

HELEN. Know what Roxane said?

ESTHER JANE. What?

HELEN. Roxane said Ralph Parker likes you.

ESTHER JANE. Really? Roxane said that? (*HELEN nods.*  
*After a pause.*) I think he's cute. Don't you think he's cute?

HELEN. I like older men.

ESTHER JANE. Older?

HELEN. Sixth-graders.

ESTHER JANE (*clearly impressed*). Oh! (*Pause.*) Have you  
picked a subject for your theme?

HELEN. No. Something about politics, maybe.

ESTHER JANE. Maybe I will, too.

HELEN. Are you a democrat or republican?

ESTHER JANE (*uncertain, then, with conviction*). Presbyterian.

SCHWARTZ. All right then, if you don't believe me, I double dare ya!

FLICK. So you're sayin' if I put my tongue on this post it'll stick.

SCHWARTZ. Yeah!

FLICK. That's dumb! It wouldn't happen!

SCHWARTZ. Then go ahead! Prove I'm wrong!

RALPHIE. Go ahead, Flick.

FLICK. Heck no!

SCHWARTZ. That's 'cause you know it'd stick!

FLICK. Would not!

SCHWARTZ. Would too!

FLICK. Would not!

SCHWARTZ. All right then, I double dog dare ya!

RALPH. This was getting serious. A double dog dare. There was nothing left but a "triple dare you" and, finally, the coup de grâce of all dares, the sinister "triple dog dare."

SCHWARTZ. I triple dog dare ya!

FLICK (*nervous*). All right, all right.

RALPHIE. Do it, Flick.

SCHWARTZ. Go on, smarty pants, do it. (*He gives FLICK a poke in the arm.*)

FLICK (*wincing*). Hey! That's my sore arm, OK?

RALPHIE. Do it.

FLICK. Don't rush me.

(*He cracks his knuckles, shakes out his hands, steps up to the lamppost and sticks out his tongue as RALPH speaks.*)

FLICK (*leans into the lamppost and his tongue makes contact*). Thith  
ith noth ... (*And then he realizes.*) Thtuck! I'm thtuck! (*He begins to wail.*)

SCHWARTZ. Jeepers! It really works!

(*The bell rings to end recess.*)

RALPHIE. Wait! Whadda we gonna do?

SCHWARTZ. I dunno.

FLICK. Auth! Oaait! Cuh back! Doe lee nee! Cuh back!

RALPHIE. The bell rang.

RANDY. Santa! Santa!

SANTA. HO! HO! HO! WHO'S NEXT?

RANDY. I gotta go wee-wee!

RALPHIE (*hissing*). Be quiet! We're gonna see Santa.

RANDY. Santa! Santa!

ESTHER JANE (*shyly*). Hello, Ralph.

RALPHIE. Oh ... um ... hello, Esther Jane.

ESTHER JANE. What are you here for?

RALPHIE (*nervous*). To ... to see Santa.

ESTHER JANE (*a gasp of feigned surprise*). I'm here to see Santa, too!

RANDY. Santa! Santa!

ESTHER JANE. We're both here for the same reason. Isn't that funny?

RALPHIE. Yeah. Funny. Yeah. Guess I'm the last one.

ESTHER JANE. It's almost closing time. I'm asking Santa for a doll.

What are you asking for?

RALPHIE (*self-conscious*). Um ... a legendary official Red Ryder  
carbine action 200-shot Range Model air rifle with a compass and  
this thing which tells time built right into the stock.

ESTHER JANE (*impressed*). Oooo.

RALPHIE. Yeah ...

ESTHER JANE. Aren't you afraid you'll shoot your eye out?

RALPHIE. Guess so.

ESTHER JANE. It was nice talking with you, Ralph.

RALPHIE. Uh huh.

ESTHER JANE. 'Bye.

RALPHIE. 'Bye.

RANDY. I gotta go wee-wee!

RALPHIE. Sh!

RANDY (*turns back to look up the steps*). Santa! Santa!

RALPHIE. Will you be quiet?

RANDY (*whispering*). Santa! Santa!

RALPHIE. What's the matter with you, anyway?

RANDY. I gotta go wee-wee!

RALPHIE. You'll just have to wait.

THE OLD MAN. How 'bout this one?

MOTHER. No, see, there's a bare spot there.

THE OLD MAN. Yeah, but maybe we can ... Sh, sh, sh, let me handle this.

LOT OWNER. Find what you're lookin' for, folks?

THE OLD MAN. Well, we thought maybe ... *(He picks up the tree, holds it at arm's length and points.)*

LOT OWNER *(takes it, spins it)*. Yeah, that there's a good 'un.

MOTHER *(pointing)*. There's a bare spot ...

LOT OWNER. *(pounds it once or twice against the ground)*. Oh no, that there's just where it was layin' when they shipped it.

THE OLD MAN *(an expert)*. Yeah. Sure.

MOTHER. But it's been standing up since ...

LOT OWNER. Yeah, but it's cold, y'see.

THE OLD MAN. Cold.

LOT OWNER *(tamping it against the ground again)*. Froze that way.

THE OLD MAN. Froze.

LOT OWNER. You get it inside where it's warm, it'll thaw out, them branches'll spread, it'll fluff up real good.

THE OLD MAN *(sucking his teeth)*. Oh yeah. Real good.

MOTHER. I guess. It's not the kind where the needles fall out, is it?

LOT OWNER. Nah!

THE OLD MAN. Nah!

LOT OWNER. That's them balsams.

THE OLD MAN *(nods wisely)*. Them balsams

MOTHER. Oh. Well, all right then.

THE OLD MAN. Whaddo I owe ya?

LOT OWNER. Well ...

THE OLD MAN *(dickering)*. Don't forget now, it's got a bare spot there.

LOT OWNER. I toldja, it ...

THE OLD MAN. Yeah, yeah, sure, sure. I know. But still ... oughta knock a buck or two off the price.

## A Christmas Story

### COWBOY

Why, a cowboy never gives up, pard! Even when they've poisoned the water hole, blown up the rail-road trestle and shot yer horse, ya never give up! No sir! Ya just push yer hat back, square up yer shoulders, look 'em straight in the eye and say, "I'm a cowboy! I love m'coun-try, m'horse an' m'best girl in that order. Y'can stab me, shoot me fulla arrahs 'r' plug me fulla holes, I ain't fallin' down! 'Cause I'm tougher'n a boot, meaner'n a rattlesnake 'n' stubbornner'n a mule. I'm still standin'! I'm standin' tall, standin' fer what's right, standin' fer m' country an' not standin' fer nothin'! And y'know why? It's 'cause I'm a cowboy, and a cowboy never gives up!" (*Big musical finish.*) That's always been my motto, pard. Words to live by. Kind of a ... theme, y'might say. So you jist git up, dust yerself off and climb back on that horse that bucked y 'off. We got a deal, pard?