

The Great Gildersleeve
A Christmas Story

Written by Michael Wheeler
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Cast:

ANNOUNCER
GILDY
LEROY
BIRDIE
BESSIE
JUDGE
PEAVEY
LEILA
DOC PETTIBONE
MRS. BANKS
DELIVERY MAN

=====

1 ANNCR It’s The Great Gildersleeve
2 GILDY (GILDERSLEEVE LAUGH)
3 MUSIC OPENING THEME
4 ANNCR The Friends of Old Time Radio present a
5 special Christmas edition of the Great
6 Gildersleeve
7 MUSIC OPENING THEME OUT
8 ANNCR Now lets look in on the Great Gildersleeve.
9 It’s Christmas Eve morning and while
10 Summerfield slept, mother nature has
11 deposited a few inches of fresh snow on the
12 ground. In the Gildersleeve household, we
13 find Leroy and his uncle seated at the
14 breakfast table.
15 LEROY When do you think Marge will be coming home,
16 Unk? The house just doesn’t feel the same
17 without her.
18 GILDY Not for a couple of weeks, I suppose, Leroy.
19 You know Aunt Hattie is getting on in years
20 and since she broke her wrist she needs
21 Marjorie to help her around the house.
22 LEROY Yeah, I know. But she picked a lousy time
23 to break it. It’s sure going to be a funny
24 Christmas without Marge here.
25 GILDY It could be worse, my boy. Aunt Hattie
26 could have decided to come here to
27 convalesce.
28 LEROY Talk about taking one for the team. I’ll
29 have to remember to be nicer to Marge when
30 she does come home.
31

1 GILDY We’ll call Aunt Hattie long distance
2 tomorrow and you can wish them both a Merry
3 Christmas. I’m sure Marjorie misses us just
4 as much as we miss her.
5 LEROY (MOUTH FULL) Okay.
6 GILDY Leroy, take your time. Don’t wolf down your
7 food like that.
8 LEROY But Unk—
9 GILDY I have to be at the office in half an hour
10 but you don’t see me wolfing down my food,
11 do you?
12 LEROY What food? Birdie hasn’t even brought yours
13 out yet.
14 GILDY No, she hasn’t. (UP) Oh, Birdie!
15 LEROY Besides, Unk, it snowed last night.
16 GILDY What has that got to do with anything.
17 LEROY That means there are sidewalks to be
18 shoveled. I’m meeting Piggy in a few
19 minutes and we’re going to make some money
20 shoveling sidewalks.
21 GILDY Starting with ours, I presume.
22 LEROY Aw, Unk!
23 GILDY And whose shovel were you planning to use
24 for this new business venture of yours?
25 LEROY Well, whenever it needs any pushing, it
26 seems to belong to me.
27 GILDY I’ll tell you what, Leroy. In keeping with
28 the spirit of the season, I’ll give you and
29 Piggy the prevailing rate. How much do you
30 boys charge?
31 LEROY Would you believe five dollars?
32 GILDY Hardly!

1 LEROY Well, you can’t blame a kid for trying. How
2 about fifty cents, then.

3 GILDY That sounds more reasonable. (UP) Oh,
4 Birdie! Birdie!

5 BIRDIE (FADING IN) (WEARY) Sorry for the delay Mr.
6 Gilsleeve. I’m afraid I burned the toast a
7 trifle.

8 SFX FORK ON PLATE

9 GILDY Hmmm. The pancakes seem a little on the
10 rigid side, too.

11 BIRDIE I’m sorry, sir. -- I guess I got a little
12 distracted and lost track of the time.

13 GILDY That’s all right, Birdie. I’m sure with all
14 the preparations you have to make for our
15 big Christmas Eve gathering this evening,
16 that breakfast just fell by the wayside.

17 BIRDIE Yes, sir. About this evening -- how many
18 was it you is expecting for dinner, again?

19 GILDY Well, there’s Leroy and myself, of course.
20 Leila and the Judge. - And the Peaveys. I
21 was thinking I might invite Bessie, too.
22 I’m not sure whether she’s going home to be
23 with her family or if she has other plans
24 but it would be a nice gesture. A fourteen
25 pound turkey ought to go that far, shouldn’t
26 it.

27 BIRDIE With a little help from the pantry, I think
28 we can make it stretch.

29 GILDY Yes, the pantry! We still have some of
30 those green beans from the Victory Garden
31 that you canned. Those will be a real
32 treat. Good thinking, Birdie!

1 LEROY And the pumpkins we grew should make a swell
2 pumpkin pie.
3 GILDY Excellent idea, Leroy!
4 BIRDIE I’m real sorry about the vulcanized
5 flapjacks, Mr. Gilsleeve.
6 GILDY Just don’t let the government find out about
7 them. If they do, I’ll have to apply for a
8 priority every time I want a short stack.
9 BIRDIE If you’ll give me just a few minutes, I can
10 mix you up another batch in a jiffy.
11 GILDY I don’t have time for that, now. I’ll just
12 have a quick cup of coffee and be on my way.
13 BIRDIE Coffee?
14 GILDY Yes, coffee. That hot black beverage that’s
15 customarily served with breakfast.
16 BIRDIE Well, you see, Mr. Gilsleeve – I’m afraid I
17 sort of forgot to put on the percolator.
18 GILDY Oh, my goodness! Well, never mind. There’s
19 no time to brew a pot now. I’ve got to get
20 down to City Hall for a meeting with the
21 Mayor.
22 SFX CHAIR SCRAPE -- FOOTSTEPS
23 LEROY What kind of a meeting are you having on
24 Christmas Eve, Unk?
25 GILDY The kind where they hand out Christmas
26 bonuses, I hope, Leroy. I’ll see you both
27 later.
28 MUSIC BRIDGE
29 SFX DOOR OPENS
30 GILDY (OUT OF BREATH) Morning, Bessie.

1 BESSIE Good morning, Mr. Gildersleeve. It looks
2 like we’re going to have a nice white
3 Christmas.
4 GILDY No time for chit-chat right now. I’m
5 running late. Just going to hang up my
6 coat, here. I’ve got to run right up to the
7 Mayor’s office.
8 BESSIE Why, Mr. Gildersleeve?
9 GILDY It’s Christmas Eve, Bessie, and
10 traditionally on Christmas Eve the city
11 fathers see fit to reward all the little
12 city workers who have been really really
13 good with a token of their appreciation.
14 BESSIE But the Mayor already left for the day.
15 GILDY What?
16 BESSIE Mayor Terwilliger’s secretary was here just
17 a few minutes ago. She said he already went
18 home for the day. -- But she did leave an
19 envelope for you. It’s on your desk.
20 GILDY (PLEASED) An envelope! Well, well. Merry
21 Christmas, Bessie.
22 BESSIE (GIGGLES) Merry Christmas to you, Mr.
23 Gildersleeve.
24 SFX FOOTSTEPS – TEAR OPEN ENVELOPE
25 GILDY (OFF) (ANGRY) Why that no-good Terwilliger!
26 BESSIE (FADING IN) What’s the matter, Mr.
27 Gildersleeve?
28

1 GILDY (READING) "Due to fiscal restraints imposed
2 by the City Council and in an effort to
3 combat inflation, there will be no cash
4 bonuses for Summerfield municipal employees
5 this year." - The Cheapskate! -- "However,
6 in order to allow city workers to enjoy more
7 of the holiday with their families and loved
8 ones, city offices will close at noon on
9 Christmas Eve. I will be attending the
10 Small Town Mayors Association meeting in
11 Miami through the second week of January. I
12 look forward to seeing you all in the new
13 year, upon my return"

14 BESSIE (DREAMY) Miami.

15 GILDY Merry Christmas, Mayor Scrooge!

16 BESSIE At least he gave us half a day off.

17 GILDY He’s already on his way to Florida! And on
18 Summerfield’s nickel! You wonder where our
19 Christmas bonuses went, Bessie? They’re on
20 their way to Florida with the Mayor.

21 BESSIE Well, I hope they have a good time.

22 GILDY Bessie, get your things! We’re not waiting
23 till noon. This office is closing as of
24 right now!

25 BESSIE It’s not even ten o’clock, yet. Do you
26 think we should?

27 GILDY I’m the Water Commissioner of this town and
28 I’ll run my department as I see fit. And I
29 see fit to close for the holidays starting
30 right now.

31 BESSIE Well, Merry Christmas, Mr. Gildersleeve.

32 GILDY Oh, Bessie, before we go -

1 BESSIE Yes?

2 GILDY I’m having some friends over for a Christmas
3 Eve dinner this evening. I know your family
4 is out of town so if you don’t have any
5 other plans—

6 BESSIE Thank you, Mr. Gildersleeve. That’s very
7 kind of you but I’m going to spend Christmas
8 Eve with my boyfriend, Irving. I think he
9 might have a special present for me.

10 GILDY Irving? I’ve never heard you mention him
11 before.

12 BESSIE We’ve only been going out for a month or so
13 but he wants me to meet his family.

14 GILDY Well, congratulations, Bessie. And the best
15 of luck to you both.

16 BESSIE Irving’s not really much to look at. He’s
17 not particularly athletic, either, or even
18 very smart.

19 GILDY I see.

20 BESSIE But he has the one thing a girl looks for in
21 a man when there’s a war going on.

22 GILDY What’s that?

23 BESSIE Flat feet.

24 GILDY Flat feet? Oh! (CHUCKLES)

25 BESSIE Before we go, I do have something for you,
26 though, Mr. Gildersleeve.

27 GILDY What’s that?

28 BESSIE Do you remember that mistletoe you had
29 hanging in the doorway?

30 GILDY (GIGGLES)

31 BESSIE Well, look where you’re standing.

32 GILDY (SURPRISED) Why, Bessie!

1 BESSIE (KISSES HIM ON CHEEK) Merry Christmas, Mr.
2 Gildersleeve.
3 GILDY Well, Merry Christmas, Bessie!
4 MUSIC BRIDGE
5 SFX DOOR OPENS – PEAVEY’S BELL
6 JUDGE Good morning, Peavey.
7 SFX STAMPS FEET
8 JUDGE Brrrrr.
9 PEAVEY Good morning, Judge. Is it cold enough out
10 there for you?
11 JUDGE I’ll say! How about a mug of your world
12 famous hot cocoa?
13 PEAVEY Coming right up.
14 JUDGE Did I see Leroy and that Banks boy come out
15 of here a minute ago, Peavey.
16 PEAVEY Yes, they were both just in here. Leroy was
17 doing some last minute Christmas shopping.
18 I don’t normally sell tobacco products to
19 children but he wanted to buy some cigars
20 for his uncle.
21 JUDGE They acted kind of skittish when they saw me
22 coming. Took off like jackrabbits. So,
23 Gildy’s getting some Corona Coronas for
24 Christmas?
25 PEAVEY Well, now I wouldn’t say that. I offered to
26 sell them to Leroy at a discount, five for a
27 dollar, but he went with the El Lobos at
28 three for a quarter.
29 JUDGE Gildersleeve won’t know the difference,
30 anyway.
31

1 **PEAVEY** He does tend to favor the El Lobos himself.
2 (CONTINUES)
3 **SFX** DOOR OPENS – PEAVEY’S BELL
4 **PEAVEY** Well, speak of the devil! Here he is now.
5 Good morning, Mr. Gildersleeve.
6 **GILDY** Good morning, Peavey – Judge. Peavey, I’m
7 absolutely famished. What have you got
8 behind that lunch counter of yours today?
9 **PEAVEY** How about a nice turkey salad sandwich?
10 **GILDY** Turkey salad? I’ll probably be eating that
11 for the next week. Haven’t you got anything
12 else.
13 **PEAVEY** Well, now, let’s see -- I’ve got some cheese
14 and pressed ham.
15 **GILDY** Pressed ham. Eugh. I guess I’ll get an
16 early start on the turkey salad, then,
17 Peavey.
18 **JUDGE** Why are you so hungry this early in the day,
19 Gildy? It’s not lunchtime, yet.
20 **GILDY** If you must know, I didn’t have any
21 breakfast.
22 **JUDGE** (LAUGHS) What did you do, oversleep?
23 **GILDY** I’ll have you know I was up and at the table
24 in plenty of time, you old goat. Birdie
25 just didn’t seem to be quite on the ball
26 this morning for some reason, that’s all.
27 **JUDGE** Is Birdie not feeling well?
28 **GILDY** I don’t know, Horace. She did seem a little
29 distracted. And now that you mention it, I
30 think she did have bags under her eyes. You
31 don’t suppose she’s still having trouble
32 with that finance company, do you?

1 JUDGE No, that’s been taken care of. Her brother
2 is protected by the Soldiers and Sailors
3 Relief Act and that extends to her as a co-
4 maker. They’re both immune from any
5 prosecution for the duration.

6 SFX PLATE ON COUNTER

7 PEAVEY Here’s your sandwich, Mr. Gildersleeve.
8 Coffee?

9 SFX TELEPHONE RINGS

10 GILDY Yes, please.

11 PEAVEY Be back with you in just a moment.

12 SFX TELEPHONE PICKUP

13 PEAVEY Hello, Peavey’s Pharmacy, this is Mr. Peavey
14 speaking. -- Oh, hello Mrs. Ransome. --
15 Why, yes, he is here. Just a moment.
16 (WORRIED) It’s for you Mr. Gildersleeve -
17 it’s Mrs. Ransome.

18 GILDY Hello, Leila - Leila - Slow down, Leila -
19 Now what’s the matter? -- Birdie! - What -
20 She - Oh my goodness! I’m on my way!

21 MUSIC BRIDGE

22 SFX HURRIED FOOTSTEPS - DOOR OPENS

23 GILDY Birdie! Leila!

24 LEILA (OFF) In here, Throckmorton.

25 BIRDIE (CRYING SOFTLY)

26 GILDY (FADING IN) Birdie! For heaven’s sake,
27 what’s the matter?

28 BIRDIE I’m sorry, Mr. Gilsleeve. I didn’t want to
29 burden you with my troubles. (CONTINUES
30 SOBBING)

31 GILDY Burden? What in the world is going on here?

1 LEILA I found her this way, Throckmorton. I came
2 over to borrow a couple of eggs - I was
3 going to bake a cake to bring over with me
4 this evening - and I found her this way --
5 just crying her eyes out.

6 GILDY Birdie -- Birdie, Please - tell us what’s
7 the matter.

8 BIRDIE It’s my brother, Mr. Gilsleeve, my baby
9 brother, Buddy.

10 GILDY The one who’s in the army?

11 BIRDIE (COMPOSING HERSELF) Yes, sir. Corporal
12 Clarence D. Coggins - we always called him
13 “Buddy”. He joined up right after Pearl
14 Harbor. He didn’t wait to be drafted, no
15 sir, he joined right up. And ever since D-
16 Day he’s been driving a truck back and forth
17 between Omaha Beach and the front lines.
18 Keepin’ the army supplied with food and
19 ammunition.

20 GILDY The Red Ball Express.

21 BIRDIE Yes sir, the Red Ball. ‘bout a week ago,
22 mama got a telegram. Buddy was missing in
23 action.

24 GILDY Birdie!

25 LEILA Oh, Birdie! I’m so sorry.

26 BIRDIE Mama didn’t tell me at first. But yesterday
27 she got another telegram. They changed
28 Buddy’s status from missing in action to
29 missing in action - presumed dead. (BREAKS
30 DOWN) Oh, Mr. Gilsleeve! I helped raise
31 that boy. What am I going to do?

1 GILDY We can all pray for him, Birdie, that’s
2 what. And don’t give up hope. If he’s
3 missing in action, no matter what they
4 presume, there’s still some hope.

5 LEILA That’s right, Birdie. And this is the best
6 time of year to be praying for a miracle.
7 Miracles do still happen.

8 BIRDIE (RESOLVED) Well, Buddy did his duty and I’m
9 not going to shirk mine. I’ve got a dinner
10 to get ready.

11 GILDY Now, Birdie, don’t be silly.

12 LEILA Nobody expects you to—

13 BIRDIE No, sir. I’ve got to do this. I’m not
14 going to start letting people down just
15 because I have some burdens of my own, no,
16 sir.

17 LEILA I can take over making dinner, Birdie.

18 GILDY (ALARM) What?

19 BIRDIE No, ma’am. I am gonna do my duty.

20 GILDY Birdie, for crying out loud—

21 BIRDIE Not gonna abandon my post, no sir. (SHARP
22 INHALE) Oh, my! Mr. Gilsleeve, I---

23 SFX BODY DROP

24 LEILA Throckmorton! She’s fainted.

25 GILDY I’ll get her back on the sofa. You call Doc
26 Pettibone - Quick!

27 MUSIC MIDBREAK BRIDGE

28 ANNCR We’ll return to the Great Gildersleeve in
29 just a few moments.
30

1 ANNCR Ladies, are you looking for a way to stretch
2 those red ration points? Do you need a
3 delicious, nourishing dish that you can prepare
4 in just seven minutes by the clock? Then say
5 “hello” to Kraft Dinner Macaroni and Cheese. Yes
6 Kraft Dinner Macaroni and Cheese is the red point
7 saver that you make in just seven minutes by the
8 clock and it’s as easy as one - two - three. If
9 you can boil water, you can make fluffy delicious
10 macaroni in no time at all! Each package has
11 Kraft’s special “no-bake” macaroni that you
12 simply boil and drain. Also in the box you will
13 find a packet of Kraft’s very special grated
14 cheese product - that’s the secret of this point
15 saving, time saving wonder food! If you’re
16 strapped for time or short on points, Kraft
17 Dinner Macaroni and Cheese is the product you
18 have been waiting for. So, the next time you shop
19 look for - ask for - Kraft Dinner Macaroni and
20 Cheese. Did I mention that it only takes two red
21 ration points? Yes, Kraft Dinner Macaroni and
22 Cheese. It’s made by KRAFT!

23
24
25
26

1 MUSIC POST MIDBREAK BRIDGE

2 **ANNCR** Now, let’s get back to the Great
3 Gildersleeve. It’s half past noon on
4 Christmas Eve and, so far, the day has been
5 filled with anything but holiday cheer. We
6 find Gildersleeve pacing back and forth
7 nervously while Doc Pettibone tends to
8 Birdie in another room.

9 **GILDY** Confound it! What’s taking him so long?

10 **LEILA** Now, Throckmorton, Doctor Pettibone has only
11 been here for a few minutes. Be patient.
12 Birdie is in good hands.

13 **GILDY** Maybe we should call an ambulance. If
14 anything happens to Birdie—

15 **LEILA** Why don’t you let the doctor decide what to
16 do? If he thinks we need an ambulance, I’m
17 sure he’ll let us know right away.

18 **GILDY** Poor Birdie. I had no idea. And I was so
19 abrupt with her this morning. Over a silly
20 stack of pancakes.

21 **LEILA** Now, Throckmorton, don’t blame yourself.
22 You didn’t know.

23 SFX DOOR OPENS AND CLOSES OFF

24 **LEROY** (SLUGGISH) Hi Unk. Hello Mrs. Ransome. Is
25 that Doc Pettibone’s car I saw out front?

26 **GILDY** Yes, it is Leroy.

27 **LEROY** Well, where’s Doc Pettibone?

28 **LEILA** He’s with Birdie.

29 **LEROY** Birdie?

30 **GILDY** She’s been under a lot of stress lately,
31 Leroy and a little while ago – well, she
32 fainted.

1 LEROY Gosh!

2 SFX DOOR OPENS

3 GILDY Doctor Pettibone! How is she, Doc?

4 DOCTOR Birdie is resting comfortably, Gildy. I
5 gave her a mild sedative so she’ll be a
6 little drowsy for the rest of the afternoon.

7 GILDY What happened, Doc? It wasn’t her heart?

8 DOCTOR No, her heart is fine. Her blood pressure
9 is a little elevated but apparently she
10 hasn’t eaten anything since yesterday
11 morning and what with the stress ---

12 GILDY Is she going to be all right?

13 DOCTOR She’ll be fine. But it may take a little
14 time for her to deal with the grief --
15 losing her brother.

16 LEROY Her brother?

17 GILDY Birdie’s little brother is missing in
18 action, Leroy.

19 LEROY Gosh!

20 DOCTOR I’m afraid I’ve seen far too many cases like
21 this, the past few years.

22 GILDY That means we’ve got to be very
23 understanding with her, Leroy, especially at
24 this time of year.

25 DOCTOR Leroy, let me take a look at you. - How do
26 you feel?

27 LEROY Oh, um - I’m fine, Doctor Pettibone.

28 DOCTOR You look a little pale - and a little green.
29 Let me feel your forehead.

30 LEROY I’m fine Doc, really. Can I go up to my
31 room, Unk, and lay down for a while?

1 GILDY You want to take a nap? Leroy, you must be
2 sick!

3 DOCTOR (SNIFFS) Hmmmm. I think I know the cause
4 of Leroy’s malaise.

5 GILDY Good grief! What have we got here -- an
6 epidemic?

7 DOCTOR In Leroy’s case it’s just a simple case of
8 wolf bite, eh, Leroy?

9 GILDY Wolf bite?

10 DOCTOR El Lobo’s revenge?

11 SFX DOORBELL

12 LEROY (SAVED BY THE BELL) I’ll get it!

13 SFX FOOTSTEPS – (UNDER)

14 DOCTOR It’s nothing to get too concerned over,
15 Gildersleeve.

16 SFX DOOR OPENS

17 LEROY (OFF) (DISAPPOINTED) Oh! Hello, Mrs. Banks.
18 MRS. BANKS (OFF) Hello, Leroy, is your uncle in?
19 LEROY (OFF) Well, uh—

20 GILDY (FADING IN) Yes, he’s in, Mrs. Banks. Come
21 right in. Very good to see you again.

22 MRS. BANKS Yes, good afternoon, Mr. Gildersleeve. Oh,
23 Doctor Pettibone. I do hope nobody’s ill.

24 DOCTOR Well, I was just having a look at Leroy,
25 here.

26 MRS. BANKS Yes. I see. Well you know I’m not one to
27 carry tales, Mr. Gildersleeve, but – do you
28 by any chance know what your nephew has been
29 up to this morning?
30

1 GILDY I believe he and Piggy were going to shovel
2 some sidewalks, Mrs. Banks. Heh-heh.
3 Enterprising young men those boys of ours.
4 Hardworking. Fine lads!

5 MRS. BANKS Enterprising indeed, Mr. Gildersleeve.
6 Leroy and Theodore did shovel some
7 sidewalks. And do you know what they did
8 with the money they made?

9 GILDY Well – no.

10 MRS. BANKS Why don’t you tell your uncle, Leroy?

11 LEROY It wasn’t my idea, Unk -- Piggy dared me!

12 GILDY Dared you to what, young man?

13 LEROY Well, all I wanted to do was get you a
14 Christmas present, Unk. So me and Piggy
15 went to Mr. Peaveys after we finished
16 shoveling. We only made a couple of dollars
17 and I had to split it with Pig, but I used
18 my share to buy you some cigars.

19 LEILA Mr. Peavey sold you cigars? At your age?
20 My goodness!

21 LEROY I told him they were for Unk – and they were
22 for Unk – but Piggy dared me to smoke one.

23 GILDY Leroy!

24 LEROY So I dared him to smoke one, back.

25 GILDY You know better than that, Leroy.

26 LEROY I don’t see how you stand it, Unk. We were
27 both choking and coughing our heads off but
28 neither one of us was willing to be the
29 first to quit. We both smoked a whole
30 cigar. And I feel really sick.

1 MRS. BANKS Theodore has been quite indisposed as well
2 and I thought you ought to know about it,
3 Mr. Gildersleeve.

4 GILDY Yes, well, thank you Mrs. Banks. I hope
5 Theodore isn’t too ill.

6 MRS. BANKS I’m sure he’ll survive. What do you propose
7 to do about this, Mr. Gildersleeve?

8 GILDY Well, in my day if a parent caught a boy
9 Leroy’s age with a cigar, the punishment was
10 usually to make him smoke the whole thing.
11 It looks like Leroy and, uh, Theodore,
12 managed to punish themselves.

13 MRS. BANKS Yes, I suppose they did. I just hope they
14 learned their lesson. Well, I’ll be on my
15 way then, Mr. Gildersleeve. A Merry
16 Christmas to you.

17 GILDY Yes, Merry Christmas, Mrs. Banks.

18 SFX DOOR CLOSE

19 GILDY Leroy!

20 LEROY Yes, Unk?

21 GILDY Go to your room!

22 MUSIC BRIDGE

23 GILDY Are you comfortable, Birdie? Can I get you
24 anything – a pillow, a glass of water –
25 anything?

26 SFX OFF – RATTLE SOME PANS

27 BIRDIE I’m okay, now, Mr. Gilsleeve, really. Won’t
28 you please let me go back to my kitchen?

29 GILDY Doctor Pettibone said you’re to take it
30 easy. Don’t worry – Leila is taking care of
31 the dinner preparations.

32 BIRDIE But, Mr. Gilsleeve--

1 LEILA (FADING IN) Birdie, where do you keep your
2 grits?
3 BIRDIE Grits?
4 LEILA Yes. I want to make my Grandmother
5 Beecham’s famous grits and okra casserole.
6 It’s a family recipe that’s been handed down
7 for generations.
8 GILDY (SICKLY) Grits and okra?
9 LEILA It’s simply delicious. It reminds me of
10 Christmas when I was a little girl back home
11 in Savannah.
12 GILDY Oh. Savannah.
13 LEILA Christmas time just doesn’t seem right
14 without peach cobbler, hot cider in front of
15 the fireplace, and some of Grandmother
16 Beecham’s grits and okra casserole.
17 BIRDIE I’m sorry, Miz Ransome, but we just don’t
18 have any grits in this house.
19 GILDY (SIGH OF RELIEF)
20 LEILA Well, that’s all right. I’ll just use corn
21 meal instead. You do have corn meal?
22 BIRDIE (RELUCTANT) Yessum. It’s in the pantry on
23 the right middle shelf.
24 LEILA Well, good. Now I won’t even bother to ask
25 about the okra. Maybe I can substitute
26 eggplant. Thank goodness the Judge insisted
27 we grow some eggplant.
28 GILDY Yes. Every year he insists on eggplant.
29 I’ll have to remember to thank Horace for
30 that, the very next time I see him.
31 LEILA One more thing, Birdie. When do you think I
32 should start the turkey roasting?

1 BIRDIE (GASP) The turkey? `bout four hours ago!

2 LEILA Oh, dear. Well, maybe if I turn up the

3 heat. Throckmorton, we may have to eat a

4 little later than you originally planned.

5 GILDY I’ll go call the Judge and Mr. Peavey and

6 see if I can buy us a little time.

7 SFX FOOTSTEPS

8 BIRDIE Miz Ransome. There ain’t no way you’re

9 gonna have that turkey done at a decent

10 hour. There just ain’t no way.

11 LEILA Now, don’t you worry yourself about it,

12 Birdie, not even one little bit. The doctor

13 said not to let you get excited. (FADING)

14 You just take it easy and let little ol’

15 Leila take care of everything.

16 BIRDIE But Miz Ransome—

17 LEROY (OFF) Hey, Unk. Can I come downstairs now?

18 BIRDIE (UP) Your uncle is in his study, Leroy,

19 making a phone call. Why don’t you come on

20 down. I reckon he’ll let me grant a parole,

21 seeing as it is Christmas Eve.

22 SFX FOOTSTEPS DOWN STAIRS

23 LEROY Okay.

24 BIRDIE Sit down here beside me, Leroy. I hear you

25 and Piggy got into a little mischief this

26 morning.

27 LEROY Yeah, I guess we did. It was all Piggy’s

28 fault, though.

29 BIRDIE Piggy, huh?

30 LEROY Well, I guess maybe it was my fault a little

31 bit, too.

1 BIRDIE Yes, maybe it was – a little. (SIGHS) Young
2 boys is always in such a hurry to be growed
3 up. My little brother, Buddy, was like
4 that, too. Always testing the limits. I
5 don’t know how my mama put up with him
6 sometimes. Lawd, she loved that boy.

7 LEROY I’m really sorry about your brother, Birdie.
8 BIRDIE I know you are, Leroy. But Buddy was doing
9 what he wanted to do – serving his country.
10 He was proud to be doing that -- and I’m
11 proud of him for doing it, too.

12 LEROY And now he’s missing in action?
13 BIRDIE That’s right, Leroy. My mama’s Christmas
14 present this year may turn out to be a gold
15 star to hang in the window.

16 SFX CLATTER OF PANS – BREAKING GLASS

17 LEILA (OFF) Oh, dear!
18 BIRDIE What is that woman doing to my kitchen?
19 GILDY (FADING IN) What was that?
20 LEROY I think Mrs. Ransome is cooking for us, Unk.
21 BIRDIE Don’t sound like any kind of cooking I know
22 about.

23 GILDY Yes. Well, she would probably be more at
24 home in her own kitchen but I’m sure she’s
25 certainly trying.

26 LEROY What was it that Mister Ransome passed away
27 from, anyway, Unk? Do you happen to know?
28 GILDY Leroy! Mrs. Ransome is a fine cook. I
29 thought I told you to go to your room.
30 BIRDIE I asked him to come down, Mr. Gilsleeve.
31 GILDY Oh. Well, alright, then. But you be on
32 your best behavior young man.

1 LEROY Yes sir.
2 SFX THUMPING (OFF)
3 GILDY Now what?
4 LEROY It sounds like the turkey is trying to
5 escape.
6 BIRDIE Please, Mr. Gilsleeve, Let me get up off
7 this couch and--
8 LEROY Hey, Unk! Do you smell smoke?
9 GILDY Smoke?
10 BIRDIE Oh! Lordy, mercy!
11 LEROY (SNIFFS) Something’s burning!
12 SFX OFF – RATTLE PANS
13 LEILA (OFF) Throckmorton, you don’t happen to have
14 a fire extinguisher out here anywhere, do
15 you?
16 GILDY Oop! Fire extinguisher!
17 SFX OFF – HISSING
18 LEILA (OFF) Oh, never mind. It’s out!
19 GILDY Heugh!
20 MUSIC BRIDGE
21 LEILA Oh, Throckmorton! The Judge and the Peaveys
22 will be here any minute. What in the world
23 are we going to do?
24 GILDY Don’t panic, Leila. We have those green
25 beans that Birdie canned. We can heat a
26 couple jars of those up in a jiffy.
27 LEILA But my grits and okra casserole—
28 GILDY That’s alright, we can use it for a doorstep
29 while the kitchen airs out. Just remind me
30 to take it out and hide it, afterwards.
31 That was Birdies favorite casserole dish.

1 LEILA But the turkey won’t be ready before
2 midnight. What are we going to do for a
3 main dish?
4 GILDY Don’t worry about that.
5 LEILA But Throckmorton.
6 GILDY Don’t worry about it. – Here, here’s a
7 couple of boxes of Kraft Dinner. We can
8 make delicious fluffy macaroni and cheese in
9 just seven minutes by the clock.
10 LEILA That’s right! I’ve heard about that on the
11 radio. And only two red ration points!
12 SFX DOORBELL
13 GILDY Someone’s here. You get working on the
14 Kraft Dinner and I’ll see who it is.
15 SFX DOOR OPENS
16 LEROY (OFF) Oh, hello, Judge Hooker. Come on in.
17 JUDGE Good Evening, Leroy. Hello, Gildy. I
18 stopped by the bakery on my way over and
19 picked up some dinner rolls.
20 GILDY Very thoughtful of you, Judge. Come on in
21 and have a seat.
22 JUDGE (LOW) How’s Birdie doing?
23 GILDY (LOW) She’s doing all right, all things
24 considered.
25 JUDGE (UP) Oh, hello, Birdie. My sincerest
26 condolences for your loss.
27 BIRDIE Thank you, Judge.
28 JUDGE I understand that Mrs. Ransome is pinch-
29 hitting in the kitchen this evening.
30 BIRDIE (GLUM) Yes sir.
31 SFX DOORBELL
32 GILDY That will be the Peaveys. Get that Leroy.

1 LEROY Okay.
2 SFX FOOTSTEPS (UNDER)
3 GILDY (QUIETLY) I’m afraid the dinner isn’t going
4 to be quite what I had originally planned,
5 Horace, but Leila has given it the old
6 college try.
7 SFX DOOR OPENS
8 JUDGE I’m sure everything will be fine.
9 DELIVERYMAN (OFF) Telegram for Miss Birdie Lee Coggins.
10 LEROY (OFF) Hey, Unk!
11 GILDY Coming, Leroy.
12 SFX FOOTSTEPS
13 GILDY I’ll take that young man. Thank you.
14 SFX CHANGE RUSTLING
15 GILDY Uh, here.
16 DELIVERYMAN Thank you, sir. Merry Christmas!
17 GILDY Yes, Merry Christmas to you.
18 SFX DOOR CLOSES
19 GILDY Well, Birdie, it’s a telegram for you.
20 BIRDIE Will you open it for me, please, Mr.
21 Gilsleeve? I just can’t.
22 GILDY Well, all right.
23 SFX ENVELOPE OPENED
24 GILDY (PLEASED) Well! Listen to this, Birdie.
25 (READS) “Buddy alive and well. Recuperating
26 hospital. Expect full recovery. Merry
27 Christmas. Love, Mama.”
28 BIRDIE (TEARS OF JOY) Oh, Mr. Gilsleeve!
29 JUDGE That’s wonderful news, Birdie.
30 LEROY Oh, boy!
31 GILDY Now we have something to really celebrate!

1 LEILA (FADING IN) What’s going on in here? What’s
2 all the commotion?
3 GILDY We just got a telegram, Leila. Birdie’s
4 brother is okay! Apparently he was wounded
5 but they expect him to make a full recovery.
6 LEILA Oh, Birdie, I’m so happy for you.
7 BIRDIE It’s my Christmas prayer answered, that’s
8 what it is. Praise the Lord!
9 LEILA Well, now that we have something to
10 celebrate, dinner is just about ready. I’m
11 afraid it isn’t up to Birdie’s high
12 standards but I don’t think anyone will go
13 away hungry.
14 SFX DOORBELL
15 GILDY That will be the Peaveys.
16 SFX FOOTSEEPS – DOOR OPENS
17 GILDY Peavey! Mrs. Peavey! It’s good to see you
18 both.
19 PEAVEY Good evening, Mr. Gildersleeve. Was that a
20 Western Union man I saw---
21 GILDY It certainly was, Peavey! Wonderful news -
22 Birdie’s brother is alive! He’s in the
23 hospital but he’s alive!
24 PEAVEY Well, that is good news!
25 GILDY It certainly is! My goodness, don’t you two
26 stand out there in the cold. Come in, come
27 in!
28 PEAVEY Thank you, Mr. Gildersleeve.
29 GILDY (LOW) Did you, uh, remember to bring that
30 item from the pharmacy?
31 PEAVEY Yes. Sir. I have it right here.

1 GILDY Everybody! -- I think we can all sit down to
2 dinner now that the Peavey’s are here. Open
3 up that sack, will you, Peeve?
4 SFX RUSTLE BAG
5 PEAVEY Here they are!
6 GILDY Fine, Fine. -- Yes, indeed! How can we
7 possibly go wrong? Kraft Dinner macaroni
8 and cheese, green beans from our own victory
9 garden, hot dinner rolls courtesy of the
10 Judge - and turkey salad sandwiches hand
11 made and fresh from Peavey’s Pharmacy. It’s
12 a Christmas Eve dinner we’re all sure to
13 remember for years to come.
14 PEAVEY Well, now I wouldn’t say --- Well, maybe ---
15 Yes! I guess maybe I would, at that.
16 GILDY (BIG LAUGH) Merry Christmas, Peavey! Merry
17 Christmas, everybody.
18 MUSIC END BUMPER
19 MUSIC END THEME
20 ANNCR This special Christmas edition of the Great
21 Gildersleeve starred:
22
23 CREDITS
24
25
26