

A PARTRIDGE IN A PALM TREE

A CHRISTMAS COMEDY IN THREE ACTS

By Megan Orr

Copyright © MMVIII by Megan Orr

All Rights Reserved

Heuer Publishing LLC in association with Brooklyn Publishers, LLC

ISBN: 1-60003-295-8

Professionals and amateurs are hereby warned that this work is subject to a royalty. Royalty must be paid every time a play is performed whether or not it is presented for profit and whether or not admission is charged. A play is performed any time it is acted before an audience. All rights to this work of any kind including but not limited to professional and amateur stage performing rights are controlled exclusively by Heuer Publishing LLC and Brooklyn Publishers, LLC. Inquiries concerning rights should be addressed to Heuer Publishing LLC.

This work is fully protected by copyright. No part of this work may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without permission of the publisher. Copying (by any means) or performing a copyrighted work without permission constitutes an infringement of copyright.

All organizations receiving permission to produce this work agree to give the author(s) credit in any and all advertisement and publicity relating to the production. The author(s) billing must appear below the title and be at least 50% as large as the title of the Work. All programs, advertisements, and other printed material distributed or published in connection with production of the work must include the following notice: **“Produced by special arrangement with Heuer Publishing LLC in association with Brooklyn Publishers, LLC.”**

There shall be no deletions, alterations, or changes of any kind made to the work, including the changing of character gender, the cutting of dialogue, or the alteration of objectionable language unless directly authorized by the publisher or otherwise allowed in the work’s “Production Notes.” The title of the play shall not be altered.

The right of performance is not transferable and is strictly forbidden in cases where scripts are borrowed or purchased second-hand from a third party. All rights, including but not limited to professional and amateur stage performing, recitation, lecturing, public reading, television, radio, motion picture, video or sound taping, internet streaming or other forms of broadcast as technology progresses, and the rights of translation into foreign languages, are strictly reserved.

COPYING OR REPRODUCING ALL OR ANY PART OF THIS BOOK IN ANY MANNER IS STRICTLY FORBIDDEN BY LAW. One copy for each speaking role must be purchased for production purposes. Single copies of scripts are sold for personal reading or production consideration only.

**HEUER PUBLISHING LLC
P.O. BOX 248 • CEDAR RAPIDS, IOWA 52406
TOLL FREE (800) 950-7529 • FAX (319) 368-8011**

CHARACTERS (5M, 4W)

DAVE PARTRIDGE	37-year-old; father to JENNY and ANDREW; great sense of humor; highly imaginative; constantly playing pretend; at times embarrassingly goofy
JOY PARTRIDGE	36-year-old; mother to JENNY and ANDREW; protective and motherly; not the best cook
JENNY PARTRIDGE	15-year-old; independent, intelligent, pretty, and popular
ANDREW PARTRIDGE	10-year-old; extremely energetic and intelligent for his age; funny; mischievous
KEVIN SCHNEIDER	15-year-old; geeky; writes poetry; smitten by JENNY PARTRIDGE; has sent her love letters every day of the school year since kindergarten
MARY SCHNEIDER	40-year-old; homemaker; outspoken; demanding; a perfectionist and control freak; dislikes any deviation from plans
MAX STANLEY	26-year-old; overly eager airport security guard with an itchy trigger finger; his first week on the job; dreams of working for the FBI someday; smitten by VANESSA; has proposed to her everyday so far
VANESSA FAIRCHILD	25-year-old; airline hostess; single, attractive; polite and professional, but with a good sense of humor
GLEN SMILEY	55-year-old; balding; airport security director; serious and severe; rarely smiles; no sense of humor; takes his job very seriously

Time: The afternoon of December 24; modern-day

Setting: Inside Midway Regional Airport, Chicago, IL

THE SET

Set instructions

One simple set is used for the entire play. Flats should be designed to look like the interior of an airport terminal. Three large floor-to-ceiling windows fill the center flat. At upstage left is an information desk, complete with computer, telephone, and miniature Christmas tree. Attached to the top of the stage right flat is a “flat-screen television” displaying flight arrivals and departures. Three waiting room-style chairs sit at upstage center against the windows and facing the audience.

For Act III, Scene 1, a long dinner table is also needed. It should be placed center stage parallel to the edge of the stage.

Lighting instructions

Indoor lighting is used for the entire play.

In Act I, Scene 2, lights go off suddenly when the “power fails” right before the end of the scene.

In Act III, Scene 2, lights may dim for mood setting when Vanessa enters.

A Partridge in a Palm Tree
Three-Act Christmas Comedy

by
Megan Orr

SCENE 1

SET: Inside Midway Regional Airport terminal

SOUND: Christmas music softly playing over the “loudspeaker.” The music fades as Vanessa speaks.

Lights rise. JOY and ANDREW enter stage right, each wheeling one suitcase.

VANESSA: (*Intercom*) Attention passengers flying Delta Flight 153 to New York. Due to the weather, your flight has been delayed indefinitely. Thank you for choosing Midway Regional Airport.

JOY: All right, Andrew. Now remember what we talked about. This is an airport, and while we’re in here and on the plane I don’t want to hear a word about— (*Looking both ways and lowering her voice to a whisper*) Explosives. (*Raising her voice*) Do you understand me?

ANDREW: Aw, Mo-om! You just ruined my big plan!

JOY: (*Warningly*) Andrew Partridge. . .

ANDREW: Okay, fine. Can I still yell “Terrorist”?

JOY: (*Exasperated*) Son, do you *want* to be arrested?

ANDREW: (*As if considering the question*) Arrested. Hmm . . .

(*A grunting JENNY enters stage right loaded down with luggage. She is wearing a white snow parka. JOY and ANDREW watch her approach.*)

VANESSA: (*Intercom*) Attention passengers flying American Airlines Flight 685 to Seattle. Due to the weather, your flight has been delayed indefinitely. Thank you for choosing Midway Regional Airport.

ANDREW: (*To JOY*) I got an idea. How ‘bout I yell “Abominable Snow-monkey” instead?

JENNY: Hardee-har-har. You *could* give me a hand, you know.

ANDREW: No thanks. (*Turning to JOY*) Hey, Mom. What’s the airline’s weight limit?

JENNY: I’ll have you know that each of my bags is perfectly well under the weight limit, thank you very much.

ANDREW: Oh, I didn’t mean for your bags. I meant for you.
(*JENNY smacks ANDREW on the arm.*)

A PARTRIDGE IN A PALM TREE – Page 5

JOY: (To JENNY) He does have a point, honey. Did you really need to bring so many bags?

JENNY: Yes! I had to make sure I'm prepared for anything.

ANDREW: Yeah. You never know when you'll need a snow suit in Orlando.

JENNY: (Archly) You never know.

VANESSA: (Intercom) Attention passengers flying Virgin Atlantic Flight 4505 to New Orleans. Due to the weather, your flight has been delayed indefinitely. Thank you for choosing Midway Regional Airport.

JOY: Well, Jenny, just try not to let your luggage leave your sight, okay? You never know what kind of crazies there may be in an airport. Maybe your father can . . . (Looking around) Wait a minute. Where is your father? He was right behind us a minute ago!

JENNY: Oh, you know Dad. He probably wandered off while he was pretending to be Secret Agent Man.

ANDREW: (To JOY) See! You let *him* do it!

JOY: (Sighing) I better go find him before he gets himself into trouble. You two wait right here and listen for any news about our flight. And keep an eye on your bags! (Exits stage right)

JENNY: (Sighing) Why couldn't I have been part of a *normal* family?

ANDREW: I'm not even going to bother to answer that one. (Looking toward stage left) Hey, look. Isn't that Kevin Schneider?

JENNY: What?! Kevin Schneider? Where??

(VANESSA and MRS. SCHNEIDER enter stage left, MRS. SCHNEIDER gesticulating wildly to VANESSA. KEVIN follows somberly behind. They cross to the airline counter at upstage left.)

(Ducking behind ANDREW) Ugh! Gag me with a spoon. It is Kevin.

ANDREW: Isn't he the guy who's been sending you love notes every day since, like, first grade?

JENNY: Kindergarten. And don't remind me!

ANDREW: (Grinning evilly) Wanna go say hi? (Walks toward stage left)

JENNY: (Warningly) Andrew Partridge, so help me, I'll kill you and feed your remains to Mickey Mouse!

ANDREW: (Over his shoulder) I'll take my chances.

JENNY: (Loud whisper) Andrew! Don't go over there! Andrew! Andrew!!

(ANDREW walks up to KEVIN.)

ANDREW: Hi! It's Kevin, isn't it?

KEVIN: Uh . . . yeah?

ANDREW: (Sticking out his hand) I'm Andrew Partridge, Jenny's brother.

KEVIN: (Enthusiastically) Jenny Partridge? Really? You're Jenny's younger brother?

(KEVIN eagerly shakes ANDREW's hand.)

A PARTRIDGE IN A PALM TREE – Page 6

ANDREW: Yep. That's me. Though I prefer the title "Jenny's Younger-but-Infinitely-Wiser Little Brother."

KEVIN: (*Looking around hopefully*) Wow. Is Jenny here?

ANDREW: Actually, you are in luck, my friend. She's right over—

(*ANDREW turns toward downstage right, but JENNY has "disappeared" off stage right.*)

(*Turning back to KEVIN*) Give me just a sec. I'll be right back.

(*ANDREW exits stage right. KEVIN takes a seat at upstage center and waits, nervously.*)

MRS. SCHNEIDER: (*To VANESSA*) Three feet of snow?? I don't care if there is *thirty* feet of snow. My husband *has* to be home for Christmas!!

VANESSA: I'm sorry, ma'am. Our airline staff is doing everything it can to make sure that as few flights are delayed as possible. But with this snowstorm in effect, there's only so much we can—

MRS. SCHNEIDER: Excuse me, Miss . . . What is your name?

VANESSA: Vanessa. Vanessa Fairchild.

MRS. SCHNEIDER: Miss Fairchild . . . do you know what today is?

VANESSA: (*Confused*) I'm sorry?

MRS. SCHNEIDER: The date. Could you tell me the date, please?

VANESSA: It's . . . December twenty-fourth.

MRS. SCHNEIDER: Exactly. December twenty-fourth. Christmas *Eve!*

Now I don't care if your pilots have to *drive* that plane back here from New York. I want my husband home tonight!

VANESSA: (*Sighing*) I'll see what I can do, ma'am.

(*ANDREW reenters stage right, pulling JENNY by the arm behind him. She drags her feet.*)

JENNY: Andrew Michael Partridge! I cannot believe you! Just wait until I tell Mom that you went into the women's bathroom!

ANDREW: Hey, Kevin! I found her!

(*ANDREW gets behind JENNY and begins pushing her toward KEVIN.*)

JENNY: Wait! Wait a minute. I'll . . . I'll . . . do your chores for a week! A month!

ANDREW: (*To KEVIN; cheerfully*) Here she is!

(*ANDREW gives JENNY a good shove. She stumbles forward and stops right in front of KEVIN. There is a brief, awkward pause.*)

KEVIN: (*Awestruck*) Jenny. Hi.

A PARTRIDGE IN A PALM TREE – Page 7

ANDREW: Well, looks like my work here is done. You two kids have fun.
I'm going to go find Dad now. Later.

JENNY: (To ANDREW) But--!

(ANDREW exits stage right.)

(Under her breath) Oh, you are so going to regret this. (With a sigh; unenthusiastically) Hi, Kevin.

KEVIN: (As before; awestruck) Jenny. Hi.

JENNY: It's okay, Kevin. You can breathe now.

KEVIN: Oh! Right. It's just that you look so . . . so . . . beautiful. Like . . . a big, fluffy . . . marshmallow!

JENNY: You think I look like a marshmallow?! Is that supposed to be a compliment?

KEVIN: Yes! (Dreamily) Marshmallows are my favorite food.

JENNY: O-kay . . .

KEVIN: (Eagerly) Do you want me to write you a poem about it? It shall begin "Ode to Jenny . . . my marshmallow!" (In a sing-songy voice) "My Jenny, my marshmallow, so soft, sweet, and yummy, if I didn't love you then I'd be a dummy. But because I am smart and you are so sweet . . ."

(KEVIN gets down on one knee and takes JENNY's hand.)

" . . . I'd be honored if you'd be my marshmallow treat."

(KEVIN stands excitedly.)

There! What do you think??

JENNY: Uh . . . thanks, Kevin. That was . . . lovely.

KEVIN: You're welcome! So, what brings you to the airport on this wonderful Christmas Eve?

JENNY: Oh, well, my family and I are flying down to Florida for Christmas. It's kind of a tradition. We do it every year.

KEVIN: Really? Sounds like fun! Maybe next year I'll go to Florida too!

JENNY: Uh . . . yeah, I don't think we'll be going next year. In fact, this might be the last time we go . . . ever.

KEVIN: (Disappointed) Oh.

JENNY: Yeah. Sorry. So . . . where are you and your mom flying to?

KEVIN: Oh, we're not going anywhere. We're just waiting for my dad to get back from a business trip. He's going to be arriving any minute.

MRS. SCHNEIDER: (To VANESSA) Excuse me, Miss Fairchild, but I would like to be home for Christmas some time this year. Any word regarding my husband's flight?

VANESSA: I'm sorry, ma'am, but there's still no news.

MRS. SCHNEIDER: Still no news? What is wrong with you people??

KEVIN: (To JENNY) Well, he was supposed to be arriving any minute.

A PARTRIDGE IN A PALM TREE – Page 8

VANESSA: Perhaps you'd like to speak to the airline manager?

MRS. SCHNEIDER: *(To VANESSA)* Yes. Yes, I would. I *would* like to speak to Mr. What's his name?

VANESSA: Smiley. Glen Smiley.

MRS. SCHNEIDER: Well, get your Glen Smiley up here this instant!

JENNY: Wow. Your mom seems a little . . . upset.

KEVIN: Yes, well, that's my mom for you. She can be a bit . . . explosive.

*(MAX runs on stage right and aims a gun at KEVIN. *For schools, the gun may be mimed by using a finger.)*

MAX: You there! Freeze! Airport security!

(KEVIN immediately throws his hands up defensively.)

MRS. SCHNEIDER: What in the world—??

MAX: *(Yelling at KEVIN)* Hand over the explosives and get down on the ground!

KEVIN: But--!

MAX: I said, down on the ground!

(MAX forces KEVIN onto the ground, facedown as VANESSA, MRS. SCHNEIDER, and JENNY gape at him.)

MRS. SCHNEIDER: Excuse me! Just what do you think you are doing with my son?? Unhand him!

MAX: Stand back, ma'am! I know what I'm doing!

VANESSA: Max!

(MAX suddenly straightens up at the sight of VANESSA. His entire face lights up.)

MAX: Oh. Miss Fairchild! Hello. I didn't see you there. You look lovely today, by the way.

VANESSA: Max, what are you doing?

MAX: *(Looking a bit lost)* Nothing. I'm just . . . doing my job?

MRS. SCHNEIDER: Your job? Is it your job to break my son's back??

MAX: No, but . . . the boy said he was carrying explosives!

JENNY: No, he didn't. He said that his *mom* was explosive.

MRS. SCHNEIDER: *(To KEVIN; highly offended)* What?? Explosive? What do you mean explosive???

(MAX wheels around to point his gun at MRS. SCHNEIDER.)

MAX: You mean the mother is carrying explosives?

MRS. SCHNEIDER: I am not explosive!

JENNY: No! Nobody's carrying explosives!

KEVIN: Can I get up now?

A PARTRIDGE IN A PALM TREE – Page 9

(MR. SMILEY enters stage right.)

VANESSA: Max, maybe you should just put your gun away.

MR. SMILEY: Yes, Max. Maybe you should.

(MAX spins around to face MR. SMILEY.)

MAX: Oh! Mr. Smiley. I . . . I didn't see you standing there, sir.

MR. SMILEY: Put the gun away, Stanley.

MAX: Yes, sir.

MR. SMILEY: Now step aside. I'll be speaking with you in a few minutes.

MAX: (*Glumly*) Yes, sir. (*Crosses to upstage center, where he waits nervously.*)

KEVIN: Now can I get up??

MRS. SCHNEIDER: (*Standing over him*) Not until you explain why you think I'm explosive!

JENNY: Uh, Kevin? It's been really . . . nice . . . talking to you, but . . . I have to go now.

KEVIN: But--!

JENNY: Bye!

(JENNY exits stage left. KEVIN sighs and drops his head onto the floor.)

MRS. SCHNEIDER: (*To KEVIN*) I'm still waiting!

MR. SMILEY: Mrs. Schneider, isn't it?

MRS. SCHNEIDER: Yes?

MR. SMILEY: I believe you wanted to speak with me. My name is Glen Smiley. I'm the airline manager.

MRS. SCHNEIDER: Oh. So *you're* the one who keeps delaying the flights.

MR. SMILEY: Indeed. But it is for the safety of our treasured customers such as yourself and your husband.

MRS. SCHNEIDER: (*Somewhat appeased*) Oh, well . . .

MR. SMILEY: You have my full assurance, Mrs. Schneider, that we at American Airways are working to get your husband home as quickly as we possibly can.

MRS. SCHNEIDER: Good. Then you'll have him home by tonight.

MR. SMILEY: We certainly intend to. Will there be anything else, Mrs. Schneider?

MRS. SCHNEIDER: No. Thank you. Come, Kevin. We'll wait for your father at his gate. And *while* we wait, we'll have a little discussion about things we say about our *mothers* behind their *backs*.

(MRS. SCHNEIDER pulls KEVIN up from the ground, brushes him off, and drags him off stage left. MR. SMILEY gestures for MAX to join him at center.)

A PARTRIDGE IN A PALM TREE – Page 10

MR. SMILEY: Stanley, do you remember the conversation we had a few days ago when I hired you on?

MAX: Uh . . . you said, a gun is not a toy and to treat it with respect.

MR. SMILEY: Yes. And do you realize how many times you've drawn your gun on a customer within the last four days?

MAX: But, sir, each of those times there was a legitimate threat, I assure y—!

MR. SMILEY: Five times, Mr. Stanley. Five times in the last four days.

MAX: It's a . . . really dangerous airport, sir.

MR. SMILEY: I'm beginning to think what's really dangerous here, Mr.

Stanley, is allowing you to continue on as a part of our security force.

MAX: Look, Mr. Smiley, I . . . I know I've made a couple of bad calls . . .

MR. SMILEY: Bad calls? Stanley, you took away a child's toy because you thought it was a real weapon.

MAX: Hey, those GI Joe sound effects are very realistic!

MR. SMILEY: You kicked the cane out from under an old man because you thought it contained explosives!

MAX: Okay, so I was a little off . . .

MR. SMILEY: You made the governor of Illinois take off his shoes and walk around the airport barefoot for half an hour because you believed he had a bomb hidden in the soles of his loafers!

MAX: Well, how was I supposed to know he wears lifts? He always looks so tall on television.

MR. SMILEY: And that was all on Monday!

MAX: All right, all right. I guess sometimes I can get a bit . . . overzealous at times.

MR. SMILEY: Overzealous?? Puppy dogs are overzealous.

Telemarketers are overzealous. Little children on Halloween night, after they've just eaten three buckets of candy, are overzealous, Stanley. You . . . there aren't even words to describe it.

MAX: You could say I'm . . . fully committed to the force?

MR. SMILEY: One more mistake, Mr. Stanley, one more and the only force you'll be permitted on is the janitorial force. Understood?

MAX: Yes, sir.

(MR. SMILEY exits stage right.)

That man is *never* happy.

VANESSA: *(Sighing)* Oh, Max.

MAX: Vanessa! Hi! I . . . *(Deflating)* I suppose you heard all that.

VANESSA: What are we going to do with you, Max?

MAX: *(Hopefully)* Well . . . you could always marry me.

VANESSA: Max, you've already asked me to marry you. Yesterday and the day before and the day before that. I'm sorry, but the answer is still no.

MAX: Oh, come on, Vanessa. Marry me. Be my wife.

VANESSA: Not today, Max. *(Crosses to stage left)*

A PARTRIDGE IN A PALM TREE – Page 11

MAX: *(Calling after her, hopefully)* Tomorrow then?

VANESSA: Tomorrow's Christmas, Max. *(Exits stage left)*

MAX: *(To himself)* Yes! I always wanted a Christmas wedding.

(MAX runs off after VANESSA, stage left. As he exits, DAVE enters stage right, in "secret agent mode.")

SOUND: "Mission Impossible" (optional)

DAVE: *(Talking to his wrist)* This is Agent Double-oh-seven. It appears the perimeter is now secure. Requesting permission to resume undercover mode. . . . Thank you, sir.

(DAVE dramatically puts on a pair of sunglasses and crosses his arms across his chest. He slowly scans the audience from left to right.

ANDREW enters stage right.)

ANDREW: Hey! There you are, Dad! I've been looking all over for you!

(DAVE ignores ANDREW.)

Dad? . . . Hey! Dad!

DAVE: I'm sorry, young man. Have we met?

ANDREW: Duh, Dad. It's me. Andrew.

DAVE: Sorry. I don't know anyone by the name of Andrew.

ANDREW: Oh . . . I get it. It's a game. Okay. So who are you pretending to be today?

DAVE: A secret agent never reveals his true identity.

ANDREW: Uh, Dad? You just did. You're a secret agent.

DAVE: Oh. Uh, I meant . . . I'm Santa Claus.

ANDREW: No, you're not.

DAVE: Yes, I am!

ANDREW: Oh, yeah? Okay, Santa. Where's your red suit?

DAVE: It's at the cleaners.

ANDREW: *(In disbelief)* Uh-huh. Well, what about your beard?

DAVE: I've decided to go for a younger, hipper look.

ANDREW: And sunglasses?

DAVE: I'm on my way to Florida.

ANDREW: Yeah, about that. Dad, I don't think they're going to let any planes leave tonight.

VANESSA: *(Intercom)* Attention passengers flying Northwestern Flight 62 to Los Angeles. Due to the weather, your flight has been delayed indefinitely. Thank you for choosing Midway Regional Airport.

ANDREW: *(To DAD)* See what I mean?

DAVE: Hmmm . . . the boy may have a point. Perhaps I should speak to my superior.

ANDREW: Your superior? Santa Claus has a superior?

A PARTRIDGE IN A PALM TREE – Page 12

DAVE: Oh. Right. Perhaps I should speak to . . . Mrs. Claus.

ANDREW: You know, Dad, you make a really lousy secret agent.

(JOY enters from stage right.)

JOY: Boys! There you are! I've been looking all over.

ANDREW: Sorry, Mom.

DAVE: *(Grinning)* Yeah. Sorry, Mom.

JOY: David, you know better.

DAVE: Sorry, honey. Couldn't resist.

JOY: Any news about our flight?

(JENNY pokes her head through stage left and looks around nervously.)

JENNY: Psst! Hey! Mom! Is the coast clear?

JOY: *(Looking around, confused)* What?

JENNY: Is the coast clear?

JOY: Honey, I don't have the slightest idea what you're talking about.

ANDREW: I do. Let me handle this. *(To JENNY)* Yep. The coast is clear. He's gone.

(Heaving a sigh of relief, JENNY enters stage left.)

JOY: *He?* Oh, Jenny, please tell me you haven't gone and met some stranger here in the airport.

JENNY: He's not a stranger, Mom. He's Kevin Schneider. He goes to my school and he's *really*—

(KEVIN runs in stage left, stopping directly behind JENNY.)

KEVIN: Jenny! There you are!

JENNY: --here.

KEVIN: *(Sing-songy)* I've got something for you!

JOY: *(Nervously)* It's not something dangerous, I hope.

ANDREW: Don't worry, Mom. He's harmless. Weird, but harmless.

KEVIN: *(To JENNY)* I know how excited you are about your trip to Florida, so in honor of Christmas and of your trip, I've got something to give you.

JENNY: It's not a poem, is it?

KEVIN: Nope . . . It's a song!

ANDREW: *(To JENNY, in mock amazement)* You mean he sings, too???

Be still, my heart.

(KEVIN clears his throat, hums a note, and begins singing.)

KEVIN: "On the first day of Christmas I gave to my true love . . . a Partridge in a palm tree!"

A PARTRIDGE IN A PALM TREE – Page 13

(KEVIN ceremoniously hands JENNY a palm tree photo clip with a photo attached to it. DAVE, JOY, and ANDREW lean in to peer at the picture.)

(Excitedly) See! It's a palm tree photo clip! Get it? Because of your trip to Florida! And you're the Partridge in a palm tree!

JOY: Oh! Isn't that sweet?

JENNY: Where in the world did you get this picture? I must have been in, like, first grade!

KEVIN: Kindergarten, actually.

JENNY: How did you get a picture of us together?

KEVIN: Oh, I've had it forever. It's actually a class picture that we stood next to each other for, but I like to pretend it's just the two of us. Together.

DAVE: And people say I'm highly imaginative!

KEVIN: So . . . what do you think??

JENNY: Well, Kevin, it's very . . .

VANESSA: (Intercom) Attention passengers flying American Airways Flight 221 to Orlando. Due to the weather, your flight has been delayed indefinitely. Thank you for choosing Midway Regional Airport.

JENNY: What?!

ANDREW: Oh, man!

KEVIN: What? What is it?

JENNY: That's our flight! They just delayed our flight! Now what are we going to do??

JOY: I guess we're just going to have to wait around to see when our plane leaves.

ANDREW: How long will that take?

DAVE: Who knows? Could be as short as a few hours or as long as a couple of days.

JENNY: A couple of days??

KEVIN: My wildest dreams have come true!

(Lights fade.)

End of Scene.

A PARTRIDGE IN A PALM TREE – Page 14

ACT I, SCENE 2

SET: Inside Midway Regional Airport terminal

Lights rise. DAVE, JOY, JENNY, ANDREW, and KEVIN are in the same positions as at the end of Act I, Scene 1. Throughout the scene, MAX makes periodic rounds past VANESSA's ticket counter. As he passes, he always tries to catch her eye and give her a little smile and a wave before resuming his "serious" expression. Whenever MR. SMILEY happens to notice him, MAX looks particularly serious.

ANDREW: So, Dad, what are we going to do? Are we going to stay here and wait around for our flight or are we leaving?

KEVIN: *I vote for staying!*

JOY: We do need to make a decision sometime soon, honey. If we don't leave soon one way or the other, we'll be spending Christmas here.

JENNY: Christmas in an airport? Ugh!

KEVIN: *I vote for staying!*

DAVE: Well, I suppose I could try to find out how long the delay is expected to be. If it's more than a few hours, we could just go home.

KEVIN: *I vote for staying!*

(DAVE, JOY, ANDREW, and JENNY turn to look at KEVIN.)

DAVE: *(Not unkindly)* Look, kid . . . don't you have a family or something?

(VANESSA, MR. SMILEY, and MRS. SCHNEIDER enter stage left and cross to ticket counter. VANESSA goes behind the counter and MR. SMILEY stands in front of the counter, watching VANESSA work. MRS. SCHNEIDER stands by the counter, arms crossed and tapping her foot impatiently.)

JENNY: Hey, Dad, why don't you ask that guy about our flight? I think he's in charge.

ANDREW: Yeah. As grouchy as he looks now, he's *got* to be in charge.

DAVE: I'll see what I can do. *(Puts his sunglasses back on dramatically.)*

JOY: *(Warningly)* David . . .

DAVE: *(Taking off his sunglasses)* Oh, all right. Fine. We'll do this the boring way.

ANDREW: *(Eagerly)* I'll help you interrogate him, Dad!

(DAVE and ANDREW cross to ticket counter.)

MR. SMILEY: *(To MRS. SCHNEIDER)* It appears your husband's flight has made an emergency landing in Detroit. Now, most of the time in these situations, flights don't resume until the following day—

A PARTRIDGE IN A PALM TREE – Page 15

MRS. SCHNEIDER: *Most of the time, I'm sure they don't. However, this time I would like you to get my husband home tonight.*

MR. SMILEY: (*Sighing*) Ma'am—

DAVE: Excuse me, sir . . .

MRS. SCHNEIDER: (*To MR. SMILEY*) You do realize that it is Christmas Eve, don't you?

MR. SMILEY: Yes, ma'am. I am well aware of that fact.

DAVE: Excuse me . . . Sir?

MRS. SCHNEIDER: And do you also realize that some families have *traditions* they'd like to celebrate on Christmas Eve? Traditions with *family members*?

MR. SMILEY: Yes, and I would hate for you to miss out on those joyous occasions but the reality of it is—

DAVE: Sir?

ANDREW: Let me handle it, Dad. (*Loudly to MR. SMILEY*) Hey! Grouch ball!

(*MR. SMILEY whirls around to face ANDREW.*)

MR. SMILEY: Excuse me?!?

ANDREW: (*Happily*) There you go, Dad.

DAVE: (*Whispering*) What have I told you about calling people grouch balls?

MR. SMILEY: (*Icily*) May I help you?

DAVE: Uh, yeah. Sorry to interrupt, but our flight to Orlando has just been delayed and we were wondering whether we should wait around for it or not.

MR. SMILEY: Well, it is my recommendation that if it is simply a flight delay, you wait for more news. Now if it were a flight *cancellation*—

DAVE: No, no cancellation. Just a delay. That's all we needed to know. Thanks for your time, Mr. . . . ?

MR. SMILEY: Smiley. Glen Smiley.

ANDREW: Smiley? Boy, somebody sure got that one wrong!

MR. SMILEY: Pardon me??

DAVE: (*Dragging ANDREW away*) Nothing. Never mind. Merry Christmas.

(*DAVE and ANDREW cross to stage right where JOY, JENNY, and KEVIN wait.*)

JOY: So what did he have to say?

DAVE: You mean, before or after our son nearly got us kicked out of the airport?

ANDREW: Oh, come on, Dad. I was only joking. Besides, he was *clearly* an enemy agent.

DAVE: True . . .

ANDREW: (*Eagerly*) You wanna tail him??

A PARTRIDGE IN A PALM TREE – Page 16

JOY: All right, you two. No more secret agent stuff. Now focus . . . Is the trip still on or not?

DAVE: As of right now, it is. We're just going to have to wait for more news.

JENNY: You mean we're stuck here?!?

DAVE: For now.

KEVIN: YES!!!

(DAVE, JOY, JENNY, and ANDREW turn to look at KEVIN.)

I mean, stuck here? *(Giving a thumbs down signal)* Boo!!

(DAVE, resuming "secret spy mode," sneaks off stage right while JOY speaks.)

JOY: *(Digging through her bag)* Well, honey, if it's going to be a few hours, I think I'm going to go have a seat. You kids can leave your bags with me and I'll keep an eye on them . . . So long as you keep an eye on your father.

JENNY: Sure, Mom. Give *us* the hard job!

(JOY and ANDREW cross to upstage center with their luggage. KEVIN offers to help carry JENNY's luggage. JOY sits in a chair, takes out a magazine, and begins to read. ANDREW and JENNY leave their luggage with her. Meanwhile, MR. SMILEY and MRS. SCHNEIDER begin speaking at the ticket counter.)

MRS. SCHNEIDER: *(Ruefully)* It would have been a perfectly lovely Christmas Eve. I had it all planned. First, a scrumptious turkey dinner with all the trimmings, of course, followed by my famous dessert strudel. Nobody makes a strudel like a Schneider. After dinner, Christmas caroling around the neighborhood with our nearest and dearest friends. And finally, we would have ended the evening by the fire with a relaxing cup of hot cocoa, reminiscing about Christmases of yore.

VANESSA: Yore?

MR. SMILEY: It sounds like a beautiful evening.

MRS. SCHNEIDER: Yes, it would have been perfectly lovely . . . if my *husband* had been here to share it. But, alas! Now my poor son and I will have to spend this cold Christmas Eve all alone.

VANESSA: Alas?

MRS. SCHNEIDER: *(Dramatically)* Do you have *any* idea what it's like to be alone on Christmas Eve, Mr. Smiles?

MR. SMILEY: It's "Smiley."

MRS. SCHNEIDER: It most certainly is not! It's the most utterly heartbreaking—

MR. SMILEY: I meant my name, ma'am. My *name* is Mr. Smiley.

A PARTRIDGE IN A PALM TREE – Page 17

MRS. SCHNEIDER: Oh. . . . So??? What's in a name when a poor soul is standing before you in the throes of agony?

VANESSA: Throes of agony??

MR. SMILEY: Perhaps, ma'am, I could . . . call the Detroit airport and check on your husband's flight for you. Would that ease your pain at all?

MRS. SCHNEIDER: Well, it's about time! Why in the world do you think I've been standing here??

MR. SMILEY: *(Thrown off guard)* Oh. Right. Well, then . . . Vanessa? Why don't you ring up Detroit for me, please? *(To MRS. SCHNEIDER)* It'll just be a few minutes, ma'am. Perhaps while you wait you'd like to take a seat and . . . enjoy a magazine?

MRS. SCHNEIDER: *(Derisively)* A magazine? On Christmas Eve? No. Thank you. I've got plenty to keep me occupied. Please inform me as soon as you have any news on my husband's flight.

(Head held high, MRS. SCHNEIDER crosses to the seat beside JOY and sits down regally. SHE pulls out a stack of thank you cards and a pen and begins writing. JOY looks on curiously. ANDREW and JENNY return to center stage, followed by KEVIN.)

JENNY: Well, *now* what are we supposed to do? This place is so boring!

ANDREW: We could always play a game with Dad.

(JENNY and ANDREW look over at DAVE, who has run onstage and is now shooting at invisible villains.)

JENNY: You're kidding, right?

ANDREW: *(As if talking about a child)* Aw, come on. Look at him. He's having fun!

JENNY: Thanks. I'll pass.

(DAVE runs over to JENNY and ducks behind her, clutching her shoulders.)

DAVE: Marzipan! Marzipan, we've got to run for it! Now!

JENNY: *(Embarrassed)* Knock it off, Dad.

KEVIN: *(To ANDREW)* Who's Marzipan?

ANDREW: Oh, that's Dad's nickname for Jenny. Only she never plays along. *(Pretending to speak into a walkie-talkie)* Lieutenant Lunkhead at your service, sir!

DAVE: *(Speaking into his "walkie-talkie")* Lunkhead! Where have you been?! I've been calling you for hours!

ANDREW: *(Dropping his "walkie-talkie")* Dad! I've been right here!

(DAVE gives ANDREW a look.)

A PARTRIDGE IN A PALM TREE – Page 18

Oh! Right! The game! (*Speaking into his “walkie-talkie”*) Uh . . . sorry, Commander. I was . . . abducted by aliens on the way here, sir.

JENNY: Well, *that* explains everything.

DAVE: That’s all right, Lieutenant. But we’ve got to be going. Marzipan? Are you coming with us?

JENNY: Sorry, Dad. Count me out.

DAVE: Right. (*To ANDREW*) Lunkhead, Marzipan will stay behind to guard the prisoner. You and I will make the push into enemy territory. Now let’s go!

KEVIN: What? Prisoner?!? Does he mean *me*??

ANDREW: (*Teasingly*) Don’t worry about it, Schneider. Just consider yourself a prisoner of lo-ove.

JENNY: Gross.

DAVE: (*Bellowing*) Onward!

(*DAVE charges off stage left, ANDREW at his heels. JENNY shakes her head and pulls a crossword puzzle book out of her purse.*)

KEVIN: Wow. Your Dad seems like . . . a lot of fun.

JENNY: Yeah? Try living with him. (*Looking into her purse*) Rats! I thought I had a pen in here somewhere. Now where on earth did it go?

KEVIN: A pen?

JENNY: Yeah. For my crossword puzzle. I’ve got to find *something* to do to kill time. Have you got a pen?

KEVIN: No. I’m sorry. (*Willingly*) If I had one, I’d give it to you!

JENNY: (*Disappointed*) Yeah. Thanks.

(*JENNY continues searching her purse and pockets as ANDREW walks in, stage left. He is dragging his feet, shoulders slumped in disappointment. As JENNY talks to ANDREW, KEVIN appears to get an idea and excitedly sneaks off stage right. JENNY and ANDREW do not notice him.*)

Well, if it isn’t Captain Lunkhead. Back so soon?

ANDREW: (*Sulkily*) It’s Lieutenant Lunkhead. And yes. I’m back. Dad runs too fast.

JENNY: Dad was *running* through the airport?? I sure hope no *other* kids from school are here. Hey, do you have a pen?

ANDREW: No. (*Sighing*) Now what am I supposed to do?

JENNY: I don’t know. Why don’t you go bug someone? That’s what you’re good at.

ANDREW: No, that’s no fun . . . I know! I can tail that grouchy guy!

(*ANDREW runs over to MR. SMILEY.*)

JENNY: Like I said, why don’t you go bug someone?

A PARTRIDGE IN A PALM TREE – Page 19

(Shaking her head, JENNY crosses upstage to JOY and MRS. SCHNEIDER to ask for a pen. ANDREW tugs on the back of MR. SMILEY's sports coat to get his attention. MR. SMILEY turns around.)

ANDREW: Hi!

MR. SMILEY: Oh. It's *you* again. *(Turns back to the counter)*

ANDREW: My name's Andrew.

MR. SMILEY: That's very nice.

ANDREW: I'm ten.

MR. SMILEY: Well . . . good for you.

ANDREW: How old are *you*?

MR. SMILEY: *(Turning to ANDREW)* I'm sorry, little boy, but I'm very busy right now. I don't have time to talk. *(Turns back to the counter)*

ANDREW: Oh. . . . That old, huh?

(MR. SMILEY straightens indignantly and turns back to ANDREW.)

MR. SMILEY: Is there something I could help you with?

ANDREW: No. I'm just waiting for my plane to take off.

MR. SMILEY: *(Under his breath)* So am I.

(There are a few brief moments of silence.)

ANDREW: So . . . what was it like?

MR. SMILEY: *(Irritated)* What was *what* like?

ANDREW: Living with the dinosaurs?

MR. SMILEY: *(With an exasperated huff)* Vanessa? I'll be in my office if you need me. *(Exits stage left)*

ANDREW: Hey! Wait for me!

(ANDREW follows MR. SMILEY offstage left. JENNY, still looking for a pen, leaves JOY and MRS. SCHNEIDER and crosses to VANESSA.)

JENNY: Excuse me, Miss? Do you have a pen?

VANESSA: Of course. Here you go. *(Hands JENNY a pen)*

JENNY: *(Relieved)* Thank you.

(JENNY turns to leave when SHE sees MAX passing by, grinning at VANESSA. JENNY turns back nervously to VANESSA.)

Is it just me or has that security guard been by here, like, fifty times today?

VANESSA: I had it at forty-eight. But give him a few more minutes.

JENNY: Why does he keep walking by and grinning like that?

VANESSA: *(Sighing)* It's a long, sad story . . . Actually, it's not a very long story. He only started working here Monday.

JENNY: So who is he?

A PARTRIDGE IN A PALM TREE – Page 20

VANESSA: His name is Max Stanley. And he's asked me to marry him everyday this week so far.

JENNY: *(With interest)* Really??

(JENNY studies MAX as he passes by again.)

He's kind of cute. I bet it wouldn't be so bad to marry him.

VANESSA: Are you kidding?! The man's a complete mess! He hasn't even been here a week yet and already he's nearly gotten himself fired . . . twice!

JENNY: Yeah, well, he's a picnic compared to the guy I've had to put up with for the last ten years.

VANESSA: Ten years?

JENNY: Yes! Ever since kindergarten, this guy Kevin has been sending me these love poems. Poems about my hair, my eyes, my voice . . .

VANESSA: Aww . . . that sounds sweet!

JENNY: But it's not! They're *horrible* poems! Somebody *has* to tell this guy that he can't write! Like today, he wrote me a poem about how I reminded him of a marshmallow.

VANESSA: *(Bewildered)* Oh . . .

JENNY: Yeah . . .

VANESSA: Well, at least he has job security. There's always the greeting card industry.

JENNY: I guess.

(VANESSA and JENNY sigh simultaneously.)

VANESSA and JENNY: *(Exasperated)* Boys!!

(VANESSA and JENNY continue on their conversation silently as JOY and MRS. SCHNEIDER begin to talk. JOY looks over at MRS. SCHNEIDER curiously as MRS. SCHNEIDER places another finished thank-you card in a pile on the seat between them.)

JOY: So . . . sending out a few last-minute Christmas cards?

MRS. SCHNEIDER: Last-minute Christmas cards? No. That's for people who don't plan ahead. I, on the other hand, like to stay on top of things, so I'm starting my thank-you cards.

JOY: Thank you cards? For what?

MRS. SCHNEIDER: For the gifts my family and I will be receiving tomorrow, of course.

JOY: But . . . you haven't received them yet. How can you thank someone for a gift you haven't received?

MRS. SCHNEIDER: I don't have to know what the gift *is* to write a thank you card. I just use simple, generic phrasing: *(Reading a card)* "Dear Blank, Thank you so much for the lovely gift. It was just what we

A PARTRIDGE IN A PALM TREE – Page 21

wanted. May your new year be filled with every happiness. Love, the Schneiders.” *(Looking up)* See?

JOY: Well, that’s quite . . . personal of you, Mary.

MRS. SCHNEIDER: I’m sorry. Have we met?

JOY: Oh, I’m Joy Partridge. I’m on the PTA with you. . . . Jenny and Andrew’s mom?

MRS. SCHNEIDER: Oh! Jenny and Andrew’s mom. *(Glancing down at JOY’s magazine disdainfully)* The one who . . . reads magazines in her spare time.

(MRS. SCHNEIDER returns to writing her thank-you cards. JOY looks down at her magazine and then self-consciously rolls it up and puts it back in her bag. DAVE enters, stage left.)

DAVE: *(Shouting excitedly to JOY)* Princess Imelda! Princess Imelda! News from the mother ship!

MRS. SCHNEIDER: Goodness! Did the asylum accidentally lose a patient?

JOY: *(Standing, embarrassed)* Actually, no. That’s . . . that’s my husband. Dave.

MRS. SCHNEIDER: Oh.

DAVE: Princess Imelda! I just got word—

JOY: David, honey, didn’t I ask you to quit playing pretend?

DAVE: Oh. I thought you just wanted me to drop the secret agent stuff.

JOY: No, I—

DAVE: *(Eagerly)* You mean I can go back to being a secret agent?

JOY: Wha--? No! I . . . never mind. What did you find out?

DAVE: Well, according to the mother ship—

JOY: David!

DAVE: Oh, okay. Fine. I just heard the weather report. It’s expected to keep snowing like this until morning. The weatherman said to look for twenty to twenty-four inches.

JOY: Twenty to twenty-four inches??

DAVE: My guess is that our flight will probably be canceled.

(JENNY crosses to DAVE and JOY.)

JOY: Oh, David. The kids will be so disappointed!

JENNY: Disappointed? Oh no. *Please* don’t say our trip is canceled, Mom.

JOY: I’m afraid so, honey. It doesn’t look like this snow is going to let up.

JENNY: *(Whining)* But we’re going to Florida! They don’t *have* snow in Florida!

KEVIN: *(Runs in, stage right)* Jenny! Hey, Jenny!

(DAVE holds his arm out to stop KEVIN from running up to JENNY.)

A PARTRIDGE IN A PALM TREE – Page 22

DAVE: Now might not be the best time, Kevin.

KEVIN: Why?

DAVE: It looks like our trip's been canceled.

KEVIN: Oh! Well, then, now would be the *perfect* time to give Jenny my gift. It'll cheer her up! (*Crossing to JENNY*) Hey, Jenny! Guess what? I've got another gift for you! And the second verse to my song! Are you ready?

JENNY: Not now, Kevin.

(*KEVIN clears his throat, hums a note, and begins singing.*)

KEVIN: "On the second day of Christmas I gave to my true love . . . two light-up pens and a Partridge in a palm tree!"

(*KEVIN presents JENNY with two light-up pens. She simply stares at them without taking them.*)

See? Pens! Now you can do your crossword puzzles!

JENNY: It's too late, Kevin. Our flight's been canceled. We're leaving.

KEVIN: What?! No! You can't leave!

JENNY: For once, the feeling is mutual.

JOY: (*Sighing*) I guess I'd better go find your brother.

(*MR. SMILEY enters, stage left, followed by ANDREW.*)

ANDREW: (*To MR. SMILEY*) So how come you never smile? Your *name* is Mr. Smiley. You really ought to smile more. You know, if you *never* smile, people might start to think it's because you don't have any teeth! Oh hi, Mom! Hi, Dad! (*To MR. SMILEY*) So . . . *do* you have any teeth?

MR. SMILEY: (*To DAVE and JOY; gesturing to ANDREW*) Ahem. I believe *this* is yours.

DAVE: Ah! There you are, Lieutenant. *Atten-tion!*

(*ANDREW snaps to attention, hand at forehead in a frozen salute. He stays in this position for the rest of the scene.*)

MR. SMILEY: Well. I wish I had known it was that simple. Now I'm afraid I have a bit of bad news . . .

(*MRS. SCHNEIDER crosses to group.*)

MRS. SCHNEIDER: Bad news?? Don't tell me . . . the phone lines are down?

JOY: Our flight has been canceled?

DAVE: You really *do* wear dentures?

A PARTRIDGE IN A PALM TREE – Page 23

(MR. SMILEY, MRS. SCHNEIDER, JOY, JENNY, and KEVIN look at DAVE.)

What? (*Gesturing to ANDREW*) He started it!

MR. SMILEY: No. Unfortunately, it is my duty to report to you that a blizzard warning has been issued for our area by the National Weather Service. The highways have been closed, and we are in effect—

(*Stage suddenly goes black. There is a brief pause.*)

Confined here.

(*There is a brief moment of silence.*)

KEVIN: Well, at least we still have the light-up pens! (*Flashes the pens in the darkness.*)

End of Scene.

ACT II

SCENE 1

SET: Inside Midway Regional Airport terminal

Lights rise. All characters are in the same positions as at the end of Act I, Scene 2.

MR. SMILEY: Ah! Good. There go the back-up generators.

MRS. SCHNEIDER: Pardon me, Mr. Smiles, but could you kindly explain just what exactly you mean by “confined here”?

MR. SMILEY: Of course. . . . We may not leave this airport.

MRS. SCHNEIDER: You mean, until the roads are cleared, correct?

MR. SMILEY: Unfortunately, no. Until the storm is over.

JOY: Do you mean . . . ?

JENNY: We’re spending Christmas Eve in an airport?!?

MR. SMILEY: And quite possibly a large part of Christmas Day, too.

ANDREW: Sweet!

DAVE: Well, in that case, I suppose there’s time to find the fiend who’s been meddling with the electricity.

JOY: Wait a minute, David. . . .

DAVE: Madame Prime Minister, I shall return when I’ve apprehended the culprit! (*Quickly runs offstage left*)

JOY: Madame Prime Minister? David . . . David! (*Turning to JENNY; shocked*) He left. Your father just left!

JENNY: Don’t worry, Mom. He can’t go far.

A PARTRIDGE IN A PALM TREE – Page 24

MRS. SCHNEIDER: Well, Mr. Smiles, I must first say that I am *most* displeased about this situation—

MR. SMILEY: I'm sure you are, Ma'am.

MRS. SCHNEIDER: However, I have always considered myself resourceful. I shall simply look at this situation as a challenge to my skills. *(To the group)* All right, people! Gather round, please. Gather round.

JENNY: *(To KEVIN)* What's going on?

KEVIN: I'm not sure. But with my mom, there's probably going to be work involved.

MRS. SCHNEIDER: As you all know, it appears we will be spending Christmas Eve together here in the airport. And while this isn't the most ideal situation, I believe we ought to try to make the best of it.

JOY: Oh, I so agree!

MRS. SCHNEIDER: Good. I'm glad you do. Because you will be helping me in the kitchen with Christmas dinner.

JOY: Kitchen? What kitchen?

ANDREW: *(To KEVIN)* Has your mom lost her mind?

MRS. SCHNEIDER: *(To KEVIN and ANDREW)* And you two. You will be in charge of making the Christmas tree.

ANDREW: *Making* the Christmas tree??

MRS. SCHNEIDER: Let's see . . . what else? Ah, yes. Ornaments. Miss Fairchild? You will be in charge of crafting ornaments for our tree.

VANESSA: *(Gesturing to a stack of papers on the counter)* Oh, but I—

MRS. SCHNEIDER: Now . . . Have I forgotten anyone?

(JENNY begins creeping toward stage right exit.)

Ah, yes! Miss Partridge. Why don't you--?

JENNY: Actually, Mrs. Schneider, I thought I'd go check out the gift shop. You know, for . . . Christmas presents.

MRS. SCHNEIDER: What an excellent idea, Miss Partridge. Why don't you do that?

(Relieved, JENNY exits stage right after shooting a victorious smile at ANDREW.)

(To the GROUP) Okay, everyone. Let's get to work.

(VANESSA unenthusiastically crosses to the information desk, sits down, and begins making paper ornaments. ANDREW and KEVIN look at one another. ANDREW shrugs and exits stage left. KEVIN follows ANDREW a few steps, pauses, looks toward stage right, and then back at ANDREW. KEVIN suddenly runs off stage right after JENNY.)

MR. SMILEY: Ahem. And what should I do?

A PARTRIDGE IN A PALM TREE – Page 25

MRS. SCHNEIDER: *What should you do? What do you think you should do?? Find a way to get us out of this airport as soon as possible, of course! Really! Do I have to think of everything?? Come, Joy.*

(MRS. SCHNEIDER grabs JOY by the arm and leads her off stage left.)

MR. SMILEY: *(Noticing VANESSA looking at him)* Yes, well . . . Vanessa, you man the desk.

(MR. SMILEY exits stage right. VANESSA, alone on stage, sighs loudly. MAX, on his rounds, walks slowly by VANESSA. He peers at her work.)

MAX: Hey . . . nice snowflakes! *(Playfully)* Are those for me?

VANESSA: No. They're for the Christmas Nazi.

MAX: *(Reaching for his gun)* Christmas Nazi? Where??

VANESSA: *(Sighing)* Never mind.

(ANDREW enters from stage left, carrying a stack of newspapers and singing.)

ANDREW: "O Tannenbaum, O Tannenbaum, how lovely are thy branches!
O Tannenbaum, O Tannen—Augh!"

(MAX, upon hearing the first "baum," runs at ANDREW and tackles him to the ground. The newspapers fly everywhere.)

MAX: Airport security! Hand over the bomb!

VANESSA: Max!

ANDREW: Bomb? What bomb??

MAX: Don't play games with me, mister! Do you realize how many years you'd get for bringing a bomb onto an airplane? Let's put it this way—by the time you got out, you'd be getting a shuffleboard stick for Christmas!

ANDREW: *(Whining)* But-but I hate shuffleboard!

VANESSA: Max!!

MAX: Yeah?

VANESSA: He didn't say "bomb." He said "Tannenbaum."

MAX: *(Obviously still confused)* Uh-huh.

VANESSA: It means "Christmas tree."

MAX: Oh. Well, why didn't you just say "Christmas tree" in the first place?

(MAX helps ANDREW to his feet, quickly brushes him off, and then crosses to VANESSA. ANDREW begins collecting the newspapers.)

VANESSA: Max, you've got to start being more careful. If you don't rein it in a little, Mr. Smiley is going to fire you!

MAX: *(Hopefully)* Would you miss me if I were fired?

A PARTRIDGE IN A PALM TREE – Page 26

VANESSA: Oh, Max.

MAX: Marry me??

VANESSA: *(Irritated)* No, Max!

(VANESSA hurriedly scoops up her snowflakes and scissors and exits stage right. One snowflake flutters to the ground.)

MAX: *(To ANDREW)* We're going to get married someday, you know.

ANDREW: Yeah. Dream on, Prince Charming!

(MAX picks up the fallen snowflake, hugs it to his heart dreamily for a moment, and then exits stage left. JENNY enters stage right, looking bored.)

Hey, Jenny. Find any good presents in the gift shop?

JENNY: *(Sighing)* No. Not really. Most of it was just tourist-trap stuff. I mean, there were a couple of nice hats and shirts and sweatshirts, but for the most part—

(KEVIN runs in from stage right with a shopping bag.)

KEVIN: Jenny! Hey, Jenny!

JENNY: Not again!

KEVIN: Boy, Jenny! Have I got something for you!

JENNY: I can only imagine.

ANDREW: There wouldn't by any chance be a song that goes with it, would there?

KEVIN: Actually, there is!

JENNY: *(Sarcastically)* Gee, thanks, Andrew.

ANDREW: You're welcome!

KEVIN: Okay. Here it goes!

(KEVIN clears his throat, hums a note, and begins singing.)

"On the third day of Christmas, I gave to my true love . . . three T-shirts, two light-up pens, and a Partridge in a palm tree!"

(KEVIN hands the shopping bag to JENNY.)

I followed you around the gift shop! And every T-shirt you picked up, I bought! See?

(ANDREW and JENNY peer into the shopping bag.)

JENNY: Wow, you . . . you really did, didn't you?

ANDREW: *(Reading a T-shirt)* "Annoying the world one person at a time"?

JENNY: That one was for you.

A PARTRIDGE IN A PALM TREE – Page 27

KEVIN: So . . . what do you think?

JENNY: Kevin, where are you getting the money for all of this?

KEVIN: Oh, I had some Christmas money saved up. (*Dreamily*) But I'd rather spend it all on *you*.

JENNY: Oh, well . . . thanks. Uh, I've got to . . . go to the bathroom. To try all these shirts on! I'll see you later. (*Hastily exits stage left*)

ANDREW: (*Watching JENNY leave*) Well, Kevin my friend, knowing Jenny, this could take a few light-years. How about we go round up that Christmas tree while we wait?

KEVIN: Okay. Sure.

ANDREW: Just make sure not to call it a . . . (*Looking around cautiously; whisper*) "Tannenbaum."

KEVIN: Huh?

(*ANDREW and KEVIN exit stage left. Once the stage is empty, DAVE slinks on, stage right, looking around furtively.*)

SOUND: "Mission Impossible" (optional)

DAVE: (*Talking to his wrist*) This is Agent Double-oh-seven. Still no sign of the culprit, although it is now believed that the spy is indeed German. Requesting permission to—wait just a minute! (*Takes a big sniff*) I believe I may have found him! If my nose doesn't deceive me, I smell strudel! And where there's a strudel, there's a German! I'm going in!

(*MRS. SCHNEIDER enters stage left, wearing an apron and oven mitts and carrying a baking dish. She stops when she sees DAVE.*)

MRS. SCHNEIDER: You there! You'll do. Come over here, please.

(*DAVE freezes and gives MRS. SCHNEIDER a suspicious look.*)

DAVE: (*Whispering to his wrist*) I think my cover's been blown!

MRS. SCHNEIDER: Fine! Then I'll come to you.

(*MRS. SCHNEIDER crosses to DAVE.*)

DAVE: Back-up! I need back-up immediately!

A PARTRIDGE IN A PALM TREE – Page 28

Thank you for reading this free excerpt from A PARTRIDGE IN A PALM TREE by Megan Orr. For performance rights and/or a complete copy of the script, please contact us at:

Heuer Publishing LLC

P.O. Box 248 • Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52406

Toll Free: 1-800-950-7529 • Fax (319) 368-8011

HITPLAYS.COM

DO NOT COPY