

SCENE 10: BAD NEWS – Street, Parlor

(BERT stands in front of the house. More time has passed at Cherry Tree Lane. The RESIDENTS go about their business.)

BERT

THE WINDS MAY BLOW, BUT WHO'S TO KNOW
EXACTLY WHAT IT'S BRINGING.
GOOD NEWS OR BAD, HAPPY OR SAD,
THE PENDULUM KEEPS SWINGING.

(MRS. BRILL and ROBERTSON AY appear in the hall. She has a feather duster and he carries a pair of steps. She stops near a shelf holding a precious vase.)

MRS. BRILL

Right, put the steps there and stand back. You are never to come near that vase nor no one else but me neither. That is "an heirloom."

ROBERTSON AY

Heirloom!

(ROBERTSON AY puts the steps below the shelf and carefully backs away as MRS. BRILL climbs up.)

MRS. BRILL

And while I do this, stay totally immobile.

ROBERTSON AY

Immobile.

MRS. BRILL

Do not move a muscle.

ROBERTSON AY

Muscle.

MRS. BRILL

Do not breathe. Do you hear me?

(ROBERTSON AY tries to hold his breath but then gasps when he can't any longer.)

ROBERTSON AY

I might as well be dead.

MRS. BRILL

(threatening with her feather duster)

Don't give me ideas.

BERT

A GAME IS PLAYED, A CHANGE IS MADE,
BUT STILL THE ROAD IS LONG.
AND THOUGH THEY MIGHT YET FLY A KITE,
SOMETIMES THE WIND'S TOO STRONG.

(GEORGE BANKS appears and enters the house. He looks extremely worried. He is greeted by a surprised WINIFRED. He puts down his briefcase as she helps him off with his coat.)

WINIFRED

George? What's happened? Are you ill?

GEORGE

No. Should I be?

WINIFRED

Of course not. Only... why on earth are you home so early? Is everything all right?

GEORGE

No, everything's all wrong.

WINIFRED

My dear, what is it?

GEORGE

If you must know, I refused some German chap a loan. It seems he went to our chief rivals. They gave him the money and now it's turned into a gold mine.

WINIFRED

Well, they can't expect you to get it right every time.

GEORGE

Can't they? That's exactly what they expect.

(Before GEORGE can say more, the CHILDREN run downstairs, followed by MARY POPPINS.)

JANE, MICHAEL

(à cappella)

OH! SUPERCALIFRAGILISTICEXPALIDOCIOUS!
EVEN THOUGH THE SOUND OF IT IS SOMETHING QUITE ATROCIOUS,
IF YOU SAY IT LOUD ENOUGH—

GEORGE

That is more than loud enough! Go to your room!

MICHAEL

But we were just—

GEORGE

I don't care what you were "just"! Upstairs! Now! Where's my briefcase? I put it here...

(MICHAEL has hidden it behind his back. GEORGE turns towards him.)

Michael?

(MICHAEL has transferred the case to JANE. He holds up both hands.)

Jane?

(JANE slides the briefcase back to her brother and holds up her hands. But this time GEORGE has seen the maneuver and shouts.)

Will you give it to me!

(With a roar of fury, he spins MICHAEL around and roughly snatches the case away. ALL are shocked by the violence and intensity of his anger. He turns on WINIFRED.)

Must I put up with this behavior? You're their mother! Why can't you do something!

WINIFRED

(attempting to take control of the situation)

Well, I can try not shouting for a start.

GEORGE

Mary Poppins! You are here to teach the children manners, and just look at them! They're a pair of little savages! If I had my way, you'd be out of this house by—

WINIFRED

George! You're tired.

(GEORGE retires to the study, dejected, and closes the door.)

Mary Poppins, don't bring the children down tonight. Mr. Banks is quite exhausted. Perhaps you could keep them occupied.

MARY POPPINS

I hope you haven't forgotten, ma'am, tonight's my evening out.

JANE

What?

WINIFRED

Oh dear, I had forgotten. I suppose the best people wouldn't ask you to change your plans?

MARY POPPINS

No ma'am, they wouldn't.

WINIFRED

I thought not.

JANE

That's not fair! Daddy loses his temper and we're shut up in the nursery! Daddy's mean and rotten and I hate him!

WINIFRED

Jane! Take that back this instant! I will not have you criticize your father.

MICHAEL

Why not? He criticizes you! Last week he said you were neither use nor ornament.

WINIFRED

How dare you—

MICHAEL

I heard him say it and so did you!

(This one is below the belt. WINIFRED answers with some dignity.)

WINIFRED

Sometimes people say things they don't mean. Take the children upstairs please, Mary Poppins.

(JANE and MICHAEL follow the nanny up. WINIFRED goes to the study door. She hesitates, then opens it and enters.)

George?

GEORGE

What is it now?

WINIFRED

I thought you might like to talk about it.

GEORGE

What would be the point?

WINIFRED

Perhaps I can help.

GEORGE

Don't be ridiculous.

WINIFRED

I'm serious, George. If you have troubles, I'd like to share them.

GEORGE

Don't worry. You will.

(lifts his head, stares at WINIFRED)

The fact is I've been suspended without salary until they decide what to do with me.

(WINIFRED gasps with shock.)

#11B – Twists and Turns

Bert

BERT

TWISTS AND TURNS, UPS AND DOWNS,
ONE MOMENT SMILES, NEXT MOMENT FROWNS.
BUT BAD-TEMPERED FACES HAD BETTER CHANGE QUICK,
'CAUSE IF THE WIND CHANGES, THE FACE MIGHT JUST STICK.
CHIM CHIMINEY, CHIM CHIM CHER-EE CHIM CHER-OO.

SCENE 11: PLAYING THE GAME – Nursery

(JANE and MICHAEL enter the nursery.)

JANE

It's not fair! You're going out, and we get left on our own!

MARY POPPINS

You've plenty of toys to play with.

JANE

I don't want to. They're boring!

MARY POPPINS

They might say the same about you.

MICHAEL

Why does Daddy get so cross?

JANE

Fathers are supposed to look after their children, not yell at them all the time.

MARY POPPINS

Maybe, but have you asked yourself who looks after the fathers when things go wrong?

MICHAEL

The mothers, I suppose.

MARY POPPINS

Not the children?

JANE

Wouldn't that be rather upside-down?

(MARY POPPINS continues to primp herself ready for her "evening out.")

MARY POPPINS

Sometimes families are upside-down, for a while anyway.

JANE

I don't want to be in an upside-down family. I wish I could run away.

MICHAEL

Why don't you? Somebody might adopt you.

JANE

But you'd miss me.

MICHAEL

No, I wouldn't. I could have your toys.