

*(GEORGE and MARY enter from the back of the house and down an aisle. CLARENCE's light fades down as their light fades up. CLARENCE exits. GEORGE is dressed in an old-fashioned, ill-fitting football uniform, sans padding. MARY wears an oversized terry cloth bathrobe with "BFHS" on the back. They carry their wet clothes tied in bundles. Onstage, a picket fence with bushes is set up R of C.)*

GEORGE & MARY *(singing)*. Buffalo Gal, won't you come out tonight,

Come out tonight, come out tonight!

Buffalo Gal, won't you come out tonight ...

*(Harmonizing.)*

and dance by the light of the moooon!

GEORGE. Hot dog! Perfect! Just like the barber shoppers!

MARY. Beautiful.

GEORGE. And I told Harry I'd be bored to death! Here, let me hold that. *(He takes the bundle of clothes from MARY.)* Bet I'm the only boy ever carried your wet clothes home from school.

MARY. You are. Do I look as funny as you look?

GEORGE. Guess I'm not exactly the football player type. Well ... beggars can't be choosers. These are all I could find in the locker room. But ... no, no ... you ... you don't look funny at all ... you look wonderful.

*(They stop walking. He is enraptured.)*

MARY *(moving to the stage)*. You look at me as if you didn't know me.

GEORGE. Well, I .... knew this little girl named Mary Hatch. Guess she grew up. You know 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 dunno. Maybe I will. Say, I thought you were Sam Wainwright's date.

MARY. No. We danced.

GEORGE. More than once.

MARY (*moving toward center. DR is a section of picket fence with heavy bushes upstage*). I like dancing.

GEORGE. You didn't come to the dance with Sam?

MARY. No. I came stag.

GEORGE. Stag? You can't ... You're not Sam's girl?

MARY. No, I'm not his girl.

GEORGE. Then whose?

MARY. It's not decided yet. Whose boy are you?

GEORGE. Whose b ... ! Say, how old are you, anyway?

MARY. Eighteen.

GEORGE (*moving to her*). Eighteen! Seems like just last year you were seventeen. You look older without your clothes ... I mean, without a dress. I mean you look good ... I mean, younger. You look just ...

MARY. Careful! You're standing on the belt! I almost lost this robe you think so much of.

GEORGE. Oh. Oh. Can't have that. I mean ... well ...

MARY (*grandly*). Well then, sir, my train please ... throw it over my arm.

GEORGE. A pox upon me for a clumsy lout. Here you are ... your caboose, my lady.

MARY. You may kiss my hand.

GEORGE. And so I shall, my lady ... I ... Oh ... it's ... it's such a soft hand, Mary. (*He is trying to understand his own feelings.*) And you ... you're so ... soft and so ...

MARY (*breaking away quickly, playfully and singing*). Buffalo Gal, won't you come out tonight, come out tonight ...

GEORGE. No ... wait, come back here, now. Lemme ... lemme show you something. (*Picks up a pantomime "rock" from the stage floor and points out over the audience.*) I'll throw a rock at that old house there ... the old Granville house.

MARY. Don't! I love that old house.

GEORGE. No, no, you see, you make a wish and try to break some glass. When I was a kid, we ...

MARY. Oh, George, don't. That old place ... it's so full of romance. I'd love to live in it.

GEORGE. Live in it? Not even a *ghost* would wanna live in it. All right now, see this rock? Watch that second floor window there ... to the right.

*(He makes a throwing motion. The sound of breaking glass.)*

MARY. What did you wish for, George?

GEORGE. Not just one wish, Mary ... a whole hatful. I'm shakin' the dust of this crummy little town off my feet, 'n then I'm gonna see the world ... After that I'm going to college and see what they know ... and then I'm gonna ... I'm gonna build things. (*MARY looks around and picks up a "rock."*) I'm gonna build skyscrapers a hundred stories high and bridges a mile long and ... hey, whatcha doin' with that rock?

MARY. Making a wish and ... (*She makes a throwing motion over the heads of the audience.*) throwing it.

*(The sound of breaking glass.)*

GEORGE. Hey, that's pretty good. What'd you wish, Mary?

MARY. Wouldn't you like to know? (*She moves R, and GEORGE follows.*) "Buffalo Gal, won't you come out tonight, come out ..."

GEORGE. No ... wait, tell me what you wished for. Tell me what you want, and I'll get it for you. What do you want, Mary? You want the moon? Just say the word and I'll throw a lasso around the moon and pull it down. Hey, that's a pretty good idea. I'll give you the moon, Mary.

MARY (*turning*). I'll take it. Then what?

GEORGE (*moving in close*). Well, then you could swallow it, and it'd all dissolve, see, and the moonbeams'd shoot out your fingers and toes and the ends of your hair and ... Am I talking too much?

MAN ON THE PORCH (*from the back of the house*). Yeah! You're talkin' too much!

(*MARY makes a sudden move to behind the bushes, though her robe remains onstage. Offstage, she squeaks in surprise.*)

GEORGE (*turns and looks into the house, over the heads of the audience and moves C*). How's that?

MAN ON THE PORCH. I been sittin' on this porch listenin' to you for the last five minutes. Stop talkin'. Kiss her!

GEORGE. Kiss her?

MAN ON THE PORCH. Aaaaaw, youth is wasted on kids who don't know what t'do with it! I'm goin' inside!

(*A screen door slams in the back of the house.*)

GEORGE. Hey, hey, hold on, come back here! Come back out here and I'll show you some kissin' that'll put hair back on your head! Isn't that right, M ... (*He turns to find her gone. He searches the stage.*) Mary? Mary? Where'd ya go? Mary? Where are ya?

(*The bushes rustle visibly.*)

MARY (*behind the bushes*). Over here in the hydrangea bushes.

GEORGE. What are you doin' in there? Why don'tcha ...

MARY. Look down, George.

GEORGE. Down on the ... oh. It's ... it's your robe. (*He reaches down and picks it up.*)

MARY. You were standing on the belt again.

GEORGE. Well, if I've got your robe here that means that you're ...

MARY (*head and shoulders emerge from the bushes. She extends an arm*). Yes. Now please toss me my robe.

GEORGE. This is a very interesting situation.

MARY. My robe.

GEORGE. A man doesn't get in a situation like this every day.

MARY. My r ...

GEORGE. Not in Bedford Falls, anyway. This requires a little thought.

MARY. George Bailey, give me my robe!

GEORGE. I've read about things like this, but I never ...

MARY. I'm going to tell your mother on you!

GEORGE (*absently*). Oh, my mother's way up on the corner there.

MARY. I'll call the police!

GEORGE. Oh, they're way downtown. They'd be on my side, too.

MARY. I'll scream!

GEORGE. Maybe I could sell tickets.

MARY. George Bailey!

(*From off L: the sound of a sputtering Model T and a horn. MARY ducks back into the bushes.*)