



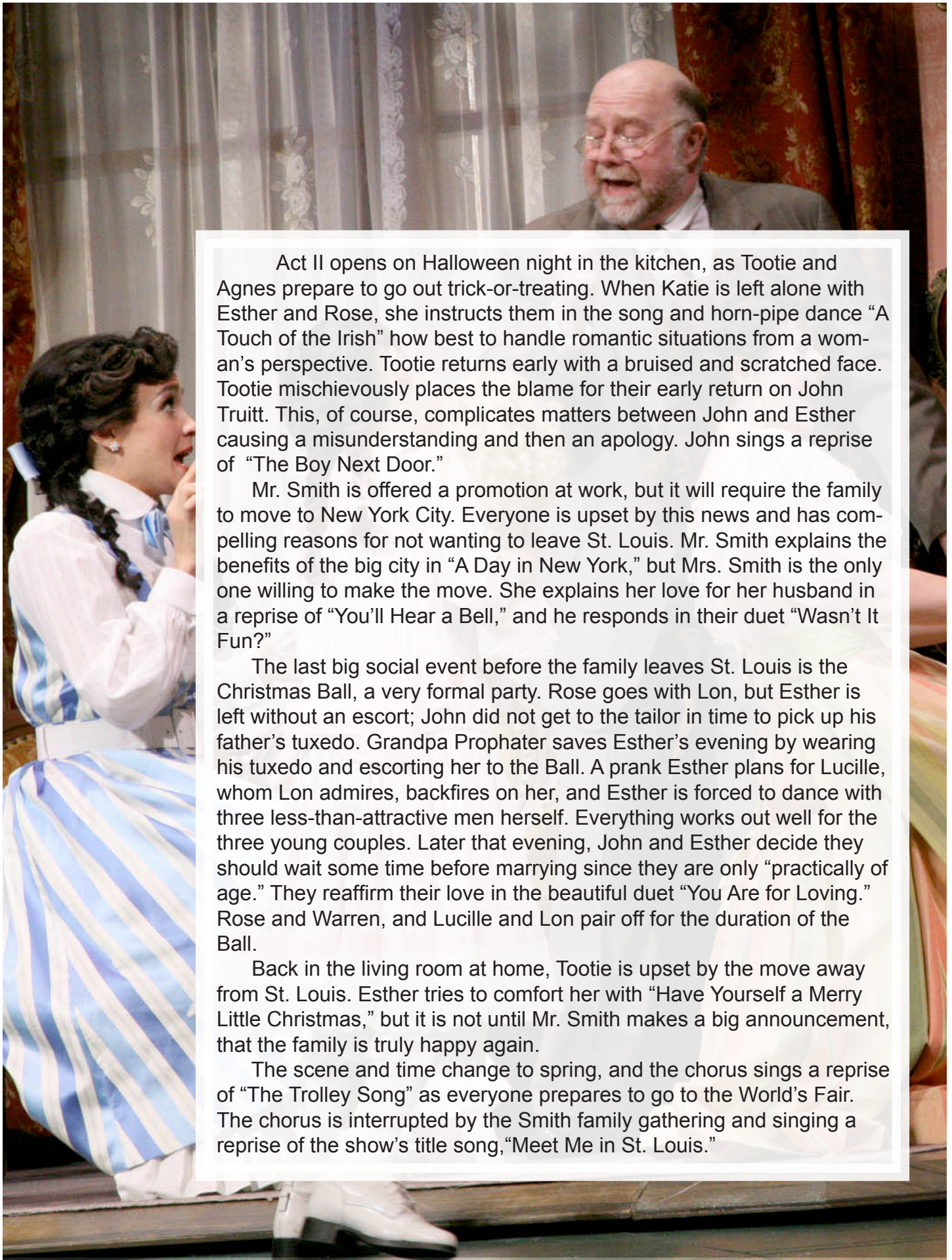
SYNOPSIS

Act I begins with the “Overture,” which leads directly into the “Meet Me In St. Louis,” where we find ourselves in front of the Smith family home. The audience meets the family: Tootie, the youngest girl; Agnes, her closest sister; Lon, the son ready for Princeton; Mrs. Anna Smith, mother; Katie, the family’s Irish maid; Grandpa Prophater; Rose, the eldest daughter; and Esther, the second oldest daughter. We learn of their excitement about the fair, of Esther’s crush on “The Boy Next Door,” John Truitt. The family sings of their close and loving relationships in “Whenever I’m With You.” Mrs. Smith gives love advice to Esther in “You’ll Hear a Bell.”

Esther attempts to hold the family dinner an hour earlier than usual, in order to give Rose some privacy to receive a long distance phone call from a wealthy suitor, Warren Sheffield, who is vacationing in New York. Mr. Smith insists on dinner at the usual time, and despite Katie’s quick pace the plan fails. The whole family overhears Rose’s disappointing call. The tone picks up quickly, and we find ourselves at Lon’s going away to college party. Warren has returned from New York by now, and he and Rose sing the delightful duet “A Raving Beauty.” In Warren’s refrain, she is “winsome, wise and easy on the eyes”, and in Rose’s tongue-in-cheek refrain he is “wayward, bad and all kinds of a cad.”

With the party in full swing, Lon leads Warren, Rose and the Chorus in the rousing square-dance production number “Skip to My Lou.” Caught after bedtime watching Lon’s party from the stair landing above, Tootie and Agnes are invited down to perform “Under the Bamboo Tree” with Esther as a vaudeville turn for the party guests.

When the guests go home, Esther and the boy next door, John, are left alone. Although he is shy and a bit awkward, he manages to sing the touching waltz, “Over the Bannister,” to Esther as he helps her turn down the room gaslights. He then shakes her hand good night. She is disappointed by the handshake as any teenage girl would be, but shrugs it off with a reprise of “The Boy Next Door.” Outside at the trolley stop, Esther and the Ensemble sing “The Trolley Song” as John joins her on the trolley.



Act II opens on Halloween night in the kitchen, as Tootie and Agnes prepare to go out trick-or-treating. When Katie is left alone with Esther and Rose, she instructs them in the song and horn-pipe dance “A Touch of the Irish” how best to handle romantic situations from a woman’s perspective. Tootie returns early with a bruised and scratched face. Tootie mischievously places the blame for their early return on John Truitt. This, of course, complicates matters between John and Esther causing a misunderstanding and then an apology. John sings a reprise of “The Boy Next Door.”

Mr. Smith is offered a promotion at work, but it will require the family to move to New York City. Everyone is upset by this news and has compelling reasons for not wanting to leave St. Louis. Mr. Smith explains the benefits of the big city in “A Day in New York,” but Mrs. Smith is the only one willing to make the move. She explains her love for her husband in a reprise of “You’ll Hear a Bell,” and he responds in their duet “Wasn’t It Fun?”

The last big social event before the family leaves St. Louis is the Christmas Ball, a very formal party. Rose goes with Lon, but Esther is left without an escort; John did not get to the tailor in time to pick up his father’s tuxedo. Grandpa Prophater saves Esther’s evening by wearing his tuxedo and escorting her to the Ball. A prank Esther plans for Lucille, whom Lon admires, backfires on her, and Esther is forced to dance with three less-than-attractive men herself. Everything works out well for the three young couples. Later that evening, John and Esther decide they should wait some time before marrying since they are only “practically of age.” They reaffirm their love in the beautiful duet “You Are for Loving.” Rose and Warren, and Lucille and Lon pair off for the duration of the Ball.

Back in the living room at home, Tootie is upset by the move away from St. Louis. Esther tries to comfort her with “Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas,” but it is not until Mr. Smith makes a big announcement, that the family is truly happy again.

The scene and time change to spring, and the chorus sings a reprise of “The Trolley Song” as everyone prepares to go to the World’s Fair. The chorus is interrupted by the Smith family gathering and singing a reprise of the show’s title song, “Meet Me in St. Louis.”