

VIOLET. George... have you gone crazy? Walk in the grass in my bare feet? Why, it's ten miles up to Mount Bedford.

GEORGE. Oh, but it's so...

VIOLET (*as she exits*). If you want to plan an expedition, take a husky!

GEORGE. Okay, just forget about the whole thing.

UNCLE BILLY *is chuckling to himself but does not comment on GEORGE's embarrassment.*

BILLY. For all his daydreaming, George kept the good old Building and Loan ticking over.

GEORGE (*morosely*). Okay, Mr Randall. There's the statement of your account.

BILLY. Mrs Thompson...regular as clockwork... four dollars, is it? (*Fishes in his pocket for candy. But she says something.*) Now don't tell me Little Jimmy's given up candy! Oh, I see, he's going to college tomorrow. Little Jimmy, huh? Doesn't time fly! Well, well...

GEORGE. There you are, Mrs Davies. And don't you worry, Bob'll find some work. You just hold on. You'll be fine.

Phone rings. It's HARRY again.

GEORGE. Mr Harold Bailey! We got your wire. Uncle Billy and I will meet the train, okay?

HARRY. Great, George.

GEORGE. But why did you wire us? Come on, Harry, spill the beans!

HARRY. I wasn't gonna say till I got there but... well... I'm bringing someone home.

GEORGE. You're bringing someone... a girl... you're bringing some smart college dame back to funny old Bedford Falls? Do you think that's a wise move? Don't want to put her off.

HARRY. Too late for that. She's your sister-in-law.

GEORGE. My what?... Now, let me see... no, this is my good ear...

HARRY. Your sister-in-law, George... my wife... Ruth Dakin Bailey. Here... meet the wife.

He puts RUTH onto the phone.

RUTH. Hello.

GEORGE (*stunned*). Hello. Ruth Dakin Bailey?

RUTH. That's right.

BILLY. What's going on?

GEORGE. Excuse me. (*Covers mouthpiece.*) I'm speaking to Harry's wife.

BILLY. Harry's...???

GEORGE (*suddenly realising that it's good news*). Harry's wife. Well, hello Harry's wife! Congratulations!

BILLY (*calling*). Congratulations! Is she pretty?

GEORGE. Well now, let me see... how do I know? This is a telephone... Uncle Billy wants to know if you're pretty.

RUTH. You'll have to wait and see.

GEORGE. I bet you are. You sure sound pretty. What's a pretty girl like you doing marrying that two-headed brother of mine?

RUTH. I'll tell you. It's purely mercenary. My father offered him a job.

GEORGE (*suddenly sobered up*). Oh, he gets you and a job. Harry's cup runneth over.

HARRY takes back the telephone.

HARRY. About the job. It's not settled. I never said I'd take it.

GEORGE. What kind of job is it?

HARRY. Ruth's father owns a glass factory in Buffalo. It's just a research job.

GEORGE. Research, eh? You always said that was what you wanted. When you were blowing up things in Mom's kitchen...

HARRY. You've been holding the bag there for four years and... well... I won't let you down, George. Maybe some time in the future...

BILLY. Come on, George, don't be greedy. Let me congratulate the newlywed!

GEORGE *hands over the phone to* UNCLE BILLY *reflectively. BILLY chats away to HARRY as GEORGE tries to settle back to work. Perhaps some music underscores this.*

Congratulations! You get her here as fast as you can... I'm the same as ever. Nobody changes much around here. We'll see you... both of you... Oh, I can't wait! Goodbye now... Goodbye, Mr and Mrs Bailey!

HARRY *and RUTH disappear as BILLY keeps chatting and dancing.*

Just when we were down in the dumps, eh, George! We're gonna give them the biggest party this town's ever seen! Business may not be booming but... oh boy, oh boy... I feel so good I could spit in Potter's eye. In fact, I think I will – (*Swigs from hip flask.*) What do you say, George?

GEORGE (*shaking head to decline drink*). You do that.

BILLY. I'm just going to pop over and tell Cousin Tilly...and Eustace and... oh, hang it... I'm going to tell everyone I meet. Just what Young Harry needs. I bet she'll keep him in line.

He exits.

GEORGE (*to himself*). Keep him out of Bedford Falls anyway.

GEORGE *takes out the travel brochure again, but his heart isn't in it and he puts it away. He picks up his hat and is about to leave when MARY HATCH enters.*

MARY. Hello George.