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# Tim: A Christmas Story

By  
D. B. Williams

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# Tim: A Christmas Story

By D. B. Williams

## CAST OF CHARACTERS

EDDIE GREEL.....	<i>A Businessman, 35-40 Years of Age</i>
TIM.....	<i>Eddie's 11-year-old Nephew</i>
FRED .....	<i>One of Eddie's Co-workers (30-45)</i>
DENNIS .....	<i>Another of Eddie's Co-workers (30-45)</i>
TOM.....	<i>Another (35-45)</i>
JULIE.....	<i>Another (30-45)</i>
ALICE.....	<i>Eddie's Secretary</i>
MR. CALBERT .....	<i>A Local Industrialist (Age 45-60)</i>
MRS. CALBERT .....	<i>Mr. Calbert's Wife (Age 45-60)</i>
EDDIE'S MOTHER .....	<i>60 + years of age</i>
EDDIE'S FATHER.....	<i>1<sup>ST</sup> Dream Sequence</i>
WAITRESS.....	<i>Hispanic; works at the El Taco Grande; 1<sup>st</sup> Dream</i>
SECOND WAITRESS.....	<i>Also at the El Taco Grande (No Lines)</i>
DELIVERY BOY.....	<i>A Young Male Age 16-20</i>
SIS .....	<i>Eddie's Sister/Tim's Mother</i>
SIS, AS A CHILD.....	<i>Young Girl; 1<sup>st</sup> Dream Sequence</i>
SCROOGE.....	<i>Character in "A Christmas Carol" &amp; "Doctor"</i>
YOUNG EDDIE .....	<i>About Age 10; 1<sup>st</sup> Dream Sequence</i>
COLLGE-AGE EDDIE.....	<i>Eddie at Ohio State</i>
SANJAY .....	<i>Eastern Indian "Guide"; 2<sup>nd</sup> Dream Sequence</i>
CLARICE.....	<i>Eddie's Ex-girlfriend/Guide; 3<sup>rd</sup> Dream Sequence</i>

MEMBERS OF THE ABOVE CAST WILL DOUBLE IN THE FOLLOWING ROLES\*:

TV ANNOUNCER/VOICE ON TV

FIRST SOLICITOR

SECOND SOLICITOR

ADDITIONAL ACTORS IN "A CHRISTMAS CAROL"/CROWD SCENES

MALE VOICE ON INTERCOM

TOM'S WIFE

TOM'S THREE CHILDREN

LEBRON JAMES (*Represented by an Actor or by Voice Only*)

\* ADDITIONAL ROLES MAY ALSO BE DUPLICATED TO REDUCE CAST SIZE

## SETTING

The play takes place in the present at various locations in and about Cleveland, Ohio, in the last weeks leading up to Christmas.

## AUTHOR'S NOTES

In writing this play, I attempted to modernize Dickens's ageless story and put it in a modern perspective. Eddie Greel is no curmudgeon or miserly loner; he's a guy trying to get ahead in an increasingly competitive world. Like a lot of people, he's feeling the pressure of the global economy in a very real sense. He sees new boogey-men around every corner and at every bus stop; people with strange sounding names and faces. Eddie is not angry as much as he is frustrated. As he develops in the play, he becomes more confused, but he also begins to change. Give Eddie room to grow; don't start him out in a rage.

When I first completed the work, Eddie was firmly ensconced in Cleveland Ohio as was his idol LeBron James. As fate would have it, LeBron left for the sunnier climes of Miami. At first I considered a rewrite to relocate Eddie and the rest of the characters to Miami but after some thought decided that LeBron's exodus was just more fodder for Eddie's paranoia. So Eddie must now try and find the meaning of life in the winter cold of Cleveland and without his idol LeBron.

I know that times (and basketball players) will change. The location of Cleveland Ohio is necessary if LeBron is used, if time has rendered LeBron less of a star, or if the location of the production has a *basketball* player that is as well know as LeBron (and perhaps even available to do the walk-on at the end) the author gives his permission to change LeBron's character and make the minimal necessary changes to the script to accommodate this. This would entail taking out Eddie's references to LeBron and to his leaving Cleveland, and substituting the new character in the appropriate places. The new LeBron has to be well known. I hope that this will be done while keeping the importance of Eddie's obsession with LeBron (or the new character) an integral part of the work.

I hope that you enjoy participating in Eddie's metamorphosis as much as I enjoyed writing it and that I have done a good enough job with Dickens's glorious story to keep the ghosts of "Christmas Carols" past from my hearth.

## Production Notes and Suggestions

Included at End of Play



JULIE

It's the politicians. All they want to do is stay in power. None of them has the cahones to take on problems. Not even the women.

*(The OTHERS stare at Julie.)*

FRED

I tell you we're headed for trouble unless we do something.

*(The OTHERS express their agreement.)*

EDDIE

The problem is that we can't find any Americans that want to work. People want something for nothing. My father used to say that this country would fall from within, like the Roman Empire. One day we'd all be sitting around watching 3D television while a robot runs around vacuuming our living room and some video nanny takes care of our kids and they'll just walk right in and take over, without a shot being fired. I'm glad he's not here to see what's happening today.

DENNIS

*(Starts to rise)* Well, I know that I've got to get back to work. I have to put in 60 hours a week to keep up with Eddie here. He's a human dynamo. How many orders did you have last month, 50?

EDDIE

That's because I know human nature. People are basically lazy. If you make it easy for them they'll buy from you every time. I do all the work for them. My role models are the winners in life. You know like Bill Gates or LeBron James.

TOM

*(Readying to leave)* LeBron James and Bill Gates, that's an unlikely duo. Well, I've got to get back to work too. My kid wants a new video game for Christmas. Have you seen what they cost? *(Exits)*

FRED

It's the Christmas hype. The Ads work those kids into a frenzy, and then the parents can't say no.

EDDIE

No, the parents *won't* say no. What a waste of resources. If it were up to me, everyone would simply donate a paycheck to some Chinese toy manufacturer every year at Christmas and the rest of this crap would be outlawed.

TOM

Spoken like a man without kids. As a matter of fact, you don't even have a girlfriend to buy for this year, do you? What ever happened to her ... Claris ... Clovis ... what was her name?

EDDIE

It's Clarice. And she decided she needed someone who was willing to waste more time on trivial things.

*(TOM laughs and shakes his head.)*

FRED

*(Gathering paper wrappers as he's leaving table)* So, Eddie, not into Christmas?

EDDIE

Christmas! Ha! Christmas! That's a laugh. A holiday invented by Londoners in the nineteenth century to keep the mob from tearing the town apart every winter. If we were selling Christmas trees I'd be *very* into Christmas. But most offices shut down over the holidays; thus, I don't make a dime off of it. It's a pain in the butt.

FRED

*(In a mock English accent)* Well, have a happy one, Ebenezer. I've got to go and buy a lump of coal for the fireplace.

*(ALL laugh except Eddie.)*

EDDIE

*(As FRED is leaving)* Very funny. I hope a reindeer leaves a lump of something else in that new Lexus of yours.

JULIE

*(Grabbing her things)* See you later, Eb.

*(ALL exit leaving EDDIE alone at the table. He puts a packet of sauce on his taco, tastes it and yells toward the counter.)*

EDDIE

Hey, doesn't anyone understand English anymore? I said mild sauce. This stuff will take your head off.

WAITRESS

*(Slowly brings a handful of sauce packets and dumps them unceremoniously on the table)*  
Feliz Navidad.

## EDDIE

Only a third world country could come up with the idea that eating should be painful. (As *WAITRESS is leaving*) Thank you Jose` Feliciano... or should I say Joretta. You know, I don't get it with you people. You should be more grateful that we're letting you stay here, giving you good jobs. (*WAITRESS ignores him.*) It's no use; nobody speaks English around here anymore. (*EDDIE'S cell Phone rings. HE pulls out his phone and answers.*) Hello. Yeah, hello sis. (*Pause*) No, I'm at work. (*Pause*) She is. What Hospital? (*Pause*) How is she? I mean she isn't going to ... (*Pause*) Oh, good. Hey look, I'd like to, but I can't leave here. The Government just announced a big project in Utah and I've got to get bids ready. (*Pause*) I know she's my Mother. It's not like I don't want to go, but you and Harry are going, right? I'd just be in the way. Besides, she likes him more than me anyway. (*Pause*) Very funny. (*Pause*) What? Tim? You want me to what? (*Pause*) Aaahhh, can't you take him with you? I don't know how to take care of myself, let alone a kid. (*Pause*) That's pretty low, sis. How long would it be? (*Pause*) I'd stay in your house? Is there plenty of food and booze? (*Pause*) All right, but if he messes his pants I'm not cleaning it up. (*Pause*) All right. (*Shutting his cell phone*) Geez, what have I gotten myself into now. (*Rises, starts to leave then goes back, makes a show to the waitress of putting a quarter on the table*) Here, just to show you that I'm not a bad guy.

## WAITRESS

(*Walks over and picks it up as EDDIE starts to exit. She speaks in Spanish. This line should be translated in the program.*) A whole quarter! Oh thank you very much Santa Clause. I will see you later. Until then, may an elf take a piss in your eggnog.

(*PATRONS/OTHERS laugh.*)

## EDDIE

(*Looking a little bewildered*) Nobody speaks English anymore.

(*EDDIE exits as LIGHTS FADE TO BLACK.*)

**ACT I; Scene 2**

(*AT RISE: A spotlight on EDDIE seated on a bench, "driving" to his sister's house.*)

## EDDIE

Hey! Watch out you moron. God I hate women drivers, especially Asian women. It's like they can't make up their minds. It's all that mushy Eastern philosophy, and too much raw fish ... I wonder how they can be so good at math. (*Yelling out the window*) Oh, nice move dumb butt. If you'd get off your cell phone for ten seconds maybe you'll live to get where you're going, they ought to outlaw those things. People are too stupid to do two things at once. (*Cell phone rings, EDDIE answers immediately*) Y'ello, yeah, Sis I'm almost there. (*Pause*) I'll be there when I get there. (*Pause*) A what? A basketball game? Am I going to

EDDIE, *Continued*

have to chauffeur this kid around? I've got a life too you know. *(Pause)* Yes, I do know where it is. Go and be with Mother, I can handle Tim. *(Hangs up)* Ah Geez; this is going to be a **nightmare**. Why did I let her talk me into this? It would have been easier just to go and see Mom. *(Pauses to reflect a moment)* ... if I weren't so busy.

*(EDDIE puts the car in park, exits as SPOT OUT. HE carries his suitcase, crossing to the opposite side of the stage as LIGHTS UP on the interior of a house decorated for Christmas. EDDIE enters through front door into living area.)*

EDDIE, *Continued*

*(Calling out)* Sis, I'm here!

SIS, *Off*

*(Mockingly)* Any trouble finding the place?

EDDIE

I can do without the sarcasm. I visit when I can get away from work.

SIS

*(Enters carrying suitcase)* Yes, well I suppose that it's just hard for me to picture the hectic pace of the office supply business.

EDDIE

Where's Tim. I had no idea they had basketball leagues for kids that young.

SIS

He's eleven, Eddie.

EDDIE

Really! The last time I saw him he could barely see over the top of his crib.

SIS

*(Putting some last minute additions in a small case)* He gets a year older every year on the 7th of June. Maybe you could drop him a card. That might help you remember Mom's birthday as well ... since they're both on the same day.

EDDIE

Don't start. You know that I'm just no good at that kind of thing. And I don't have any money to spare. I'm still paying on students loans for cripes sake ... if Dad could have maybe left me more money for college, I wouldn't have to work so much. And now, I sacrifice to come here and help you out of a jam and this is the thanks that I get.

SIS

*(Incredulously)* The *jam* you're helping me out of consists of being with *our* mother while she's in the hospital. *(Her mood softens)* I'm sorry, Eddie. I do appreciate your coming on such short notice. I've left plenty of food in the freezer, a lot of your favorite frozen dinners and an ample supply of beer ... ample for a reasonable drinker.

VOICE, *Off*

Come on Christine, I want to get there before it starts snowing.

EDDIE

*(Pointing offstage)* You see, always thinking of himself.

SIS

*(Giving EDDIE a sisterly poke)* Oh, you.

*(SIS picks up a suitcase and exits. EDDIE puts his suitcase down and starts unpacking with his back to the entrance. Enter TIM with schoolbooks.)*

TIM

Hi Uncle Eddie, long time no see.

EDDIE

Don't you start. *(Turns around; surprised)* Whoa! You've grown. You were about this big when I saw you last.

TIM

*(Puts his hands in a large arc around his head)* And you had about *this* much hair.

EDDIE

You have your mother's acerbic wit. You must get beaten up often at school. Where do you have to go tonight?

TIM

I've got a basketball game at the school gym.

EDDIE

You're on the team?

TIM

Yes.

EDDIE

I mean you actually *play* on the team, not a manager or a ball-boy or whatever?

TIM

Yes, I play.

EDDIE

Are you any good?

TIM

We're one and four so far.

EDDIE

I didn't ask about the team. I asked whether *you* were any good.

TIM

I guess I'm the best player, but coach says that the only thing that matters is the team. He says there's no "I" in team.

EDDIE

That's because your coach is a Bolshevik. The *only* thing that matters is if you win. That's why they keep score. And if it takes being selfish to win then you do it. A team is only as good as its best player. Do you know who LeBron James is? He's just the best basketball player that ever laced up a pair of Nikes, that's all. I can't believe he left Cleveland ... I can't believe it! (*Growing progressively louder*) Do think that LeBron James just sits back and waits for other people to score? No, he takes charge. He knows what he has to do.

TIM

(*Slinking away*) I... I've got to put on my uniform.

EDDIE

Sap-headed coaches like yours just hold a great player back. That's probably why he left, but he'll be back ... oh, yes, he'll be back.

(*TIM exits, practically running off stage. EDDIE follows to the edge of the stage yelling after him.*)

EDDIE, *Continued*

... And there is a "me" in team!

(*BLACKOUT.*)

### ACT I: Scene 3

*(AT RISE: A SPOTLIGHT on EDDIE and TIM in the car. TIM is dressed in street urchin costume.)*

EDDIE

I've got to say that I'm impressed with your game last night, that little behind-the-back pass looked almost like LeBron out there. But why did you sit out the last quarter.

TIM

We were ahead by 20 points; I guess coach just wanted some of the other guys to play ... and the ball slipped out of my hand.

EDDIE

You see what I mean. That's what's wrong with this country, softheaded sentimentality. *(Becoming agitated)* When you've got a team down that's when you have to go for the jugular... They'll remember the beating they took and they will fear you... *(Yelling out the window)* Hey, watch it you jerk ... They'll be beaten before they even start the next time they play you.

TIM

It's just a game, Uncle Eddie. Why do you get so worked up?

EDDIE

Because I see the consequences of that kind of thinking every day. I see people from third-world countries taking our jobs. I see American companies going under to foreign competition.

TIM

Because we lose basketball games?

EDDIE

*(Pulls up as if stopped at a light; Looks over to lecture TIM)* No one's taught you anything about life have they? When I was a boy, your Grandpa took me turkey hunting every Thanksgiving. It was a family ritual. If we got a turkey, we got to eat it with all the trimmings, but if we didn't, we ate hot dogs for Thanksgiving. He was teaching us a valuable lesson.

TIM

About turkey hunting?

EDDIE

No, about life. Nothing is free. If you want to eat, you've got to bring home the bacon yourself. No one's going to give you anything.

TIM

I thought you said turkey.

EDDIE

*(Agitated)* It doesn't get any greener lady! *(To TIM)* What?

TIM

*(To no one in particular)* I like hot dogs. What is it that you like Uncle Eddie?

EDDIE

What do you mean?

TIM

You know, about life. What do you like about it? I like the look of my uniform. I like music and reading, and I really like plays. What do you like?

EDDIE

*(At a loss for words)* I don't know ... stuff

TIM

What kind of stuff?

EDDIE

*(Sharply)* Stuff, just stuff. *(Thinks for a moment)* Winning, I like winning. I like putting the other guy in his place so quit trying to change the subject. SO, where am I taking you tonight?

TIM

Play practice.

EDDIE

You're in a lot of activities. Maybe you're spreading yourself too thin. Dad used to say that if you're a Jack-of-all-trades you are the master of none.

TIM

Is that bad?

EDDIE

*(Yelling out the window)* How long does it take to make a right-hand turn for Christ's sake ... Is what bad?

TIM

Being a Jack-of-all-trades

EDDIE

How should I know? What play are you in?

TIM

We're doing Dickens' "A Christmas Carol".

EDDIE

Oh, yeah, the sappy one about the crippled kid.

TIM

There's more to it than that.

EDDIE

Well, the only plays that I'm interested in are the bad one's that the Brown's quarterback has been calling lately.

TIM

I think that there's more to life than just competition.

EDDIE

Listen to this, philosophy from a thirteen year old

TIM

Eleven.

EDDIE

*(Getting out of car)* Even worse. Well, don't worry; life will beat that out of you soon enough.

*(BLACKOUT.)*

## **ACT I; Scene 4**

*(AT RISE: The set for "A Christmas Carol"; Elizabethan London. ACTORS are milling about as EDDIE and TIM enter.)*

EDDIE

Well, here you are. When should I pick you up?

TIM

I've only got a small part. I'm an extra in a street scene. Why don't you just hang around for a minute and I'll be done.

EDDIE

All this for a lousy “extra” part. Why didn’t you try for a bigger role ... the crippled kid part? Your name is Tim.

TIM

I’m in the play, that’s what counts to me. I love this play.

AN ACTOR

Quiet! Quiet on stage!

*(EDDIE shakes his head as TIM disappears into the crowd; a rehearsal of a scene from “A Christmas Carol” in progress. SCROOGE is seated at his desk having a discussion with the SOLICITORS. EDDIE crosses stage left and listens.)*

FIRST SOLICITOR

And what can we put you down for, sir?

SCROOGE

Nothing.

SECOND SOLICITOR

You wish to remain anonymous, then?

SCROOGE

I wish to be left alone.

FIRST SOLICITOR

But, it’s at this time of year that the Poor’s misery is most acutely felt.

SCROOGE

Are there no prisons, no workhouses?

SECOND SOLICITOR

Yes, unfortunately they are still in operation.

SCROOGE

Good. I was afraid that something had happened to deter them in their useful purpose. If their need is so great then they should go there.

FIRST SOLICITOR

Many would rather die than do so.

SCROOGE

Then if they are want to die they should do it, and decrease the surplus population—good day sirs!

*(The SOLICITORS exit; SCROOGE rises and exits to the street. The STREET URCHINS, TIM included, snowball him as he walks down the street. TIM rejoins EDDIE.)*

TIM

What do you think?

EDDIE

*(Crossing to sit at SCROOGE'S desk)* What do I think? I think old Scroogy got a bad rap...that's what I think. He makes a lot of sense. Charity does nothing but spawn dependence and more poverty. I'm beginning to see why everyone hated Scrooge. They didn't want to hear the truth.

TIM

I don't think that that's why they hated him. I think that they thought he was selfish and mean-spirited.

EDDIE

Well, I would have apprenticed under him anytime. That old guy could teach you how to be a winner. Come on, if we hurry we can catch the end of the Miami game. I bet LeBron has fifty points by now. I can't believe he left Cleveland!

*(LIGHTS FADE OUT as EDDIE and TIM exit; TIM shaking his head this time.)*

## ACT I; Scene 5

*(AT RISE: EDDIE's bedroom in his sister's house.)*

EDDIE

*(EDDIE enters the bedroom room, yelling back off stage)* And knock off the homework in an hour; you're going to fry your brain. *(To himself as he prepares for bed)* I don't get this kid. Where did he ever learn screwed up values like that? *(Picks up a bottle of spring water that's sitting on the bed table)* Where did this come from? "Poncho's Spring Water", man, we can't even produce our own water any more. This must be cheap stuff. Probably bottled in a basement in Tijuana. I'll bet this is why LeBron left.

*(EDDIE Takes a long drink and gets into bed. He lies still for a moment, but becomes more and more uncomfortable. He squirms and finally sits up.)*

EDDIE, *Continued*

Oh, brother. I shouldn't have eaten that leftover lasagna this late.

*(EDDIE takes another swig of water and lies back down. He begins hearing sounds coming from the other side of the room. The ACTORS from "A CHRISTMAS CAROL" are enter onto the London set and take their places, standing in front of a podium. One of the shops now has a "YE OLDE Taco Grande" sign hung over it. SCROOGE stands on a soapbox with a boisterous crowd around him.)*

SCROOGE

Citizens of London don't be fooled by these purveyors of untruths... *(EDDIE rises from his bed to investigate and enters the London set.)* ...They use guilt to shame you into thinking that your substance is a curse and that your hard earned wealth should be given to those who will not fend for themselves. *(The CROWD cheers.)* To put it in simple terms, "Greed is Good". It motivates us. It helps weed out the **weak and mentally incompetent**. Elect me Lord Mayor and I'll double the number of workhouses, lock up the criminals and send the immigrants back from whence they came.

*(The CROWD cheers loudly. Even EDDIE joins in. SCROOGE crosses to meet EDDIE as the CROWD fades into the background. SCROOGE leads EDDIE to a table near the "Ye Olde Taco Grande" sign.)*

SCROOGE

*(Putting his arm around EDDIE)* Well, what did you think? You don't think I laid it on too thick do you?

EDDIE

*(A bit confused)* Thick? Uh, well I ...

SCROOGE

*(Seating himself at the table)* I always worry that I'm being too strong with my words. Maybe I should tone it down a little.

EDDIE

*(Trying to orient himself, sits down with SCROOGE)* No, no, not at all. I couldn't have said it better myself. But I don't recall you running for Mayor in the play.

SCROOGE

It was LeBron James's idea. Do you know that he scored fifty points last night?

*(EDDIE gives SCROOGE a long stare. The WAITRESS from the Mexican Restaurant comes over to take their order)*

WAITRESS

*(In English but with a Spanish accent.)* All right, what will it be?

EDDIE

Wait a minute. This is getting weird.

SCROOGE

Bean burrito with cheese. And don't skimp on the cheese.

EDDIE

*(Pointing to the WAITRESS and then to SCROOGE)* I'm dreaming. It's either the spring water or the lasagna or both. You're an hallucination. You're both hallucinations.

WAITRESS

What makes you think that I'm the hallucination? Maybe you're the hallucination, Eddie.

SCROOGE

*(Stands, takes his burrito and dances a slightly silly dance as he fades into the background, singing)* LeBron James, LeBron James. La la la la la la la la.

*(EDDIE ignores SCROOGE and concentrates on the WAITRESS.)*

EDDIE

You know my name?

WAITRESS

I've known you for a long time, Eddie.

EDDIE

How can that be? I haven't been going to this restaurant for that long. Besides, it has a new crew every time a bus pulls into the Greyhound station.

WAITRESS

*(Ignoring the insult)* I've known you from birth. You might say that I was assigned to you.

EDDIE

I was assigned an Hispanic waitress at birth! *(To no one in particular)* Man I hope that this is a dream.

WAITRESS

Very funny, Eddie. You are such a wit. But, you always were. There was a time, though, when you used that wit to make people feel *better* ... remember?

*(A LIGHT rises on YOUNG EDDIE and YOUNG SIS center stage. YOUNG EDDIE has his arm around her.)*

YOUNG EDDIE

Don't cry sis. He didn't mean it.

YOUNG SIS

I hate him, the way he treats mom and me. He makes me feel stupid and ugly.

YOUNG EDDIE

*(Holds his sister's face up as if to examine it)* Well, one out of two's not bad.

YOUNG SIS

*(Giving him a playful punch reminiscent of Sis's)* Oh, you.

YOUNG EDDIE

So, which is it today, stupid or ugly? I'm writing a diary and I need to know.

YOUNG SIS

*(Playfully pushing him away)* I'm gonna clobber you.

*(YOUNG EDDIE covers his head as his sister gently pokes at him, finally putting her arms around him.)*

Oh Eddie, what would I do without you?

*(LIGHT fades on YOUNG EDDIE and his sister. EDDIE, who has been standing next to the WAITRESS watching the two very closely reflects on the scene.)*

EDDIE

She had it tougher than I did. Dad was OK with boys, but girls were a waste of space as far as he was concerned.

WAITRESS

*(Mimicking Scrooge)* **Weak and mentally incompetent?**

EDDIE

Yeah, I guess that's how he felt.

WAITRESS

And I suppose he found you strong and fit.

EDDIE

Oh, yeah. He doted on me.

*(A LIGHT RISES on YOUNG EDDIE with a basketball. He is with his FATHER center stage. EDDIE'S FATHER gets right into YOUNG EDDIE's face.)*

EDDIE'S FATHER

Do you think that just one time you can get the ball down the court without throwing it away? Jesus, Eddie how many times do I have to go over the same thing. Sometimes I wonder if you're really my son you're such a screw-up. Now get out there and try not to embarrass me in front of this whole town.

*(The LIGHT FADES on YOUNG EDDIE and his father.)*

EDDIE

*(Apologetically)* Yeah, well, Dad was tough. But he knew what he was doing. He was preparing me for a tough world. Maybe his tactics were a bit rough, but he had my best interest at heart.

WAITRESS

And did his tactics work? Did it make you tough?

EDDIE

I think so. It made me realistic. It taught me that the race goes to the swiftest, and only suckers give something away for nothing.

*(LIGHT UP midstage on YOUNG EDDIE's family seated around the tree at Christmas.)*

EDDIE'S FATHER

All right, time to open the presents. I want you all to know that these are gifts, but every gift is really an opportunity ... a way for you to continue to improve yourselves. Eddie, a new basketball to go with the new goal I've set up for you outside in the driveway. *(Tosses the ball to YOUNG EDDIE who is standing at the edge of the scene)* Now I want you to take 100 shots every day and raise that scoring average by at least ten points next year.

YOUNG EDDIE

*(Halfheartedly)* Thanks Dad.

EDDIE'S FATHER

And for you sissy, here's your very own kitchen set and bake oven. I expect some good meals from you this year. *(He pats her on the head.)*

YOUNG SIS

*(Obviously disappointed)* It's like the one on TV, thanks.

*(The SCENE freezes.)*

EDDIE

*(Staring at the frozen scene)* Why did he always have to do that?

WAITRESS

Do what?

EDDIE

Set conditions on everything.

WAITRESS

I thought that only a sucker gives away something for nothing?

EDDIE

*(Looks at her for a moment then proceeds)* Sis had been hinting for a Chatty Cathy doll all year. Why couldn't he just give her something that she wanted? Look at sis. She doesn't feel like part of the family. She's feeling like some kind of hired help.

WAITRESS

*(Flipping the quarter he had given her as a tip)* Like a waitress, maybe?

*(LIGHT FADES on Family scene.)*

EDDIE

He meant well. He just didn't know how to do it. He wasn't a bad person. No one ever taught him how to deal with people, that's all ... to be sensitive to their needs.

WAITRESS

Sensitive to *their* needs?

*(SOUND: PHONE RINGS. The WAITRESS produces a phone.)*

WAITRESS, *Continued*

I think that's for you.

*(COLLEGE EDDIE enters and takes the phone. He's wearing a ball cap with an Ohio State University logo.)*

COLLEGE EDDIE:

Yeah, Sis, that's great. When's it due? *(Pause)* Oh you bet I will. I wouldn't miss the birth of my nephew for the world. *(Pause)* What? No, I haven't talked to Mom. *(Pause)* Well, since Dad died I guess. *(Pause)* Don't get that way with me. I've been busy. I told her to call me if she needed anything... *(Pause)* has she called? I don't know. I'm away from the phone a lot... But I wouldn't miss this for the world. I'll be there for sure ... I promise.

*(COLLEGE EDDIE exits.)*

WAITRESS

*(Addressing EDDIE)* You didn't go, did you?

EDDIE

Go where?

WAITRESS

To the hospital to see your new nephew.

EDDIE

*(Ashamed)* No.

WAITRESS

You didn't call your Mother that day either; I believe he was born on June 7th, her birthday.

EDDIE

No. I was probably busy with school, taking a test or something.

WAITRESS

He was born on a Sunday, Eddie. I don't think that they give tests on Sunday.

EDDIE

Look, this is getting way too personal. I don't even know who you are or why I'm talking to you.

WAITRESS

Don't worry. This is the last you'll see of me ... for a while.

EDDIE

Good!

WAITRESS

There's a whole crew assigned to this job. Say hello to LeBron for me.

EDDIE

What are you talking about?

WAITRESS

Oh you'll see. And soon I would expect. *(In Spanish as she exits)* See you later, Father Christmas

EDDIE

*(Running after her)* LeBron James! Wait a minute!

*(BLACKOUT.)*

## ACT I; Scene 6

*(AT RISE: The “El Taco Grande” Mexican restaurant the next day. The usual crowd is eating lunch. A new waitress is behind the counter. EDDIE enters, obviously agitated, giving the new waitress a long stare he starts looking all over the restaurant. Finally, he crosses to the table where his co-workers are seated and sits, dejectedly.)*

DENNIS

*(To EDDIE)* What’s this, not hungry today?

EDDIE

Where’s the other waitress?

DENNIS

What other waitress.

EDDIE

The one that was here yesterday.

DENNIS

It’s the same one, I think.

EDDIE

*(Irritated)* No it isn’t. It’s not the same one.

DENNIS

Take it easy. So, it isn’t the same one. What difference does it make? You said yourself that they all look alike.

EDDIE

I need to talk to her ... to ask her something.

FRED

Ask away, but she doesn’t speak English.

EDDIE

Oh, but this one does. At least she did yesterday. She was assigned to me at birth.

*(A long pause; ALL stop eating and stare at EDDIE.)*

DENNIS

Are you all right? That kid hasn’t driven you batty already has he?

EDDIE

Never mind. It must be the different bed or maybe it's the water. I had a doozy of a dream last night. Have any of you ever heard of Poncho Spring Water?

FRED

Go ask her. *(Points to counter)* I've got to get back at it. It's only two weeks till Christmas and I want to get things wrapped up so I can spend some time with my family. What are you doing for Christmas, Eddie?

EDDIE:

*(Coming out of his daze)* Doing? I'm doing what every good American should be doing—working. You don't think they shut down for Christmas in Tokyo do you.

FRED

As a matter of fact I think they do. *(As he speaks ALL but Eddie start to leave)* Commerce isn't everything, Eddie.

EDDIE

Tell that to your kid when he doesn't get his video game.

*(LILGHTS FADE on the table as EDDIE rises and crosses to his desk at work. He sits as LIGHTS UP on desk. EDDIE pulls out his cell phone and makes a call. SOUND of a CELL PHONE RINGING is heard at near the back of the audience. MR. CALBERT, who has been seated in the audience, quickly rises, answering the call, moving to the back of the audience. He talks in a loud, hushed voice.)*

MR. CALBERT

Yes, hello.

EDDIE

Hello, Calbert industries? This is Mr. Greel at Offco. I've finished all the paper work for your order and I'll get shipping to have it out to you by next Thursday.

MR. CALBERT

I don't know what order you're referring to, but I'm sure that will be fine. I must say, you have an efficient organization, Mr. Greel.

EDDIE

Well thank you. I'm very particular about serving my clients.

MR. CALBERT:

How did you get my personal cell phone number?

EDDIE

Personal cell? Who am I speaking to?

MR. CALBERT

This is Hugh Calbert.

EDDIE

Hugh Calbert, *the* Hugh Calbert! You answer the company phone!

MR CALBERT

As I said, this is my personal cell phone.

EDDIE

I don't know how I got this number. It was the number that I had on my speed dial. Could you speak up a bit, sir, I can barely hear you.

MR. CALBERT

I'm a little indisposed at the moment.

EDDIE

On the old yacht cruising the Caribbean?

MR. CALBERT

No, actually I'm at the theater.

EDDIE

Ahh, the Opera is it?

MR. CALBERT

I wish it were. It's some silly Christmas play. Listen, you sound like a conscientious young man. How would you like to make some extra cash at Christmas?

EDDIE

I'm sorry, sir you're breaking up.

MR. CALBERT

Your cash position, how is it?

EDDIE

Cash, oh yes. Positioning yourself is important. Of course, I think we should have ample cash reserves all year round.

MR. CALBERT

How would you like to work a little dinner at my home? It might be a good opportunity for you.

EDDIE

Dinner at your home ... did you say a working dinner? Oh yes sir, I'd love to. A working dinner is the only way I do it.

MR. CALBERT

What's that, you're starting to break up on me now. Listen, it'll be at my house in Shaker Heights on the eighteenth at 6:30. I'll give you more information later. *(Cuts off call, goes back to seat and gets MRS. CALBERT who had been seated next to him. He speaks in a voice audible to the audience.)* Come on dear. Let's go. This play is starting to get on my nerves.

*(MRS. CALBERT rises and the TWO exit rear of theater.)*

EDDIE

*(Still thinks he's talking to MR. CALBERT)* Yes, sir. That would be great. You know, if we had more people like you in this country we wouldn't have to worry about foreign competition. I think that you and I could... hello ... sir, sir. *(Realizes he's been cut off)* Oh well, busy guy.

*(TOM enters and puts a bottle of Poncho water on EDDIE'S desk.)*

EDDIE, *Continued*

Do you know who I've just been talking to?

TOM

Jerry Springer.

EDDIE

Just Hugh Calbert, that's all.

TOM

Hugh Calbert of Calbert industries? Wow.

EDDIE

That's right. I can't for the life of me tell you how I got his cell number, it's weird. *(Picks up the bottle of Poncho water that's sitting on his desk)* Did you bring this in here?

TOM

Yeah, it was on my desk. Figured it was yours.

EDDIE

Why?

TOM:

Poncho's Spring Water, you mentioned it at lunch.

EDDIE

(Takes a sip) Anyway, he wants me to have a working dinner with him on the 18th, at his house. *(Checking calendar)* Oh nuts!

TOM

What?

EDDIE:

If SIS isn't back by then I'm going to have to get someone to watch TIM ... what are you doing that night?

TOM

Who's Tim?

EDDIE

My nephew, my sister's kid.

TOM:

Oh, that's right; you're staying over there aren't you. How's your Mom?

ALICE

*(Over intercom)* Mr. Greel, call for you on one.

EDDIE

*(Distracted)* Mom? Oh she's fine ... I guess. *(Reaches for the phone)* Rats, I knew this kid thing would mess me up. *(Answering)* Eddie Greel, *(pause)* oh, Mr. Calbert, I was just talking about you. *(Looks over at TOM with a look of triumph)*

ALICE

*(Over Intercom)* Mr. Greel, call on two. I think it's your sister.

EDDIE:

*(With his hand over the phone)* All right, Alice, tell her I'll be with her in a minute. *(Getting back to the phone)* Could you wait just a second sir? The President of our company is on hold and he really needs to talk to me. *(TOM stifles a laugh; EDDIE glares at him.)* Yes, I'll give him your regards. *(EDDIE counts the seconds off in the air then continues, pretending to talk to his boss.)* Look, Bill, I'm just not sure about a move like that ... we have to consider all the options, can you call me back? Hugh Calbert's on the other line ... Oh, Mr. Calbert! Sorry, I must have punched the wrong line. Just a sec. *(TOM and EDDIE share a laugh as he punches the other line.)* Sis, can I call you back. I'm swamped at the moment. *(Starts to punch the other line and then hesitates)* Mom's O.K. isn't she? Oh. I'll call you back in a few minutes. I promise. *(Punches line to CALBERT)*

EDDIE, *Continued*

Yes, sir. Sorry about that. You know, busy, busy, busy. *(Pause)* Wear what? Oh, a formal deal, huh. Sure thing Mr. C. That's right, Six-thirty the eighteenth. Yes sir I can find it, you know, GPS and all. *(Hangs up)* A formal working dinner, I should have known. These people are real class.

TOM

What about the Kid?

EDDIE

Come to think of it, I believe he has a play that night. Maybe one of the other kids' moms can keep him until I get home.

TOM

Won't he want you to see the play? I know that my kid would.

EDDIE

He's not *my* kid, Tom, besides it's just a bit part.

TOM

Man, a working dinner with Hugh Calbert. I hope you remember all the little people when you're a big shot.

EDDIE

Yeah, this is a big deal ... a very big deal. This could open up a world of opportunities for me. *(Sitting back smugly in his chair and taking another swig of water)* You know Tom, Mr. Calbert and I are one-and-the-same. I knew it the first time I talked to him ... I have his private cell number, you know. Yes sir, we're on the same wavelength; we're peas in a pod. He senses that in me. He's probably going to be making me a big job offer. He implied that if this dinner works out there could be a lot more of them for me. *(Getting cockier by the minute)* But don't worry Tom. I won't forget the little people. You will continue to receive the same Christmas gift from me that you get every year.

TOM

Which, of course, is nothing.

EDDIE

*(Chuckling)* Exactly, you see fame and fortune won't change me a bit. *(Punches intercom button)* Alice, get someone from shipping up here.

ALICE

*(Over intercom)* Eddie what about your sister?

EDDIE

Sis, oh yeah, I'll get back to her. Just get shipping up here ... on the double.

TOM

I've got to go. I'm already starting to dislike you.

*(TOM exits.)*

EDDIE

*(Leaning back in his chair in contentment and swigging Poncho water)* Eddie Greel the big shot. I like the sound of that. My old man would choke.

*(SANJAY, a man of obviously East Indian descent enters, awaking EDDIE from his daydream.)*

SANJAY

*(With Indian accent)* Mr. Greel?

EDDIE

Who are you?

SANJAY

I am Sanjay, from shipping.

EDDIE

Boy that was fast. I'm already commanding respect. I didn't interrupt your prayers or anything?

SANJAY

No, sir.

EDDIE

O.K. Sanjay from shipping, let's see if you can get this entire order to my client by Thursday. It is *extremely* important and I'm not exactly confident that you can do it.

SANJAY

And what would have shaken your confidence in our shipping department?

EDDIE

Last year I tried to rush an order of computer paper to Pittsburgh and your boys ended up sending a hundred cases of felt-tip pens to a Dominican monastery in Houston.

SANJAY

Unfortunate.

EDDIE:

I'll say it was. It took a crew three months to scrub the graffiti off the Rectory walls ... and we got the bill. (*Shaking his head and speaking to no one in particular*) Those guys have way too much time on their hands.

SANJAY

I will see to it personally.

EDDIE

(*Sizing up the clerk*) Why haven't I seen you around here before? Are you new?

SANJAY

You might say that.

EDDIE

Oh, Eastern philosophy is it? What is new, what is old, that kind of thing.

SANJAY

(*Mysteriously*) Perhaps.

EDDIE

(*A bit irritated, takes a swig of water*) Well, I don't care if you levitate while you're doing it as long as you get this order to Calbert Industries. It means a great deal to me.

SANJAY

It is important to you, then?

EDDIE

It's *the* most important thing in the world at the moment. It probably means my future.

SANJAY

More important than your mother's health?

EDDIE

My mother? How do you know about her?

SANJAY

Oh, I am sorry. I overheard your phone conversation. Well, do not fear. I am here to see that your future is all that it should be.

(*SANJAY nods to EDDIE and exits. EDDIE looks at him strangely.*)

EDDIE

Weirdo. *(Starts to pick up phone then thinks better of it and pushes intercom button instead)* Alice, call Dammon's and rent me a tuxedo for a week from Saturday ... and have it delivered.

*(EDDIE leans back confidently in his chair and smiles as LIGHTS FADE OUT.)*

## ACT I; Scene 7

*(AT RISE: EDDIE'S room at Sis's house. EDDIE, in his pajamas, stands at the door with the Poncho water in hand, speaking off.)*

EDDIE

*(Calling loudly)* Tim ...**TIM**

TIM, *Offstage*

*(Weakly)* Yes.

EDDIE

Are you asleep?

TIM

I was.

EDDIE

Well, good. Get some rest.

TIM, *Offstage*

Thank you, Uncle Eddie.

EDDIE

Good kid ... strange, but good.

*(EDDIE walks around the room, takes a swig of water from the bottle, gargles it for a moment and lies back on the bed. There is a knock at the bedroom door. The knocking grows progressively louder.)*

EDDIE, *Continued*

Tim, is that you? What's the matter? *(There is no answer. EDDIE gets up and opens the door. It is SANJAY holding two packages.)* What the deuce are you doing here?

SANJAY

I've got some deliveries. I need you to help me.

EDDIE

Are you nuts? It's ten O'clock at night. I'm in my pajamas. How did you find me anyway?

SANJAY

LeBron James gave me your address.

EDDIE

*(Staring skyward)* Here we go again! *(Playing along)* So, where's the waitress?

SANJAY

Only works day-shift.

EDDIE

I suppose you won't leave me in peace until I do this.

SANJAY

You are correct my Xenophobic friend.

EDDIE

Look, I'm not your friend, Ok. Can we just get this over with so I can get some real sleep?

SANJAY

Certainly. We only have a few stops.

EDDIE

So, what do I do, touch the sleeve of your jacket or something.

SANJAY

What?

EDDIE

You know, so we're whisked away to our destination.

SANJAY

*(Staring at him for a moment)* You've been watching too much television. I thought that we'd take my van.

EDDIE

Suit yourself.

*(EDDIE and SANJAY exit the room to a platform upstage overlooking the action center-stage. LIGHTS UP center-stage to reveal TOM, his wife and three children standing around a large dinner table. TOM is saying grace. EDDIE and SANJAY watch.)*

TOM

And thank you for the bounty you provide with your hand.

EDDIE

Very touching. (*Loudly, in TOM's direction*) How about thanking the buyers who provide the cash for that bounty.

SANJAY

They cannot hear you ... which is their Christmas gift from me.

EDDIE

I thought this was *my* dream. We've got deliveries. Let's get this over with.

SANJAY

Oh, yes, the package.

(*Sanjay takes a small box, places it on the table and opens it. The FAMILY at the table slowly becomes more animated. THEY break out in laughter.*)

EDDIE

(*Stares at Sanjay; sarcastically*) The spirit of Christmas. Isn't this a bit trite?

SANJAY

They seem to be enjoying each other's company. It's what families are for isn't it. What is trite about it?

EDDIE

I'm talking about the magic box thing. You open it and the spirit of Christmas is miraculously released.

SANJAY

What are you talking about? It's a box of Twinkies ... for dessert.

EDDIE

Twinkies? Where's the magic in that?

SANJAY

There is no magic—well, perhaps a little in the filling—but who says having a good time has to be magic? All that is required is to show up, something at which you're not particularly good.

(*The FAMILY slowly exits. LIGHTS FADE OUT on table.*)

EDDIE

I show up where it counts, pal. I haven't missed a day's work in my life.

SANJAY

But you have missed many other things.

*(EDDIE'S CO-WORKERS enter with party favors, hats, etc as if at an office party.)*

JULIE

Where's Eddie?

FRED

Where do you think? He's on the phone with buyers.

JULIE

Doesn't he even take time off for Christmas?

FRED

To Eddie, buyers are Santa Claus and the Wise men rolled into one.

JULIE

Well I feel sorry for him. He hasn't got a family to be with at Christmas.

FRED

Are you kidding? Who told you that?

JULIE

He did. I asked him and he said his family was all dead.

*(The scene freezes. SANJAY glares at EDDIE.)*

EDDIE

*(Sheepishly)* I exaggerated.

*(LIGHTS FADE on scene. CO-WORKERS exit.)*

SANJAY

Why wouldn't you tell her about your family?

EDDIE

I don't know. I don't really feel connected I guess.

SANJAY

But to kill them off, that's a little more than exaggeration, isn't it!

EDDIE

Look around you Sanjay. Look at the people who are making it in this world. They don't have "family obligations" holding them back. They work longer and harder. They're at a tremendous advantage.

SANJAY

And what is the price of this *advantage*, as you put it?

EDDIE

Price? I don't see any price. They're the "winners in life." What's that worth?

SANJAY

So, you have no attachments to your family.

EDDIE

Quit trying to make it sound so sinister. A lot of people don't see much of their families now-a-days. (*Thinks for a moment*) I am kind of getting to know my nephew, Tim. He's not a bad kid. He's got a lot of goofy ideas about life, but he's Ok.

SANJAY

What sort of "goofy" ideas?

EDDIE

Oh, you know. Everything is beautiful. Love is the answer, that kind of Eastern religious bull ... oh, sorry.

SANJAY

No need to be, I'm a Southern Baptist. Come on. We've got two more deliveries.

*(A formal table is now set, but there is only one person seated; a distinguished man, MR. CALBERT at the head of the table. SANJAY walks over and places a package on the table. The man doesn't react to his presence, but simply picks up an object from the package and begins examining it. MRS. CALBERT enters.)*

MRS. CALBERT

What is it dear?

MR. CALBERT

*(Turning the object over in his hand)* The new cell phones we're manufacturing. Beauties, huh? *(Looking up from the object)* Have you heard anything?

MRS. CALBERT

No, not a word. I would have thought that Sarah would at least have called at Christmas.

MR. CALBERT

*(Still studying the cell phone)* I suppose that she's busy with her boutique. She did say something about a buying trip to Paris.

*(MRS.CALBERT seats herself at the other end of the table. There is an uneasy silence. Suddenly they both speak at once.)*

MR. CALBERT  
Has Arthur called?

MRS.CALBERT  
Has Arthur called?

*(THEY both fall silent again. Finally MR. CALBERT speaks.)*

MR. CALBERT

I'll bet that it's tough to get to a phone at a treatment center this time of year. You know, everybody trying to call home and all. They took his cell phone away from him in jail.

MRS. CALBERT

*(Crosses to "window")* I remember how excited they used to get at Christmas ... even back when they didn't get much.

MR. CALBERT

Yeah. I was lucky to be able to scrape together enough to get Arthur a saddlebag for his bike that one year, remember.

MRS. CALBERT

*(Looks out window, wistfully)* In a way I miss those days. It seems that we were more of a family.

MR. CALBERT

Miss them ... not me! I worked my hands to the bone to get where we are now. I wouldn't go back to that poverty for anything in the world ... no sir.

*(SOUND: PHONE RINGS. THEY both jump up to get it. MRS. CALBERT reaches it first.)*

MRS. CALBERT

Arthur? *(Disappointedly)* Oh, yes, he's right here. *(Hands MR.CALBERT the phone)* A Mr. Hancock.

MR. CALBERT

*(Reluctantly takes the phone)* Yes, Hancock. Look, you know my position. I don't care if it is the holidays, you've got to come up with the cash or default on the deal. Yes I know it's a family company. *(Pause)* Well, if you can't come up with the money, it will become my family's company. *(Pause)* Yes. I'll give you another week, but that's it. *(Pause)* What? Oh, yes, Merry Christmas to you.

MRS. CALBERT

*(Still at window, speaking aloud to herself)* Our family, just what it needs ... another company.

MR. CALBERT

Money won't buy happiness, Martha, but it *will* allow you to choose from a wide range of alternatives.

EDDIE

He's right. The world is for the one's willing to reach out and take it. Sometimes you have to make sacrifices.

SANJAY

So, the Calbert's are "winning at life"?

EDDIE

Yeah, it looks like he's doing pretty well to me, except about his son and daughter, and all.

SANJAY

Well, he certainly doesn't have "family obligations" holding him back on the Holidays. But of course, a lot of people don't see much of their families "now-a days".

EDDIE

Why does everyone keep repeating what I say?

SANJAY

And where exactly do you fit into Mr. Calbert's winning scheme?

EDDIE

I think that he has big plans for me. He's asked me to dinner you know.

SANJAY

Yes, I know.

EDDIE:

*(Studying SANJAY)* What else do you know?

SANJAY

Many things.

*(SOUND: CELL PHONE RINGS. MRS. CALBERT answers.)*

MRS. CALBERT

*(Excitedly)* Arthur! Oh Arthur! *(Pause)* Yes, dear. *(Pause)* Oh, it's so good to hear from you. *(Pause)* You're what? You need what? *(Her mood darkens.)* Arthur, I ... I mean, your father and I... *(Defeated)* Yes, I suppose we can. Is there anything else? *(Pause)* All right, I'll see to it that Charles brings it to you tomorrow. Oh, Arthur ... sweetheart ...*(Arthur apparently hangs up. MRS. CALBERT puts phone down on the table and stares at it a moment.)*... Merry Christmas.

*(MR. and MRS. CALBERT return to their bleak dinner party. Scene fades. THEY exit.)*

EDDIE

I wonder how Mom and Sis are doing?

SANJAY

As a matter of fact, that's the last stop.

*(EDDIE's MOTHER, a woman in her 60's, enters and begins to cross the stage being helped by SIS. She's hooked up to a mobile IV unit. THEY talk as she crosses the stage in front of EDDIE and SANJAY.)*

SIS

You know how he is mother, I'm sure he'll come as soon as he can, and bring Tim with him. But don't worry; you're going to get better. You'll be home and we'll all have Christmas together.

MOM

He'll come. I know he will. It was his upbringing. I failed him. I should have stood up to his father, but I was such a coward. It was my fault.

EDDIE

*(Calling to her as she crosses)* It wasn't your fault Mom. You did the best you could. I love you Mom.

SANJAY

She can't hear you either Eddie, but there were times when she could hear you. Did you tell her you loved her then?

EDDIE

I didn't know how. I wanted to be tough like Dad. I never heard him say, "I love you" to anyone.

SANJAY

Sometimes I think it takes a tougher person to say it than not to say it.

EDDIE

I'm beginning to agree with you.

SIS

We'll have Christmas together, Mom ... don't worry.

EDDIE

I'll be there Mom. I promise. I can't take this. Don't you have something for them?

SANJAY

Unfortunately, no. Only you can deliver the gift that she needs.

*(EDDIE'S MOTHER and SIS exit. EDDIE calls after them.)*

EDDIE

I love you Mom.

SANJAY

Such sentimentality. Aren't you afraid of becoming soft? You better watch out. *(Waves his hands in an eerie fashion.)* The evil foreign powers will walk in and take over. *(Speaking as he exits)* But, I must get back now. I have a hundred cases of felt-tip pens to ship to a Monastery in Houston.

EDDIE

*(Running after him as he exits)* NO, NO wait!

*(LIGHTS FADE OUT. END ACT I.)*

## **ACT II; Scene 1**

*(AT RISE: EDDIE's office the next morning. EDDIE is at his desk yawning. Enter TOM.)*

TOM

You're not looking so hot. Working too hard?

EDDIE:

I haven't been sleeping well lately. Tom, did you ever have a recurring dream?

TOM

Yeah, my life. It's a recurring nightmare.

EDDIE

No, I'm serious. I'm having these dreams. Strange people keep showing up in them, some look like people I've met, some I don't know at all. And the dreams all seem to have the same theme. It's as if my life is trying to tell me something.

*(DELIVERY BOY enters carrying a tuxedo.)*

DELIVERY BOY

Mr. Greel?

EDDIE

Yes

DELIVERY BOY

Here's the tux you ordered.

EDDIE

Thanks, just hang it on the rack. *(DELIVERY BOY starts to leave. EDDIE calls him back.)*  
Hey, kid, Here's a twenty for your trouble.

DELIVERY BOY

Gee, thanks mister!

TOM

A twenty! What did you do hit the lottery?

EDDIE

*(Somewhat exasperated at his own actions)* You see what I mean. I don't know why I did that. I've been getting more and more like this since the dreams started.

TOM

Well don't go weird on us now, Eddie. You've got that big dinner coming up. Man, I'd give anything to be in your shoes. My life is pretty much at a dead end.

EDDIE

No it isn't Tom. Look at what you've got. You've got a great wife, three great kids, and a good job. Maybe we should all be a little more grateful for what we have.

TOM

*(Looking at EDDIE in disbelief)* I say this with love Eddie. You need to see somebody about those dreams. They're starting to mess with your head.

*(TOM exits.)*

EDDIE

Well, thank goodness they're only dreams.

ALICE

*(Over Intercom)* Eddie ... I mean Mr. Greel, shipping on one.

*(EDDIE pushes a button on the phone.)*

EDDIE

Eddie Greel.

MALE VOICE

*(Gruffly, over the intercom)* You da guy what ordered the pens?

EDDIE

What?

MALE VOICE

Da pens, da felt-tip pens.

EDDIE

I don't know what you're talking about. I had an order going out to Calbert Industries ASAP. It was computer paper and ink cartridges

MALE VOICE

Ohhh, dat must be it.

EDDIE

Be what?

MALE VOICE

Calbert. We all thought it said Calvert.

EDDIE:

No, it's definitely Calbert. It's only the biggest industrial complex in the State of Ohio. Maybe you've heard of it.

MALE VOICE

Yeah, I heard of it. It makes more sense now.

EDDIE:

What makes more sense?

MALE VOICE

Sending this stuff to Calbert Industries.

EDDIE

Where were you going to send it?

MALE VOICE

Well, the only other account we have that's even close is Saint Calvert's Dominican Monastery in Houston.

EDDIE

I don't believe this. I suppose the Abbot there is a guy named Father LeBron?

MALE VOICE

What?

EDDIE

*(Aloud to himself)* That's what I was afraid of. This is real. *(Into speaker)* Who gave you the order?

MALE VOICE

I don't know, some new employee from shipping.

EDDIE

A guy with an Indian accent.

MALE VOICE

Nah, a Hispanic sounding lady. She seemed to be giggling a lot when she called it in so it was hard to tell. Anyway, don't worry about a thing. The trucks been loaded and they're on the way there.

EDDIE

Trucks with computer paper and ink cartridges?

MALE VOICE

Uhh?

EDDIE

To Calbert Industries?

MALE VOICE

Uhh...

EDDIE:

I'm coming down there.

*(BLACKOUT.)*

**ACT II; Scene 2**

*(AT RISE: EDDIE's bedroom at Sis's house. EDDIE is lying on the bed, dressed in pajamas and looking tired. TIM comes in from play practice very excited.)*

TIM

Uncle Eddie! Uncle Eddie!

EDDIE

What's the commotion? I'm trying to get some rest. I feel like I haven't slept in a week.

TIM

I got a new part, a talking part!

EDDIE

A talking part?

TIM:

Yeah, the kid who was going to play the urchin in the turkey scene got expelled for bringing a snake to school.

EDDIE

*(Sitting up, yawning)* They expel you for that?

TIM

It was a really *big* snake. It got loose and tried to eat one of the rabbits in the science room.

EDDIE

*(Stretching; yawning)* Smart snake.

TIM

What do you mean Uncle Eddie?

EDDIE

It avoided the cafeteria. *(Beat)* So, you took the part?

TIM

Yeah, I thought about what you said and you were right. I might as well try for the biggest part I can get.

EDDIE

You listened to me? I don't think that's ever happened. I hope you still have fun with the play. That's important too you know.

TIM

*(Staring at him for a minute)* Are you O.K.? Uncle Eddie?

EDDIE

I'm not sure. I think I'm exhausted.

TIM

Are you too tired to help me with my lines? I need to learn them in a hurry.

EDDIE

*(Whining)* Your lines? Can't you just read them to yourself a lot, you'll remember them.

TIM

It's not the same. I need for you to play the Scrooge part, so I can get the timing down.

EDDIE

Do I have to? I'm bushed. *(Sensing Tim's disappointment)* Oh, all right. What do I have to say?

TIM

*(Handing him a script)* Here. Just start in the middle of scene five. You've just awakened after seeing the three ghosts.

EDDIE

*(Halfheartedly)* I'm not dead. I'm alive. I don't know what to do. I'm as merry as a schoolboy, I'm as happy as an angel. I'm as light as a feather. Goes to window and throws up the sash.

TIM

You don't read that Uncle Eddie. That's the stage directions. They're in italics.

EDDIE

Oh, sorry. *(Back to lines)* Oh boy ... boy

TIM

Who me?

EDDIE

*(Still without emotion)* Yes, you. A remarkable boy. What day is it?

TIM

*(Puts down the script)* Uncle Eddie, it's kind of hard when you're not really playing the part.

EDDIE

What do you mean?

TIM

I mean putting something into it. You're Scrooge. You've just been delivered from a nightmare.

EDDIE

*(Yawning)* I wish I knew how he did that.

TIM

Come on Uncle Eddie. Think about how you would feel.

EDDIE

Ok, I'll try harder. *(Mustering enthusiasm)* I'm as merry as a schoolboy. I'm as light as a feather.

TIM

Go with it Uncle Eddie. Do what comes naturally.

EDDIE

*(Getting into the part)* I don't know what to do. I'm as merry as a schoolboy. I'm as light as a feather.

TIM

That's it, Uncle Eddie.

*(EDDIE starts dancing around the room. He dances over to the imaginary window and calls out.)*

EDDIE

Boy ... oh boy!

TIM

*(Getting into the act)* Me sir?

EDDIE

Yes, you my good lad. What day is it?

TIM

Day, sir? Why Christmas day of course.

EDDIE

Remarkable boy. Splendid boy. I haven't missed it. The spirits have done it all in one night. But of course they can, they're spirits, they can do anything.

*(EDDIE sings to the tune of “this is the way we wash our clothes”.)*

EDDIE, *Continued*

They can do anything; I think they can to anything.... *(Back to TIM)* Do you know the poultry shop in the next block?

TIM

I should say I do.

EDDIE

Delightful boy, intelligent boy. Is the prize turkey still hanging in the window?

TIM

What, the one as big as me?

EDDIE

That’s the one.

TIM

It’s hanging there still.

EDDIE

Then go and buy it.

TIM

*(Disbelievingly)* Go on.

EDDIE

No, I’m in earnest. Go and get the shopkeeper and bring him and the bird back here. Do it in ten minutes and I’ll give you a shilling.

TIM

Wooo ... I’m off.

EDDIE

*(Calling after him)* Bring him back in five and I’ll give you half a crown.

TIM

*(Astonished at Eddie’s transformation)* That was great Uncle Eddie. You did that better than our Scrooge.

EDDIE

Thank you. I don’t think I ever got that far into the play.

TIM

Are you positive that you've never acted?

EDDIE

I used to think that I hadn't. I'm not too sure now. Anyway I feel better. (*Grabs TIM playfully around the neck*) That really felt good, especially the part where I promise you half a crown. It reminds me of a delivery boy the other day. For some reason I gave him a twenty-dollar tip. It felt good.

TIM

I think giving makes you feel better than getting. Grandmother always says, "Takers never have enough and givers never run out". (EDDIE sits on the bed.) What's the matter, Uncle Eddie?

EDDIE

I don't know. I was just thinking about your Grandmother. I don't remember her ever saying that. In fact, I don't remember much of anything she said. I haven't been around a lot.

TIM

It's never too late to start.

EDDIE

(*Studying his nephew*) You're awfully wise for a thirteen year old.

TIM

(*Smiling*) Eleven.

EDDIE

(*Smiling back*) Yeah, eleven. (*Suddenly fearful; suspiciously*) Who taught you all of this? It wasn't LeBron James was it?

TIM

LeBron James?

EDDIE

Never mind.

TIM

Mom taught me. She's a pretty neat Mom.

EDDIE

And a pretty neat sister, too.

TIM

I'm glad you came to stay with me Uncle Eddie. I think you're a real cool guy.

EDDIE

You're not bad yourself, kid, although your jump shot could use some work.

*(EDDIE grabs him again, playfully.)*

TIM

I'm really looking forward to the play Saturday. I'll get you a front row seat.

EDDIE

*(Suddenly serious)* Oh, yeah, the play. Listen kid, it's about the play. I don't think I'm going to be able to go.

TIM

Why not?

EDDIE

It's business. I've got a big business meeting. It's real important, vastly important... *(Trying to convince himself)* ...immensely important. In fact, I don't even think I will be able to drop you off.

TIM

That's Ok, Uncle Eddie. I understand. I can walk. It will give me more time to get into character.

EDDIE

You know that I would if I could.

TIM

I know.

EDDIE

I'll make it up to you, I promise.

TIM

I know that you will. I've got to get to bed. I've got a game tomorrow.

EDDIE

*(Half-heartedly)* I probably won't be at the game either. I've got a big shipping mess to try and straighten out... It's real important...

TIM

*(Disappointed)* Sure it is. *(Starts to exit)* Goodnight, Uncle Eddie.

EDDIE

Goodnight sport.

*(EDDIE watches TIM exit then goes over to the dresser and picks up a picture of the family. He sets it down, picks up the bottle of water next to it and downs it in one drink.)*

EDDIE, *Continued*

I promise ... I promise. How many times have I said that in my life? *(Looking intently at the picture)* Where are you when I need you, LeBron?

*(BLACKOUT.)*

### ACT II; Scene 3

*(AT RISE: EDDIE's office the next day. EDDIE is at his desk, staring into space. FRED enters.)*

FRED

Did you get the Magic Marker thing straightened out?

EDDIE:

I think so. *(Yawns, rubs his eyes and looks very tired)* A few boxes might have gotten through, but the Abbott intercepted the bulk of the order.

FRED

Good! Bad things happen when Dominicans get access to writing materials. You look terrible.

EDDIE

Thanks for the kind words. I haven't been sleeping well. Fred, how do you do it?

FRED

Do what.

EDDIE

Do your job and have time left for a family.

FRED

You've got it backwards, Eddie.

EDDIE

What do you mean?

FRED

It's take care of your family and still have time to do your job. It's the family that's important.

EDDIE

But don't you want to succeed, to get to the top?

FRED

For what? More money, more stuff?

EDDIE

More security. More control of your life, of your surroundings; a better life for your family.

FRED

I don't know, Eddie. I guess my idea of success changed when we had kids. I used to think that all I wanted was to have a big house and drive a big car. Now I just want my kids to grow up healthy and relatively happy.

EDDIE

There was a time when Clarice and I talked about having kids. But my career plans got in the way. Do you have to give up your dreams to have a family?

FRED

You don't give them up; I guess your dreams just change.

EDDIE

*(Leaning back in his chair and grabbing his head)* I know mine have lately. They've been driving me crazy. And worse, they seem to be bleeding over into my real life. I'm not sure what's real and what's not anymore.

FRED

Maybe you ought to talk to a counselor. The company has a good one.

EDDIE

You go to a counselor?

FRED

Everyone needs some extra help sometimes Eddie. You can't do everything by yourself.

EDDIE

My dad would have taken issue with that statement.

FRED

That might be something you'd want to discuss. Look, you've got that big dinner coming up. You're going to have to get some rest. Maybe a counselor can help.

EDDIE

Well, maybe.

FRED

It couldn't hurt. She's probably in today. Why not give it a try?

*(FRED exits.)*

EDDIE

She? *(Thinks for a long moment and then calls into the next room)* Alice, I'm going to be taking an early lunch today, and I may be a little late getting back. *(Gets up to leave and goes back to pick up the bottle of water sitting on his desk)* This is what I really need analyzed.

*(BLACKOUT.)*

## ACT II; Scene 4

*(AT RISE: The Counselor's office. CLARICE, Eddie's ex-girlfriend, stands in the shadows, her identity obscured. EDDIE sticks his head into the office and looks around.)*

EDDIE

Boy, they make all the offices alike around here.

CLARICE

Come in, I've been expecting you. Please sit in the chair.

EDDIE

*(Looking around for a chair)* What chair?

CLARICE

So, having trouble with commitment again?

EDDIE

Again, we haven't started yet. And how could you be expecting me? I just dropped by. I didn't even make an appointment.

CLARICE

You didn't, did you? That is *sooo* like you, Eddie.

EDDIE  
What are you talking about?

CLARICE  
Always doing what's convenient for you.

EDDIE  
Huh?

CLARICE  
Always me, me, me...

EDDIE  
Clarice! Is that you?

CLARICE  
*(Emerging from the shadows)* You bet it is.

EDDIE  
*(Takes a big swig from his water bottle and looks skyward)* Oh please let it be the dream, please, please let it be the dream. *(Addressing Clarice)* You work here!

CLARICE  
In a way, I suppose. So, why did you do it, Eddie?

EDDIE  
Do what?

CLARICE  
Dump me.

EDDIE  
I didn't dump you; you left.

CLARICE  
And do you remember why I left?

EDDIE  
*(Quizzically)* You didn't like me?

CLARICE  
Eddie, I loved you. I never got to see you. You were always working, and when you weren't, you were thinking about work. You used to call me Alice all the time, remember? Sometimes I wish she **had** been a lover instead of your secretary, at least then I would have known you cared about something other than your career.

EDDIE

I did it for you, Clarice. I wanted to make good so I could ask you to marry me.

CLARICE

And have you made good, Eddie?

EDDIE

I've done pretty well, yeah. And I've got a big deal in the works.

CLARICE

And have you asked me to marry you yet?

EDDIE

I didn't know where you were.

CLARICE:

I live in Indianapolis, Eddie. It's just one state over. You know that I'm a nurse. It's not hard to look these things up. But that's sort of the story of your life isn't it, Eddie. If it doesn't affect you financially, it's not important.

EDDIE

*(Looking at the water bottle; the Poncho Water bottle)* But ... but if you live in Indianapolis, how can you be....

CLARICE

Eddie, do you think that LeBron James questions everything his coach tells him? Why don't you stop trying to figure this out and just try and learn something? If you keep on the way you're going it's not going to be pretty.

EDDIE

What do you mean?

*(LIGHTS UP stage left. Eddie's CO-WORKERS enter once again with Christmas party favors.)*

FRED

Merry Christmas, Tom! Julie!

JULIE

Same to you Fred.

*(ALICE enters.)*

TOM

Hey Alice, come and have some punch! *(Hands her a glass)* So, how's your new boss?

ALICE

He's very nice. But I do miss Eddie.

TOM

Yeah, I miss him. He could be a real jerk sometimes, but there was something about him. It was a real shame.

FRED

Yeah, that deal with Calbert was the kicker. He was just never the same after that.

*(CO-WORKERS exit. LIGHTS CROSS FADE to stage right. SIS and TIM enter.)*

SIS

A state championship. Oh honey, I'm so proud of you! Hey, what's the matter, you look like you lost instead of won?

TIM

I guess I just wish that Uncle Eddie could have been here.

SIS

He was here in spirit.

TIM

Yeah. I guess he was.

*(LIGHT FADES OUT.)*

EDDIE

Wow, a State championship ... and I missed it. *(Beat)* I didn't ... you know... I didn't.

CLARICE

Didn't what?

EDDIE

Kill myself.

CLARICE

Stop being so dramatic, Eddie, of course you didn't. You're still here aren't you?

*(CLARICE crosses back into the shadows. EDDIE follows part-way.)*

EDDIE

But ... but ... I mean in the future. That's what this is, isn't it? You're showing me the future.

CLARICE, *Offstage*

What are you talking about? You're here for counseling. I'm just trying to show you what it's going to be like if you keep this up. It's not going to be pretty

EDDIE

*(Becoming more frantic)* But you're my ex-girlfriend. You live in Indianapolis. You're not even a counselor; you're a nurse. This is the building I work in!

CLARICE

Not going to be pretty Eddie.

*(LIGHTS UP on SIS who walks towards EDDIE addressing him directly.)*

SIS

You didn't show. You jerk. You didn't show. Mom was calling for you but you weren't there. Harry tried to comfort her, but she just kept calling your name. How did you get so far gone Eddie? How does somebody lose their way like that? How do you get to where no one means a damn to you? You've got no soul Eddie. You may have a nice car and a big house but you've got no soul.

EDDIE

*(Dropping to his knees and crying)* I can't take this anymore. I don't know what's happening to me. I'm going crazy.

*(A new "counselor", the HISPANIC WAITRESS walks out of the shadows.)*

WAITRESS

Well, that's a good start.

EDDIE

*(Stands up astonished and holds the water bottle in front of him like a protective charm)* Ahhhh... You're her, I mean, I'm him, I mean ... I mean ... stay away from me ... stay away from me!

*(EDDIE races out the door; the WAITRESS calmly calls out after him.)*

WAITRESS

Well, come back again. *(Turns to audience and smiles)* I think we're making progress.

*(LIGHTS FADE OUT.)*

**ACT II; Scene 5**

*(AT RISE: Back in Eddie's bedroom at Sis's house. EDDIE is moaning loudly, tossing and turning in bed. TIM stands by the bed shaking him.)*

TIM

Uncle Eddie, Uncle Eddie, wake up.

EDDIE

What ... where ... oh, Tim, thank God. Tim, tell me I'm a good man. Tell me that I'm Ok.

TIM

I like you Uncle Eddie; you were just having a nightmare.

EDDIE

*(Calms himself and sits up in bed)* You don't understand Tim; my life is turning into a nightmare.

TIM

I was thinking. You could run me up to school early Saturday. You could do it before your dinner.

EDDIE

*(Back in the moment)* I'd love to sport, but I can't risk being late for this meeting. I'm going to go by the office first and do a little homework on Calbert Industries so I'll be able to talk with confidence.

TIM

That's the key isn't it?

EDDIE

What is?

TIM

*(Aggressively)* Confidence. That's what I've been missing in my life. I'm not aggressive enough. I need to be more like you Uncle Eddie. You know, go for the jugular ... get to the top.

EDDIE

Look, Tim, don't jump to any conclusions. You're young and impressionable. Getting ahead isn't everything. It's the people in your life that count. That's all you really leave behind in the end, the mark you make on other people's lives.

*(EDDIE climbs out of bed, rubbing his head.)*

EDDIE, *Continued*

*(Incredulously)* What am I saying? *(Starts to take a drink of Poncho water then recoils)* Oh no you don't!

TIM

Who are you talking to Uncle Eddie?

EDDIE

Never mind. Don't listen to me. You're right, get out there and go for it.

*(BLACKOUT)*

## ACT II; Scene 6

*(AT RISE: Eddie's office; the following day. EDDIE is at his desk in his tux going over some documents.)*

EDDIE

*(Looking at his watch)* I'd better hurry with this, the party's in less than two hours. I wonder if Tim's doing all right. How do I get myself in these situations? *(SOUND; CELL PHONE RINGS. EDDIE answers.)* Hello. *(Pause)* Oh, Mr. Calbert. I was just going to call you. *(Pause)* Do I what? Have a what? *(Pause)* A white towel? What do I need a white towel for? *(Pause)* Oh, it looks classier ... classier for what? What exactly am I supposed to be doing at this dinner? *(Pause)* Serving guests? *(Pause)* Oh no, of course not, I didn't think that at all. *(Pause)* Yes, I do recall your saying something about extra cash at Christmas. Yes, well that's why I was going to call you. I've got some bad news. I'm not going to be able to make it. That's right; I've got a more pressing engagement. *(Pause)* What is it? I'm going to see my nephew in a play, *(Pause)* Well, I'm sorry you can't understand that sir, but I suppose that may be at the root of your family problems. *(Pause)* Oh nothing, just a guess. Anyway, maybe your guests could order out. I know a great little Mexican Restaurant and an Indian guy who'll deliver it for free. *(Pause)* You're going to what ... cancel your order? I think that order has already been cancelled, unless you wanted a hundred cases of Magic Markers. Have a nice holiday. Maybe we can work together in the future. *(Hangs up)* Well, that felt surprisingly good.

*(TIM checks himself out in a mirror on the wall, adjusting his bow tie.)*

EDDIE, *Continued*

Tim is going to flip when he sees me in this outfit. *(Starts to exit; sees a bottle of Poncho Spring Water on a table and retrieves it)* You know, this stuff kind of grows on you.

*(EDDIE takes a huge swig and sticks the bottle in his pocket.)*

ALICE

*(Over intercom)* Mr. Greel, I know you didn't want to be disturbed, but there's a call on line one. From a hospital I think. They say it's urgent.

EDDIE

Oh gosh, it must be Mom. *(Grabs the receiver)* Hello, yes, this is Eddie Greel. *(Pause)* Yes, he's my nephew. *(Pause)* He's what? *(Pause)* Oh God no. He was supposed to be going to his play. Is he ... *(Pause)* Oh no, please no. I'm on my way. What Hospital is this? *(Pause)* Holy Redemptor? I'm not familiar with it, but I'll find it.

*(EDDIE drops the phone, grabs his coat and bolts out the door. LIGHTS OUT on the office and LIGHTS UP on the hospital waiting room. MR. CALBERT is seated on a bench. EDDIE rushes in, sees him and crosses to him.)*

EDDIE

Mr. Calbert! What are you doing here?

MR.CALBERT

Do I know you?

EDDIE

Oh, that's right. You couldn't see me.

MR.CALBERT

I beg your pardon. Do I know you? Your voice sounds familiar.

EDDIE

*(Extending a hand somewhat sheepishly)* Greel... Offco Supplies. I hope I didn't mess up your dinner party.

MR.CALBERT

Ahh, Mr. Greel. I'm sorry about the misunderstanding. As to the party, well it won't be much of one now.

EDDIE

Your son?

MR.CALBERT

Yes, he ... uh ... inadvertently took too much of his medicine.

*(MR CALBERT looks intently at EDDIE who realizes what he has said.)*

MR. CALBERT, *Continued*

How did you know it was my son?

EDDIE

*(Sitting down next to him)* It's a long story.

MR.CALBERT

*(Despondently)* This is the fourth time. It's killing his mother. Sometimes I wish it would just be over. But that would kill her too. What about you? Why are you here?

EDDIE

My nephew. He was hit by a car. I may have been partly to blame.

MR.CALBERT

Looks like we've both got some burdens to bear. *(Studies EDDIE a moment)* You look like a good man; can I confide something in you?

EDDIE

Yes.

MR.CALBERT

I envy people like you, people who make time for their families. I hate who I have become. I went from working for a living to living to work. In the process I lost the most valuable things I had: my family, the joy of building a business from the ground up— All the things I loved and believed in. Now, in their place I have stuff ... lots and lots of stuff, and not one piece of that stuff can give me back my son.

EDDIE

I'll confide something in you. I envied *you*. Even with your family problems I envied you. I thought that you were a true winner in life, a man firmly in charge of his own destiny. I wanted to be in that inner circle so badly that I pushed my mother, sister, nephew, even the woman I loved aside. Now we're both sitting here alone. Is this how it ends, Mr. Calbert? We lose the ability to reach the people we love.

MR.CALBERT

*(MR. CALBERT stands and looks at EDDIE. His demeanor has changed)* Maybe not, Eddie.

EDDIE

You called me, "Eddie".

MR.CALBERT

It may be too late for me, but it's not too late for you. There's still time for you to be a son to your mother, an uncle to Tim; to be a brother to your sister, maybe even a husband to Clarice. There's still time for you Eddie.

*(MR.CALBERT rises and crosses almost in slow motion toward the exit.)*

MR. CALBERT, *Continued*

... Still time for you Eddie ... There's still time...

EDDIE

*(EDDIE follows him)* Mr. Calbert— Wait!

**This is Not the End of the Play**

**Ending Intentionally Omitted for Security Purposes**

**Continue to Next Page for**

**PRODUCTION NOTES AND SUGGESTIONS**

## PRODUCTION NOTES AND SUGGESTIONS

### UNIT SET

Down Center: Table with Mexican table cloth and four chairs

Stage left: Bed with pillows, small table with pictures

Right/Center stage: four by four foot, 12” high platform with table(s), chair(s) and desk

**ACT I; Scene 1: Eddie and his co-workers discuss current events at “El Taco Grande” restaurant. Sis calls Eddie to ask if he can watch Tim and has a brief run-in with the Waitress.**

Setting: Interior of a Mexican Restaurant

Cast: Eddie, Tom, Julie, Dennis, Fred, Waitress and other restaurant staff

Props: Table and chairs, cloth over counter reading “El Taco Grande”, food trays, various food wrappers, paper cups, quarter, cell phone for Eddie.

Costumes:

Eddie: professional work clothes

Food Wait Staff: restaurant uniforms

**ACT I; Scene 2: Eddie drives to Sis’ house. Upon arrival he interacts with Sis who is leaving to see their Mother at the Hospital. Eddie sees Tim and discusses philosophy with him.**

Setting: Interior of a car, Sis’ house

Cast: Sis, Eddie, Tim

Props: Steering wheel, suit case for Eddie, Small suitcase for Sis

Costumes:

Sis: traveling clothes

Eddie: work clothes

Tim: casual

**ACT I; Scene 3: Eddie and Tim drive to Tim’s play practice and discuss their takes on life.**

Setting: Interior of a car

Cast: Eddie, Tim

Props: two chairs and a car steering wheel

Costumes:

Eddie: work clothes

Tim: “street urchin” costume

**ACT I; Scene 4: Eddie observes Tim’s play and the scene with Scrooge and the two men soliciting charity. Eddie defends Scrooge.**

Setting: The school auditorium

Cast: Eddie, Tim and other urchin, Voice, First man in Scrooge scene, Second man in Scrooge scene, Scrooge

Props: Dickens scene. Scrooge’s desk

Costumes:

Scrooge, First and Second man: Era clothing for “Christmas Carol” scene.

Tim: “street urchin” costume

Eddie: work clothes

**ACT I; Scene 5: Eddie’s first dream scene. He meets Scrooge. The Waitress shows him scenes from his past and vows to return.**

Setting: Stage right, Eddie’s Bedroom. Left/Center stage, Dickens scene. Stage Upstage Left, Mexican restaurant table & chairs.

Cast: Eddie, Scrooge, Waitress, Eddie’s Father, Young Sis, Young Eddie, Various Victorian onlookers

Props: small table and chairs for Mexican restaurant, draped sign over counter reading “YE Olde Taco Grande” notepad for Waitress, Basketball, wrapped box with play oven, phone and Ohio State cap

Costumes:

Eddie: pajamas

Scrooge, Victorian onlookers: period clothes

Young Sis: jumper, pajamas

Young Eddie: play clothes, pajamas

Eddie's Father: jacket and cap/coaching scene, work clothes/Christmas scene

The Waitress: fanciful traditional Mexican skirt and colorful blouse

**ACT I; Scene 6: Eddie returns to the restaurant looking for Waitress after encountering her in his first dream. Eddie calls Calbert Industries only to mysteriously get Hugh Calbert himself on the line. Mr. Calbert offers Eddie a chance at a "working" dinner. Tom brings Eddie his "Poncho" water and they discuss the opportunity. Eddie encounters a new worker (Sanjay) from shipping who seems to know more about him than he should.**

Setting: El Taco Grande Restaurant the next day, Eddie's office

Cast: Dennis, Eddie, Fred, Mr. Calbert, Mrs. Calbert, Tom, Alice on intercom, Sanjay

Props: restaurant table and chairs, various food wrappers, notepad for Sanjay, poncho water, Eddie's desk with intercom (rolled out as co-workers are leaving restaurant), cell phones for Calbert and Eddie.

Costumes:

Eddie: work clothes

Co-workers: work clothes

Sanjay: delivery outfit

Alice: work clothes

Mr. and Mrs. Calbert: Theatre-going dress clothes.

**ACT I; Scene 7: After a few swigs of Poncho water, Eddie wakes to find Sanjay at his door. Sanjay takes Eddie on a trip through the present, seeing Tom's family joyful at Christmas, his co-workers at an office party, and a much different scene at the wealthy Calbert household. The Scene ends with Eddie seeing his sick mother wishing he would come to visit. It's almost too much for Eddie.**

Settings: Interior of Eddie's room, podium stage right.

Cast: Eddie, Tim (offstage) Sanjay, Tom and family, Julie, Fred, Mr. Calbert, Mrs. Calbert, Mom, Sis.

Props: Poncho water, Sanjay's boxes (Twinkies for Tom's family, a cell phone for the Calberts) Christmas table for Tom's family and the Calberts, I V for Mom.

Costumes:

Eddie: pajamas

Sanjay: traditional Indian attire

Tom's family: everyday clothes

Calberts: everyday clothes

Mom: robe and slippers

Sis: everyday clothes

**ACT II; Scene 1: Back at the office, Eddie's nocturnal episodes are taking their toll. Eddie over-tips the delivery boy, Tom offers some advice. Shipping gets Eddie's Calbert order all fowled up.**

Setting: Eddie's office the next day

Cast: Eddie, Tom, Delivery boy, Alice on intercom, man on intercom

Props: Eddie's desk and intercom, tux from delivery boy, coat rack, twenty dollar bill for Eddie

Costumes:

Eddie: suit

Tom: suit

Delivery boy: delivery clothes

**ACT II; Scene 2: Eddie's becoming more and more frazzled. Tim enters abruptly to announce a new role in the school play and a new attitude. Eddie helps Tim with his lines and gets caught up in the spirit of the moment. Eddie begins to see that his ambition has caused him to miss out on a lot of life. Eddie reluctantly tells Tim he won't be able to come to his play.**

Setting: Eddie's bedroom

Cast: Eddie, Tim

Props: pictures on table, play script

Costumes

Eddie: pajamas

Tim: school clothes

**ACT II; Scene 3: Eddie's education continues as he discusses what's important in life with Julie. Julie suggests that Eddie see the company counselor.**

Setting: Eddie is back at his desk the next day

Cast: Eddie, Julie

Props: Eddie's desk

Costumes

Eddie: work clothes

Julie: work clothes

**ACT II; Scene 4: Eddie goes to see the councilor but gets his old girlfriend Clarice instead. Clarice shows Eddie where his life is headed in a series of dream sequences. Eddie finally loses it after being confronted by Sis for not going to see there mother. His breakdown is complete as Clarice suddenly morphs into the Waitress as Eddie exits screaming.**

Setting: interior of councilor's office.

Cast: Eddie, Clarice, Julie, Tom, Dennis, Alice, Sis, Tim, Waitress

Props: Christmas party hats for co-workers, Santa outfit for Dennis, Basketball trophy for Tim

Costumes:

Eddie: work clothes

Clarice: professional clothes

Tim: basketball uniform

Sis: casual

Alice: work clothes

Waitress: “dream” skirt

**ACT II; Scene 5: Back in bed, Eddie is struggling with his revelations. Tim expounds on his new found aggressive attitude.**

Setting: Eddie’s bedroom

Cast: Tim, Eddie

Props: none

Costumes:

Tim; school clothes

Eddie: pajamas

**ACT II; Scene 6: Eddie finds out that his working dinner at the Calbert’s wasn’t what he thought it was. Tim’s taken to the Hospital. Eddie encounters Mr. Calbert at the Hospital and begins to see what is really important in life. A final, dream encounter ensues where Eddie learns that Tim is O.K. and that Dr. LeBron has the cure for his ailments. The entire cast dances the “LeBron James and Poncho Water” dance.**

Setting(s): Eddie’s office before the dinner, Hospital

Cast: Eddie, Mr.Calbert, Doctor, LeBron James, other cast members

Props: Poncho water, surgical mask, basketball, talcum powder, table cloth

Costumes:

Eddie: tux

Mr. Calbert: tux

Doctor: scrubs and a surgical mask

LeBron: basketball uniform and surgical mask

Cast Members: as characters

**ACT II; Scene 7: Eddie has found himself. He makes a kind gesture to Tom who is amazed at his change. He revisits the Mexican restaurant and the Waitress for a final thank you to the spirits. The play ends with he and the Waitress embracing and a chorus of “Feliz Navidad”**

Setting: Eddie’s Office, and Mexican restaurant

Cast: Eddie, Tom, Waitress

Props: Hundred dollar bill, Poncho water wrapped as a gift

Costumes:

Eddie: work clothes

Tom: work clothes

The Waitress: wait-staff uniform