

SETTING: *Various locations in New York City including Bethesda Fountain in Central Park, a pawnshop downtown on Delancey Street, The Empire State Building, Grand Central Station and Times Square. Winter, the present.*

AT RISE: *Central Park, late afternoon on December 23rd. A park bench resides near Bethesda Fountain. The stage is dark. We hear a bitter cold wind howling. Music begins...*

#1 A Cold, Cold Wind

(Lights come on up WIND, a figure dressed in blue, dancing, twirling a piece of blue fabric about. JACK enters pushing his hot dog cart. WIND dances over to him and twirls her fabric around him. JACK shivers and rubs his hands together.)

WIND

*Oooh...oooh...oooh...oooh...
Oooh...oooh...oooh...oooh...*

JACK

That's a cold wind...

(Two ICE SKATERS enters, skates draped over their shoulders. WIND dances over to them and snaps the fabric in their direction.)

WIND

*Oooh...oooh...oooh...oooh...
Oooh...oooh...oooh...oooh...*

ICE SKATERS

That's a cold wind...

(ICE SKATERS cross to JACK and order hot dogs. SHOPPER #1 enters opposite, carrying wrapped Christmas presents in a Macy's bag. WIND dances over to him and snaps the fabric at him. He spins about, his bags falling to the ground. He shivers and gathers them up.)

WIND

*Oooh...oooh...oooh...oooh...
Oooh...oooh...oooh...oooh...*

SHOPPER #1

*That's a really cold...
Bitter cold wind!*

JACK/ICE SKATERS/SHOPPER #1

*That's a really cold...
Bitter cold...
Cold, cold wind!*

(WIND keeps dancing and twirling around them as they sing.)

ICE SKATER #2

*Tomorrow's Christmas Eve and still
There's been no sign of snow
But here in New York's Central Park
It feels like ten below!*

SHOPPER #1

*While shopping on Fifth Avenue
The wind chill took my breath*

ICE SKATER #1

*And skating down at Wollman's Rink
I almost froze to death*

ICE SKATER #2

I need some hot chocolate!

(WIND snaps her fabric at ICE SKATER #2.)

That's a cold wind!

(WIND snaps her fabric at ICE SKATER #1.)

ICE SKATER #1

That's a cold wind...

(WIND snaps her fabric at SHOPPER #1.)

SHOPPER #1

*That's a really cold...
Bitter cold...*

(Music changes. They all freeze in place as DOT BLACKWELL enters. Special on her and on the Angel of Bethesda Fountain.)

DOT

*There she is...the Angel of the Fountain
Standing just where Billy said she would be
Will you help me please, oh Angel of the Fountain
Help me find Billy... show him to me...*

(WIND snaps her fabric at DOT.)

Brrr!

(The others unfreeze and the action resumes. During the following, DOT weaves her way amongst the others looking for Billy.)

SHOPPER #1

*The sun is setting in the sky
And night is closing in
I cannot wait to get inside
Away from this cold wind*

ICE SKATER #1

*I'm trading in my ice skates for
My slippers, warm and snug
A fire in the fireplace...*

ICE SKATER #2

Hot chocolate in a mug!

Let's go!

(WIND snaps her fabric at ICE SKATER #2.)

That's a cold wind!

(WIND snaps her fabric at ICE SKATER #1.)

ICE SKATER #1

That's a cold wind...

(WIND snaps her fabric at SHOPPER #1.)

SHOPPER #1

*That's a really cold...
Bitter cold wind*

JACK/ICE SKATERS/SHOPPER #1/DOT

*There's not an inch of snow
Oh but feel that north wind blow*

(WIND stands center and starts twirling faster and faster.)

*That's a really cold...
Bitter cold...
Cold, cold wind!*

(Music out. ICE SKATERS and SHOPPER #1 exit. DOT crosses to JACK. WIND snaps her fabric at DOT.)

DOT

Brrr! My goodness. That wind...

JACK

Makes a cold day even colder, don't it? What'll you have, lady? I got ketchup, mustard, onion, relish...

DOT

Oh no, no.

JACK

You want it plain? I can do that. How 'bout a soda? I got Coke, Diet Coke, Pepsi...

DOT

No, thank you. Actually, I'm looking for someone.

(She pulls a snapshot out of her coat pocket and hands it to him.)

JACK

This your son?

DOT

Not exactly.

JACK

What'd he do? Run away from home?

Something like that. DOT

Nah. I ain't seen him. JACK

Are you sure? Look again... DOT

Lady – I see about a million kids come through this park everyday. No way I can remember what each one of 'em looks like. JACK

He's got to be here! DOT

New York is a big city, lady. JACK

But Billy loves Central Park. He always talks about it, about how he wants to come here and see the Angel in the Fountain. DOT

#2 Angel of the Fountain (underscoring only)

Who? JACK

*(DOT points forward, as if Bethesda Fountain was in front of them.
Behind them, the Angel is lit.)*

The Angel in the Fountain. DOT

Oh, right. The Angel in the Fountain... JACK

I just know he's here somewhere. DOT

You may be right, ma'am, but I ain't seen him. Sorry. JACK

(He hands the picture back.)

DOT

Then I'll keep looking. Merry Christmas.

JACK

Merry Christmas, lady – and good luck!

#3 A Cold, Cold Wind (Reprise – underscoring only)

(WIND dances around DOT as she exits past PADDY MORAN, who enters carrying a load of firewood. WIND playfully snatches Paddy's hat from his head.)

PADDY

Whoa! Me hat! The wind took me hat!

JACK

I got it, Paddy!

(JACK snatches the hat away from WIND, who continues twirling offstage. Music out. JACK crosses to PADDY and puts the hat on his head.)

Here you go.

PADDY

Thanks, Jacky. I don't know what I'd do without me hat.

JACK

You'll need it tonight, too – it's gonna be a cold one. Maybe you oughta go to a shelter.

PADDY

Shush! Imagine me, Paddy Moran, taking refuge in a shelter.

(He kneels on the ground, arranging his wood to build a fire.)

No, Jacky. I'll be warm enough with me fire and me bench to sleep upon.

JACK

If the cops catch you making a fire in the Park they'll haul you off to jail.

PADDY

I won't be caught – not with the Angel keepin' watch.

#4 Angel of the Fountain (underscoring only)

Who?

JACK

(PADDY also points forward to Bethesda Fountain. Once more it is lit.)

PADDY

The Angel of the Fountain.

JACK

Oh right. The Angel of the Fountain.

PADDY

She's been watchin' over me a long time. She won't let me down now.

(Music out.)

JACK

But the weather...

PADDY

It's a fine night, not a sign of snow. Just look at those stars...

JACK

(Still not convinced)
Paddy!

PADDY

I'm stayin' put, Jacky.

JACK

Then at least let me give you something to eat.

PADDY

I'll not be taking your charity!

JACK

They're left over hot dogs! Either I throw 'em away or give 'em to you. Consider it an early Christmas present, okay? Tomorrow's Christmas Eve...

(He tries to hand PADDY two hot dogs. PADDY pushes them away.)

PADDY

Then give 'em to me tomorrow.

JACK

I won't be here tomorrow. I gotta cover for a guy down on Delancey Street, near the pawnshops...

(Once again, he holds out the two hot dogs.)

Please, Paddy. Take 'em.

PADDY

All right then – if you insist. God bless you, Jacky.

(PADDY takes the hot dogs.)

JACK

Merry Christmas, Paddy.

(He crosses back to his cart. He looks up at the Angel.)

Watch over him, Angel.

#5 A Cold, Cold Wind (Reprise – underscoring only)

(WIND enters and twirls about JACK as he pushes his cart off. PADDY starts to build a fire. He strikes a match and puts it to the wood. WIND dances over and snaps her fabric at the flame, making it grow and crackle. WIND dances off. PADDY warms his hand then looks up at the Angel.)

#6 Angel of the Fountain

PADDY

*Angel of the Fountain
Watch over me tonight
Wrap me safe within your wings
Silver with starlight*

*Guide me on my journey
Keep me in your sight
Angel of the Fountain
Watch over me tonight*

(He places a hotdog on the end of a stick and starts to roast it. Suddenly...)

BILLY (O.S.)

That's mine! Give it back! Stop! Thief!

(PADDY stands up. A THIEF runs on opposite carrying a backpack. BILLY appears behind him and points to the THIEF.)

BILLY

He stole my backpack! Stop him!

(PADDY tries to block his path. THIEF raises his fist and threatens him with it.)

THIEF

Back off, old man.

(PADDY backs off. THIEF runs past him and off. BILLY starts after him. PADDY grabs his arm to stop him.)

PADDY

Whoa, now...

BILLY

(Struggling)

Let me go! That creep's got my backpack! Let me go!

PADDY

And let you get hurt? No, lad! I will not!

BILLY

(Still struggling)

All my stuff is in that backpack! Let me go!

PADDY

It's not worth dyin' for...

(BILLY stomps Paddy's foot.)

Easy now! Or it's my hand you'll be feeling on your backside!

(BILLY tries to stomp his foot again.)

I said enough!

(BILLY stops struggling but PADDY maintains his hold on him.)

PADDY (cont.)

He's gone, lad. There's no catchin' him now.

BILLY

But my backpack...!

PADDY

There's a police station on the other side of the park. If you'd like, I could take you there...

(BILLY starts struggling again.)

BILLY

No!

PADDY

You could file a report...

BILLY

I'm not going to the cops! Let me go!

PADDY

So you're avoidin' the police, eh? What are you, then – a runaway?

(BILLY stops struggling.)

BILLY

I never said that!

PADDY

It's a fine thing when a child runs away at Christmas time. I'll wager your family is crazy with worry. I'll not be havin' that on my conscience... it's to the police station with you.

(He starts to pull BILLY off.)

BILLY

No! Please, mister! Listen! No one's gonna worry about me! I ain't got no family!

(PADDY relents.)

PADDY

No family?