

SIDE #15

(Script pages: 2/3 down p. 65 – halfway down p. 66)

Bert Jefferson (drunk) and Maggie (with Dr. Bradley)

It is Christmas morning.

Unwittingly, Bert Jefferson has fallen victim to Whiteside's plot to ruin his romance with Maggie by driving a wedge — named Lorraine Sheldon — between them. Whiteside has enlisted the beautiful, scheming and notoriously promiscuous actress to seduce Bert by enticing him to her hideaway at Lake Placid, ostensibly to help him improve the play he's just written. Utterly flattered that an actress of Lorraine's status would find such merit in his first effort as a playwright, and bestow such lavish attention on him, Bert has gone out to celebrate and consumed a bit too much "celebration."

He is drunk and in an exultant and festive frame of mind when he arrives at the Stanley household to share the news with Maggie that he's about to become a world-famous playwright. Maggie, however, caught onto the plot last night and has ever since been furious with Whiteside. She has just confronted him for taking advantage of Bert's trust, and she is equally jealous of Lorraine, whose ample sexual charms so easily swayed Bert's sensibilities.

BERT: *(Entering, a little drunk and feeling triumphant.)* Hello — hello — hello!!! *(Crossing to C.)* Merry Christmas, everybody! Merry Christmas! I'm a little high, but I can explain everything. Hi, Maggie! Hi, Mr. Whiteside. Shake hands with a successful playwright. Maggie, why'd you run away last night? Where were you? Miss Sheldon thinks the play is wonderful. I read her the play and she thinks it's wonderful. Isn't that wonderful?

MAGGIE: Yes, that's fine, Bert.

BERT: Isn't that wonderful, Mr. Whiteside?

WHITESIDE: Jefferson, I think you ought to go home, don't you?

BERT: What? No — biggest day of my life. I know I'm a little drunk, but this is a big day. We've been sitting over in Billy's Tavern all night. Never realized it was daylight until it was daylight — *(crosses to MAGGIE R.)* Listen, Maggie — Miss Sheldon says the play needs just a little bit of fixing — do it in three weeks. She's going to take me to a little place she's got in Lake Placid — just for three weeks. Going to work on the play together. Isn't it wonderful? *(A pause.)* Why don't you say something, Maggie? *(She turns away.)*

WHITESIDE: Look Bert, I suggest you tell us all about this later. Now, why don't you —

(He stops as DR. BRADLEY enters from hallway.)

SIDE #15

(Script pages: 2/3 down p. 65 – halfway down p. 66)

DR. BRADLEY: (C). Oh, excuse me! Merry Christmas, everybody. Merry Christmas!

BERT: God bless us all, and Tiny Tim.

DR. BRADLEY: Yes . . . Mr. Whiteside, I thought perhaps if I came very early . . .

BERT: (*Crosses back of WHITESIDE to BRADLEY.*) You know what, Doc? I'm going to Lake Placid for three weeks — isn't that wonderful? Ever hear of Lorraine Sheldon, the famous actress? Well, we're going to Lake Placid for three weeks.

WHITESIDE: Dr. Bradley, would you do me a favor? I think Mr. Jefferson would like some black coffee and a little breakfast. Would you take care of him please?

DR. BRADLEY: Yes, yes of course . . .

BERT: Dr. Bradley, I'm going to buy breakfast for *you* — biggest breakfast you ever had.

DR. BRADLEY: Yes, yes Jefferson.

BERT: (*Putting arm around BRADLEY, he starts him off.*) You know what, Doctor? Let's climb down a couple of chimneys. I got a friend that doesn't believe in Santa Claus — let's climb down his chimney and frighten the hell out of him. (*He exits with BRADLEY, L.*)