

SCENE 5

Back in the Young's apartment, Della enters excitedly. She takes off her coat and throws it on a chair. Heading for the stove, she suddenly remembers the package in her coat pocket and hurries back to get it. She looks around for a moment and decides to put it on the mantel, behind the magi scene. That done, she stands pensive for a moment and slowly walks over to peer in the mirror. She is horrified and whispers:

DELLA Oh! Oh my. [*she tries to fix it up.*] If Jim doesn't kill me before he takes a second look at me, he'll say I look like a Coney Island chorus girl. But what could I do with a dollar and eighty-seven cents?

A cheerful Jim enters and shuts the door. He has a small package. He turns to her:

JIM Hello Dell— [*he just stares*]

DELLA Jim, darling, don't look at me that way. I had my hair cut off and sold it because I couldn't have lived through Christmas without giving you a present. It'll grow out again—you won't mind, will you? I just had to do it. My hair grows awfully fast. Say "Merry Christmas" Jim, and let's be happy. You don't know what a nice—what a beautiful, nice gift I've got for you.

JIM You've cut off your hair?

DELLA Cut it off and sold it. Don't you like me just as well, anyhow? I'm me without my hair, ain't I?

JIM [*looks around the room curiously*] You say your hair is gone?

DELLA You needn't look for it. It's sold, I tell you— sold and gone, too. It's Christmas Eve, boy. Be good to me, for it went for you. Maybe the hairs of my head were numbered, but nobody could ever count my love for you. [*she is nervous about his strange expression and tries to change the subject*] Shall I put the chops on, Jim?... Jim?

The music starts as Jim suddenly comes to himself, smiles and enfolds Della in a tender embrace. They remain thus for several moments

JIM Don't make any mistake, Dell, about me. I don't think there's anything in the way of a haircut or a shave or a shampoo that could make me like my girl any less. But if you'll unwrap that package you may see why you had me going a while at first.

Della rips open the package, takes out the combs and screams with delight. Suddenly the realization dawns on her and she begins to cry. Jim takes her in his arms and comforts her. He sings :

It's not a palace
Or golden dove,
Just a token
Of my tender love.

DELLA My hair grows so fast, Jim! [*suddenly she leaps up*] Oh, oh! [*she runs to the mantel and gets his gift.*] I almost forgot about your present. [*he opens it and holds up the job slowly*] Isn't it a dandy, Jim? I hunted all over town to find it. You'll have to look at the time a hundred times a day now. Give me your watch. I want to see how it looks on it.

Jim laughs lamely. He flops on a chair, grinning, and beckons her to sit. He sings:

JIM Let's wrap up both our gifts, my pet,
 And put them safely by.
 They're far too nice to use just yet,
 Come close, I'll tell you why.

 The watch which was so dear to me,
 That fits your gift so well,
 Was sold to buy the combs, you see:
 A present for my Dell'.

 Then what was my surprise, my dear,
 And what are we to do?
 I thought to be the giver here,
 But got a gift from you.

 It's best to store them, I believe,
 Let's hide them in a chest.
 And have a Merry Christmas Eve,
 The brightest and the best.

DELLA Surely I've never been richer than now.

JIM Never was freer than after our vow.

BOTH Richer or poorer
 Of one thing I'm sure:

DELLA Our covenant of love
 Is eternal, beyond time.

JIM Our covenant of love will endure,
 I will love you,
 For you are my treasure,
 My Della, mine.

DELLA You are my treasure,
 are mine.

They kiss and the stage darkens.