL. That's not fair!

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST. The problem, Carol, is that you connect better than anyone else with animals. But when it comes to people—

CAROL. Let's go!

(THE GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST *walks to the edge of the stage, reaches off, and returns holding the fortune*.)

It walks across the stage and the fortune is pulled like a rope.

It circles around the back of the playing area, momentarily obscured by a door or Christmas tree, and when it emerges from the other side of the door or tree, it has transformed into a huge, black horse! This transformation happens as if by magic.

The fortune continues to stream across the stage and then is pulled off in one quick flutter.

The horse clops over to CAROL.

CAROL's *mouth is agape.*)

CAROL. Licorice!?

THE GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT. (*With a whinny in his voice.*) Only you could recognize a ghost horse with a single look.

CAROL. I couldn't mistake you for any other! You're Licorice—Ed and Jamie's old—

THE GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT. I am Licorice no moooooore! I am the ghoooooost of Christmas Preeeeeeesent.

CAROL. But you...I had to put you to—

THE GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT. You were so kind to me, Carrrrrrrrrol. You criiiiiiiiiied forrrr daaaaaaays.

CAROL. It's so hard for me to do that part of my job.

THE GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT. I knooowwwww. We alllllll knowwwwwww.

Now. Let's goooooo for a ri iiiiiiiiiiiide.

CAROL. I don't want to. And I *won't sign the consent form.*

THE GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT. Actualllly, I donnnnt need yourrrrr consennnnnt for thisssss part. Weeirrd loophole. Butt I would like yourrrr OK.

(CAROL *sighs then mounts* THE GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT.

They gallop around as the home of Gregory appears. The two arrive at a window and peer inside.)

CAROL. That's Gregory!

(GREGORY *brings two plates of a fancy, home-cooked meal to the table.*

He goes and retrieves two wine glasses.)

I don't understand.

CAROL. He said he wanted to have a frozen dinner. That's a gosh darn home-cooked meal! And that's not a bathtub!

THE GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT. That's a tabbb—

CAROL. That's a table, yes. Yes. That's a table. What the heck! He lied to me. Who is he dating?

THE GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT. Heeee's in a domesssstic partnerrrrrshippppp with hissss physsssicalll therapissssst.

CAROL. Why did he never mention her??

THE GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT. He didddd.

CAROL. No he didn't!

THE GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT. He mennnntionedd her. Just nottttt to youuuuuuu.

CAROL. Oh.

THE GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT. Peoplllllle don't know how to taaaaaalkkkk to youuuuuuu. Theyyyy feel uncomfortabbbble.

CAROL. Why? I'm a nice person.

THE GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT. Nicceeee isn'tttt the sammme as goooooood.

CAROL. Yes it is! People love nice! If this world were full of nice people—

THE GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT. A chaaair is niceeee but I don'ttttt want to taaaaalk to it.

(CAROL marches away a few steps.)

I didnnnn't meaaaaan to compaaaaare you to furnitureeeee. But you donnnn't relate toooo people like peeeeeople. You preeeefer animals because they cannnn't talk.

(Silence.)

CAROL. I...I like people, too.

THE GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT. Do youuuuu? Do you wisssshhhhhh you didddd? Noww hurry!

(The world revolves around, a lightning burst and thunder boom, and they are suddenly at Grace's apartment.

"Hark The Herald Angels Sing" plays.

GRACE is trimming a tree, stopping after every ornament and looking expectantly at the door.)

CAROL. I thought Grace said her boyfriend was making her a ham.

THE GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT. He saaaaaaid he woulllld.

CAROL. She's stopping after every ornament to look at the door. So where is this boyfriend?

THE GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT. Whhyyy donnn't you assssk the questiionnnnn you allreaddddy knowww the answeerrrr to?

CAROL. Then why ask it.

(THE GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT gives her a knowing look.)

Fine.

Who is he.

(A rush of movement, a lightning burst, thunder boom, and they arrive upon:

A high-stakes video game between BOB and his son, LITTLE TIM. It's the kind of video game that one plays with one's whole body—dancing, kicking, punching, jumping...)

CAROL. Oh no. Bob...

THE GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT. You are trusssting, but nottt stupid.

CAROL. I...

I guess I wanted to only see what I wanted to see.

THE GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT. And whatttt do you seeee now?

CAROL. That his nephew is kicking his butt.

THE GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT. Thattttt's notttt his nephewwwww.

CAROL. (Really losing it;) WHAT!?!?!? THAT'S LITTLE TIM?!?!? That little *crap* is supposed to be *crippled!*

THE GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT. He hollllds a highhh scorre natttionallly at Kung Fuuuuu Arrrcaaaade Fivveeeee.

CAROL. Where's all the money I gave Bob? Wait. You mean he *stole* from me?

THE GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT. Theyyyy haveeee a verrrry niceeee condo and alllll the preeeemiummmmm cabbbbble stations.

CAROL. Even that one channel that only shows the movies the other good premium channels don't want?

THE GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT. Eeeeven thattttt one.

CAROL. That...jerk.

THE GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT. Sayyyy it louuuuuuder!

CAROL. Bob is a jerk!

THE GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT. Once morrrrrre, with feeeeeeeling.

(CAROL runs up to his window, cups her hands and shouts:)

CAROL. You! Bob! ARE A JERK!

Woooo!

This is so fun.

THE GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT. Nowwww we have to gooooo to—

CAROL. And I hope your kid breaks his leg! I hope it snaps like a piece of dried spaghetti! Break your legs! Break your legs! Break your—

THE GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT. Ohhhhhhhkaaaaayyyy. Time to go!

CAROL. But I was just starting to have some—

(The world rotates around again and in a lightning burst / thunder boom, they arrive at:

Sandra's home.

SANDRA's standing, watching as SAM packs up a cardboard box.)

Fun.

Oh no. I—

I want to go from here.

Please, Licorice. Let's go see something else.

Anywhere else.

Not here.

Please. Not—

THE GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT. Listen—

(The GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT does a circle with its neck and now voices emerge from the house—)

SANDRA. Won't you just sit down and have a hot chocolate with me?

SAM. Hot chocolate? You think I want to sit and have—

SANDRA. It's Christmas, Sam.

SAM. I don't care what day it is. I...

I saw Carol tonight.

SANDRA. Carol.

SAM. Yeah. I walked past her office and she was all alone.

SANDRA. She wasn't alone. She has all her *animals*.

SAM. Animals aren't people.

SANDRA. To her they are. Please. Don't go.

SAM. Why should I stay? Please. You think I want to throw all this away? Do you know what it's like running the boats, buying my

groceries, hearing what everyone is saying about me behind my back. You made me into a fool, Sandra.

SANDRA. I didn't mean to. I didn't *want to*—

SAM. Then why did you do what you did?

CAROL. What did she do?

THE GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT. Keep listennnnning—

SAM. The guy's a...a...

CAROL. No! Sandra...

SAM. He's sleazy. I mean, he tells Carol that his son has a leg injury so he can buy a new flat screen.

CAROL. What!! Bob!! Is he going around with EVERY PERSON ON THIS ISLAND!

SAM. Was I that bad to you?

SANDRA. What? You wish I'd done it with someone you... respected? What I did I'm not proud of, but I did it; it was a mistake. I don't know what else to say. But I'm not blameless. You...you come home at 1AM, smelling like the water—

SAM. Because that's my JOB!

SANDRA. Even when we are together I feel *alone*. You used to feel things for me, I know that. Just in the way you looked at me, I knew. But somewhere. A long time ago... They all sailed away.

(He puts a final object in the box.)

Tell me I'm wrong.

(Silence.)

SAM. You're wrong.

(He leaves, exiting past CAROL and THE GHOST OF THE CHRISTMAS PRESENT.)

CAROL. Sam...

(He trudges past, not hearing her.)

THE GHOST OF THE CHRISTMAS PRESENT. Commmmme in-sidddeee.

*(CAROL reluctantly follows.
SANDRA is holding a photo.)*

Whooooo is in that phoooooto?

CAROL. It's...it's the two of us. When we were little.

THE GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT. Whatttt were you doooooing?

CAROL. I was. I was showing her how to throw a snowball filled with rocks.

THE GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT. You werrrrre tough.

CAROL. I...I guess I was.

(She smiles.)

I don't know *why* Sandra is even *bothering* to look at it. Now she has everything she wants. Her own radio show where SHE gives the advice. Sam—

THE GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT. But Sam leffffft. Annnnd he wannnnnted to talllllk with youuuuu tonightttt but you lied.

CAROL. He humiliated me! He chose my little sister! He told me he LOVED me! Am I supposed to just forget that? Am I supposed to just forgive him?

The Carol in that photo was gone a long, long time ago.

(SANDRA goes over to a telephone and picks it up.)

THE GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT. She's goooooing to call youuuu.

CAROL. I...I don't want her to.

THE GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT. So tell her.

(SANDRA starts dialing.)

THE GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT. Tellll her to stoppp.

Sheeeee's dialllling.

Telll her to stoppp.

(CAROL opens her mouth, but no sound emits.

Quickly, SANDRA puts down the phone and takes a deep breath.)

CAROL. See. She doesn't want to make anything better.

The radio psychologist has no interest in even helping herself. I told you.

(Sadly.)

I told you.

THE GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT. And hereeeee is where I leeeeeeeave you...

(The snow starts to increase in density.)

CAROL. What do you mean?

(The snow downpour is greater and greater...)

Don't go!

Licorice!!

(The street goes dark.

The sound of hoofs running off into an echo.

Christmas lights on the nearby houses fade up.

Then, the warm street lamps.

CAROL is alone.

She looks up into the falling snow.

It falls on her hair and face.

Slowly, a familiar presence approaches out of the darkness...)

Max!?

THE GHOST OF CHRISTMAS FUTURE. Hello, Carol.

CAROL. Max! I can't believe you're here.

(She kneels in the snow and begins to scratch him under his chin.)

THE GHOST OF CHRISTMAS FUTURE. I always did love a good scratch under my chin. But now I'm the Ghost of Christmas future, so...

CAROL. I need to stop scratching you?

THE GHOST OF CHRISTMAS FUTURE. It's a weird problem with HR, I like it, but they say I need to have you fill out some paperwork, it's all very complicated. I don't like this new job very much.

CAROL. I'm sorry.

THE GHOST OF CHRISTMAS FUTURE. We'd better get going before it's too late.

CAROL. Before what's too late?

(She looks at the sky.)

THE GHOST OF CHRISTMAS FUTURE. I'm really not supposed to say, Carol.

For now...

BARK! BARK! BARK BARK!

(A flash of lightning, the ground rumbles, a crash of thunder and the sky begins to hail.)

CAROL. Ouch! Is this hail??

THE GHOST OF CHRISTMAS FUTURE. The future is the hardest to see!

(The rumbling grows and the lightning flashes!)

CAROL. Ahhhhhhhhhhhhhhh!!
GHOST OF CHRISTMAS FUTURE. Arf! Arf! Bark bark bark! Ruffff! Bark!!
 Arf!!

(An OLD WOMAN appears, surrounded by four cats.)

CAROL. Who is that sad, pathetic woman?

THE GHOST OF CHRISTMAS FUTURE. It's...

CAROL. Oh no! Is that *me*? I become some sad old woman with four cats?

THE GHOST OF CHRISTMAS FUTURE. Actually, that's not you.

(An OLDER WOMAN in a wheelchair wheels on and she is literally covered with cats—they crawl all over her, they sit on her head, they squeal.)

THAT'S you.

CAROL. There must be dozens of cats.

THE GHOST OF CHRISTMAS FUTURE. You have names for each of them.

Full names.

CAROL. Oh my goodness.

FUTURE CAROL. Reginald Sourpuss MacDougall, stop harassing Phineas Bartleby Bernstein the Second or I won't let you sleep on my neck tonight.

CAROL. That's disgusting!

THE GHOST OF CHRISTMAS FUTURE. Some of them also shower with you.

CAROL. No!!!

So I just become some sad, pathetic cat lady? That's it?

THE GHOST OF CHRISTMAS FUTURE. As the years progressed, you lost all ability to relate to human beings. You have all your groceries delivered and refuse to pay taxes, saying that your property belongs to Wild Beasts.

CAROL. Well...who is that other sad woman?

THE GHOST OF CHRISTMAS FUTURE. That's Sandra.

CAROL. *That's Sandra? She's all alone?*

THE GHOST OF CHRISTMAS FUTURE. Look what happens.

*(FUTURE SANDRA picks up a telephone and dials a number.
Future Carol's phone rings.*

*FUTURE CAROL ignores the rings.
The ringing stops.)*

FUTURE CAROL. What a nuisance! She knows I don't want to talk to her. Why would I ever want to talk with her when I can talk with all of you...

CAROL. This is so, so sad.

I want to go home, Max. Please.

THE GHOST OF CHRISTMAS FUTURE. But they want me to take you to the graveyard.

CAROL. Why? I already know what becomes of me.

THE GHOST OF CHRISTMAS FUTURE. I'm not sure it's *your* grave, actually. I may have some documentation somewhere that explains...

CAROL. I want to go back, please let me go back, Max. Please.

THE GHOST OF CHRISTMAS FUTURE. But there's still one more stop on the itinerary! The big dogs upstairs are gonna be pretty mad at me if I mess up on my first day. Wait, where are my notes...

CAROL. I *get* it. I die all alone. Please. Please let me go back to my job. To the people in my life. They might not be...the most generous. They may walk all over me and literally steal from me. But...but they're all I got and I know I can do something about my life before it's truly too late.

Please, Max.

THE GHOST OF CHRISTMAS FUTURE. If anyone deserves happiness, it's you.

Close your eyes.

Bark! Bark! Ruff ruff ruff! Bow-wow-wow watch what happens NOW!

(A flash of lightning, the ground rumbles, a crash of thunder and the sky begins to hail.

It builds.

And builds.

It finally explodes into a flash and then sudden darkness.

A golden light fades up on:

CAROL is sitting back on the floor of her office, surrounded by the remainder of her Chinese food dinner.

CAROL, bleary-eyed, looks over the chair. She sees the fortune cookie.

She picks it up.

No choral music. No glow.

She puts it on the floor and takes off a shoe.

She raises the shoe into the air and brings it down on the cookie, smashing it to bits.

She braces herself for all heck to break loose, but it doesn't.

She looks down at the cookie bits, but there's no slip of paper. Whatsoever...)

CAROL. What! No fortune!

(She searches through the bits.)

Where's my fortune?

Nothing?

(CAROL takes out her cell phone and dials.

Lights up on GREGORY, bleary eyed.)

GREGORY. Carol?

CAROL. Gregory. Code Volcano. Beached Whale. Come into the office immediately.

GREGORY. It's Christmas.

CAROL. You're Jewish!

(She hangs up on GREGORY.

He stares at the phone. Then lights down on him as CAROL dials...

Lights up on GRACE.)

GRACE. *(Through tears:)* Hello?

CAROL. Grace, get in here. It's 9AM. You're not at work.

GRACE. It's Christmas.

CAROL. We work on Christmas. Fish get sick on Christmas! People put them in stockings!

GRACE. *I'm a sick animal. My boyfriend didn't show up last night because...*

(GRACE, shocked at the vehemence of Carol's demand, stares in disbelief.)

CAROL. Because your boyfriend is an ass. His name is Bob. He was dating apparently everyone in this town. And you hid it from me. Code Atomic. We have a... A unicorn has broken his horn. Come fix him. NOW!

(CAROL hangs up and lights down on GRACE. CAROL dials. Lights up on BOB.)

He's sitting with LITTLE TIM, who is trying on a new pair of soccer cleats and bright red socks.)

BOB. *(To LITTLE TIM:)* How incredibly strong your legs are. And in such good health. You will be the best kicker on the law school soccer team!

(His phone rings. He rolls his eyes to his son, and says:)

Ugh. It's Carol. Watch how your old man can fib his way out of any situation.

(In a raspy, sickly voice:)

Heelllllo?

CAROL. You're a monster. I want you in my office in fifteen minutes or I'm going to reach down your throat with both hands, grab your long intestine, and pull one end out each nostril and FLOSS YOUR BRAIN!

(She starts to hang up, but then pauses.)

Oh. And bring your checkbook.

(She hangs up. BOB stares, stupefied. He lowers the phone.)

BOB. Um. I have to go to work.

(Lights down. CAROL smiles to herself.)

A sudden 'pop' makes her jump. The radio has come on. All by itself.)

SANDRA'S VOICE. Merry Christmas, Nantucket. This is Sandra Rezenbeen, as always, your Voice of the Island.

Before I introduce Emily Harris from Nantucket Elementary who has a special Christmas song to sing for all of us and then we open things up to our callers, I want to say...

(In the distance, lights slowly fade up on SANDRA, at a microphone, in a bathrobe and holding a cup of coffee.)

I'm a pretty good sleeper. I never dream. Never. When I go to bed, I enter into a dark forest of slumber. I walk barefoot through soft mosses and there are leaves as fragile as peacock feathers that brush against my bare arms and face until I find a warm patch of grass in a moonlit clearing where I lie down, sleeping throughout the entire night, protected by benevolent bears. And that's where I stay until the morning comes.

I don't have nightmares and I don't have dreams. It's just a deep and full sleep where I wake up completely anew, awash with energy and full of, what do the Frenchies say? Joie...oh! *Joie de vivre!* Well.

(SANDRA walks slowly into CAROL's space and the two look at one another in a moment of magic.)

Last night I dreamt that I had gone through my whole life without saying the one sentence that I should have said a long, long time ago.

To the girl who taught me how to make very special snowballs that protect us from bullies:

I am, so, so sorry.

(The two look at one another.)

In my dream there were also a crapload of cats.

And now! Emily Harris from Nantucket Elementary with a Christmas song!

(A child's voice begins to sing "It Came Upon A Midnight Clear.")

CAROL slowly leans back, smiles—touched, and listens to the song.

GREGORY hobbles in.)

GREGORY. Carol—I was watching *It's a Wonderful Life* and you called right when George Bailey—

CAROL. Have you seen it before?

GREGORY. Of course I've seen—

CAROL. Then why are you complaining?

GREGORY. Well, it had been a few years—

CAROL. They all die. Everyone. Even Zuzu. And then the flowers die. Mr. Potter builds Pottertown and it's fantastic and each luxury condo has in-unit washer dryers.

GREGORY. Wait. That's not what happens.

CAROL. If you want the night off to spend with your...friend... that's fine. But I wish would just tell me.

GREGORY. We're not friends...you're my boss.

CAROL. I know but... Next time? Please just tell me the truth.

GREGORY. I will.

(They smile at one another.)

So can I go home now?

CAROL. Of course not. You lied. You're working today.

GREGORY. On Christmas!?

(GRACE is heard to drive in, hitting the garbage cans. She ambles into the room.)

GRACE. Honest to smorgasbord, Carol, there are *laws* in America. You can't just demand us to—

CAROL. Do your job?

GRACE. Exactly! Wait. Now where is this unicorn?

CAROL. Unicorns are mythical beasts.

GREGORY. I thought we're here to help a beached whale!

GRACE. A whale? Are a whale and a unicorn doing battle!?!?

GREGORY. Is he outside?

CAROL. Grace, you need to have self respect. And you need to not trust Bob. Ever.

GRACE. Bob...how'd you—

CAROL. You can have a bright future if you let yourself be as smart as I know you really are.

GRACE. So wait, there's no unicorn?

CAROL. As smart as I think you someday could be. I'm going to need my car back.

GRACE. I would...but it's sort of...out of gas.

CAROL. What the flip is wrong with—

GRACE. I rode it downhill here on neutral.

CAROL. I'm renting you my car at \$25 a day until you get it fixed. The dents. The axle. The part of the roof you somehow lost. And Put Gas In My Car!

GRACE. What!?!

CAROL. And...and...I want you to make me a really cool mix tape with songs that kids are listening to these days. I feel so out of touch.

GRACE. Who woke up inside your skin?

CAROL. I woke up inside my skin for the first time! Carol Rezenbeen is BACK! I'm flippin' BACK, people!

(BOB walks in.)

BOB. Carol! How *dare* you take me away from my ailing son—

(CAROL winds up and punches him in the nose.)

Ow! Did you just...my nose is bleeding!

CAROL. You, Bob Cratchit, are an *asshole!*

(She reaches behind him, going for his rump. He giggles as he says—)

BOB. Whoa! What are you—Carol—you're a naughty minx, but, wait—is that my wallet!?

(She has grabbed his wallet and reaches in, pulling out all the cash he has.)

CAROL. And I'm taking 50 dollars a month out of your paycheck until you pay me back for all those fake surgeries.

BOB. Oh no you're—

*(She gets in his face.
He steps back, scared.)*

CAROL. Bah Humbug.

(She looks at her watch.)

OH no! The Ferry. It's almost 10 AM! Sam! I have to go!

BOB. Wait, you expect us to work here on Christmas?

GREGORY. No animals are sick today. Today is a day of health and happiness.

*(CAROL dials a number on her phone. She walks over and turns on the radio.
Lights up on SANDRA.)*

SANDRA'S VOICE. And our next caller is—

CAROL. Carol.

SANDRA'S VOICE. *You mean... Wait. Is it...Carol?*

CAROL. From Nantucket Animal Hospital. I want to give a gift to your community of listeners. Did you know that 3 out of 5 family pets are improperly vaccinated? Did you know that 4 out of 5 are ailing from undiagnosed problems? Bring your dogs, cats, horses, cows, gorillas, alligators, turkeys, dinosaurs—anything—bring them down to the office TODAY and my wonderful team of coworkers will help your animals to feel better...absolutely free. What better Christmas gift can you give to the ones in your life that don't know how to ask for help. Because they literally can't speak English.

GREGORY + BOB + GRACE. (*Ad lib:*) Awww! No! We'll have to stay here all day!

SANDRA'S VOICE. *Carol? Is that?*

CAROL. I miss you too, Sandra. Merry Christmas. But I gotta go!

(She hangs up her call and runs out the door, her three employees standing mouth agape!)

CAROL runs back in and takes the sweater off of GRACE.)

I've always liked this sweater. I'm going to take it.

(CAROL runs out.)

(The lights snap off on everyone but CAROL.

Snow is falling and she's running as fast as can.

One by one, she passes the actors who played the three animals—)

PERSON 1. (*Ghost of Christmas Past.*) Carol! Would you lend a hand unloading groceries? My poor lower back—

CAROL. No!

PERSON 1. What?

(CAROL passes the person, who is dumbfounded by Carol's unhelpfulness.

CAROL hears a town bell strike 9:45.)

CAROL. Sam! Wait!

(CAROL ducks around corners, jumps over sawhorses, obstacles in her way.)

PERSON 2. (*Ghost of Christmas Present:*) Carol! I know you're an animal doctor, but I was up all last night because I found this weird mark on the skin of my arm. It would be so wonderful if you could—

CAROL. If you want medical attention, you gotta pay for it. Come see me if you're ever a horse.

PERSON 2. Carol!

CAROL. I'm coming, Sam!!

*("God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen," set to a fast beat, is heard.
It accelerates as CAROL does as well.
The snow falls harder.*

CAROL rounds turns, bumping into people on their way to church.)

PEOPLE. (*Ad lib:*) Ouch! Watch it! Carol! Whoa!

CAROL. Move it!

MRS. HOFFMAN. Carol!

(CAROL stops.)

Carol, you won't believe it! I woke up this morning and I went to church and this family was giving away puppies!

Look!

I think he's just what I needed, but he keeps coughing.

Will you take a look?

CAROL. Uhhhhhh.

MRS. HOFFMAN. This is an ANIMAL. And this animal *needs* you.

CAROL. (*Trying to decide—after all—this is an animal in need!*) Uhh-hhh!!!!

MRS. HOFFMAN. Carol?

CAROL. Not today!

(CAROL runs, shoving people out of the way.)

PEOPLE. (*Ad lib:*) Ouch! Whoa! Carol, did you just knock me over!? Owwwwwww!

(A sign for Nantucket Ferry comes closer and closer and closer...)

CAROL. I see it!

(And closer and closer and closer!)

CAROL. I see it!

*(Until...
A fog horn sounds.)*

Oh no! It's too late!

(She looks around quickly, desperately.)

**THIS PLAY IS
NOT OVER!**

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