BUYING BILLY'S CHRISTMAS PRESENT
Characters......Milly, Mary, Young Man Clerk
Scene...........Clerk Counter at a Department Store

Milly:(speaks) Here they are, Mary. Here (beckons to Mary) don't you think ties would be nice? Yes, I think so too. (Hopefully) These are pretty. (Bends over counter; motions to clerk) Can't you wait on me, please? I want some of these ties. Oh, they're different prices, Mary. (To clerk) Let me see some. (Waits impatiently.)

(To Mary) I never knew men were so fussy about things. That man has looked at a dozen ties. Why can't he take one and get away from the counter? You really think Billy'd like a tie? It seems sort of - well - (laughs) it isn't original, but I can't think of another thing. Bronze? My dear, what would he do with Bronze? It might fall on him too, he's so careless. (laughs)

(To clerk) Will you wait on me please? I want some of these ties.

(To Mary) They are real silk aren't they? I would hate to give him something that wasn't real. He hates imitations. He gave me these ear rings last year. I doubted if they were the real things. It didn't seem possible any man would be silly enough to buy real pearls. I could get just as good looking for fifty cents at Shaw's, but I wouldn't hurt his feelings by saying so. You wouldn't? Well, I took them in myself. Jewelry clerks don't lie.

(To clerk) Will you please wait on me? I have been waiting for some time. I want some of these ties.

(To Mary) We'll never be waited on here. That clerk can't seem to see but one customer at a time. Here's a pretty one. (Selects tie from counter, holds it aloft) Like it? You like that better? (Stands holding one in her hand) Um-m I like mine, it's more ultra. But Mary, all men like red. N-no, he never does, but (brightens) maybe he'd like a change. I've worn blue so long I can't buy anything else. If some one would give me henna or taupe I'd be delighted to wear it, but I wouldn't buy it myself, don't you see? Billy's like that perhaps. Oh, he'll like it. It's from me.

(To clerk) What's the price of these? (Waves ties; bends over counter to attract clerk's attention) How much? Will you wait on me, please? How much? Three dollars For the two? One? Oh...

(To Mary) Three dollars! I never knew any tie cost over seventy five cents. You can buy a whole yard of brocade for that price. It's ridiculous. Men say we are extravagant. Can't you think of something else? If I'm going to pay that, I want something more than a remnant of fancy silk. Pictures? What sort of pictures? Oh Mary, men never care for pictures. He'd laugh at me. They can get all they want from calendars and they're prettier heads than you can buy in the stores, and just out too. No he wouldn't like "Sir Galahad" or the "Lone Wolf". They're so old, dear. I guess there's nothing else but ties.

(To clerk) Will you please... (breaks off) (looks up smiling at clerk) Yes, you were busy. That's alright. I want some of these ties. Awful rush at this time isn't there? Can't just decide. What do you like? Yes, that is neat, but it isn't distinctive, I want something no one else will wear. Have you more of these? (Holds tie up) Oh, then I don't want it. I thought perhaps you'd have just one of some unusual pattern. I know they do some times in suits. Samples, you know.

(To Mary) You like that?
(To clerk) Would you wear it? No, I don't suppose we'd ever see another like it. Billy likes odd things. He has the queerest taste. (Laughs) Well, I don't know. (Hesitates, looking at tie. Looks up, discovers absence of clerk)

(To Mary) Where has he gone? Couldn't that customer wait until I had decided? He's only shown me two ties. No, I don't like any of those hanging up. (Discovers price on tie) Four dollars! Goodness! for that hideous thing! Did you ever hear such prices? We could buy a whole blouse for it. I'd never give that for a tie. Never! I wonder if Billy buys his ties here.

(To returning clerk) No, I don't care for this one. It's too starry. Lovely silk though, isn't it? What is that one? (Points to tie) Oh, now that is beautiful.

(To Mary) Isn't it, Mary? Blue, too...that's my favorite color. You like it, don't you, Mary? 'Most everyone likes blue.

(To clerk) Well, then I think...wait a moment. What is it? Oh, two fifty. I'm not sure I want it. Maybe I ought to give him something more...more distinctive. (Walks up counter) These are good looking. (Fingers ties, discovers price tags) Seventy-five cents. (under breath) These are more what I mean, this design. These yellows are so cute.

(To Mary) Mary did you ever see anything so artistic? Billy will love them.

(To clerk) Seventy-five cents, is that all? It isn't the price, I'm trying to find just the right style. Aren't these bargains? I thought so. The silk is wonderfully good. What is the difference between these and the four dollar...oh, I see...a little newer pattern, but these are so much prettier.

(To Mary) Don't you think so, Mary? (Whispers to Mary) They're not so bad, are they? If it were in a... (breaks off)

(To clerk) You'd put it in a box for me, wouldn't you? A nice box like one of the four dollar ones come in? Why not? You must have loads of boxes. No one thinks anything of a box. Then I don't want it. (Walks away indignantly)

(To Mary) What have you found? More ties? Why they are just as good as the seventy five cent ones. Why didn't the clerk tell us there was another counter? Aren't they exactly the same thing? Yes, they might do for little Johnnie. Does he wear ties now? It doesn't seem possible. Seventeen! Don't tell anyone you've a nephew that age. Oh Mary! (Runs a few steps) Look! Twenty-five cents! Doesn't seem true they can make ties for that money.

(To clerk) I always thought ties like these were never less than three dollars. They're not real silk...they can't be. Oh...odds and ends. (laughs) They're really very pretty. I ought to take a dozen. (Runs hand under ties) Here's one, yes, it's lovely. It's just like that blue tie on the other counter. (examines it)

(To Mary) A spot! But Mary, I can clean it.

(To clerk) What is that spot? Don't you think it will come out? Lemon and salt is good. I'm sure I can clean it with gasoline, anyway. I think they'll give me a little at the garage near us. I'll ask when I pass by today. No I don't like the others. I'll take this one...no, just this one. Will you put it in a box for me? A nice box, thank you. (Sighs to Mary) That's off my mind at last. Let's go upstairs. They have the loveliest coffee and waffles here for fifteen cents.