

A Bag Full of Miracles

Tom Northam



A Bag Full Of Miracles

A Three-Act Musical-Comedy
For Senior Theatre

by

Tom Northam

Story, Lyrics and Music by Tom Northam
Musical Orchestration by Ron Pronk

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This is an ArtAge Publication / published by arrangements with VALOR Productions,
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Published in the United States of America by ArtAge Publications, P.O. Box 12271,
Portland, Oregon 97212-0271

Printed in the United States of America

Production-In-A-Packet™ Series - A Bag Full Of Miracles

ISBN: 0-0660412-0-9

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DEDICATION

To those who dare to dream,
find joy in giving,
and have the love of laughter
...yours is the real world.

The Author

ACT I, SCENE 1

Scene: Street scene in San Francisco. People from all walks of life are meandering around.

Time: Present

MAGGIE

(ENTERS) Check your appearance: 1. Clothing (*Brushes and straightens her jacket and skirt/slacks*) 2. Hair (*Feels hair*) 3. Nails (*Looks at each hand*) 4. Shoes (*Polishes right foot against left pant leg, and repeats with other*) 5. Breath (*Checks with hand, then puts in mint or spray from purse to make sure*) Ring door bell or firmly knock. Be sure of yourself and exert positive energy. Hello, I'm your Miracle Girl. (*Repeats with different inflections*) Identify the "Lady of the House." Are you the Lady of the House? (*Repeats with different inflections*) Identify the decision maker. Ensure that you use your time effectively. Are you the decision maker? No, that doesn't sound right. You must be the decision maker? Oh, dear, this isn't going to be easy. Be positive, self-confident. Use your newly learned selling techniques and skills. You know your products. Good luck.

MUSIC: **SOMEONE YOU'VE NOT MET**

Lyrics and Music © 2003 by Tom Northam

Introduction: Good Morning (*1st Person*), Good Morning (*2nd Person*), Good Morning (*3rd Person*)

Verse 1: There's a beautiful way to start the day, you say "Good Morning"
And say it to somebody you don't know.
It's a magical way to make each day a brand new dawning
So brighten up your life just say "Hello"
It's a marvelous way so give it a try,
Don't let a stranger pass you by,
Go out and meet a person you don't know, Why?
You might even make a friend by saying "Hi."

Verse 2: Whenever you pass a stranger, smile and say "Hello There!"

Ensemble A stranger's only someone you don't know.

Joins It's a wonderful way to let a person know that you care.

Maggie A smile may be the best part that you show.

So give 'em a grin, here's what I'll bet

The more you give, the more you'll get.

Go out and meet a person you don't know—Yet!

Your best friend may be SOMEONE YOU'VE NOT MET!

[Song repeated one (1) time.]

End Tag: Your best friend may be SOMEONE YOU'VE NOT MET!

[EXITS SL]

[BLACK OUT]

ACT I, SCENE 2

[SCENE: *Windesmeer House, Knob Hill, San Francisco, California. Lady Anne is seated SR at the dining table and Elmer Strunk is standing over her shoulder explaining the papers before her.*]

STRUNK

While your stock was doing...fairly well, Lady Windesmeer, it seems to have dropped a little lately. The Dow-Jones average is down by over 4,000 points, and the Feds are not showing any signs of relief either. I'm a little concerned about your total portfolio; however, just as in the past, I'll take care of you, as always.

LADY ANNE

Honestly, Mr. Strunk, I don't know what I'd do without you. I just don't understand all of this...points...feds...Dow...or...whatever? Ever since Lord Windesmeer passed on, you've been my stronghold.

STRUNK

I'm really afraid, Lady Windesmeer, that you might want to consider selling your home.

LADY ANNE

Sell *Windesmeer House*? No! This has been my home most of my life. I couldn't live anywhere else! I've already let the servants go and shut down most of the rooms. There must be another way!

STRUNK

I'm trying Lady Windesmeer, I'm trying, and we can hope for the best, but as it appears now, we've about run out of options, and I do know somebody who might be interested in buying *Windesmeer House*. In any case, we have the stocks and bonds portfolio to take care of...I have it ready for signature.

LADY ANNE

There just has to be another way. I'll do anything to keep from selling my home. Maybe this will help. Where do I sign, Mr. Strunk?

STRUNK

Right there. You've made a very wise decision...and like I said, I'll take care of you...just like I always have.

LADY ANNE

Oh, thank you very much. You are truly a wonderful person...what would I do without you?

STRUNK

Lady Windesmeer, you flatter me. I'm just a humble lawyer helping where I can. And if there is anything I can do, please don't hesitate to call, I'm always glad to come. You're my most important client! Now, I really must be off. As usual, you're a delight to work for. Good Day, Lady Windesmeer.

LADY ANNE

(Interrupting him several times during the last parts of speech above) Oh, Mr. Strunk...*(With difficulty)*...Mr. Strunk...Is there any...ah... money that I don't have to invest? I seem to be running a little low on cash at the moment.

STRUNK

I wish you'd said something a little earlier, Lady Windesmeer, I'm planning to leave for a short vacation this afternoon *(Looking at his watch)*—5 :30 flight, but never fear, I'll see that a deposit is made to your checking account before I leave.

LADY ANNE

Oh, I'd hate to upset your vacation plans, Mr. Strunk! Just don't worry about me, it's okay, I'll be fine. You go on now, and have a wonderful vacation.

STRUNK

Well, actually, it's more like an extended weekend, but I can certainly make a deposit. *(Looking at his watch as if rushed)*

LADY ANNE

No, no, no! Just go along and have a well-earned rest! Don't bother about me.

STRUNK

Well, if you're sure. Good day, Lady Windesmeer. I'll see you in a few days. *(EXITS)*

LADY ANNE

(Begins to straighten things up—busy work. She stops, looks up at portrait painting of Lord Windesmeer over the fireplace) Oh Winston, why did you leave me? I don't know how to do all of this! You managed everyone else's financial affairs, why didn't you take care of mine. Mr. Strunk says I'm running out of money. Why would you do that to me? **[DOORBELL]** *(She heads for the door, wiping her eyes.) (To self)* I'll bet Mr. Strunk forgot something. *(Opening door)* Come in. Oh!

MAGGIE

(ENTERS) Hello *(handing Lady Anne a pink calling card and as rehearsed)*, I'm Margaret Hill and I'm here to make your life a beautiful experience. I'm your *Miracle Girl!*

LADY ANNE

Well, I'm certainly glad to see you! *(Looks back to painting)* Thank you, Winston.

MAGGIE

(As memorized) As your *Miracle Girl*, I'm here to offer you the latest in *Miracle Products*—and they are truly “miracles.” Are you the lady of the house?

LADY ANNE

(A little stunned) I'm the “only” of the...house...ah...Yes, I am.

MAGGIE

Wonderful! Then you are in charge, you are the decision maker?

LADY ANNE

Well, yes, I guess I am!

MAGGIE

Good! *(As memorized)* You will see immediate improvements in the condition of your skin and tone quality...and this, the moment you apply *Miracle Cosmetics*. Wrinkles will disappear in an instant and you will see the beautiful glow of your youth.

LADY ANNE

(Blandly with a bit of sarcasm) You've got to be kidding!

MAGGIE

Oh, no! I'm really not. I've been using *Miracle Cosmetics* for two weeks now, and you'd be surprised if you ever tried to guess my age.

LADY ANNE

(With a touch of sarcasm) Yes! I'm sure that I would. What can I do for you...ah...*(looking at card)*...Miss Hill?

MAGGIE

Oh no, Mrs...?

LADY ANNE

Windesmeer...Lady Anne Windesmeer.

MAGGIE

Well, Mrs. Windesmeer...it is *I*, who am here to do for you! (*Pause and starting to come unglued*) Did you say “Lady Windesmeer?” Lady Anne Windesmeer? As in the social columns...like *the* Lady Anne Windesmeer of *Windesmeer House*?

LADY ANNE

That’s what they seem to say...in the papers.

MAGGIE

(*Totally unglued*) Oh, dear! Where...ah...how...ah....when...ah...What have I done!?! And on my first call, too! Oh, Lady Windesmeer, I’m so sorry to have disturbed you. (*Packing up her stuff*) I’m so embarrassed! *Miracle Girl*, indeed! I’m sorry. (*Tries to exit*)

LADY ANNE

Hold on, Miss Hill, I may just need a *Miracle Girl*! Why don’t you just come here and sit a spell....and call me Lady Anne...most do. (*She sits on the sofa, SL*) Now, suppose you tell me about these *Miracle Products* you have.

MAGGIE

(*Sets the Miracle Sample Case on the coffee table and opens the case*)

MUSIC: A BAG FULL OF MIRACLES

Lyrics and Music © 2003 by Tom Northam

Chorus: I’ve got A BAG FULL OF MIRACLES, A BAG FULL OF MIRACLES.
There’s something for each wish that you may dream.
Destiny brought me to your door—or certainly so it seems.
There’s everything here that you may need
To make your life complete!
I’ve got A BAG FULL OF MIRACLES just for you.

Verse (1): There’s a *Miracle* cleaner you can drink,
Or brush your teeth, or clean the sink,
Or polish brass and silverware,
Or mop the floor or style your hair.

There's nothing in the world that it can't do!
 It's the *Miracle* secret-formulated product, just for you.
 It keeps your cat and dog from shedding,
 Brightens clothes, keeps weeds from spreading
 It kills roaches, fleas and even ants!
 And cut in half with water feeds your plants! (Chorus)

[*Lights fade as Maggie moves to apron into single spot. Lady Anne closes Miracle Case, picks it up and EXITS when lights are out on stage.*]

Verse (2): There's a *Miracle* tonic you can take
 When you can't hear, or start to shake,
 Or ankles swell, or feet feel broke,
 For aching backs, or raw sore throats.
 There's nothing in the world that it can't do!
 There's a *Miracle* secret-formulated product, just for you.
 Our rainbow colored vitamin pills
 Will hide grey hair; cures all known ills.
 Will restore your memory, and your sight!
 And excess weight will vanish over night!

Verse (3): Try our *Miracle Girl* vanishing cream
 Gives tired skin a youthful sheen.
 Hides blotches, bags, unwanted hair
 Makes wrinkles go with nightly care.
 There's nothing in the world that it can't do!
 There's a *Miracle* secret-formulated product, just for you.
 Our lipsticks, polishes match each other
 Blushes, brushes, perfumes, powders
 Gels and sprays and colors for your hair.
 And a full line of sexy underwear!

I've got *A BAG FULL OF MIRACLES*, *A BAG FULL OF MIRACLES*.
 There's something for each wish that you may dream.
 Destiny brought me to your door—or certainly so it seems.
 There's everything here that you may need
 To make your life complete!
 I've got *A BAG FULL OF MIRACLES* just for you.

[BLACKOUT]

ACT I, SCENE 3

[SCENE: Great Room, one week later. Lady Anne is on the telephone pacing.]

LADY ANNE

(Pacing with phone) Yes, but I don't understand Miss. He said he would be returning last week. Would you please have him call me as soon as possible. It's most urgent. Thank you. (Hangs up telephone)
[DOORBELL] (Walking to the door) Now, who could this be?

MAGGIE

(Offstage) Hi, Lady Anne, it's your Miracle Girl.

LADY ANNE

Oh, hello Miss Hill, please come in.

MAGGIE

(ENTERS with Miracle Sample Case and carrying a small pink bag with tissue) I have the products you ordered last week. I know you're going to love them..

LADY ANNE

How much are they?

MAGGIE

Only seventy-four dollars and seventy-six cents (\$74.76). I gave you an introductory price discount.

LADY ANNE

(Sitting on sofa) I'm afraid at this point...it might as well be seventy-four *hundred* dollars. For I find myself in the embarrassing situation of...having no funds. You see my lawyer, Elmer Strunk seems to have disappeared. He took a short holiday, but has not returned as planned. He manages my accounts.

MAGGIE

Oh dear, (Sitting in dining chair, SR) I more than understand your situation. I can delay collection a few days...but I did have to pay before delivery.

LADY ANNE

Oh my, this truly is embarrassing. You see Miss Hill, Lord Windesmeer took care of all of these matters, but since he passed on, Mr. Strunk has been managing my accounts. I'm sure he is very reliable;

however, he said the stock market has been so bad that my resources have dwindled. Now, he seems to have been delayed in sending me a check.

MAGGIE

Lady Anne, how well do you know Mr. Strunk?

LADY ANNE

Well, not too well personally...but he said he was highly recommended, and he's such a nice person. Why did you ask?

MAGGIE

(Rising and pacing) Lady Anne, I'm not a financial person, but from what I hear on the news, the stock market has been exceptionally good for quite some time now. I only wish I could invest. You see, I sell *Miracle Products* to supplement my retirement income from the Seltzer Academy. I was young when I started, so I really wasn't concerned about their pension plan. To be perfectly honest, the landlord has raised my rent, and I was having difficulty paying before he raised it!

LADY ANNE

(Rises and walks toward Maggie) Miss Hill, now I'm really embarrassed. I didn't realize that you had your rent problems to deal with, and now I'm beginning to wonder if Mr. Strunk might be less than the person I think he is.

MAGGIE

Don't you think it's strange you haven't heard from him? How long has it been?

LADY ANNE

(Now pacing) Well, he knew I was running short on cash, and he should have returned last week.

MAGGIE

I think we'd better check-up on your Mr. Elmer Strunk, Esquire! May I use your phone?

LADY ANNE

It's over there on the end table. *(Indicating SL at end of sofa)* By all means...help yourself.

MAGGIE

(Already dialing as Lady Anne is speaking. She sits on sofa) Hi Jane...Maggie Hill. Oh, I'm fine. Thanks, enjoying retirement...Oh, yes, lot's to do...you know what they say. Say, Jane, I know you're busy, but would you do me a big favor? Could you look into the background of a lawyer named Elmer Strunk? Oh!...you have? No...no, it's not for me...a friend of mine...she has become financially entangled with him. Well, I don't know, he seems to have disappeared. Oh...he does? Oh, dear...Oh, no!...Oh, my God! *(Very discouraged)* Okay, thank you Jane. *(Hangs up)*

LADY ANNE

Well?

MAGGIE

It doesn't sound good! Jane is the head of the Law Department at the Academy. She said that Strunk has a reputation for taking advantage of widows and seems to get his hands on everything including the kitchen sink...and the sad part of it is, he gets away with it legally. You haven't signed anything have you?

LADY ANNE

(Closing her eyes and shoulders sagging in defeat) I'm afraid I have—just before he left on his holiday. He also said that I should consider selling *Windesmeer House*. He said he knew of someone who might be interested.

MAGGIE

Sure, he wants it himself.

LADY ANNE

(Sitting on SR end of sofa) Without any money, it's going to be rather difficult to keep it.

MAGGIE

Lady Anne? I have an idea. Would you consider taking in a boarder or two?

LADY ANNE

Like a "bed and breakfast?" Hmm...Oh, dear...the rooms are in no condition to rent out...I'm afraid I'm in no condition to get them ready, either. Besides, I know they're going to need painting and repairs and that takes money...which I guess I don't have.

MAGGIE

Well, I have to pay rent someplace. How'd you like to have a real live *Miracle Girl* living with you?

LADY ANNE

It may take a miracle...do you suppose we *could* start a bed and breakfast? I think I may have an idea or two of my own...this house is filled with Winston's heirlooms. Maybe some are worth selling!

MAGGIE

Let's hope so...my paltry rent check won't paint or build too much. But...I guess money's money, and every cent counts... 'cause my guess is that *your* money is very busy paying for Elmer Strunk's bed and breakfast, somewhere! Who knows, maybe someone, someplace will be smart enough to slip a little arsenic in that creep's cornflakes!

LADY ANNE

Hmm....that's a mean spirited thought, Miss Hill! (*Pause, little evil giggle*) Perhaps...someday... someplace...someone...will!

[CURTAIN]

ACT I, SCENE 4

[SCENE: A few days later. *Great Room. There are crates and boxes, paintings, furniture, all around.*
[From offstage because of costume changes]

MAGGIE

Lady Anne, did you realize that...(Grunt)...selling this stuff would turn you into a stevedore? (Giggling)
Clear. Watch it! Oops!

LADY ANNE

Got it! No I didn't...Oops! Well, I thought I had it!

MAGGIE

You okay?

LADY ANNE

Yes. Say...do you cook? I mean we're talking bed and *breakfast*.

MAGGIE

No...I've never cooked in my life. I thought you did.

LADY ANNE

Uh-oh! We've got problems!

MAGGIE

Maybe not...just a limited menu. Do you have any idea what's living in this crate?

[**Lady Anne's back side appears as she is backing down the stairs carrying her end of a wooden crate. The crate has packing materials coming out of the sides. Maggie is carrying the other end. Both are giggling**]

LADY ANNE

(Breathlessly) Miss Hill, am I ever going to be able to thank you for helping me with this...stuff?

MAGGIE

(Also breathlessly) Don't need to. (Changing subject, flopping onto sofa) My God, getting old is hell, isn't it?!

[*They both continue to laugh and giggle through the next few lines*]

LADY ANNE

Well, you're just getting started...(*ungraciously flopping down on dining chair*)...but I've had better days. Never in my life did I ever think I'd be hauling stuff down from the attic!

MAGGIE

(*Staying flopped back and not moving*) The bright side is...at least Strunk didn't get his hands on this...whatever it is!

LADY ANNE

(*Not moving*) Maybe we'll wish he had!

MAGGIE

(*Not moving*) Well, let's find out...got a crow bar?

LADY ANNE

(*Not moving*) I suppose there's one in the garage somewhere.

MAGGIE

Never mind, (*Rising*) I'll use the fireplace poker! (*She goes to fireplace, SL, and gets poker. She pries it open, pulls out stuffing and lifts out this "thing" which is a samovar or a creation*) What is it?

LADY ANNE

You don't know, either?

MAGGIE

And you've lived without it?

LADY ANNE

It was in Winston's family...so I'm sure it's an heirloom. If there was more than one of anything...they collected it! (*Pause*) There's writing on it, but I can't read it.

MAGGIE

(*Laughing*) Probably "Made in Taiwan."

LADY ANNE

(Laughs) With our luck...it was! *(Pause)* Actually, it's very corroded, but it looks like Russian writing on it. Whatever "it" is!

MAGGIE

Perhaps when Pruitt gets here, he'll know.

LADY ANNE

Well, he's supposed to be the top antique expert in the Bay area. **[DOORBELL]** Speak of the devil...timing's perfect...if this is him. *(Goes to door and opens it)* Hello...Mr. Pruitt...I presume?

PRUITT

(From offstage) My card. *(ENTERS)* Percival Pruitt, Dealer of rare antiques.

LADY ANNE

This is my good friend, Miss Hill, formerly Director of Art, Music and Drama at the Seltzer Academy.

MAGGIE

How do you do, Mr. Pruitt. Your reputation precedes you.

PRUITT

(He rudely acknowledges the introduction with the wave of a hand. Then stops and a bit shaken) Why? What have you heard?...ah...well, yes, thank you...I do experience a degree of success. I have a very exclusive clientele. I have sold some of the finest pieces in the entire Bay area.

LADY ANNE

(Matter-of-fact) Yes. We're relying upon your expertise. You see, I'm trying to clear out some of the heirlooms that have come through my husband's family. Lord Windesmeer, passed on recently, and I have no reason to keep them. We'll need your assistance in pricing them as well. What is your fee?

PRUITT

(Crosses Maggie to SL and continues inspecting items) I take two-thirds of the selling price.

MAGGIE

My God, that's over 66%!

PRUITT

Very astute, Miss Hill and I'm sure that sounds like a lot; however, my name alone, carries the "mark of celebrity." It adds immediate value and certain success, and I do have my reputation to guard and preserve. (Sings)

MUSIC:

I CAN MAKE OLD THINGS NEW

Lyrics and Music© 2003 by Tom Northam

Verse:

I can turn trash into treasure. (Un Huh.)
 But I don't do it for free. (Are you kidding?)
 I'm not your fairy God Mother (Un Uh, Honey)
 I'm just in this business for me: (*Giggle*)

Chorus:
 (*Ragtime*)

You can call me anything you want to, Honey
 'Cause I'll make my living off you!
 I'm an old-time, junker-man; a high classed raggy-man
 Who makes lots of money. It's true!
 I'll take your cast-offs, throw-away's, all the stuff you've packed away
 And sell it for much higher than new.
 I'm an antique dealer,
 A real wheeler-dealer,
 I can sell what is worthless to you
 And that's the little magic I do, 'cause
 I CAN MAKE OLD THINGS NEW, yes
 I CAN MAKE OLD THINGS NEW!
 I'm a dealer for the "hard-to-please," Believe me!
 I have a picky clientele.
 It gives 'em greater pleasure, when they buy a new-found treasure
 It's the *only* one that I'll ever sell.
 I'll haul another from the celler, and I'll sell it to a feller
 Whose thrilled with his new rarity
 I'll create a little mystery,
 Authenticate its history,
 And tie it with a ribbon of blue.
 And that's the little magic I do, 'cause
 I CAN MAKE OLD THINGS NEW, yes
 I CAN MAKE OLD THINGS NEW!
 So, ramble through the crannies your attic, Dearie'
 Search through every box that you find
 Tucked back in your closet, left where someone lost it
 You could find a hidden treasure or two.
 I'll never hear you holler, when I hand you every dollar
 That you get from what was worthless to you
 What's brand new to the buyer,
 Was ready for the fire,

By the feller whose the seller, that's you
 And that's the little magic I do, 'cause
 I CAN MAKE OLD THINGS NEW, yes
 I CAN MAKE OLD THINGS NEW!

Tag:

It'll give you greater pleasure,
 When I sell your trash as treasure
 And that's the little magic I do, 'cause
 I CAN MAKE OLD THINGS NEW, yes
 I CAN MAKE OLD THINGS NEW!

PRUITT

Now, shall we commence. (*He starts poking through boxes. Seeing the samovar*) What is...that?

MAGGIE

(*Seeing an opportunity to act. She looks at Lady Anne and winks*) Mr. Pruitt, It's a very rare Russian piece. I would think it should fetch a small fortune.

PRUITT

(*Rising to the bait*) Of course, I, naturally, suspected that it was. I was merely seeking its background. Do you have any way of authenticating this?

MAGGIE

Excuse me, Mr. Pruitt. This is Lady Anne Windesmeer, the widow of Lord Winston Blair Windesmeer... the ninth. The House of Windesmeer has a long and distinguished reputation for having one of the finest collections of royal antiquities in the world. (*Changing voice to bland*) Try looking on the bottom.

PRUITT

But of course! (*Inspecting the bottom*) I can't read it, but in my professional opinion it is Russian.

MAGGIE

(*EXITING to the kitchen*) Let me get some *Miracle Cleaner*.

PRUITT

Cleaner? Oh no! Don't you know that you can't clean it? That would disturb the patina and reduce its value!

LADY ANNE

Mr. Pruitt, (*rising*) as it is, we have no idea of its real value. Something is better than nothing, I've always thought! At least we'll know what it says.

MAGGIE

(*ENTERING with bottle of cleaner and still acting and reciting her memorized sales speech*) This is our lucky day, I just happen to have an extra bottle. Here, let me demonstrate. (*She moistens a cloth with the cleaner and commences to rub the bottom of the "thing"*) You see how the corrosion and tarnish are gently lifting and coming away...and. look...yes...(becomes herself) It is Russian!...but some of it is in English...“To my dear friend, Lord Winston Blair Windesmeer...Catherine.” (*With feigned great awe*) Catherine the Great?

PRUITT

(*Close to euphoria, he totally loses his composure*) Oh, my dear ladies, this is truly a rare find. I have clients who will fight for this. Imagine, it's from a real queen.

MAGGIE

Actually, an empress.

PRUITT

Oh yes...yes..yes...and Percival Pruitt will sell it. It will be all over the *Chronicle*, the *Times*. This might even make the cover of *Newsweek*!

MAGGIE

(*Feigning his excitement*) Yes, yes, yes...You'll be world famous! Imagine, Catherine the Great!

PRUITT

(*Patting his heart*) I must place some calls. Ladies, we're going to fetch a fortune! (*Biting his knuckles, he EXITS*) Oh, yes, yes, yes!

[**Lady Anne and Maggie** just stand, then look at each other and break into laughter.]

LADY ANNE

“Catherine the Great?”

MAGGIE

Well, could you prove that it isn't? Besides, when I don't know what to do, I call upon my life-long talents. (*Dramatically with great emphasis placing the back of her left hand against her forehead*) I act, Lady Anne, I act!

[BLACKOUT]

End of FreeView

Now read the whole show by ordering a perusal!