

JOSEPH. They're playing your song, Gloria.

GLORIA. Same every year, and same joke!

MARTINI'S VOICE. Jesus, Mary and Joseph, help my friend George.

BILLY'S VOICE. We need George. Keep him safe.

JOSEPH. 'George' again? Trouble? Trouble in Bedford Falls. Listen in, everyone.

ACTOR 1 enters as GEORGE. He puts his coat collar up against the wind. GEORGE makes his way to the bridge.

BERT'S VOICE. Never thinks about himself, God. That's why he's in trouble. He needs a guardian angel.

GLORIA. A lot of people are asking for help for a man called George Bailey. We'll have to send someone down.

GEORGE. Water sure looks cold. Wonder how long a man could stay alive in it.

GLORIA. Tonight's his crucial night. We must send someone immediately. Whose turn is it?

JOSEPH. It's been so busy. Christmas Eve is always busy. Most of them are on duty already.

GLORIA. So, who's left?

JOSEPH. Well... the ~~seamstress~~. *Clockmaker*

GLORIA. Clarissa? ~~Clarissa~~ Oddbody?

JOSEPH. ~~She~~ hasn't got her wings yet. Maybe I can find someone else.

GLORIA. I know ~~he~~'s a bit scatty, easily distracted...

JOSEPH. Concentration span of a jumping flea...

GLORIA. But ~~she~~'s a simple soul, honest and patient. Might be just what Bedford Falls needs. Anyway, she's available. ~~Clarissa~~ Oddbody!

CLARISSA ~~Clarissa~~. You sent for me?

GLORIA. A man on earth needs our help.

~~CLARISSA~~. Oh goody! Is he sick?

GLORIA. No, worse, he's discouraged. At exactly ten forty-five tonight, earth time, that man will be thinking seriously of throwing away God's greatest gift.

~~CLARISSA~~. His life? Oh my! If I... if I should accomplish this mission... might I win my wings? I've been waiting over two hundred years and people are beginning to talk.

GLORIA. You do a good job with George Bailey, and you'll get your wings.

~~CLARISSA~~. Oh, thank you! Oh dear, I've only got an hour to dress. What are they wearing down there now?

JOSEPH. You've only got an hour to save him. If you're going to help this poor man, you need to know something about him.

~~CLARISSA~~. Well, yes, I suppose...

SAM'S VOICE. Excuse me...

~~CLARISSA~~. Yes... Who...?

SAM'S VOICE. Excuse me, God.

~~CLARISSA~~. Oh, it's not for me...

During the following speech the two ANGELS get ready to become other characters.

SAM'S VOICE. It's Sam, God... Sam Wainwright? I know you don't hear from me too much but, well, my old friend George Bailey... I think he needs a break...

JOSEPH. You've got one hour.

~~CLARISSA~~. So little time to find out about him. If I concentrate... oh dear, concentrate... I should be able to see his whole life... with some help from his friends.

GLORIA. You'll get help.

~~CLARISSA~~ is now in the town.

~~CLARISSA~~. This George Bailey is certainly in lots of folks' thoughts.

As SAM's voice is heard, GLORIA joins in and goes into the town to become SAM.

SAM/GLORIA. He's a good guy. Could you give him a break, God?

SAM (*now played live by GLORIA*). Hey, I remember when he saved his kid brother.

~~CLARISSA~~. Really! This could be useful... go on... oh I hope he goes on... I do think wings would suit me...

HARRY, played by JOSEPH, as a kid jumps up and down and calls out and GEORGE, now twelve years old, calls from the bridge.

HARRY. Look at me, Georgie! Look at me, Sam!

GEORGE. Not on the ice, Harry, it's too thin!

SAM. 1918... no, no 1919. Cold winter, 1919. Me and George, we were twelve. But Harry was just a little sprout, just eight.

HARRY. World Champion Slider! Aaaagh!

SAM. George just jumped right in that icy river. But I guess it's only us who ever knew... (*To God.*) us and you.

GEORGE runs from the bridge to SAM and HARRY. He rescues HARRY. He is shivering with cold but still in charge.

GEORGE. You gotta swear...

~~CLARISSA~~. Oh dear!

GEORGE. Swear not to tell.

HARRY. I'm cold...

GEORGE. Do you want a larruping?

HARRY. No... but I'm cold and wet and...