

A CRICKET COUNTY BLIZZARD

by Eddie McPherson



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A Cricket County

BLIZZARD

A winter wonderland winds up wacky

by Eddie McPherson

To Rhonda Wray.

*Thank you for your support these last fourteen years,
making it possible for a bunch of hillbilly characters
to climb on stages literally all over the world with messages
of hope and love. Your suggestions, insights, recommendations,
and most of all kindness are appreciated and treasured by a
writer who is living his dream.*

CAST OF CHARACTERS

The City Bunch:

OSWALD

Leader of the city clan.
Tries to make the best of a bad situation.

PETE

Oswald's brother who is a little nerdy.

MIMI

Narcissistic. Tries to "wish" her way out of the blizzard.

PETUNIA

Highbrow, but decides she wants to help
Fester care for his new "pet."

STANLEY PHILLIPS

A stranger from the city who is stranded
at the diner because of the storm.

LORRAINE PHILLIPS

Stanley's wife. They are both good-natured
and love the Cricket County bunch.

The Country Bunch:

ELKIN

Leader of the country clan.

GRANDMA

Owens the diner. She's afraid she won't get to
stage her annual live Nativity this year.

FESTER

Naïve but has a big heart. Lets his City Cousins
know he's disappointed in them.

GLENDA MAE

Has her work cut out for her trying to keep her
husband Elmer Crick in line.

BRENDA MAE

Glenda Mae's identical twin sister who looks nothing like her.

ELMER CRICK

Glenda Mae's simple-minded husband.
Dreams of playing his guitar on the radio.

Other Country Folk:

CHARLES RAY

Cricket County's radio announcer who has set up shop
in the back of Grandma's diner.

FREDA

Cricket County's switchboard operator.

PRODUCTION NOTES

Synopsis

There's a blizzard blowing in Cricket County this Christmas, trapping everyone in Grandma Taylor's diner on Christmas Eve. The Country Bunch is snowed in, the City Bunch is snowed in, and even a couple strangers end up there after their car skids off the road.

The City Bunch is grumpy because they are stuck out in the boonies, and the Country Bunch is hurt because once again, their urban cousins thought they were coming out to the country for some of the hillbillies' inheritance money. (Actually, what the Country Cousins were offering them was honey, not money.) Because there isn't much else to do, everyone starts praying to the good Lord. But if you listen to the prayers very closely, there's more *asking* of the Lord than anything else. It seems the City *and* the Country Bunches are thinking of their Creator a little like they think of Santa Claus these days: give me this, please grant me that, I really need so-and-so. However, this fact isn't realized until the mayhem of the evening comes to a sudden halt when the power goes out and everyone sits in the soft glow of lanterns and oil lamps, listening for the first time to the blowing wind outside. In the quietness of the moment, their mistake is realized.

It's a lesson in how we treat God with dishonor if we're only going to him when we want something and not just to spend time with him. After all, he's not like Santa, whose only purpose is (if we're good) to grant us all our hearts desire.

Set

The set is a country diner. The café is very old, but it's been kept up well. The Upstage wall (the wall closest to your Backstage) has a large window painted to make it look as though it looks out on the front porch. "Cricket County Café" is painted backward on the window. Red-and-white checkered curtains (matching the tablecloths) hang on either side of the window. Fake snow lines the window. Heavy falling snowflakes are painted on to represent the blizzard outside. The diner is decorated with old-fashioned Christmas decorations.

The door that leads to the outside is right of the window. (Right for the actors, not the audience.) A small window is left of the large window. This is a real window that actors appear behind. This smaller window looks into the kitchen. An optional counter is in front of this window. The door that leads into the kitchen is left of the small window. A decorated Christmas tree stands somewhere in the café.

A jukebox is painted on the Stage Left wall (unless you have access to a real jukebox, which would be cool). On the Stage Right wall is a door that leads to the storage room.

The use of lanterns, oil lamps, candles, etc. used when the power goes out will give a nice, cozy glow to the stage for the remainder of the play. You may use real oil lamps and lanterns, or you may choose to use artificial light here.

Costumes

The Country Bunch wears flannel shirts, blue jeans, cotton or gingham dresses, overalls, etc. Grandma, Glenda Mae, and Brenda Mae wear aprons. Glenda Mae and Grandma take turns wearing a chef's hat. The city characters, including Mr. and Mrs. Phillips, wear nice, modern clothing. Everyone who enters from outside wears some type of jacket or coat, scarf, hat, etc. Grandma might wear a bouffant or beehive or granny bun. Mimi needs a bathrobe, straw hat, and sunglasses as part of her disguise. Petunia needs a white doctor's jacket (or scrubs).

Props

Small wrapped gift, guitar, broom, headphones, cell phones, computer tablet, old "microphone" (doesn't have to work), old radio, old-fashioned telephone, two notepads and pens (one for Charles Ray and one for Mr. Phillips), bandana, tree limb, old-fashioned headset and microphone (Freda the Operator), small Christmas box, necklace, thermos, Styrofoam cups, hearing aid, bracelet, baby doll, watch, large balloon, brown tissue paper, toy or real fireman's helmet, piece of garden hose, oversized work gloves, ladle, wooden chair, quilts, electrical cord with plug, two pieces of paper (for recipe and Oswald's prayer list), sleeping bags, clipboard, bottle of water,

baby's bottle, suitcase, four to five red and green helium balloons on strings, and oil lamps, lanterns, or candles (real or fake).

The flying pig: The audience never sees the pig. When Fester first enters with it, he has it wrapped inside his coat. Later, when he wraps it up in a "cloth," inflate a large balloon with air (not helium) and wrap it in brown tissue paper (this makes the "swine" very light). Once the helium balloons are attached to it at the end of the play, it will lift up into the air very easily. You will want to have a fishing line tied to the bottom of the "pig" and anchor it so it won't fly to the ceiling of your performance room.

Sound Effects

It would be effective to include the sound of howling wind throughout the play. Be sure it isn't so loud that it drowns out the actors.

Music

A classic version of "Sweet Little Jesus Boy" by Robert MacGimsey, copyright © 1934, Carl Fischer Inc., New York. You will also need additional recorded Christmas music where the script calls for it (any seasonal song).

Note

Every time the actors come in from the storm, they need to have "snow" on their shoulders and heads that they brush off when they enter.

(Inside the Cricket County Café, FESTER sits holding and staring at a wrapped Christmas package. ELKIN is looking out the window. BRENDA MAE stands behind the counter leaning on it, looking bored and wrapping her gum around her finger. ELMER sits on a chair, holding a guitar and picking at its strings. GLENDA MAE is sweeping with an old broom. OSWALD sits on the opposite side of the stage, his elbows propped on a table, his chin resting in his hands. PETE, wearing earphones, is listening to music on his phone. MIMI is scrolling through the Internet on her smartphone while PETUNIA reads a book on her computer tablet. She also wears headphones. After the lights come up, the audience sees the above picture for a few moments. It's quiet, except for the picking of the guitar strings and the distant sound of the howling wind outside. GRANDMA enters from the kitchen and speaks into a microphone that sits on the counter.)

GRANDMA: *(Loudly, causing everyone in the diner to jump)*

Testin' one, two! Testin' one, two!

BRENDA MAE: *(Hand to her chest)* **Good gravy, Grandma. You scared me out of my skin!**

GRANDMA: *(Into the microphone)* **Sorry, honey child. I was just testin' my new microphone.** *(Pronounces it "my-cree-phone.")*

FESTER: *(Covering his ears)* **It hurts my eardrums.**

ELKIN: *(Turning from the window)* **What's the microphone *(My-cree-phone)* for, Grandma?**

GRANDMA: **To call in orders to the kitchen.** *(Into the microphone)* **I need one plate of fried green maters.**

BRENDA MAE: **Why can't we just do what we always do?** *(Shouting toward the kitchen)* **Hey, Grandma, one plate of greasy greens!**

GRANDMA: **Because, little miss smarty pants, I'm tryin' to bring my humble little café up to the modern times.**

GLENDA MAE: **I thought you said it was because you wasn't goin' to let Inita Goosh over in Chigger County outdo you with her new diner she's opened up.**

GRANDMA: **Do you know that little sneak opened up that there** *(Finger quotes)* **"diner" and is hostin' a live Nativity**

1 for her customers, just like I've done for twenty years?
 2 If I didn't know better, I'd say what she's doin' is against
 3 the law.

4 ELKIN: A little friendly competition never hurt nobody,
 5 Grandma.

6 GRANDMA: There ain't nothin' friendly about it. She's tryin'
 7 to steal my ideals *and* my customers.

8 BRENDA MAE: But Grandma, Inita's diner is clear over in
 9 Chigger County, a good ten miles away.

10 GRANDMA: That don't matter none. I know what she's up to.
 11 But I guarantee Inita don't have a microphone to call
 12 her orders in to her kitchen. I want to try it out. Let's
 13 practice. I'll go to the kitchen and Brenda Mae, you call
 14 in a order. (*Excited, GRANDMA runs to the kitchen.*)

15 BRENDA MAE: (*Shrugs.*) At least it's somethin' to do. Elkin,
 16 be my customer.

17 ELKIN: (*Shrugs.*) OK. (*He walks to the counter and takes on a*
 18 *character's voice.*) I'll take a bowl of chili with onions.

19 BRENDA MAE: Okey-doke. (*Into the microphone, but not very*
 20 *loudly*) One homemade gas attack, and make it cry.

21 GRANDMA: (*Shouting from Backstage*) I can't hear you!

22 BRENDA MAE: (*Closer to the microphone*) One homemade gas
 23 attack, and make it cry.

24 GRANDMA: (*Backstage*) Get closer to the microphone!

25 BRENDA MAE: (*"Eating" the microphone, but not shouting*) One
 26 homemade gas attack, and make it cry.

27 GRANDMA: (*Backstage*) Louder!

28 BRENDA MAE: (*This time she turns away from the microphone*
 29 *completely and shouts to the kitchen.*) I said a bowl of chili
 30 covered with onions!

31 GRANDMA: (*Appears at the window.*) Perfect! I heard ever'
 32 word. See? I told you it was a good ideal. And it will be
 33 just perfect for the narrator to use tonight in the live
 34 Nativity scene. Don't think for a minute I'm goin' to let
 35 Inita Goosh outdo me with *her* copycat scene her first
 36 year! (*She disappears into the kitchen.*)

37 ELMER: Fester, you been starin' at that wrapped box for a
 38 whole hour now.

- 1 FESTER: 'Cause I'm tryin' to figure out what one of my
2 Christmas presents is.
- 3 GLENDA MAE: Let me see it. (*She picks up the gift FESTER's*
4 *holding and looks it over.*) There's no name tag on it. Who's
5 it from?
- 6 FESTER: It's from me, silly.
- 7 ELKIN: You bought *yourself* a Christmas present?
- 8 GLENDA MAE: And you don't know what it is?
- 9 ELKIN: Well, I bought it last summer when we took that trip
10 to the flea market. I thought to myself, I thought,
11 "Fester, you shore would enjoy havin' that there item,
12 so I think I'll give it to you for Christmas." So I bought
13 it and wrapped it up, and (*Holds it up*) here it is.
- 14 BRENDA MAE: And now you can't remember what it is. Law,
15 law. (*Pats him on the head.*) Poor Fester. Like I always say,
16 there may be a barn on the hill, but that don't always
17 mean there's hay in the loft.
- 18 FESTER: (*Offended*) I got as much hay in my loft as the next
19 feller.
- 20 ELKIN: Just go ahead and open it, Fester.
- 21 FESTER: Can't. I promised myself I wouldn't open it 'til
22 Christmas mornin'.
- 23 GRANDMA: (*Coming out of the kitchen tying her apron*) Folks
24 should start showin' up any minute now for the annual
25 Christmas Eve supper.
- 26 ELKIN: (*Looking out the window*) I don't know, Grandma. It's
27 snowin' cats and dogs out there, and it's almost up to
28 the window sill.
- 29 GRANDMA: Elkin, turn on the radio and see if we can get a
30 weather report.
- 31 ELKIN: Shore, Grandma. (*He switches it on.*)
- 32 CHARLES RAY: (*On a microphone Backstage*) Well, folks, it's
33 snowin' cats and dogs out there, and it's almost up to
34 the window sills.
- 35 ELKIN: See, Grandma? I was right.
- 36 GRANDMA: Shhhh!
- 37 CHARLES RAY: (*Off-stage*) I was just talkin' to Buzz Kilroy
38 over at the hardware store, and he said he talked to

1 Burma Thang's mama-in-law this afternoon, and she
2 said she heard that it was goin' to get a lot worse 'fore
3 it got better.

4 ELKIN: (*To the room*) You can't get more official than that.

5 CHARLES RAY: (*Off-stage*) Looks like wherever you are right
6 now is where you'll be spending Christmas, so I hope
7 you're spendin' it with people you like. This is Charles
8 Ray at Cricket County's own WHIC, comin' at you with
9 forty-five-and-a-half watts of power. Now for some
10 cheery Christmas music. (*Christmas music plays until*
11 *ELKIN turns off the radio.*)

12 GRANDMA: That station shore does come in a lot clearer
13 these days.

14 ELKIN: That's 'cause Charles Ray moved the radio station
15 into your storage room back there. (*CHARLES RAY*
16 *enters and crosses to the phone.*)

17 CHARLES RAY: Howdy, ever'body. Just needin' to get
18 another weather update. (*He picks up the phone and dials*
19 *it.*)

20 GRANDMA: Doin' a real good job on the radio, Charles Ray.

21 CHARLES RAY: Much obliged, Miss Imogene.

22 ELMER: Hey, Charles Ray, when you goin' to let me play my
23 gee-tar on that there radio show of yours?

24 CHARLES RAY: When pigs fly.

25 ELMER: Darn it. That could take weeks.

26 CHARLES RAY: (*Into the phone*) Hey, Buzz, Charles Ray. You
27 got my next official weather report so I can put it on the
28 air? Uh-huh ... uh-huh ... (*As he writes it on his pad*) Snow
29 is still fallin' down hard. Much obliged. If anything
30 changes, you can reach me here at the diner. (*He hangs*
31 *up and crosses to the window and looks out.*) Whoo-eeee!
32 Buzz was right. Well, back to the old grindstone.

33 GRANDMA: Charles Ray, don't forget to tell the folks in
34 radio land that the live Nativity starts at nine o'clock
35 sharp.

36 CHARLES RAY: Be glad to. (*He exits.*)

37 ELKIN: Hey, y'all. (*Pulls his country family over to Stage Right as*
38 *they stand around FESTER, who is still looking over his*

- 1 *present.*) Have y'all noticed our City Cousins ain't hardly
2 said a word to us since they got here this mornin'?
- 3 GLENDA MAE: I think they're a mite mad at us.
- 4 GRANDMA: What in tarnation for?
- 5 BRENDA MAE: It all started when Glenda Mae called Cousin
6 Mimi up on the telephone to tell her that we had some
7 honey to give them for Christmas.
- 8 GLENDA MAE: Right, and 'fore I knew it, Cousin Mimi
9 throwed down that phone and was up here with the rest
10 of the gang first thing this mornin', just ahead of the
11 snowstorm.
- 12 GRANDMA: Law, law, if I had knowed they liked honey that
13 much, I woulda gave them their very own beehive.
- 14 BRENDA MAE: Well, that's just it —
- 15 GLENDA MAE: (*To BRENDA MAE*) It's *my* story! (*Turns to the*
16 *others.*) Well, that's just it. When I told her on the
17 telephone that I had some honey to give them, I found
18 out later she thought I said I had *money* to give them,
19 and that's why they come. And when they got here and
20 said, "Well, here we are. Where's our money?" I couldn't
21 help but laugh. And I says to them, I says, "No, I told
22 y'all I got *honey* to give you, not *money*." That's when
23 they turned all red in the face and ain't spoke a word
24 since.
- 25 ELKIN: Bless their souls, and now they're stuck here 'cause
26 of the storm.
- 27 GRANDMA: Serves 'em right for bein' so greedy.
- 28 FESTER: Maybe we should give 'em all the money Uncle
29 Zeke left us so then they would come see us 'cause they
30 *wanted* to spend time with us, and not because they
31 want our loot.
- 32 GRANDMA: Fester, I don't like that word "loot."
- 33 FESTER: Sorry, Grandma. I meant because they want our
34 booty.
- 35 ELKIN: Well, whether they want to be here or not, they're
36 stuck, and there ain't a thang we can do about it.
- 37 ELMER: I got an ideal. I'll play them a song on my gee-tar.
- 38 ELKIN: (*Shrugs.*) Worth a shot. (*He crosses to the CITY BUNCH*

1 *and claps his hands.)* Well, well, well, looks like we're all
 2 stranded here for Christmas, don't it? *(No one looks up or*
 3 *acknowledges that he has said anything.)* Yes sir, it's snowin'
 4 like the dickens out there. *(There's no response from the*
 5 CITY BUNCH. *They continue what they're doing, looking very*
 6 *bored.)* Hey, Elmer, why don't you come entertain us
 7 with a song on your gee-tar?

8 ELMER: Well, since you asked, okey-doke. This little ditty is
 9 somethin' I learned when I was just a little tyke at fat
 10 camp. *(Strums the guitar.)* Oh my darlin', *(Strums)* Oh my
 11 darlin', *(Strums)* Oh my darlin', Clementine. *(Stops and*
 12 *looks at EVERYONE.)*

13 GLENDA MAE: Is that all of it?

14 ELMER: Yeah, that's two years' worth of practicin'.

15 GLENDA MAE: I'm proud of you, pumpkin.

16 ELMER: Much obliged, my little cantaloupe.

17 GLENDA MAE: You're welcome, little string bean.

18 FESTER: Quit talkin' to each other. You're makin' me
 19 hungry.

20 GRANDMA: Elmer, do you know anything Christmasey you
 21 can play on your gee-tar?

22 ELMER: Let me think.

23 FESTER: *(Playfully)* Ever'body stand back! Elmer's goin' to
 24 try and think.

25 ELMER: Got it. Here's a Christmas tune you all might know.
 26 *(Strums his guitar and sings to the tune of "Oh My Darling,*
 27 *Clementine.")* It is Christmas, *(Strums)* It is Christmas,
 28 *(Strums)* It is Christmastime for all. *(He stops.)* How's
 29 that?

30 FESTER: *(Shaking his head)* There may be a barn on the hill —

31 GLENDA MAE: Hush up, Fester.

32 ELKIN: I got a ideal. I'll show y'all some magic tricks.

33 FESTER: Magic tricks? Can you turn yourself into anything,
 34 Cousin Elkin?

35 ELKIN: Of course I can, Fester. The other day I was drivin'
 36 down the road, and I turned into a driveway. *(He laughs*
 37 *but no one else does.)* That was a little joke.

38 GRANDMA: Little is the key word there. *(To the CITY FOLKS)*

- 1 Hey over there, your Cousin Elkin is goin' to perform a
 2 little magic trick for you.
- 3 **ELKIN:** For my first trick, I'd like to have my beautiful
 4 assistant come up and help me out. (*GLEND A MAE and*
 5 *BRENDA MAE both start to cross to ELKIN.*)
- 6 **GLEND A MAE:** (*Stopping BRENDA MAE*) Why *you* goin' up
 7 there?
- 8 **BRENDA MAE:** 'Cause he said his *beautiful* assistant.
- 9 **GLEND A MAE:** I repeat, why *you* goin' up there?
- 10 **BRENDA MAE:** (*Hands on hips*) Are you callin' me ugly?
- 11 **GLEND A MAE:** If you ain't ugly, then why is your doctor a
 12 vet?
- 13 **BRENDA MAE:** Oh, yeah?
- 14 **GLEND A MAE:** (*Nose to nose with BRENDA MAE*) Yeah!
- 15 **GRANDMA:** Both of you, hush up. (*Crossing to ELKIN*) We all
 16 know who he meant when he said "beautiful assistant."
 17 Go ahead, Elkin. I'm here. (*GLEND A MAE and BRENDA*
 18 *MAE pout and sit.*)
- 19 **ELKIN:** (*To GRANDMA*) Assistant, if you'll take this here
 20 bandana, please. (*He hands her a bandana, then turns and*
 21 *sticks his pointer finger up into the air.*) As you all can
 22 plainly see, I have one finger up in the air.
- 23 **FESTER:** (*Applauds wildly.*) That was good, Cousin Elkin.
- 24 **ELKIN:** (*Aggravated*) I ain't done the trick yet, Fester. (*Clears*
 25 *his throat.*) Grandma, if you will take the bandana and
 26 place it over my finger, please.
- 27 **GRANDMA:** Like this? (*She covers his finger with the bandana.*)
- 28 **ELKIN:** (*Hands her a tree limb.*) Now, take this here tree limb
 29 — uh, I mean magic wand — and wave it around whilst
 30 I say a few magic words. (*GRANDMA waves the branch.*)
 31 Have-a-banana ... I mean, Abra-pajama ... I mean, Abby's
 32 gramma ...
- 33 **FESTER:** (*Having fun, childlike*) Abracadabra!
- 34 **ELKIN:** (*Points to FESTER.*) That's it! That's the word!
 35 Abraaaa-cadabraaaa ... (*He rips off the bandana and reveals*
 36 *two fingers.*) Ta-daaaaa!
- 37 **FESTER:** (*Claps wildly.*) Do it again! Do it again! (*The CITY*
 38 *BUNCH look at one another, not amused in the least, and*

1 *return to their individual activities. CHARLES RAY runs back*
 2 *in.)*

3 **CHARLES RAY:** Hey, ever'body, I heard a car skid off the
 4 road. Let's go see if they're OK.

5 **GRANDMA:** The dickens you say!

6 **ELKIN:** Come on, ever'body! *(The COUNTRY BUNCH quickly*
 7 *grab their coats and hats and run out the front door.)*

8 **GRANDMA:** Law, law!

9 **GLENDA MAE:** I hope they're OK, Brenda Mae.

10 **BRENDA MAE:** Me too, Glenda Mae. *(The COUNTRY BUNCH*
 11 *exit.)*

12 **MIMI:** *(After making sure they're gone)* Oswald, I'm slowly losing
 13 my sanity. We have *got* to get out of here.

14 **PETUNIA:** I agree. I say let's take our chances in the storm.

15 **PETE:** Perhaps there are some skis around here that we
 16 could use.

17 **MIMI:** Good idea, Pete. We're in the mountains, so it would
 18 be downhill all the way.

19 **PETUNIA:** Or we could rent the Goodyear blimp. *(All three*
 20 *chime in, talking at one time.)*

21 **OSWALD:** Hold it, *hold it!* Now, everyone just calm down.
 22 There's a raging blizzard out there. There's no way
 23 we're getting out in that.

24 **MIMI:** *(Crossing to the phone)* But the Simpsons are having
 25 their big Christmas party tomorrow night. *(As she dials*
 26 *zero on the phone)* It's the social event of the season, and
 27 I *will* be there to show off my new party dress!

28 **PETE:** Who are you calling?

29 **MIMI:** *(Putting up a finger)* Hello? Who is this? Hello? *(Covers*
 30 *the mouthpiece and speaks to the room.)* It's the Cricket
 31 County operator. *(Back to the phone)* Yes, this is Mimi
 32 Tippinheimer, and I need to get out of Cricket County
 33 as soon as possible. Yes, I realize there's a blizzard
 34 brewing, but I *must* get home at any cost. Excuse me,
 35 but I don't appreciate being laughed at. I am *very*
 36 serious. Now, I don't care who you have to call or how
 37 much it costs. I will be expecting you to get back with
 38 me within the hour. *(Covers the mouthpiece and speaks to*

1 *the room.*) She says the switchboard is about to close
 2 until after Christmas. *(Back to the phone)* Now you listen
 3 to me, you *must* get me out of here! I'm at the rundown
 4 Cricket County Café. What do you mean you are too?
 5 *(FREDA enters from the back wearing an old-fashioned*
 6 *headset and holding an old-fashioned microphone.)*

7 **FREDA:** Howdy there!

8 **MIMI:** The switchboard is in the diner?

9 **FREDA:** Yep! I'm sharin' the storage room with Charles Ray
 10 and his radio station. Merry Christmas to you and
 11 yours! *(She exits.)*

12 **MIMI:** *(Shouting after her)* But wait! What about getting me out
 13 of here? I'm Mimi Tippinheimer. The one who's having
 14 a nervous breakdown!

15 **PETUNIA:** Mimi, you need to calm down.

16 **OSWALD:** You're making *us* a nervous wreck.

17 **PETE:** Come over here and open your present.

18 **MIMI:** I *am* calm. I'm a calm, rational human being. I'm just
 19 as calm as the next ... Did you say present?

20 **PETE:** *(Picking up a small wrapped package from under the tree)* It
 21 has your name on it.

22 **MIMI:** *(Crossing to PETUNIA and grabbing the package)* Well,
 23 why didn't you say so?

24 **OSWALD:** Mimi, that gift is from your Country Cousins.
 25 You've got to wait until tomorrow to open it.

26 **MIMI:** *(Too late. She has opened it and pulls out a necklace.)* Oh,
 27 it's only a necklace.

28 **PETUNIA:** *(Getting a close look at it)* Look, it's a little manger! I
 29 think it's cute.

30 **MIMI:** You do?

31 **PETUNIA:** And it looks like it's made of solid gold.

32 **MIMI:** Solid gold? How much do you think I can get for it?

33 **OSWALD:** Mimi!

34 **MIMI:** What?

35 **PETUNIA:** Wait a minute, let me see that. *(Reaches for the*
 36 *necklace.)*

37 **MIMI:** *(Yanks it away.)* Get your own solid-gold necklace!

38 **PETUNIA:** *(Takes it.)* I've seen a picture of this necklace

- 1 before. Oswald, hand me my tablet.
- 2 PETE: (*Grabs a gift.*) If Mimi gets to open her present early,
3 then I do too!
- 4 PETUNIA: (*Slaps his hand.*) You put that down this instant!
- 5 PETE: (*Rubbing his hand*) Ow! You're always trying to hurt
6 me.
- 7 PETUNIA: (*Scrolling through her tablet*) Here it is right here —
8 look!
- 9 MIMI: (*Holding the necklace up to the tablet*) Why, it's the very
10 same necklace.
- 11 PETUNIA: I remember seeing a picture of this necklace in
12 my Appalachian History textbook.
- 13 PETE: You took Appalachian History in college?
- 14 PETUNIA: Yes, as part of my sociology study. According to
15 my professor and this online history page, there is only
16 one of these necklaces in existence in the world.
17 Treasure hunters have been searching for it for
18 hundreds of years.
- 19 OSWALD: Come on, Petunia. You don't expect us to believe
20 that, do you?
- 21 MIMI: Petunia, do you really think this necklace could be
22 one of a kind?
- 23 PETUNIA: (*Points to her necklace.*) See for yourself.
- 24 MIMI: Why, it must be priceless. (*She holds it up against herself.*)
25 All these boring trips to the country have finally paid
26 off.
- 27 PETE: Our country cousins have probably had that necklace
28 in their family for generations.
- 29 PETUNIA: (*Looking at her computer tablet*) Wait, I'm not
30 finished. There's a legend that goes along with the
31 necklace. It says one reason men have searched so long
32 for it is not only because of its monetary value, but
33 because of its secret power.
- 34 MIMI: Secret power?
- 35 OSWALD: Now you're making up stuff.
- 36 PETUNIA: (*Referring to the tablet*) It's right here in this article.
37 Anyone who comes in contact with the necklace for the
38 first time is granted three wishes.

- 1 **PETE:** *(Tries to grab the necklace.)* **Three wishes?** *(MIMI slaps his*
2 *hand.)* **Ow!**
- 3 **OSWALD:** *(Sarcastically)* **Oh, that's right.** **If it's on the**
4 **Internet, then it must be true.**
- 5 **MIMI:** **It's like having my very own personal Santa Claus. I**
6 **can ask for anything I want for Christmas.**
- 7 **OSWALD:** **You know what they say about suckers. There's**
8 **one born every —**
- 9 **MIMI:** **I do believe I will check it out and see if it works. Let's**
10 **see, what do I want to wish for?**
- 11 **PETE:** **Mimi, have I told you how beautiful you are lately?**
- 12 **MIMI:** **Be quiet. I'm not wishing anything for you. I have**
13 **something.** *(Holds the necklace tightly in both hands up to her*
14 *chest and closes her eyes tightly.)* **I wish for a hot cup of**
15 **coffee.** *(There is a pause as everyone freezes, including MIMI,*
16 *whose eyes remain closed.)* **Did anything happen?**
- 17 **PETE:** *(Sarcastic)* **Yep, it's raining coffee.** *(FREDA enters from*
18 *the back room holding a thermos.)*
- 19 **FREDA:** **Where did ever'body run off to?**
- 20 **OSWALD:** **Outside.**
- 21 **FREDA:** **Oh. Well, I just made a fresh pot of coffee. Thought**
22 **y'all might want some.** *(She sets it on the counter and exits.*
23 *The CITY BUNCH is quiet as they stare at the thermos.*
24 *Finally, PETUNIA speaks.)*
- 25 **PETUNIA:** *(Wide eyes)* **What did she say was in the thermos?**
- 26 **PETE:** **I'm pretty sure she said "fresh coffee."**
- 27 **OSWALD:** *(Noticing their shocked expressions)* **Come on, it was a**
28 **coincidence.**
- 29 **MIMI:** *(Holding out the necklace and looking at it)* **Petunia, you**
30 **were right. It really works!**
- 31 **PETE:** *(Peeking out the window)* **They're coming back in. Put**
32 **the necklace back before they realize you opened it!**
33 *(MIMI rushes to the box and replaces the necklace under the*
34 *tree. The COUNTRY BUNCH enters along with CHARLES*
35 *RAY. ELKIN and ELMER are assisting a limping stranger*
36 *named MR. PHILLIPS, and BRENDA MAE and GLENDA*
37 *MAE are helping MRS. PHILLIPS.)*
- 38 **ELKIN:** **Here we go. Come right on in here where it's nice**

- 1 and warm.
- 2 **GRANDMA:** (*Pulling around a couple of chairs*) Here, sit 'em
- 3 down right here.
- 4 **ELKIN:** Somebody get them some hot coffee to drink.
- 5 **OSWALD:** (*Rushes to the thermos and takes it to ELKIN.*) Here
- 6 you go.
- 7 **MIMI:** That's *my* coffee. I wished for it.
- 8 **PETUNIA:** Mimi, they're hurt.
- 9 **ELKIN:** (*Speaking to the CITY BUNCH as GRANDMA pours the*
- 10 *coffee into two Styrofoam cups*) Their car skidded off the
- 11 road into a snow bank.
- 12 **GRANDMA:** (*Handing MRS. PHILLIPS the cup*) Are you shore
- 13 you ain't hurt nowhere?
- 14 **MRS. PHILLIPS:** I'm fine, thank you. Just a little shook up.
- 15 **FESTER:** (*To GRANDMA, speaking quite loudly*) She said she's
- 16 just a little shook up, Grandma.
- 17 **GRANDMA:** (*To MRS. PHILLIPS*) You plowed into a wall of
- 18 snow. Of course you're shook up!
- 19 **MR. PHILLIPS:** I'm Stanley Phillips, and this is my wife,
- 20 Lorraine. The falling snow got so thick that I couldn't
- 21 see the road.
- 22 **FESTER:** (*To GRANDMA, loudly*) He said he couldn't see a-tall,
- 23 'cause the snow was fallin' so hard.
- 24 **GRANDMA:** Fester, why you treatin' me like I'm deaf? (*Deaf*)
- 25 **FESTER:** 'Cause I found your hearin' aid out in the snow.
- 26 **GRANDMA:** (*Takes it from him.*) Much obliged, Fester.
- 27 **CHARLES RAY:** (*Looking out the window*) Gol-lee, the wind is
- 28 really howlin' too. I better go update the weather
- 29 report. (*Heads to the back room.*)
- 30 **ELMER:** (*Runs and stops him.*) Charles Ray, when do you think
- 31 I might be able to play my gee-tar on your radio show?
- 32 **CHARLES RAY:** Let me think. (*As though in deep thought*) When
- 33 can Elmer play his gee-tar on my radio show? (*Snaps his*
- 34 *fingers.*) I know! When pigs fly. (*He pats ELMER on the back*
- 35 *and runs out.*)
- 36 **MRS. PHILLIPS:** We appreciate all of you coming to our
- 37 rescue.
- 38 **ELKIN:** Don't you mention it a-tall. That's what folks is

- 1 supposed to do for one another.
- 2 GRANDMA: Y'all just relax, 'cause you're in the company of
- 3 friends.
- 4 GLENDA MAE: Elmer, why don't you play a little tune for
- 5 our visitors?
- 6 ELMER: On my gee-tar?
- 7 GLENDA MAE: (*Sarcastic*) No, let me grab that bugle out of
- 8 my pocketbook. Of course on your gee-tar.
- 9 ELMER: Well, OK. (*Strums and sings to the tune of "Oh, My*
- 10 *Darling, Clementine."*) Merry Christmas, (*Strums*) merry
- 11 Christmas, (*Strums*) We hope you strangers feel at home
- 12 ... (*The COUNTRY BUNCH clap wildly.*)
- 13 MIMI: Oh, brother.
- 14 BRENDA MAE: (*Excitedly, referring to MIMI as she runs to her*)
- 15 Did y'all hear that? She talked!
- 16 GLENDA MAE: (*Running to them*) They're alive!
- 17 ELKIN: We thought y'all was goin' to be mad at us forever or
- 18 for eternity, whichever came first.
- 19 OSWALD: We're sorry we acted the way we did, Elkin. It was
- 20 very low of us.
- 21 MIMI: (*Crossing to the tree and laying her hand on her gift*) Yes,
- 22 and we forgive you for getting us up here on false
- 23 pretenses.
- 24 PETUNIA: What Mimi means is we're sorry we
- 25 misunderstood you.
- 26 MIMI: But we have great news. (*Caressing her gift*) It seems we
- 27 will be getting home tonight after all.
- 28 MR. PHILLIPS: Not out in that storm. That's the worst
- 29 blizzard I have ever seen, and I lived in Alaska as a kid.
- 30 MRS. PHILLIPS: The roads have an inch of ice on them.
- 31 (*CHARLES RAY runs in.*)
- 32 CHARLES RAY: Did y'all hear my latest report? This is the
- 33 worst blizzard that even Alaska has saw. And the roads
- 34 have a inch of ice on them. Just wanted y'all to know.
- 35 ELMER: Charles Ray, can I play my gee-tar on your radio
- 36 show now?
- 37 CHARLES RAY: What do you think?
- 38 ELMER: When pigs fly?

- 1 CHARLES RAY: (*Snaps fingers and points to ELMER.*) You got it.
2 (*He exits.*)
- 3 ELMER: He ain't *never* goin' to let me share my talent with
4 the rest of the world.
- 5 ELKIN: Elmer, that there radio station only reaches about a
6 dozen folk.
- 7 GRANDMA: More people'd hear you play if you stood out on
8 the front porch.
- 9 ELMER: Really? (*Heads for the front door.*)
- 10 GLENDA MAE: (*Stopping him*) Elmer, you ain't goin' out there
11 in that storm.
- 12 ELMER: It's OK, honey bunch. I'm blizzard-proof. (*He starts to*
13 *leave again, but GLENDA MAE grabs his arm.*)
- 14 GLENDA MAE: I said no! I need you alive at least 'til my
15 weddin' ring is paid off.
- 16 MR. PHILLIPS: (*Standing and crossing to FESTER*) That's a
17 nice guitar you have there. Can I see it? (*Takes it and*
18 *gives it a good looking over.*)
- 19 ELMER: Shore you can, but it's pronounced "gee-tar."
- 20 MRS. PHILLIPS: My husband and I run a little antique shop
21 in the city.
- 22 MR. PHILLIPS: We were on our way to an antique auction
23 when the snow started falling.
- 24 OSWALD: Antiques, huh? Is that guitar — excuse me, Elmer,
25 I mean "gee-tar" — worth anything?
- 26 MR. PHILLIPS: As a matter of fact, this particular model
27 guitar features the trademark Guild arched back
28 design that allows it to produce extraordinary volume.
29 Its smooth playability, exceptional build quality, and
30 premium specifications have made it one of the most
31 sought-after guitars in the world.
- 32 FESTER: That's all fine and dandy, but is it *worth* anything?
- 33 MR. PHILLIPS: I'd say between three and four thousand
34 dollars. (*To ELMER*) Can I ask you where you procured
35 it?
- 36 ELMER: Oh, I never procured it. I just play it now and then.
- 37 OSWALD: Elmer, he wants to know where you obtained it.
- 38 ELMER: Uhhhh ...

- 1 ELKIN: I reckon he's wonderin' where you got it from.
- 2 ELMER: Oh, got it *from*. My Uncle Bob gave it to me when I
3 was just a boy. I think he got it from his great-
4 granddaddy.
- 5 MRS. PHILLIPS: (*Roaming the diner*) And look at these
6 baskets and quilts! Why, it's a veritable smorgasbord of
7 ancient artifacts.
- 8 GLENDA MAE: It's a what?
- 9 BRENDA MAE: She said it's a vegetable sorghum boar, and
10 her Aunt Arty's fat.
- 11 GLENDA MAE: Bless her heart, it's probably a glandular
12 problem.
- 13 MRS. PHILLIPS: (*Crossing and standing beside GRANDMA*) This
14 quaint diner is full of very old relics.
- 15 GLENDA MAE: You can't talk about my grandma like that.
- 16 BRENDA MAE: Besides, Grandma's the nicest old relic you'll
17 ever meet.
- 18 FESTER: (*Presenting his axe*) Is my favorite axe what you call
19 a antique too?
- 20 MR. PHILLIPS: (*Taking it and looking it over*) Oh, yes. This is a
21 fine early axe from Lewistown, Pennsylvania. It would
22 probably bring around three hundred dollars.
- 23 ELKIN: (*Whistles.*) Three hundred dollars!
- 24 MR. PHILLIPS: Would you be interested in selling it?
- 25 FESTER: Heck, no. I couldn't part with this here axe no more
26 than I could part with my right arm.
- 27 MR. PHILLIPS: I don't think I could get anything for your
28 right arm. (*Chuckles at his joke.*)
- 29 FESTER: (*Confused*) What?
- 30 MR. PHILLIPS: Oh, nothing. I was telling a little joke.
- 31 FESTER: Sorry, I didn't mean to interrupt you. Go right
32 ahead.
- 33 GRANDMA: Hush up, ever'body. The stranger is goin' to tell
34 us a joke. (*EVERYONE is staring at MR. PHILLIPS.*)
- 35 MR. PHILLIPS: (*Embarrassed*) You see, I couldn't sell his right
36 arm in my antique shop. (*Attempts a chuckle.*)
- 37 GRANDMA: Law, you might be smart and suffocated,
38 (*Sophisticated*) but you shore could use practice tellin'

1 jokes.

2 **MRS. PHILLIPS:** What's back there? *(Points to the back room.)*

3 **GRANDMA:** Well, there's a couple of storerooms back there.

4 Would you like a tour?

5 **MRS. PHILLIPS:** If it isn't too much trouble.

6 **GRANDMA:** Brenda Mae, Glenda Mae, you two go in the
7 kitchen and get the stove started. We'll whip up
8 somethin' for supper before we perform the live
9 Nativity scene. We got us some customers after all.

10 **GLEND A MAE:** OK, Grandma. Let's go, Brenda Mae.

11 **BRENDA MAE:** I'm a-comin', Glenda Mae.

12 **GLEND A MAE:** You too, Elmer. You need to bring in some
13 firewood for the wood stove. *(They exit to the kitchen as*
14 *GRANDMA and MR. and MRS. PHILLIPS exit to the back*
15 *room, leaving FESTER behind with the CITY BUNCH.*
16 *FESTER looks at them for a split second, then takes a chair,*
17 *sets it by the window, sits, and stares outside.)*

18 **OSWALD:** Fester, are you OK?

19 **FESTER:** *(Doesn't turn around.)* Not really.

20 **PETE:** Why? What's wrong?

21 **MIMI:** Oswald, I need to talk to you.

22 **OSWALD:** Just a minute, Mimi. I'm talkin' to Fester here.

23 **MIMI:** But it's important!

24 **PETE:** *(To FESTER)* Why are you sitting over there by
25 yourself?

26 **FESTER:** Watchin' the snow fall outside.

27 **PETUNIA:** Fester, we can tell somethin' is wrong. Won't you
28 tell us?

29 **FESTER:** If you really want to know, I'm a little bit upset.

30 **PETUNIA:** About the snowstorm?

31 **FESTER:** No, not about the snowstorm.

32 **PETE:** About no one being able to come in and see the live
33 Nativity scene?

34 **FESTER:** No, not about that neither.

35 **OSWALD:** Then what are you upset about?

36 **FESTER:** *(Pause as he drops his head)* Y'all.

37 **OSWALD:** *(Taken aback)* Y'all as in us?

38 **FESTER:** Seein' how you're the only y'all in here.

- 1 **PETE:** Why are you upset with us? We haven't said anything
2 all day.
- 3 **FESTER:** That's why. I can tell that y'all don't want to be
4 here with us. I didn't just fall off the turnip truck, you
5 know. Well, not this year anyway.
- 6 **MIMI:** (*Yanking on his sleeve as she holds her gift*) Oswald, can I
7 talk to you now?
- 8 **OSWALD:** Just a minute, Mimi.
- 9 **PETUNIA:** (*To FESTER*) It's not that we don't want to be here,
10 Fester. It's just that ... well, we wanted to be home with
11 our loved ones. Not that you're not our loved ones, but
12 —I mean our family. Not that you're not our family, but
13 —I mean —
- 14 **OSWALD:** (*Sarcastically*) Petunia, you're so smooth.
- 15 **FESTER:** (*Turns to them for the first time.*) See? The only reason
16 y'all ever come out to the sticks is when you think you
17 might get somethin' from us. You only call us to see if
18 we have changed our minds about givin' you some of
19 our inheritance that Uncle Zeke gave us. The only
20 reason y'all came out this year is because the twins
21 called and asked if you wanted some honey and you
22 thought they said money, and so here y'all are. It just
23 makes me sad. (*He turns back to the window.*)
- 24 **PETE:** (*Crossing to FESTER*) Fester, we're sorry. We wouldn't
25 hurt your feelings for anything.
- 26 **FESTER:** It would be nice if y'all called sometimes and asked
27 how Grandma's back is doin', or just to say somethin'
28 like, "Hey, we was just thinkin' 'bout you and wanted to
29 call up and say 'howdy.' "
- 30 **PETE:** (*Takes a deep breath.*) Fester, look —
- 31 **FESTER:** Well, I guess I'll go see how deep the snow has got.
32 (*He takes his coat off the rack and exits through the front door.*)
- 33 **MIMI:** Thank goodness. Now may I *please* have your
34 attention?
- 35 **PETUNIA:** (*Annoyed*) What is it, Mimi?
- 36 **MIMI:** (*Points to the back room.*) Those antique dealer people. I
37 know why they're here.
- 38 **PETE:** What are you talkin' about?

- 1 MIMI: *(Taking her wrapped necklace and holding it up next to her)*
2 They've heard about the rare necklace. They're here to
3 take it from me.
- 4 OSWALD: You're the most narcissistic and paranoid person
5 I know.
- 6 MIMI: Oswald, I'm serious. You can't believe that story they
7 told about how they just *happened* to be passing by the
8 diner when they just *happened* to slide off the road into
9 a snow bank.
- 10 PETUNIA: The road is covered with a sheet of ice.
- 11 MIMI: Think about it: they are collectors of Appalachian
12 antiques, and the rarest of Appalachian antiques just
13 *happens* to be right here in this diner. *(Points to her*
14 *necklace.)* Two plus two.
- 15 OSWALD: Mimi, don't make a whole scene out of this and
16 end up embarrassing all of us, especially our Country
17 Cousins.
- 18 PETE: Oswald's right, Mimi. Don't make a whole scene out of
19 this and end up embarrassing all of us, especially our
20 Country Cousins.
- 21 OSWALD: *(Sarcastically)* I couldn't have said it better myself.
22 *(Taking their coats off the rack)* Come on, Pete. You and I
23 are going out to the limo to get the sleeping bags.
24 *(OSWALD hands him his coat and then points a warning*
25 *finger at MIMI.)* Remember, Mimi, let it go.
- 26 PETE: *(Points a warning finger too.)* Remember, Mimi, let it go.
- 27 OSWALD: Would you please stop repeating everything I say?
- 28 MIMI: *(Holding up both hands, fingers spread)* Look — I've let it
29 go. *(PETE and OSWALD exit.)*
- 30 PETUNIA: You're not letting it go, are you?
- 31 MIMI: Not on your life.
- 32 PETUNIA: What are you scheming in that head of yours?
- 33 MIMI: I'm going to take my necklace and wish those two
34 sneaky strangers out of here. *(Removes the necklace from*
35 *the box.)*
- 36 PETUNIA: *(Rushing to MIMI and grabbing her arm)* Mimi, you
37 can't do that!
- 38 MIMI: So you *do* believe in the wishes.

- 1 **PETUNIA:** No! I mean, I don't know. But if there is
2 something to it, it's not something you want to play
3 around with.
- 4 **MIMI:** It's a harmless necklace with a gold manger at the end
5 of it. Now, leave me alone and let me think.
- 6 **PETUNIA:** *(Grabs the necklace and runs to the other side of the*
7 *diner.)* No! I won't let you do it.
- 8 **MIMI:** Give me back my necklace, prissy pants!
- 9 **PETUNIA:** *(Moving toward the front door)* Mimi, you're always
10 overthinking things. I wish you would use common
11 sense sometimes.
- 12 **MIMI:** Oh, yeah? Well, you are always so uptight, so I wish
13 you would just chill! *(The door flies open and FESTER*
14 *enters carrying the wrapped "pig" in his jacket. He leaves the*
15 *door open and heads to the back room.)*
- 16 **PETUNIA:** Fester, shut the door. I'm freezing!
- 17 **FESTER:** *(Runs over and shuts the door.)* Sorry 'bout that, but
18 I'm in a real pig hurry.
- 19 **PETUNIA:** You mean real *big* hurry.
- 20 **FESTER:** No, I mean real pig hurry! *(He runs to the back room.)*
21 Grandma! *(He exits.)*
- 22 **MIMI:** Oh no, look what you made me do. I wasted another
23 wish!
- 24 **PETUNIA:** What?
- 25 **MIMI:** I said I wished you would chill, and look what
26 happened. The door flew open and gave you one!
- 27 **PETUNIA:** Gave me a what?
- 28 **MIMI:** A chill!
- 29 **PETUNIA:** Mimi, don't you think that's a stretch?
- 30 **MIMI:** I can't believe this. I haven't owned the necklace for
31 an hour yet, and I've already wasted two wishes. I've
32 got to be careful what I say.
- 33 **PETUNIA:** Now, put that necklace back in the box!
- 34 **GLENDA MAE:** *(Entering from the kitchen wearing a chef's hat)*
35 Cousin Petunia, we need somebody to fry the bacon.
- 36 **PETUNIA:** Do you want me to call someone?
- 37 **GLENDA MAE:** No, ma'am. We was hopin' you could cook
38 some up on the stove for supper.

- 1 **PETUNIA:** But I don't know how to cook.
- 2 **GLENDIA MAE:** (*Annoyed*) Take bacon out of fridge. Throw
- 3 bacon on stove. Take bacon off stove. Now you know.
- 4 **PETUNIA:** That sounds like a lot of steps.
- 5 **GLENDIA MAE:** (*Heavy sigh*) Never mind. (*She exits to the*
- 6 *kitchen.*)
- 7 **PETUNIA:** (*To MIMI*) That was a close call. I'll be in the back
- 8 if anyone cares.
- 9 **MIMI:** (*Looking around, sarcastic*) Yes, there's a whole group of
- 10 people waiting in line to see you.
- 11 **PETUNIA:** No one likes a smart aleck. (*She exits to the storage*
- 12 *room. MIMI makes sure they're gone, then she turns back and*
- 13 *slips a bracelet off her arm and places it in the necklace box and*
- 14 *then slips the necklace in her pocket.*)
- 15 **MIMI:** There. You'll be nice and safe from those dirty thieves.
- 16 (*GRANDMA re-enters with MR. and MRS. PHILLIPS.*
- 17 *GRANDMA carries a baby doll wrapped in a blanket.*)
- 18 **GRANDMA:** And this is the doll we use in the manger for our
- 19 live Nativity scene.
- 20 **MRS. PHILLIPS:** So you act out the Nativity every year for
- 21 your patrons?
- 22 **GRANDMA:** No, just my customers. But because of the storm,
- 23 we haven't had anybody show up this year besides y'all.
- 24 I've been prayin' all day on the hour that the snow
- 25 would stop or go around us and hit Chigger County
- 26 instead, but it ain't worked yet. (*Looks at her watch.*)
- 27 **Oops!** It's time for my next prayer. Excuse me a minute.
- 28 (*She steps out, looks up, and prays aloud.*) Dear Lord, this
- 29 is Imogene Taylor again. I know you're probably tired
- 30 of me askin', but I was just wonderin' if there was a
- 31 chance that maybe you could turn off the snow machine
- 32 for just a little bit so maybe folks could come out and
- 33 watch all my hard work put into practice. Well, OK
- 34 then. I'll see you in an hour. (*Extremely reverent and*
- 35 *ladylike*) Amen. (*Then she raises her head and runs to the*
- 36 *window and looks out.*)
- 37 **MRS. PHILLIPS:** Did it work?
- 38 **GRANDMA:** Nope. Snow's fallin' harder than ever. Wind's

1 pickin' up too. I must not be holdin' my mouth right
 2 when I pray. Look at me, goin' on 'bout all my troubles.
 3 I bet y'all are hungrier than a bus full of hippos.

4 MRS. PHILLIPS: As a matter of fact, it's been a while since
 5 we stopped for lunch.

6 GRANDMA: Well, don't you fret none, there. After all, this *is*
 7 a café, and you *do* know what café means, don't you?

8 MRS. PHILLIPS: No. What does it mean?

9 GRANDMA: I was hopin' you'd know.

10 MR. PHILLIPS: The word café derives from French, Spanish,
 11 Portuguese, and Catalan, and means "coffee."

12 GRANDMA: Café means coffee? Get outta here. Well, what do
 13 you know about that? You're just a walkin' 'cyclopedia,
 14 ain't you? Let me see how that sounds. (*She clears her*
 15 *throat and speaks uppity.*) Welcome to the Cricket County
 16 Café. (*Pronounces it "cah-FEY."*)

17 MRS. PHILLIPS: (*Patting her husband's back*) Stanley was a
 18 contestant on *Wheel of Fortune* once. (*During this*
 19 *conversation, because MIMI is upset with the PHILLIPSES,*
 20 *she mocks them in silence behind their backs.*)

21 GRANDMA: You don't say. Well, well.

22 MR. PHILLIPS: (*Modest*) Yes, but that was a long time ago.

23 GRANDMA: Well, I do declare. *Wheel of Fortune*?

24 MRS. PHILLIPS: Yes, ma'am.

25 GRANDMA: In that case, can I ask you a really important
 26 question?

27 MR. PHILLIPS: Sure.

28 GRANDMA: What's *Wheel of Fortune*?

29 MRS. PHILLIPS: (*Taken aback*) Well, it's a very popular game
 30 show on television.

31 GRANDMA: Never heard of it. Now, bingo — there's a *real*
 32 game. We play it here ever' first Wednesday of the
 33 month. (*They turn and catch MIMI mocking them. Her eyes*
 34 *are closed and she's making a funny face, pantomiming their*
 35 *conversation. She opens her eyes and catches them watching*
 36 *her.*) Moo Moo, are you OK? You ain't havin' a fit or
 37 nothin', are you?

38 MIMI: Grandma Taylor, I think it's time you knew the truth.

1 *(Crosses quickly and points to MR. and MRS. PHILLIPS.)*

2 **These people here are heisters!**

3 **GRANDMA:** *(Turns to MRS. PHILLIPS.)* I would have bet
4 money they was Methodist.

5 **MIMI:** They're here for the rare necklace. But don't worry,
6 it's hidden where the likes of them will never find it.
7 Now if you'll excuse me, it's time for my daily prayer.
8 *(She walks a few steps forward, looks up, puts her hands in the*
9 *air, and prays somewhat like a Pharisee.)* Oh dear Lord, it's
10 me, Mimi. That's right — me, Mimi. Dear Lord, now that
11 I have this *(Glances over at MR. PHILLIPS and lowers her*
12 *voice)* you-know-what to get me home, I ask that thou
13 dost make sure the two strangers doth not getteth their
14 hands on my little treasure. Well, that's all for today. Ta
15 ta! *(Speaks to the others.)* I'll be in here if you need me. *(She*
16 *exits to the back room.)*

17 **MR. PHILLIPS:** What was all that about a rare necklace?

18 **GRANDMA:** Law, your guess is as good as mine. *(Turns to the*
19 *kitchen.)* Glenda Mae! Brenda Mae! *(They enter from the*
20 *kitchen as we hear ELMER yelling Backstage.)*

21 **GLENDA MAE:** Yeah, Grandma?

22 **GRANDMA:** Are y'all gettin' them vittles goin'?

23 **BRENDA MAE:** Yes ma'am, but we sorta got a little behind on
24 account of the far.

25 **GRANDMA:** What far?

26 **GLENDA MAE:** Elmer got his shirttail caught in the wood
27 stove, and the next thing we knowed, there he was, on
28 far.

29 **BRENDA MAE:** *(Shouting back to the kitchen)* Stop, drop, and
30 roll, Elmer. Stop, drop, and roll!

31 **GRANDMA:** If he messes up my clean floor, I'm goin' to drop
32 him off the face of the earth! *(She runs back to the kitchen.)*

33 **MRS. PHILLIPS:** *(Concerned)* Is Elmer all right?

34 **GLENDA MAE:** Oh, yeah. Elmer catches hisself on far at least
35 once a month. We finally had to get ourselves a gaggle
36 of ducks.

37 **MR. PHILLIPS:** Ducks? Why?

38 **GLENDA MAE:** They're good at stompin' out fars with their

- 1 webbed feet. Let's go, Brenda Mae.
- 2 **BRENDA MAE:** I'm a-comin', Glenda Mae. *(They run to the*
3 *kitchen as FESTER enters from the back room holding*
4 *something wrapped in brown tissue paper made to look like*
5 *cloth. [See Production Notes.] He is followed by PETUNIA.)*
- 6 **PETUNIA:** The poor, poor thing. *(Peeking inside the tissue*
7 *paper)* Is he all right?
- 8 **FESTER:** He'll be OK, Cousin Petunia. Pigs are tough. They
9 have lots of hamina.
- 10 **PETUNIA:** You mean stamina.
- 11 **FESTER:** Hamina, stamina. Tomaters, tomahters. I got a sick
12 porker on my hands. *(Shouts to the kitchen.)* Hey,
13 Grandma!
- 14 **MRS. PHILLIPS:** *(Approaching)* What did you find, Fester?
- 15 **FESTER:** I found this here piglet out roamin' around in the
16 snow. *(Shouts to the kitchen.)* Grandma! *(Looking inside the*
17 *"blanket")* Don't worry, little Porkypine. Fester's here to
18 take care of you.
- 19 **PETUNIA:** Fester, that's cute. You named him Porkypine
20 because pigs are pork.
- 21 **FESTER:** *(Sarcastic)* No, I called him Porkypine 'cause he's
22 got quills growin' out of his back. Of course it's 'cause
23 he's made of pork.
- 24 **PETUNIA:** I'm sorry.
- 25 **FESTER:** Please forgive me, Cousin Petunia. I'm just a little
26 on edge.
- 27 **GRANDMA:** *(Appearing at the counter wearing a fireman's hat and*
28 *oversized work gloves and holding a water hose)* Fester, what
29 you want? I'm tryin' to put out a far.
- 30 **FESTER:** Can my new pet pig have somethin' to drink,
31 please?
- 32 **GRANDMA:** Fester Taylor, you can't keep a pig in here. What
33 about the smell?
- 34 **FESTER:** He'll get used to it.
- 35 **GRANDMA:** *(Holds out a ladle.)* Here, use this ladle to dip some
36 water out of the bucket in the back. But bring it back.
37 I'll need to use it to serve supper out of.
- 38 **FESTER:** Much obliged, Grandma. *(He grabs the ladle and runs*

1 *to the back room.*)

2 **PETUNIA:** *(To MR. PHILLIPS and MRS. PHILLIPS as she*
3 *shrugs)* **There's never a dull moment.** *(Shouts toward the*
4 *back.)* **I'll help you, Fester!** *(She joins FESTER in the back.)*

5 **MRS. PHILLIPS:** *(To MR. PHILLIPS)* **Well, here we are ...**
6 **Christmas Eve. Car half-buried in the snow. Stranded**
7 **in Green Acres ...**

8 **MR. PHILLIPS:** **It could be worse, I guess. Take a look at this**
9 **old jukebox, will you?** *(Crosses to it.)*

10 **MRS. PHILLIPS:** **Could you stop thinking about business for**
11 **a minute, please?**

12 **MR. PHILLIPS:** **I can't help it — this place is a gold mine.**
13 **They have antiques in every little nook and cranny. I**
14 **could buy them out and make a killing!**

15 **MRS. PHILLIPS:** **That's the difference between you and me.**
16 *(Crossing to him)* **You see this jukebox and only think**
17 **about how much money it could bring you. I look at it**
18 **and wonder what lies inside this beautiful relic. What**
19 **old, forgotten songs of the past stand inside, just**
20 **waiting to be listened to and appreciated?** *(She hits a*
21 *button.)*

22 **MR. PHILLIPS:** **It's in pristine condition and could be worth**
23 **thousands.** *(Crosses quickly.)* **And look at this old wooden**
24 **chair, will you?** *(He pulls a small pad and pencil from his*
25 *pocket.)* **I need to make a list.** *("Sweet Little Jesus Boy"*
26 *begins to play on the jukebox. As MR. PHILLIPS rushes*
27 *around the diner finding items to list on his notepad, MRS.*
28 *PHILLIPS sits calmly in a chair and looks straight out over the*
29 *audience, listening to the words of this sweet song. After the line*
30 *in the song that says, "... Take our sins away," the song stops.)*

31 **MRS. PHILLIPS:** *(Snaps out of her fog and stands.)* **What**
32 **happened?**

33 **MR. PHILLIPS:** *(Holding up the cord from the jukebox)* **Sorry, I**
34 **tripped over the plug.**

35 **MRS. PHILLIPS:** *(Rushes over and grabs MR. PHILLIPS by the*
36 *arm and drags him to a chair and forces him to sit.)* **Come**
37 **over here and sit down.** *(She grabs the notepad.)* **Give me**
38 **that.**

- 1 MR. PHILLIPS: Don't wrinkle it.
- 2 MRS. PHILLIPS: Stanley, do you remember where we were
3 five Christmases ago?
- 4 MR. PHILLIPS: (*Thinks.*) That's the year we were in
5 Washington State buying our first truckload of antiques
6 for our brand-new store.
- 7 MRS. PHILLIPS: And what about the Christmas after that?
- 8 MR. PHILLIPS: (*Thinking*) Canada, at that estate sale.
- 9 MRS. PHILLIPS: And the next Christmas we were in Boston,
10 two years ago we were buying in West Virginia, and last
11 year in North Carolina, at that antique auction.
- 12 MR. PHILLIPS: Those were great times.
- 13 MRS. PHILLIPS: It's been five years since we've have been
14 home for Christmas. The kids have given up on the
15 family ever being all together for the holidays. Our
16 business has taken over every aspect of our lives.
- 17 MR. PHILLIPS: But owning the store has been our big
18 dream.
- 19 MRS. PHILLIPS: And I love the store. I don't regret starting
20 it. But I love my family more! And I love Christmas.
21 Hearing that song just now caused all kind of memories
22 to come flooding back. My father sang that song in
23 church one year when I was a little girl.
- 24 MR. PHILLIPS: I think I know what you're getting at.
- 25 MRS. PHILLIPS: You do?
- 26 MR. PHILLIPS: (*Nodding his head*) You want me to sing that
27 song to you, don't you?
- 28 MRS. PHILLIPS: What?
- 29 MR. PHILLIPS: (*Closes his eyes and sings a little off-key.*)
30 Sweet little Jesus booooy ...
- 31 MRS. PHILLIPS: (*Putting a finger to her husband's lips*) Honey?
32 Please don't sing.
- 33 MR. PHILLIPS: Because it makes you sad?
- 34 MRS. PHILLIPS: Because it hurts my ears. (*MIMI enters*
35 *wearing a cotton bathrobe that goes to the floor, a straw hat,*
36 *and sunglasses. She is still hiding her necklace.*)
- 37 MIMI: Has anyone seen that beautiful, talented,
38 sophisticated girl from the city named Mimi?

1 MRS. PHILLIPS: Well —

2 MIMI: I bet she went home. And she probably took any
3 Christmas gifts she received with her.

4 MR. PHILLIPS: How could she, with that blizzard?

5 MIMI: Probably hired a helicopter. Oh well, I guess you
6 coming out here in search of a rare necklace has all
7 been in vain. I'm pretty tired. I think I'll take a nap. *(She*
8 *places her head on a table in the corner of the diner and*
9 *pretends to sleep.)*

10 GRANDMA: *(Rushes in from the kitchen. She's now wearing the*
11 *chef's hat.)* This is just terrible!

12 MRS. PHILLIPS: What's wrong, Ms. Taylor?

13 GRANDMA: Elmer needs CPR, and I don't know what to do!

14 MRS. PHILLIPS: *(Very concerned)* Oh my, is he breathing?

15 GRANDMA: Who?

16 MR. PHILLIPS: Elmer.

17 GRANDMA: Yeah, why?

18 MRS. PHILLIPS: The fire!

19 GRANDMA: Oh, the far. Yeah, he's fine, 'cause them thick
20 overalls he wears protected him from the flames.

21 MR. PHILLIPS: Then why does he need CPR?

22 GRANDMA: 'Cause he can't remember how to make it.

23 MRS. PHILLIPS: Make it?

24 GRANDMA: Right.

25 MRS. PHILLIPS: I'm sorry, I'm confused. He can't remember
26 how to make what?

27 GRANDMA: Cornbread Puddin'. That's why I was lookin' for
28 the CPR — Cornbread Puddin' Recipe. Don't they teach
29 y'all nothin' in the city? *(Grabs a piece of paper off the*
30 *counter.)* Here it is. We're plannin' a real fancy Christmas
31 Eve supper for y'all. Elmer, I found it! *(She rushes off to*
32 *the kitchen.)*

33 MRS. PHILLIPS: They're going to so much trouble to make
34 sure our Christmas is special. *(Looking around)* I wish
35 there was something we could do to help. *(Snaps her*
36 *fingers.)* I know just what this place needs: the balloons!

37 MR. PHILLIPS: Balloons?

38 MRS. PHILLIPS: Those red and green balloons we bought

1 for the shop. They're in the trunk of the car. They'll
2 surely add a touch of Christmas. (*Heading for the door*)
3 Let's go!

4 **MR. PHILLIPS:** (*Holding up his pad*) *Then* can I finish my wish
5 list? (*Throws his coat at him from the rack, takes hers off the*
6 *rack and puts it on, and rushes out the door. MR. PHILLIPS*
7 *stops for a second, takes a step toward the audience, and looks*
8 *up, praying.*) Dear Lord, I have a special Christmas
9 request. Please see to it that the dear, sweet,
10 unassuming country folks will sell me these beautiful
11 antiques so I might share them with the rest of the
12 world and make a killing in the bargain. Amen. (*He puts*
13 *on his coat and opens the door. OSWALD and PETE rush in*
14 *carrying sleeping bags.*) Excuse me. We'll be right back.

15 **OSWALD:** Be careful. The wind is really picking up.

16 **MR. PHILLIPS:** We will, thanks. (*They shut the door as*
17 *OSWALD and PETE dust the snow from their shoulders.*)

18 **OSWALD:** We're trapped in here like birds in a cage.

19 **PETE:** (*Sees MIMI.*) Yep, and there's the head dodo. (*Crossing*
20 *to the other side of the diner and unrolling his sleeping bag*)
21 This looks like a good place to bed down. Nice and cozy.

22 **OSWALD:** Mimi!

23 **MIMI:** (*Not moving*) Are they gone?

24 **PETE:** What are you doing?

25 **MIMI:** (*Raising her head and looking around*) Living undercover
26 so those swindlers won't try and steal my rare necklace.

27 **OSWALD:** (*Unrolling his sleeping bag beside PETE's*) Are you still
28 on that kick?

29 **MIMI:** What are you two doing?

30 **OSWALD:** We brought the sleeping bags in from the car.

31 **PETE:** Unless you wanted to sleep out on the porch.

32 **OSWALD:** Which is just about covered in snow.

33 **MIMI:** You're wasting your time. Don't you remember? I have
34 one last wish left, and I'm going to wish us out of here.

35 **OSWALD:** Mimi, look. We are all tired. We're trapped here for
36 the time being, so we will just have to make the best of
37 it.

38 **PETE:** And no silly solid-gold manger necklace is going to

- 1 change that.
- 2 **MIMI:** Oh, ye of little faith. OK, fine. Stay here for all I care.
- 3 Petunia and I will go back. (*Shouts.*) Petunia!
- 4 **PETUNIA:** (*Entering from the back room wearing a white doctor's*
5 *jacket and carrying a clipboard*) What is it?
- 6 **MIMI:** Are you ready to go?
- 7 **PETUNIA:** Go where?
- 8 **MIMI:** I'm wishing us back home. Grab your purse.
- 9 **PETUNIA:** Mimi, stop with that. I'm helping Fester nurse
10 Porkypine back to health.
- 11 **OSWALD:** Porkypine?
- 12 **PETUNIA:** Fester rescued a pig from the storm, so if you'll
13 excuse me —
- 14 **MIMI:** You're going to make me go by myself? Alone? On
15 Christmas Eve? Alone?
- 16 **PETUNIA:** You said "alone" twice.
- 17 **MIMI:** Oswald, tell her what she should do. Help me, or help
18 Porkypine.
- 19 **OSWALD:** Petunia, I think you should help out the pig.
- 20 **MIMI:** See? (*PETE, drinking water from a water bottle, does a spit*
21 *take as he laughs out loud.*)
- 22 **OSWALD:** Do what you want, but I'm taking a nap. If you'll
23 excuse me, I'll say my prayers now.
- 24 **FESTER:** (*Frantically appearing at the door*) Cousin Petunia,
25 come quick! It's Porkypine!
- 26 **PETUNIA:** I'm coming! (*She follows FESTER out. MIMI follows*
27 *them.*)
- 28 **MIMI:** Petunia, wait! It's time to go home! (*She exits.*)
- 29 **OSWALD:** (*On his knees with his hands folded in prayer*) Dear
30 Lord — merry Christmas, by the way — I come humbly
31 to you this cold Christmas Eve to make my daily
32 requests. (*Pulls out a piece of paper from his shirt pocket.*)
33 Dear Lord, please see to it that I make that big sale next
34 week so that I will meet my quota and receive my
35 bonus. Also, my car has been making a noise when I
36 turn sharp corners, so if you could check that out for
37 me —
- 38 **PETE:** (*Has assumed his prayer pose.*) Dear heavenly Father, I

- 1 come to you this cold night and ask that you please —
- 2 OSWALD: (*Opens his eyes and looks at his brother.*) Excuse me.
- 3 PETE: (*Praying*) Help me make the softball team this coming
- 4 spring —
- 5 OSWALD: Pete, you're interrupting me.
- 6 PETE: (*Like a child*) I want to say my prayers too.
- 7 OSWALD: Do you have to be so loud?
- 8 PETE: Do *you* have to be so loud?
- 9 OSWALD: (*Irritable*) I was praying first!
- 10 PETE: (*Also shouting*) OK, fine. I'll pray silently! (*Whispering*
- 11 *sarcastically*) Is this silent enough for you?
- 12 OSWALD: Pete, I'm warning you!
- 13 PETE: Fine!
- 14 OSWALD: Fine! (*They both close their eyes.*)
- 15 OSWALD: Sorry about that, dear Lord. As I was saying ...
- 16 Where was I? (*Looks at his request list.*) Oh, yes. Number
- 17 three, since these hillbilly cousins of ours won't share
- 18 their inherited millions, could you please see it in your
- 19 heart for me to win the lottery this year? (*GRANDMA*
- 20 *enters, shouting to the kitchen.*)
- 21 GRANDMA: Once you clean up that mess, git on out here and
- 22 join the rest of us. We got to get this Nativity thing
- 23 going, Fester!
- 24 OSWALD: Grandma Taylor, I hate to be rude, but we *were*
- 25 saying our prayers.
- 26 GRANDMA: Well, get to your amens, 'cause we got to get
- 27 things hoppin' around here.
- 28 FESTER: (*Enters hugging his wrapped pig up to his chest.*) Did
- 29 you call me, Grandma?
- 30 GRANDMA: Fester, is your shepherd costume close by? You
- 31 know we're goin' to be doin' the live Nativity for our
- 32 customers right after supper.
- 33 FESTER: Grandma, maybe we should just skip the Nativity
- 34 this year, what with the blizzard outside and
- 35 ever'thing.
- 36 GRANDMA: (*Hands on her hips as she can't believe what she just*
- 37 *heard*) What did you say, young man?
- 38 FESTER: I said, (*Shouting*) "Grandma, maybe we should just



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