

trinity repertory company

PRESENTS



By Joe Landry

Directed by Tyler Dobrowsky

Support for Trinity Rep's education programs comes from:

Support for Trinity Rep's education programs comes from: Carter Family Charitable Trust; CVS Caremark Charitable Trust; The Murray Family Charitable Foundation; Shakespeare for a New Generation, a national program of the National Endowment for the Arts in cooperation with Arts Midwest; The Amgen Foundation; Rhode Island State Council on the Arts; City of Providence CDBG Program; Target Stores; and many individual donors.



Prepared by the Trinity Rep Education Department

Francesca Montanile, Caroline Azano, Jordan Butterfield, Emily Atkinson, & Tyler Dobrowsky

TRINITY REPERTORY COMPANY

201 Washington Street
Providence, Rhode Island 02903

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Theater Audience Etiquette	3
Using This Study Guide in Your Classroom	4
UNIT 1: Background Information	5-11
The Playwright	5
Timeline: History of Old Time Radio and <i>It's a Wonderful Life</i>	6
The Characters	7
The Plot Summary	8
What is Foley Sound?	9
Thoughts from the Director, Tyler Dobrowsky	10
UNIT 2: Entering the Text	12-21
The World of Radio – An Activity	12
Letters in Character – A Writing Activity	13
101 Ways to Read a Monologue	14
Scenes, Characters and Conflict	16
Bibliography	22

THEATER AUDIENCE ETIQUETTE AND DISCUSSION

PLEASE READ CAREFULLY AND GO OVER WITH YOUR CLASSES
BEFORE THE SHOW

TEACHERS:

Speaking to your students about theater etiquette is ESSENTIAL. Students should be aware that this is a live performance and that they should not talk during the show. **If you do nothing else to prepare your students to see the play, please take some time to talk to them about theater etiquette** in an effort to help the students better appreciate their experience. It will enhance their enjoyment of the show and allow other audience members to enjoy the experience. The questions below can help guide the discussions. Thank you for your help and enjoy the show!

ETIQUETTE:

What is the **role of the audience in a live performance**? What is its role in a film? Why can't you chew gum or eat popcorn at a live theater performance? Why can't you talk? What can happen in live theater that cannot happen in cinema?

Reiterate that students may not chew gum, eat, or talk during the performance. If there is a disturbance, they will be asked to leave and the class will not be invited back to the theater. Students may not leave the building during intermission.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS BEFORE SEEING THE SHOW AT TRINITY REP:

What are the **differences between live theater and cinema**? (Two dimensional vs. three dimensional; larger than life on the screen vs. life-size; recorded vs. live, etc.) Discuss the nature of film as mass-produced, versus the one-time only nature of live performances. Talk about original art works versus posters. Which do they feel is more valuable? Why?

Observation #1 – When you get into the theater, look around. What do you see? Observe the lighting instruments around the room and on the ceiling. Look at the set. Does it look realistic or abstract? Try to guess how the set will be used during the show.

Observation #2 -- Discuss the elements that go into producing a live performance: The lights, set, props, costumes, and stage direction. All the people involved in the “behind the scenes” elements of the theater are working backstage as the play unfolds before the students’ eyes. Tell them to be aware of this as they watch the show. Observe the lighting cues. How do special effects work? How do the actors change costumes so fast?

Actors in a live performance are very attuned to the audience and are interested in the students’ reactions to the play. Ask the students to write letters to the actors about the characters they played and to ask questions of the actors. **Send these letters to:** Trinity Repertory Company, c/o Education, 201 Washington St., Providence, RI 02903 **or email to:** education@trinityrep.com.

USING THIS STUDY GUIDE IN YOUR CLASSROOM

A Letter from Education Director Caroline Azano

Welcome to Trinity Rep and the 45th season of Project Discovery! The Education Staff at Trinity had a lot of fun preparing this study guide, and hope that the activities included will help you incorporate the play into your academic study. It is also structured to help you to introduce performance into your classroom through the following elements:

- **Community Building in Your Classroom**
- **Inspiration and Background on the Artist**
- **Entering and Comprehending Text**
- **Creating Text for Performance**
- **Performing in Your Class**
- **Reflecting on Your Performance**

Further, the Rhode Island Department of Education has recently developed Grade Span Expectations for the fine arts in content, knowledge and skills that will be used to assess all students. (Available at <http://www.ride.ri.gov/instruction/gle.aspx>) Trinity Rep's Project Discovery student matinees help students in the following GSE areas:

- Analyzing and evaluating a theatrical performance for its effective use of music, dance, or visual arts (T1-3b)
- Evaluating major and minor themes and characters and their symbolic representation (i.e., cultural references) (T3-2a)
- Evaluating techniques for their effectiveness and craft (e.g., critiquing actor's performance and the playwright's dialog) (T3-2b)
- Evaluating a play or performances based on analysis of what is seen, heard, and known to judge its value and contribution to humanity (T4-1a)
- Evaluating character's objectives and motivations based on what is seen, heard, and known to explain character's behavior (T4-1b)
- Evaluating technical elements of theatrical production (T4-1c)
- Evaluating dramatic elements of a plot for their effectiveness and cohesiveness (T4-1d)

Our Project Discovery workshops address the following GSE standards:

- Writing dialogues and scenes, applying basic dramatic structure: exposition, complication, conflict, crises, climax, and resolution (T1-1a)
- Developing stage directions for a play or performance based on a script (T1-1b)
- Developing a character as part of an ensemble using vocal characteristics and techniques, posture, movement, and language necessary to perform an effective characterization; showing text analysis and research to include the physical, social, and psychological dimensions of the characters. (T1-1c)
- Designing or creating and analyzing designs that support or enhance the author's intent, based on text analysis and research (T1-1d)
- Evaluating and applying performance and design techniques to convey evolving ideas, feelings, or meaning (e.g., connecting particular gestures with phrasing to imply a sense of place and social stature and how this behavior evolves as the character's life unravels or in aspects of design or writing) (T3-1a)

Enjoy the show!

Unit One: Background Information

The Playwright: Joe Landry



Joe Landry grew up in Fairfield, CT. When he was twelve years old, he held his first job in the film department in the Fairfield library. This is where Landry first discovered classics like *It's a Wonderful Life*, *The Lady Vanishes* and early Alfred Hitchcock films.

Landry's other main interest was theater. With his parents' encouragement, he was introduced to the work of various theater companies which he would later come to call home, including Playwrights Horizons and Roundabout Theater Company in New York, Westport Country Playhouse and others.

In 1995, Landry founded Second Guess Theater Company, which became well known for productions of more than two dozen new plays, adaptations and revivals.

Landry first adapted *It's a Wonderful Life* as a full-scale play for a friend who was looking for a stage adaptation of the original movie. The first adaptation began on Christmas Eve morning and took place over the course of one day in Bedford Falls and included a series of flashbacks. The original adaptation was successful, but with twenty-five characters, was a very large production to stage. Landry's mentor, producer James B. McKenzie warned him of this limitation around the same time that Landry became interested in Woody Allen's film *Radio Days*. These two events collided and the radio play setting for *It's a Wonderful Life* was the result.

In 1997, *It's a Wonderful Life: A Live Radio Play* premiered in Stamford, CT and has since enjoyed productions around the country. Landry's other plays include *Vintage Hitchcock: A Live Radio Play* and an adaptation of the cult classic *Reefer Madness*. Other projects include *Mothers and Sons*, a musical co-written with Kevin Connors.

“The radio adaptation doesn't attempt to put the film on stage, but rather puts it in the minds of the audience as they listen to the story unfold and connect the visual dots in their head the same way one does when reading a book. This engages the audience to become part of the story, while letting them into the potentially new world of the live radio broadcast.”

—Joe Landry

Timeline: Radio Broadcasting and *It's a Wonderful Life*

- 1906** Lee De Forest made it possible to transmit the human voice over the radio.
- 1918** Edward Armstrong developed the technology enabling radio to move from the world of the experimental physicist to the home.
- 1920** The first commercial radio stations with regularly scheduled broadcasts were heard.
- 1921** The first sports broadcast was the Dempsey-Carpenter fight.
- 1928** *Amos and Andy* show was on the radio through 1960 – making it the longest-running series in radio history.
- 1938** The famous *Mercury Theater* went on the air for the first time. This radio drama company was founded by Orson Welles and John Houseman. The *Mercury Theater* adaptations became popular because of how well suited they were to the radio medium. Lucille Ball, Groucho Marx, Rita Hayworth and Jimmy Durante were just a few of the stars who got their start in radio drama with the *Mercury Theater* shows.
- 1946** Frank Capra's film, *It's a Wonderful Life* is released, starring James Stewart, Donna Reed and Lionel Barrymore.
- 1950s** Commercial radio begins to decline in popularity with the invention of television. Public radio becomes more common.
- 1951** The radio soap opera, *The Archers* began broadcasting on BBC Radio 4. At the height of its popularity, it was estimated that 60% of people in Britain were listeners, and has since become the longest running radio soap opera.
- 1970** National Public Radio (NPR) is incorporated by 90 charter stations to provide high quality national news programming.
- 1978** Garrison Keillor launches *A Prairie Home Companion*. In its first ten years, he produced almost 500 live shows, and today it is heard by more than 4 million listeners each week on 590 public radio stations in the U.S. and abroad.
- 1999** XM Satellite Radio is created, as a radio-equivalent to cable television. This digital radio service, along with the Internet, has contributed to the revival of radio drama in the 21st century.
- 2006** Joe Landry's radio play of *It's a Wonderful Life* is published.



Orson Welles, 1938

The Characters



The Bailey family in the 1946 film,
It's a Wonderful Life

George Bailey- a typical American dreamer

Harry Bailey- George's younger brother

Peter Bailey- George's father

Rose Bailey- George's mother

Billy Bailey- George's uncle

Mary Hatch- George's wife

Pete, Zuzu, Janie and Tommy- Mary and George's children

Gabriel- the superintendent of angels

Clarence- George's guardian angel, who shows him what the world would be like if he had never been born.

Potter: a miserly old man who uses his wealth to bleed the citizens of Bedford Falls dry.

The following radio actor characters play all of the characters in the radio play:



FREDDIE FILMORE: Announcer, Gower, Potter, Billy, Peter Bailey, Ernie, Old Man Collins, Ed, Pete, Man (at Martini's), Nick, Bridge Keeper, Binky, Cop.

JAKE LAURENTS: George Bailey (and Young George)

SALLY APPLEWHITE: Mary Hatch (and Young Mary)

LANA SHERWOOD: Violet (and Young Violet), Rose Bailey, Gabriel, Matilda, Ruth, Mrs. Hatch, Mrs. Thompson, Schultz, Zuzu, Jane, Sadie Vance

HARRY "JAZZBO" HEYWOOD: Harry (and Young Harry), Bert, Clarence Oddbody, Sam Wainwright, Martini, Dr. Campbell, Charlie, Man (at run on bank), Horace the teller, Mr. Welch, Tommy, Sheriff.

Post show discussion:

What was it like seeing the same actor portray so many different characters? How did it change your experience of the story?

The Plot Summary

The play begins in a radio station in 1949. The stage manager's voice is heard, cuing radio announcer, Freddie Filmore, to introduce the other four radio actors. The broadcast of *It's a Wonderful Life* begins with the angel Gabriel and angel-in-training, Clarence, looking down on a despairing George Bailey. Gabriel has given Clarence the task of helping George Bailey. If he does so successfully, Clarence will finally receive his wings.

Through a series of flashbacks, we learn more about George's life. When he was a young boy, George confronted Mr. Gower about his mistake in putting poison in a prescription bottle of pills for a customer. Mr. Gower had received news of his son's death and drowned his sorrows in whiskey. He struck George repeatedly, but when he realized what he had done, he was thankful for George catching the error.

We also discover that when he was a young boy, George risked his own life to save his brother from drowning and ended up losing hearing in one ear. Growing up, he aspired to go to college and travel the world, but gave up that dream as an adult to stay in Bedford Falls to manage the Bailey Building and Loan Society after the sudden death of his father. Another flashback shows us Mary and George meeting for the first time and the courtship that leads to their marriage.

George is an honorable man, who always put the needs of others above making money. But his mounting financial troubles cause him to lose sight of this, and he reaches a breaking point, standing on a bridge, contemplating ending his life. It is here that Clarence, George's guardian angel, intervenes. He arrives in Bedford falls to convince George of the value of his life by showing him what the world would be like if he had never been born. Without George, there was no one to save his brother from drowning, no one to catch Mr. Gower's mistake and Mary never married. After seeing how different the world would be without him, George discovers that his life is worth living. Clarence earns his wings and George returns to his family in time for Christmas Eve with a new positive outlook and appreciation for everyone around him.

Class Discussion:

Ask your students what they think the lives of George and the Bailey family will be like now? What changes do you think George is going to make in his life that will affect his relationships with his wife and children? Have them imagine a sequel to this story—what will happen next?



The Bailey family in the film, *It's a Wonderful Life*

Thoughts from Director Tyler Dobrowsky

In 2010, Trinity Rep doubled its holiday fare and produced It's a Wonderful Life: A Live Radio Play, Joe Landry's adaptation of the beloved Frank Capra film.. The show was such a success, it's back this year. Director Tyler Dobrowsky talked with Emily Atkinson about 2010's experience and the plans for 2011.

Emily Atkinson: What lies at the heart of *It's a Wonderful Life's* success?

Tyler Dobrowsky: It's an outstanding story, and staging it as a radio play is very engaging theatrically. It surprised all of us: Fred Sullivan, who played George Bailey last year, said it's one of his favorites.



*Director Tyler Dobrowsky,
Associate Artistic Director of Trinity Rep*

EA: Definitely, from the very first rehearsal, he gave a heartfelt performance.

TD: Agreed. In rehearsal, everyone worked together to hone the script, with the playwright Joe Landry. We added things, and adapted it to fit our company and casting. The actors really enjoyed those virtuoso opportunities... Tim Crowe, for example, playing both evil Mr. Potter and dotty Uncle Billy, sharing scenes with each other. So it was great fun to work on, to develop, to create. After we opened, the feedback from the audience was just outstanding, in every single way. Lots of people saw it, enjoyed it, were deeply moved by the story. It was a no-brainer to do it again.

EA: Last year we were surprised to find that plenty of people were completely unfamiliar with the story, or less familiar than they'd thought. I remember hearing snuffles in the audience on opening night, and gasps.

TD: It's amazing -- most of the story is setup: we get to know George Bailey and his wife and kids, then catastrophe strikes. And it's really powerful, now, for the bad guy to be a banker who evicts people from their homes. Our hero sacrifices his dreams for his community, falls into a nightmare, and thank God, is returned to the embrace of his family and friends again. It's moving.

EA: The scenes when Clarence grants George his wish and shows him how things would be if he'd never been born -- isn't it everyone's worst nightmare, to have no one know you? -- the theatrical staging was absolutely chilling. No more radio microphone amplification, or cheery studio lighting... it really hit home.

TD: We discovered those ideas in our rehearsal process with Joe and the acting company. The radio show concept is a lot of fun, and then just at the right moment, we pull the rug out from under it all.

EA: What's new this year?

TD: Well, it's not like *A Christmas Carol* where we're reinventing, top to bottom. Tim Crowe and Annie Scurria are returning, but three roles will have new casting. Mauro Hantman will play George Bailey, after playing Scrooge last year. Most people would connect Scrooge to Mr. Potter, but there are a lot of parallels between George and Scrooge, actually, about appreciating people, finding what's important. It's a super fun part. And I'm beyond excited to have him play opposite Rachael Warren, his wife, playing Mary this year. Last year Rachael played the Ghost of Christmas Past, opposite his Scrooge. After the show they'd greet the audience in the lobby, a lovely presence. That spirit will certainly enhance their work together in *Wonderful Life*. They really embrace the spirit. And Joe Wilson, Jr. will play Clarence, the angel. In OC, he played Vinnie, a simple, big-hearted character -- not too far from Clarence.

EA: Last year, when we heard about that cast, we couldn't wait to see those company members in those roles – some of us could hardly contain our enthusiasm! Now this year, we're just as excited about seeing *other* company members in those roles.

TD: That's the depth and flexibility of the company.

EA: People began speculating last year – is this a new tradition? Will *Wonderful Life* and *Christmas Carol* be side by side from now on? Others are guessing that *Wonderful Life* is just the first show to fill that slot, and they're flooding us with suggestions on what *other* holiday shows we should consider. It's a fun dialogue.

TD: Agreed. We plan our seasons one at a time, so who knows? But it's great to know there's a huge appetite for holiday programming.



The 2010 production of *It's A Wonderful Life*.

Class Discussion Idea: *George Bailey learns the value of his life by seeing what the world would have been like without him. Have your students write down five things that would be different about the world or the lives of people around them if they had never been born. Encourage your students to reflect on the positive contributions they have made, and how things would have been different if they hadn't been around to do those things.*

On Your Feet: *Break the class up into groups of three or four. Have each student choose one item off their list and, with their group, make a tableau representing that item. They may also add a sound effect and/or a repetitive movement. Finally, present the work to the rest of the class.*

What is Foley Sound?

In our production of *It's a Wonderful Life*, most of the sound cues are performed live on stage, in the same way that the sound effects were created in the days of old time radio. This technique was established by Jack Foley, and is named for him. Foley sound effects are still used today on television and film sets. Examples of Foley sounds include footsteps, paper folding, doors opening and slamming, and glass breaking.

Instead of the stage manager cuing the sound operator, the Foley technician will have been in rehearsal along with the actors and learned his cues just like the actors have to learn where to move on stage. Our production of *It's a Wonderful Life* gives the audience a backstage look at how the sound effects would be produced on a radio show.

Trinity Rep's sound engineer, Peter Hurowitz, says that working on the Foley sound for the production helps "keep us honest" as he and his technicians work to find the perfect sound for each moment. For example, not all door sounds are the same. The sound will change based on how the person closes the door, what kind of door it is and where it is located. Hurowitz says the most challenging sounds to recreate using the Foley techniques are the car door sounds. In the days of old time radio, they would have had a real car door in the broadcasting studio to open and close. Since this won't fit on our stage, our sound department had to find different ways of using Foley techniques to create those sounds.

Check out a demonstration of Foley sound from last year's production, with sound engineer, Peter Hurowitz and Foley artist, Benjamin Inniger at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=raXwydRknBg>

The following is a sampling of some of the Foley sound cues from *It's a Wonderful Life*:

Sound	Object	Action
Ice cracking	lasagna and sugar bag	crack lasagna on sugar bag
Water sloshing	tub of water and large object	pull large object out of tub of water
Ice cream maker sounds	spoon and sugar bag	scooping motion on sugar bag
Car door closes	2 suitcases	stack suitcases, open suitcase on top and close
Gower slapping George		clap hands
Flipping through money	paper	flip through paper
High heeled footsteps	high heels and platform	"walk" high heels on the platform
Running through snow	shoe and sugar bag	dig shoe into outside of sugar bag
Coins into a cash box	box and coins	drop coins into box
Police siren	hand siren	crank hand siren

Unit Two: Entering the Text

The World of Radio—An Activity

Most of us are familiar with the iconic film, It's a Wonderful Life, but the radio play gives the audience a different experience. In the following activity, students will create their own radio scenes to gain a better understanding of the various components involved in creating a radio play.

Materials Needed

- A variety of common household or classroom objects to create sounds.

Instructions

- Divide students into small groups of four or five.
- Have students choose a scene from a well-known fairytale to perform as a radio scene.
- Alternately, you can use scenes from the play that are provided in this study guide, have students choose a scene from a favorite movie, or have students write their own scenes. The possibilities are endless!
- Once they have chosen a scene, have students write down the script of the scene, including any necessary sounds. Remind them that sounds like footsteps are useful to signal that someone is entering or exiting the scene. Encourage each group to use at least three sound effects in their radio scene. You can either provide a selection of household objects to use for sound effects, or split the activity over the course of a few classes and have students bring the objects from home.
- Give students about thirty minutes to write their scripts, and choose materials for sound effects.
- Once everyone is ready, have the groups perform their scenes for the class. After each scene, ask the students in the audience to identify moments

How Did It Go?

Was the action of the scene communicated clearly through voice and sound? Did students include a variety of sound effects in the scene? Did they work well with each other?



Resident acting company member, Angela Brazil leads a workshop at a local high school

Letters in Character – A Writing Activity

The first part of the following activity gives students the opportunity to interact with the characters and plot points of the story. The second half of this activity allows students to get inside the character's head and understand the story from his or her perspective.

Materials Needed:

- Paper and pens/pencils

Instructions:

- Have your students choose a character from the story and, using any of the following prompts, write a letter to them.
 - *What advice would you give the character at this point in the story?*
 - *What is something important that you want this character to know right now?*
 - *Tell this character about an event in the story that hasn't happened yet.*
- Once everyone has finished, collect the letters and redistribute them to other students in the class.
- Now, each student must imagine that they are the character that the letter is addressed to, and respond to it from his or her perspective.
- Optional performance opportunity: your students could also write these responses in the form of a monologue and perform them for the class.
- Afterwards, take a moment to debrief with your students: which part of the activity did they like the best?



George Bailey and Mary Hatch in *It's a Wonderful Life*

101 Ways to Read a Monologue – An Activity

A monologue, or soliloquy, is a long speech made by one person. Sometimes it can be a challenge for a young actor to take on a piece of text and perform it on his or her own, so this activity is a way to get your students to forget their inhibitions and have fun with it.

- Pick one or more of the monologues below, and hand them out to your students. You can assign or let them choose which monologue they want to do, and give them a few minutes to read it over a few times and familiarize themselves with it.
- In partners, let them read it out loud to one another a few times in whichever way they want to.
- Pick a few brave souls to come up and read/perform their own interpretation of the monologue for the rest of the group.
- After this, using your own suggestions and those of your students, throw out different ways to read the monologue. Feel free to be as wacky as you want -- this is supposed to be fun. You can filter the suggestions, and pick one that you think would work and let them do it that way. Let each volunteer perform the monologue, or part of the monologue, three different ways before moving on. Some examples of different ways to read it include (but are *definitely* not limited to): an aerobics instructor, an army general, a drunk, someone who desperately has to go to the bathroom, a squirrel, the laziest person in the world, singing it, whispering it, telling it like it's a scary story, like an interpretive dancer, like they are in a musical, like a President, or a King...you can even use celebrity names and have them imitate them using the monologue.
- After every willing student has performed, take some time to talk about what they got from it. Did it help them understand the monologue better? If so, how? Did they find that any of the interpretations, as silly as they may have been, actually worked and made some sense? Which ones, and why? How does this help them as actors?



**James Stewart as George Bailey in the film,
*It's a Wonderful Life***

MONOLOGUES:

The following monologues are mostly said by male characters in the play, but can be performed by females as well.

YOUNG GEORGE: Mr. Gower, you don't know what you're doing. You're putting something wrong in those capsules. I know you're unhappy. You got that telegram, and you're upset. It wasn't your fault, Mr. Gower. But look Mr. Gower look, look. This bottle, you used this bottle to make up the capsules. It's poison! All I wanted was to make sure. Mr. Gower, I won't tell anyone. I know what you're feeling. I won't ever tell a soul. Hope to die, I won't.

GEORGE: Oh, I couldn't face being cooped up for the rest of my life in that shabby little office. Oh, I'm sorry Pop, I didn't mean that remark, but this business of nickels and dimes and spending all your life trying to figure out how to save three cents on a length of pipe—I'd go crazy. I want to do something big and something important. Most of my friends have already finished college. I just feel like if I don't get away, I'd bust.

GEORGE: Well, not just one wish. A whole hatful, Mary. I'm shaking the dust of this crummy little town off my feet and I'm going to see the world. Italy, Greece, the Parthenon, the Colosseum. Then I'm coming back here and go to college and see what they know... and then I'm going to build things. I'm gonna build air field. I'm going to build skyscrapers a hundred stories high. I'm gonna build bridges a mile long... and then I'm gonna... Hey, what... are you gonna throw a rock too?

POTTER: Peter Bailey was not a business man. That's what killed him. Oh, I don't mean any disrespect to him, God rest his soul. He was a man of high ideals, so-called, but ideals without common sense can ruin this town. What does that get us? A discontented, lazy rabble instead of a thrifty working class. And all because a few starry-eyed dreamers like Peter Bailey stir them up and fill their heads with a lot of impossible hooley.

GABRIEL: Night after night George would come home late from the office. Things weren't good with the Building and Loan. Potter was really bearing down hard. Then came the war. Mary had another baby by then but still had time to run the USO. Gower and Uncle Billy sold war bonds. Violet entertained the troops. Bert the cop was wounded in North Africa. Got the Silver Star. Ernie, the taxi driver, parachuted into France. Harry... Harry Bailey topped them all. A Navy flier, he shot down fifteen planes... two of them as they were about to crash into a transport full of soldiers.

GEORGE: Now wait a minute, wait a minute, please folks! Please don't leave. I beg of you not to do this. If Potter gets a hold of your shares, he'll be owning this Building and Loan. He's got the bank, he's got the bus line, he's got the department stores. And now he's after us, 'cause he wants to keep you living in his shacks and paying the kind of rent he decides to charge. Now we can get through this all right, but we've got to stick together. We've got to have faith in each other.

Scenes, Characters and Conflict

SCENE 1: George and Mary

GEORGE: You know something, if it wasn't me talking, I'd say you were the prettiest girl in town.

MARY: Well, why don't you say it?

GEORGE: I don't know. Maybe I will. How old are you anyway?

MARY: Eighteen.

GEORGE: Eighteen?!

MARY: Too young or too old?

GEORGE: Oh, no. Just right. Your age fits you... Hey, look where we are.

MARY: Oh, the old Granville house.

GEORGE: Yeah, I got to throw a rock.

MARY: Oh, no, don't. I love that old house.

GEORGE: Well no, don't you know about deserted houses, you make a wish and then throw a rock.

MARY: But George, it's such a lovely old place. I wish I lived there.

They both throw rocks at the house. Sound effect: glass breaking.

GEORGE: What'd you wish for Mary?

MARY: Oh no. If I tell you, it may not come true.

GEORGE: Hey, hey Mary... C'mon, what do you want huh? Do you want the moon? All you gotta do is just say the word now...

MARY: Okay, the moon. I'll take it. And then what?

GEORGE: Then what? I'll throw a lasso around it and pull it down. Then you could swallow it and it'd all dissolve, see? And the moonbeams'd shoot out of your fingers and toes, and the ends of your hair and the... Am I talking too much?

SCENE 2: George, Mary and Sam

MARY: (*Answering the telephone*) Hello, Sam, how are you?

SAM: (*on the other line*) Aw, great. Gee, it's good to hear your voice again.

MARY: Oh, well, that's awfully sweet of you, Sam. There's an old friend of yours here, George Bailey.

SAM: You mean old moss-back George?

MARY: Yes, old moss-back George.

SAM. Hee-haw! Put him on.

MARY: Wait a minute, I'll call him. George!

GEORGE: Hello, Sam.

SAM: Hey, a fine pal you are. What're you trying to do? Steal my girl?

GEORGE: What do you mean? Nobody's trying to steal your girl...

SAM: No, wait a minute. I want to Talk to both of you. Tell Mary to get on the extension.

MARY: We can both hear you. George, just put your head a little closer. We're listening, Sam.

SAM: I have a big deal coming up that's going to make us all rich. George, you remember that night at Martini's Bar when you told me about making plastics out of soybeans?

GEORGE: Huh? Yeah, yeah, yeah... soybeans. Yeah.

SAM: Well, my father's checked into it, George, see, and now he's going to build a factory outside of Rochester. How do you like that? Now, here's the point, George. I may have a job for you, that is, unless you are still married to the old broken down Building and Loan...

GEORGE: Give me that phone. (*He slams the phone receiver down.*) Now you listen to me, Mary! I don't want any plastics! And I don't want any job. I don't want to get married—ever—to anyone! You understand that? I want to do what I want to do and you're... you're not going to... Oh, Mary...

MARY: George...

GEORGE: Oh, Mary, I love you.

MARY: George, I love you too.

SCENE 3: George and Clarence

GEORGE: Hey, look here, why'd you want to save me?

CLARENCE: 'Cause I'm your guardian angel.

GEORGE: I wouldn't be a bit surprised.

CLARENCE: Ridiculous of you to think of killing yourself for money. Eight thousand dollars.

GEORGE: Yeah... just things like that. Now how'd you know that?

CLARENCE: I told you—I'm your guardian angel. I know everything about you.

GEORGE: Well, you look like about the kind of angel I'd get. Sort of a fallen angel, aren't you? What happened to your wings?

CLARENCE: I haven't won my wings yet. That's why I'm an angel Second Class.

GEORGE: Oh, I see.

CLARENCE: But you can help me earn them George, by letting me help you.

GEORGE: You don't happen to have eight thousand bucks on you?

CLARENCE: Oh, no, no. We don't use money in Heaven.

GEORGE: I found it out a little late. I'm worth more dead than alive.

CLARENCE: Now look, you mustn't say things like that. I won't get my wings with that attitude. You just don't know all that you've done. If it hadn't been for you—

GEORGE: Yeah, if it hadn't been for me, everybody'd be a lot better off. My wife, and my kids and my friends.

CLARENCE: *(To himself)* Hmmm, this isn't going to be easy...

GEORGE: They'd all be better if I hadn't been born.

CLARENCE: George, that's wonderful!

GEORGE: Wonderful?

CLARENCE: The idea you just gave me. Well, you've got your wish. You've never been born.

SCENE 4: George, Harry, Peter

PETER: Oh, I had another tussle with old Henry Potter today.

GEORGE: Oh...

PETER: I thought when we put him on the Board of Directors, he'd ease up on us.

GEORGE: I wonder what's eating that old money-grubbing buzzard anyway?

PETER: Oh, he's a sick man. Frustrated and sick. Sick in his mind, sick in his soul, if he has one. Hates everybody that has anything he can't have. Hates us mostly, I guess.

HARRY: Hey George, can I borrow your tuxedo studs?

GEORGE: Yeah, help yourself Harry.

HARRY: Well, where are they? In your suitcase?

GEORGE: I'm not taking a tuxedo on a cattle boat you know.

HARRY: Say, where'd you get that fine piece of luggage, anyway?

GEORGE: Ah, Mr. Gower. A going away present. And one of these days you're going to see that bag all covered with travel labels. Italy, Baghdad...

HARRY: Hey, why don't you come to the dance tonight?

GEORGE: What, and be bored to death?

HARRY: Well, you couldn't want a better death. Lots of pretty girls. Hey, hey, I've got to hurry!

PETER: I wish we could send Harry to college with you George.

GEORGE: We have that all figured out. You see, Harry'll take my job at the Building and Loan, work there for four years, then he'll go.

PETER: He's pretty young for that job.

GEORGE: Well, no younger than I was.

PETER: You were born older, George.

SCENE 5: Rose and George

ROSE: Well, how do you like the new sister-in-law?

GEORGE: She's swell.

ROSE: Looks like she'll keep Harry on his toes.

GEORGE: Yeah, keep him out of Bedford Falls, anyway.

ROSE: George, um... Do you know that Mary Hatch is back from school?

GEORGE: Yeah, yeah...

ROSE: Nice girl, Mary.

GEORGE: Uh huh...

ROSE: Oh, stop grumbling! Give me one good reason you shouldn't call on Mary.

GEORGE: Well, Sam Wainwright. Sam's crazy about her.

ROSE: Well, she's not crazy about him.

GEORGE: Well, now how do you know that? Did she discuss it with you?

ROSE: Besides, Sam is away in New York, and you're here in Bedford Falls.

GEORGE: And all's fair in love and war?

ROSE: I don't know about war.

GEORGE: Bye, Mrs. Bailey. By the way, do you want any books at the library?

ROSE: The library?! George! George, you go and see Mary, you hear.



Zuzu and George Bailey

SCENE 6: George and Clarence

GEORGE: What's wrong with Mr. Gower?

CLARENCE: Mr. Gower doesn't know you, George. You see, George, you weren't there to stop Gower from putting that poison into that prescription.

GEORGE: What do you mean, I wasn't there? What are you, a hypnotist? Why am I seeing all these strange things here?

CLARENCE: Don't you understand? It's because you were never born.

GEORGE: Then if I wasn't born, who am I?

CLARENCE: You're nobody. You have no identity.

GEORGE: What do you mean, no identity? My name's George Bailey.

CLARENCE: There is no George Bailey. You have no papers, no cards, no driver's license, no 4-F card, no insurance policy...

GEORGE: Zuzu's petals!

CLARENCE: What?

GEORGE: Zuzu's petals—My little girl, some petals fell off her flower, I told her I'd fix it and stuck them in my pocket—but they're gone too, everything is gone.

CLARENCE: But, you've been given a great gift George. The chance to see what the world would be like if you had never been born.

GEORGE: You're crazy! You're crazy as a bed bug and you're driving me crazy too. Now look, I'm going home to my wife and family, do you understand that? And I'm going home alone!



George and Clarence in the film, *It's a Wonderful Life*

Bibliography

"Almanac (Orson Welles) | Old Time Radio." *Old Time Radio Catalog: Classic Radio | Golden Age of Radio* -. Web. 10 Nov. 2010. <<http://www.otrcat.com/almanac-orson-welles-p-1038.html>>.

"A Prairie Home Companion from American Public Media." *A Prairie Home Companion with Garrison Keillor | American Public Media*. Web. 12 Nov. 2010. <<http://prairiehome.publicradio.org/about/>>.

"It's a Wonderful Holiday Season." Interview by Emily Atkinson. *The Trinity Square*. Nov.-Dec. 2010:9-10. Print.

Landry, Joe. "It's a Wonderful Life: A Live Radio Play." *JoeLandry.com*. Web. 8 Nov. 2010. <<http://www.joelandry.com/wl/about.htm#play>>.

"OTR: The Golden Years." *The Original Old Time Radio (OTR) Old-Time Radio at Its Best*. Web. 8 Nov. 2010. <http://www.old-time.com/golden_age/index.html>.

"Overview and History." NPR. Web. 23 Nov. 2010. <<http://www.npr.org/about/aboutnpr/history.html>>.

"Putting It's a Wonderful Life on Stage." Interview by Emily Atkinson. *The Trinity Square* Nov.-Dec. 2010: 11-12. Print.

Scarborough, Kim. "Mercury Theater History." *The Mercury Theater on the Air*. 2008. Web. 11 Nov. 2010. <<http://www.mercurytheater.info/history>>.

"Sound Ideas - What Is Foley? by Skevos Mavros." *Sound Ideas Sound Effects, Royalty Free Music & Production Elements*. Sound Ideas, 2000. Web. 11 Nov. 2010. <<http://www.sound-ideas.com/foleymavart.html>>.