

PRODUCTION NOTES

FARKUS and DILL: The two villains are not members of Ralphie's class. They are, however, used in production numbers that occur outside of school and, of course, in any scenes where they have lines.

THE BUMPUS HOUNDS: In the original Broadway production, live trained dogs were used to great effect. If trained dogs are not available, it is suggested that adult or child actors might portray the animals or that puppets be used. If not practical, all of The Old Man's lines about—and to—the dogs may be played and delivered offstage before he enters the house and/or through the open door when he comes inside.

BB GUNS: In the simpler times of 1940's America, the wish for a Christmas or birthday BB gun was on many a young person's list. It was a very common gift in those days. Most of the instances of guns being used in this show, particularly by the ensemble, can be done with guns in boxes with a picture on the outside of the box (as appeared on the original Red Ryder box). Only in the fantasy, "Ralphie to the Rescue" and in the final moments of the show—when Ralphie unwraps his gift—do we actually see a real BB gun being held.

A Christmas Story, The Musical

ACT I

(#1: "Overture")

PROLOGUE

(New York City. A street corner outside the radio studio at Station WOR. Christmas Eve, many years ago.)

At C is a Salvation Army SANTA, slowly and rhythmically ringing a hand bell next to a donation kettle hanging from a tripod. Anxious shoppers and businesspeople hurry along their way, ignoring SANTA and his bell. Near the end of the "Overture," JEAN SHEPHERD, wearing an overcoat, gloves and hat enters. He stops, tosses a few coins into the kettle and begins to walk toward the suggestion of a radio studio that has materialized, in some form, DC. Perhaps a desk, containing a microphone, which may have an "On Air" sign attached. SANTA gives the bell a good-natured scolding ring, stopping JEAN, who pulls out a couple of bills and ceremoniously drops them into the kettle. As JEAN goes to leave, SANTA once more stops him with a rather violent ringing of the bell. JEAN, incredulous, tosses his remaining change in the bucket. SANTA resumes the rhythmic ringing and disappears from view. JEAN moves to the studio, removes his outer garments, signals to an unseen engineer, sits and speaks into a microphone.)

1 JEAN *(as the "Overture" ends, delivered with high energy, excitement and a wry, nostalgic sensibility).* Hi, gang! Are you ready to play radio on this blustery, blizzardy Christmas Eve? I am if you are. Yes, once again, right here on WOR in the heart of Manhattan, it's "The Jean Shepherd Show."

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PIT @+0dB

PIT @-5dB

(He blows "Charge!" on a kazoo.) Home of the greatest stories ever told—by yours truly, of course. On my way into the studio, in the spanking December breeze, I passed by a Salvation Army Santa Claus listlessly tolling his bell, and remembered another Christmas, in another time, in another place, and ... a gun. I take you back to the exotic city of—(Anticlimactic.) Hohman, Indiana—where the state line ends abruptly in the icy, detergent-filled waters of Lake Michigan. Back in the day, Lake Michigan was so polluted you could run halfway to Milwaukee before you sank to the bottom. Any-the-how, it was there in Hohman, back in 1940, that I experienced my most important

(#1a: "Transition to 1940")

- 1 JEAN (*cont'd*). Yuletide season. Now when I say the word "I," I don't mean me, necessarily. It's a universal "I." And the "I" in this particular story is Ralphie Parker. So sit back, turn up the volume and let's go!

PIT @-0dB (JEAN "orchestrates" the set change as the studio goes off, and the interior of the Parker house comes into view.)

SCENE 1

PIT @-5dB (The Parker family house and outside. December 1, 1940.)

- 2 MOTHER (*impatiently*). Ralphie!

(Action onstage freezes.)

- 1 JEAN. There it is! The house on Cleveland Street.

(#2: "It All Comes Down to Christmas" [Part 1])

- 2 MOTHER (*calling upstairs to RALPHIE and RANDY, with growing urgency*). We have to go right now! I'm not kidding, boys! Do you want to miss it?

(Action onstage freezes.)

- 1 JEAN. My mother in the kitchen, trying in vain to get us bundled up and out the door.

- 2 MOTHER. Ralphie! Randy! I mean now!!

(RANDY enters from the upstairs, going downstairs, not eager to venture out into the blizzard.)

- 3 RANDY. Aw, Mom!

- 2 MOTHER. Randy—now!

(Action onstage freezes.)

- 1 JEAN. My kid brother Randy—

- 3 RANDY (*as MOTHER begins to dress him*). Awwwwwww ...

(We see RALPHIE in his bedroom holding a magazine.)

- 1 JEAN. And there I am with my December issue of *The Open Road For Boys*, itchy, nervously, obsessing over a three-colored, framed, full-page back cover advertisement of the greatest gift a boy could ever hunger for—and realizing that time was my enemy.

- 4 RALPHIE.
GOODBYE NOVEMBER
THANKSGIVING'S GONE
NOW EV'RY HOUSE YOU PASS
HAS A PLASTIC REINDEER ON ITS LAWN

- 2 MOTHER (*calling to upstairs, snappy*). Ralphie! Please!

- 4 RALPHIE.
IT'S ALMOST CHRISTMAS
THAT'S CLEAR TO SEE
AND THERE'S A CERTAIN SOMETHING
THAT I WANT BENEATH MY TREE

PIT @-0dB

2 MOTHER (*calling to offstage*). Frank! Start the car, the boys are almost ready!

4 RALPHIE (*starts downstairs*).
THIS YEAR
DON'T WANT ANOTHER PLAID TIE
THIS YEAR
CAN'T LET MY CHANCE PASS BY
AND I'M RUNNING OUT OF TIME!

2 MOTHER (*fed up*). Ralphie!

4 RALPHIE (*eagerly*).
THERE'S A GIFT I GOTTA GET
AND IT ALL COMES DOWN TO CHRISTMAS
I KNOW THE CLOCK IS SET
AND IT ALL COMES DOWN TO CHRISTMAS
I'VE GOT ONE SHOT AND IT'S TWENTY-FOUR DAYS
AWAY!
I HAFTA HURRY UP
'CAUSE IT ALL COMES DOWN TO CHRISTMAS DAY!

(MOTHER helps RALPHIE into his coat.

PIT DOWN

Outside, sounds of the BUMPUS HOUNDS barking are heard as THE OLD MAN enters.)

5 THE OLD MAN. Get away! Get away! Shoo! Shoo!

1 JEAN. And then there's my old man—

5 THE OLD MAN (*disgruntled, this is a daily occurrence*). Bumpus! Call 'em off. Bumpus!

1 JEAN. My old man and the Bumpus hounds next door.

5 THE OLD MAN. Get out of here you rotten—no no no!

(The BUMPUS HOUNDS chase THE OLD MAN across the stage.)

5 THE OLD MAN (*cont'd*). Bumpus! Call 'em off!

1 JEAN. Our neighbors, the Bumpuses, were so low down on the evolutionary chain they weren't even included in Darwin's family tree.

5 THE OLD MAN (*firing off a series of grumbled fake-swears*).
Consarned gadbits cummerbuts rackin' frackin' flick-flock-in' sham-shuckin' mangy mutts!

PIT @-0dB

4 RALPHIE (*cobbling together a plan*).
I HAVE A MISSION
I HAVE A PLAN
I KNOW TO GET THAT GIFT
I'VE REALLY GOTTA GET TO MY OLD MAN

5 THE OLD MAN (*entering the house*). Stupid hillbillies!

4 RALPHIE.
AND THEN THERE'S MOTHER
SHE CAN BE TOUGH.
I'LL DROP A COUPLE HINTS
MAYBE THAT'LL BE ENOUGH!

(RALPHIE makes an effort to get MOTHER to notice the Red Ryder BB gun advertisement.)

PIT UNDERSCORES

2 MOTHER. The store windows are lit at six o'clock. You don't want to miss it, do you, boys?

3 RANDY (*overlapping*). Come on, Ralphie—we got to get to Higbee's!

1 JEAN (*with nostalgic anticipation*). Ah, Higbee's. The high-water mark of the pre-Christmas season was the corner window at Higbee's Department Store. The window was now packed with gifts galore. Including the gift of my constant yearning.

(RANDY, MOTHER and THE OLD MAN exit outside as the house begins to fly away and the Parkers' car is revealed.)

PIT @-0dB

4 RALPHIE.

THIS YEAR
DON'T WANT A BOOK I WON'T READ
THIS YEAR
I KNOW THE THING THAT I NEED
AND I'M—RUNNING OUT OF TIME.

2 3 5 RANDY, MOTHER & THE OLD MAN (*a bit frenetic*).
TO HIGBEE'S
THAT WINDOW!
WE GOTTA GO!

(*THE PARKERS are in the car and drive downtown to Higbee's Department Store. Trees swirl by.*)

2 3 THE PARKERS.
4 5 NOT A SECOND CAN WE SPARE
'CAUSE IT ALL COMES DOWN TO CHRISTMAS

2 5 MOTHER & THE OLD MAN (*exasperated*).
WE'RE PULLING OUT OUR HAIR
'CAUSE IT ALL COMES DOWN TO CHRISTMAS

2 3 THE PARKERS.
4 5 WE'VE GOT ONE SHOT AND IT'S TWENTY-FOUR DAYS

2 MOTHER. RALPHIE & RANDY. THE OLD MAN.
AWAY AWAY AWAY 3 4 AWAY 5

2 3 THE PARKERS.
4 5 WE HAFTA HURRY UP
'CAUSE IT ALL COMES DOWN TO CHRISTMAS DAY!

(*Music segues to the next song.*)

(#2a: "It All Comes Down to Christmas" [Part 2])

(*Various children appear, in a dream-like state, filled with deep yearning.*)

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6 KIDS (SOPRANO 2).
THIS YEAR
I WANT A SHINY RED BIKE

CAREFUL - KIDS
FEEDBACK!

6 KIDS (ALTO).
I WANT A MODEL TOY PLANE

6 KIDS (SOPRANO 1).
HOW 'BOUT A LIONEL TRAIN!

(*Adults appear around them, forming family clusters.*)

2 ADAM M.
THIS YEAR

2 ADAM M.
I WANT
A WIFE WHO CAN COOK

1 KARIN R.
I WANT MY KID TO EARN A'S

2 ADAM M.
I HOPE THEY GIMME THAT RAISE!

6 ALL KIDS.
AND I'M RUNNING OUT OF TIME!

7 8 THE PARKERS & ADULT ENSEMBLE.
WE'RE GETTING CLOSE TO CHRISTMAS

7 8 ENSEMBLE.
WE'RE GETTING CLOSE
TO CHRISTMAS

KIDS. 6
THERE'S ONLY TWENTY-FOUR
DAYS

7 8 ENSEMBLE.
IT ALL COMES DOWN TO CHRISTMAS

6 ALL.
7 8 TO CHRISTMAS DAY!

(A flurry of activity as parents prepare themselves and their children for the bitter cold outside. Hats, gloves, and scarves abound.)

7 8 ENSEMBLE.

WE'RE SCRIMPING AND WE'RE SAVING
'CAUSE IT ALL COMES DOWN TO CHRISTMAS

6 KIDS *(a realization)*.

WE BETTER START BEHAVING
'CAUSE IT ALL COMES DOWN TO CHRISTMAS

6 ALL.

7 8 WE'VE GOT ONE SHOT AND IT'S TWENTY-FOUR DAYS

6 KIDS ENSEMBLE. TOWNSWOMEN. TOWNSMEN.
AWAY AWAY

8

7

THIRTY-FOUR
THOUSAND,
FORTY-NINE
MINUTES

AWAY

7 MEN (TENOR).

ALMOST
CHRISTMAS

ALMOST
CHRISTMAS

AWAY

6 ALL.

7 8 CHRISTMAS DAY!

(With determined cheer, they face the storm.)

WE'LL BRAVE THE BITTER WEATHER
'CAUSE IT ALL COMES DOWN TO CHRISTMAS
AND MAKE IT THROUGH TOGETHER
'CAUSE IT ALL COMES DOWN TO CHRISTMAS

7 8 ENSEMBLE.

WE'VE GOT ONE SHOT AND IT'S TWENTY-FOUR
DAYS AWAY!

6 ALL.
7 8

TIME IS ALMOST UP
AND IT ALL COMES DOWN TO CHRISTMAS

SOPRANO 1, TENOR 1 SOPRANO 2, ALTOS RALPHIE & KIDS.

& BARITONE 1.

& TENOR 2.

DAY!

ALMOST
CHRISTMAS!

ALMOST
CHRISTMAS!

CHRISTMAS DAY!

NEARLY
CHRISTMAS DAY!

NEARLY
CHRISTMAS!

BUMP PIT!

(On the button of the number, we find the ENSEMBLE and THE PARKERS staring out front, looking through Higbee's store window, which has materialized in front of them.)

(#2b: "Higbee's Window")

(In sudden commotion, all the KIDS and PARENTS exclaim what they see and what they want in the window.)

PIT @-10dB

6

ISAAC: Look. It's Raggedy Ann and Andy!

KID 2. Lincoln Logs! That's what I want!

LINDA H. :

Nancy, see Mrs. Claus sitting in the
rocking chair?

KID 3. Tinkertoys! Tinkertoys!

NOAH F: Mama—Daddy, can I have the red wagon?

DAVID. T

A Radio Flyer. That's expensive, son.

NOAH F: Well, can I?

EVA R. :

You have to ask Santa, dear.

(Sudden exclamation and joy from all as they survey the window. The music swells in excitement. JEAN appears at C, wearing Red Ryder's outfit and carrying the BB gun. The ENSEMBLE and KIDS freeze.)

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