

**ACT ONE**  
**SCENE 5**

*The Greenway Press offices on an upper floor of the Empire State Building. Later the same day, shortly after noon. A sign in a reception area, stage right, indicates that we are in the offices of Greenway Press, "Children's Books Your Child Can Trust." A secretary, DEB, is seated at a reception desk. There is a large office area with EMPLOYEES working in cubicles. Stage center there's a door to a private office which opens as the scene begins. WALTER HOBBS appears in the door, he has a children's book in hand and a sheaf of papers.*

**SAM**

We got a problem, Mr. Hobbs. "Jingles The Jolly Christmas Puppy" is tanking in every bookstore in the country.

**WALTER**

Why?

**SAM**

Because two whole pages are missing from the last chapter.

**WALTER**

What?

**SAM**

Without them the end of the book makes no sense.

**WALTER**

How did that happen?

**SAM**

I don't know but you yourself okayed the final proofs. We'll have to recall all copies and reprint.

**WALTER**

No, we won't. Kids don't read the books, anyway, they just look at the pictures. No recall!

**SAM**

You really want to do that?

**WALTER**

No, I want to go to Greenway and say we're taking a fifty-thousand dollar bath so some stupid five-year-old can find out what happened to Jingles the friggin' Puppy on Christmas Eve.

**SAM**

But...?

**WALTER**

But nothing!

**SAM**

Whatever you say, boss.

**WALTER**

*(calling to DEB)*

Deb!

**DEB**

Yes, Mr. Hobbs.

**WALTER**

Coffee! Now!

**DEB**

Right away.

*EMILY and 12-year-old MICHAEL enter.*

**EMILY**

Hi, darling.

**MICHAEL**

Hi, Dad.

**EMILY**

Ready to go?

**WALTER**

Go where?

**EMILY**

I don't believe it. Christmas shopping, remember?

**WALTER**

Emily, you always do this to me.

**EMILY**

We planned this weeks ago! I took the day off—

**WALTER**

Well, I can't. I'm swamped. This is my busiest time of the year!

**MICHAEL**

Dad, it is well documented that the children of workaholics are prone to self-esteem issues.

*WALTER stares at EMILY, baffled.*

**EMILY**

What can I say; the kid likes NPR.

**WALTER**

Could we please continue this delightful conversation in my office. Away from the staff.

*MICHAEL, EMILY and WALTER disappear into WALTER's office.*

*BUDDY enters the reception area and goes up to DEB.*

**BUDDY**

Excuse me? I'm here to see a Walter Hobbs. I'm Buddy the Elf.

**DEB**

Buddy the Elf? Oh, what a riot! You look hilarious. Who sent you?

**BUDDY**

Santa.

**DEB**

Santa?!

**BUDDY**

Uh-huh, from the North Pole.

**DEB**

From the North Pole!

**BUDDY**

Yes.

**DEB**

I'm sure Mr. Hobbs will be delighted to meet you, but he's in a meeting right now, would you mind waiting for a few minutes? Sit. Stay here.

**BUDDY**

Sure.

*BUDDY sits.*

**DEB**

Can I get you anything? A coffee?

**BUDDY**

Chocolate milk would be fantastic...

*WALTER, EMILY and MICHAEL burst out of WALTER's office.*

**WALTER**

Emily. You're making it sound like it's my fault. I just can't. Today is impossible, isn't it Deb?

*DEB leaves BUDDY and rushes over to WALTER.*

**#3 - In The Way**

*During the following scene, various other EMPLOYEES come out of their cubicles with papers in hand to speak to their boss. THEY then end up joining in the song. Among them would be SAM and the two staff writers. Eventually BUDDY gets swept up in the choreography himself, but is unnoticed by anyone.*

**DEB**

Oh, yes, Mr. Hobbs, you have a very busy day...

*(reading from a clipboard)*

ONE P.M. MEETING WITH THE STAFF  
LECTURE THEM ON THE BOARD'S BEHALF  
AND CONDEMN GIVING WORKERS CARTE BLANCHE

**WALTER**

*(To EMILY and MICHAEL)*

MY JOB HAS MANY FACETS

**DEB**

ONE FIFTEEN CUT OUR PENSION SIZE  
RECONVENE WITH THE UNION GUYS  
IN BETWEEN CLOSE OUR DELAWARE BRANCH

**WALTER**

AND LIQUIDIZE OUR ASSETS

**DEB**

CHOOSE A DATE FOR THE MEETING WITH  
GLOBAL FREIGHT

**WALTER**

TRY THE TWENTY-FIFTH

**EMILY**

WALTER, WAIT!

**ALL**

NO ONE WORKS ON THAT DAY

**(BUDDY)**

REMEMBER WHO YOU WERE BACK THEN?  
LET THOSE MOMENTS LIVE AGAIN

Come on, Jovie! Try it for me!

*(JOVIE closes her eyes and sings, tentatively at first, but growing more confident.)*

**JOVIE**

JUST SING A CHRISTMAS SONG

**BUDDY**

That's it!

**JOVIE**

IT'S LIKE MAGIC IF THINGS GO WRONG

**BUDDY**

Keep going!

**JOVIE**

JUST SPREAD SOME CHRISTMAS CHEER  
BY SINGING LOUD FOR ALL TO...

*ALL on stage now join in the song as they skate.*

**JOVIE, BUDDY & COMPANY**

JUST SING A CHRISTMAS SONG  
AND KEEP ON SINGING ALL SEASON LONG

THINK OF THE JOY YOU'LL BRING  
IF YOU JUST CLOSE YOUR EYES  
IF YOU JUST CLOSE YOUR EYES  
IF YOU JUST CLOSE YOUR EYES...  
AND SING!!

*On the applause for this number, JOVIE kisses BUDDY and the Rockefeller Christmas Tree lights up. End of Scene.*

#8a - Back To The Office

**ACT ONE  
SCENE 11**

*WALTER's office. WALTER confers with CHADWICK. It's obvious that the meeting has been going on for hours. MATTHEWS is conspicuously absent.*

**CHADWICK**

Okay. How about this: a town populated only by tomatoes -

**WALTER**

Tomatoes.

**CHADWICK**

Little tomato people. They are busily preparing for Christmas, but little do they know, the mean tomato who lives on top of the mountain is planning to steal Christmas this year.

**WALTER**

You are describing the Grinch.

**CHADWICK**

But with tomatoes!

**WALTER**

You're an idiot, Chadwick. Greenway is going to fire us all if we don't come up with something good, you understand that? Can you grasp the seriousness of this situation? Where is Matthews?

**CHADWICK**

He's working a lead.

**WALTER**

He's what?

*MATTHEWS bursts in carrying a small manuscript.*

**MATTHEWS**

I got it!

**CHADWICK**

You got it?

**WALTER**

An original idea I hope?

**MATTHEWS**

We got something better than an idea.

**CHADWICK**

We got a book.

**MATTHEWS**

You are familiar, of course, with Christopher Smith.

**WALTER**

Are you kidding? Christopher Smith was the greatest writer of Christmas stories who ever lived. When you think of Christmas you think of Chris Smith.

**CHADWICK**

So, you would be happy if we brought him in?

**WALTER**

He's dead, you morons.

**MATTHEWS**

Mr. Hobbs, I met this guy who deals in used furniture; high end stuff, from the homes of prominent dead writers. So, he recently acquired a desk once owned by one Christopher Smith.

**CHADWICK**

And in this desk he finds a secret drawer—

**MATTHEWS**

—and in this secret drawer he finds a manuscript.

**CHADWICK**

A lost Chris Smith Christmas story!

**WALTER**

A lost Chris Smith Christmas story?

**MATTHEWS**

It's a Chris Smith Christmas for Walter Hobbs!

*MATTHEWS hands WALTER a small, yellowing manuscript.*

**WALTER**

My God. It's beautiful!

**MATTHEWS**

Isn't it? The illustrations—

**CHADWICK**

And the story will make you cry.

**WALTER**

I can't believe I'm actually holding an original Christopher Smith in my hands.

**MATTHEWS**

Careful. It's the only copy.

**CHADWICK**

Are you nuts? What if someone spills coffee on it? Make a copy!

**MATTHEWS**

Relax. The machine's out of toner. Deb's changing it now. Just be careful with it, Mr. Hobbs.

**WALTER**

*(handling it gingerly)*

This could be huge!

*Suddenly BUDDY, in his business suit, bursts into the conference room, having just come from his date.*

**BUDDY**

I'm in love! I'm in love! And I don't care who knows it!

**WALTER**

Buddy, please. We're very busy.

**BUDDY**

Dad, I need a table for two at Tavern on The Green, seven o'clock, Christmas Eve. And four hundred dollars.

**MATTHEWS**

The guy's waiting in the lobby, Mr. Hobbs.

**WALTER**

*(to BUDDY)*

Buddy. We'll talk about this in a minute. Just, do me a favour and sit there in that chair. Amuse yourself.

**BUDDY**

Oh, okay, dad.

**WALTER**

*(to MATTHEWS)*

Well, bring the guy up here. I want to thank him personally.

**MATTHEWS**

He's not waiting for a thank you. He's waiting for \$300,000.

**WALTER**

What?