

POTTER. Look at you. You used to be so cocky! You were going to go out and conquer the world! But what are you now? A miserable little clerk crawling in here on your hands and knees and begging for help. No securities – no stocks – no bonds – nothing but a miserable little five-hundred-dollar equity in a life insurance policy. You're worth more dead than alive. I'll tell you what I'm going to do for you, George. Since the state bank examiner is here, as a stockholder of the Building and Loan, I'm going to swear out a warrant for your arrest. Misappropriation of funds, manipulation, malfeasance...

GEORGE is no longer listening. He leaves the office.

Go ahead, George. You can't hide in a town like this.

CLARISSA. I see...I see...money... it's just money. Well, that's a relief. At least it's nothing serious. Oh, but I suppose it is serious for George. Going to prison. Yes, that would be serious. But they wouldn't... a man like George... I mean, just for money. Oh dear, I guess they would. I'd forgotten what it's like down here... The time's getting close.

During this speech GEORGE has gone to Martini's bar and is now being helped out by MARTINI.

MARTINI. Why you drink so much, my friend? Please go home, Mr Bailey. This is Christmas Eve.

A man just about to enter the bar hears this.

WELCH. Bailey? Which Bailey?

MARTINI. This is Mr George Bailey, my good friend but he...

WELCH punches GEORGE on the jaw and sends him sprawling.

WELCH. Next time you talk to my wife like that you'll get worse. She cried for an hour. It isn't enough she slaves away teaching your stupid kids how to read and write you have to bawl her out!

MARTINI. You get out of here, Mr Welch.

WELCH. I want a drink.

MARTINI. Not in my bar! You hit my best friend! Go away!

WELCH *leaves*.

You all right?

GEORGE. Who was that?

MARTINI. Don't worry. His name is Welch. He don't come into my place no more. Teppista!

GEORGE. Welch, huh? Figures. Where's my insurance policy?
(*Finds it in his pocket.*) Oh, here...

MARTINI. Don't go now. Come back and sit down a little. You don't feel so good.

GEORGE. I'm all right.

MARTINI. Please don't go... please...

GEORGE *stumbles off*. CLARISSA *makes for the bridge*.
We hear again the Christmas carol from the beginning of the play and then GEORGE enters as he did at the beginning and goes onto the bridge. He stares down into the waters below for a while. He repeats exactly what he did in Act One.

CLARISSA. I wouldn't do that if I were you.

GEORGE (*startled*). What?

CLARISSA. I said I wouldn't do that if I were you.

GEORGE (*angrily*). Wouldn't do what?

CLARISSA. What you were thinking of doing.

GEORGE. How do you know what I was thinking?

CLARISSA. Oh, we make it our business to know a lot of things. Your lip's bleeding, George.

GEORGE. Yeah, I got a bust in the jaw a little bit ago... hey, how do you know my name?

CLARISSA. Oh, I know all about you. I've watched you grow up from a little boy.