

A Wayne Scott • LifeHouse Production



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CAST OF CHARACTERS

(In Order of Appearance)

Wilbur Wright	Aviation Pioneers
Orville Wright	
Milton Wright	Encouraging Minister Father
Susan Wright	Patient, Intelligent Mother
Katharine Wright	Helpful Sister
Charles Taylor	Rough, but Friendly Mechanic
Mrs. Welsh	Leading Town Gossip
Octave Chanute	Flight Expert
Bill Tate	Assists Brothers
Young Wilbur	
Young Orville	
Chauncy	Potential Suitor for Kate
Mr. Carmody	Junk Dealer
Dr. Spitler	Medical Doctor

OTHER CHARACTERS OF THE CAST:

School Students	(Percy and others)
Townfolk	(Mrs. Tate, John Daniels, others)
Museum Docent	
Teacher	

"The Wright Brothers at Kitty Hawk"

SYNOPSIS OF SONGS

ACT I

Overture

1. "The Tour".....Teacher, Students, Museum Docent
2. "School's Out".....Student Ensemble
3. "Measure Twice, Cut Once".....Susan, Wilbur and Orville
4. "Sled Race".....Wilbur, Orville, Student Ensemble
 "The Tour" (Reprise).....Museum Docent
 "School's Out" (Reprise).....Student Ensemble
 "Measure Twice, Cut Once" (Reprise).....Wilbur and Orville
5. "Kites".....Wilbur, Orville, Student Ensemble
6. "Entrepreneurs".....Wilbur and Orville
7. "Hockey Game".....Players and Spectators
8. "What Would I Do Without You?".....Orville, Katharine and Susan Wright
9. "What Will I Do With My Life?".....Wilbur
 "Entrepreneurs" (Reprise).....Wilbur and Orville
10. "Bicycles".....Katharine, Chauncy, Townfolk Ensemble
 "What Will I Do With My Life?" (Reprise).....Wright Family Ensemble

ACT II

Entr'acte

11. "World's Fair".....Barker and Cast Ensemble
12. "Otto Lilienthal".....Charlie, Student Ensemble
13. "You Will Finally Fly".....Milton
14. "Quiet Obsession".....Wilbur, Orville, Katharine, Milton
15. "You Can't Do That!".....Mrs. Welch and Townfolk Ensemble
16. "Dreams of Flight".....Wilbur, Orville, Octave Chanute
 "You Can't Do That!" (Reprise).....Chorus Ensemble
17. "Frustration".....Wilbur and Orville
18. "Love Has to Wait".....Katharine

Finale

- "You Will Finally Fly" (Reprise).....Cast Ensemble

"The Wright Brothers at Kitty Hawk"

By Pattie Burch

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ACT I

Overture

SCENE 1A: KITTY HAWK AVIATION MUSEUM (Set: Neutral)

(As audience is admitted prior to overture, the dimly lit :Kitty Hawk Aviation Museum," complete with sign and video display case, is seen on stage. Behind velvet rope(s) can be seen the "Wax Figures" of Orville and Wilbur Wright and their younger selves. Milton, Susan and Katharine Wright are in separate areas. Each are the actors posed perfectly still. Each are labeled with display signs. The backdrop is a giant semi-abstract blueprint design featuring components of the first Wright flyer of 1903. This backdrop opens to reveal Kitty Hawk Dunes when appropriate and otherwise serves as background and/or extension of all other scenes. Shortly after the audience is admitted, Custodian(s) enter to "dust" figures, "sweep" floor, "empty trash," etc. in plain view of the audience. The Docent may also enter and exchange pantomimed pleasantries with Custodian(s) while straightening Milton's tie, adjusting boy's hats, etc. The custodians exit just before or during overture. Docent sits on stool and eats an apple while reading a book on the Wright Brothers. The lights dim to black during overture and as lights rise, the Teacher and Students enter. Docent watches, amused))

Teacher *(In an irritating monotone drone)* Class... Class! Come long, now. This is the Aviation Museum where we'll see how flight began with the Wright Brothers of Dayton, Ohio.

Students *(Groaning in bored despair)* Awwww—

A Student Do we have to go in?

Teacher It took eight months to get this rotten field trip approved and you're going to enjoy it— or else!

SONG: "THE TOUR"

Broker *(Leading class)* Come along now, children, let us not delay
Let us see the items on display
There's so much that we can see
Everything from A-Z
On the airplane's history
Oh, drat!
Student A Good Lord!
Student B Not that!
Student C I'm bored!
Student D Can anything be duller than the past?
Students I'm glad you took the time to come and ask!
Docent There's no need to fret and there's no need to fear
Come along, now, students— gather here!
When you look at history
Don't forget that you will see
People just like you and me!
There were young people and old people
With lives and hopes and dreams like yours
With faith, courage and hard work
They spread their wings and they soared!
Now take these brothers standing here

*(Refers to figures,
Who come to life
to match lyrics
upon being tapped
by Docent's pointer*

all join in choreography. Video images appear and illustrate lyrics as needed throughout production; "Wax" figures are choreographed off by this song's end)

They transformed transportation
But they were once as young as you
And got their education
Orville Wright and Wilbur too
Were boys with aspirations
And as they worked and studied hard
They gave us aviation!
The Wright Brothers were tight brothers
Who kept their eyes on the clear, blue sky
They proved once and for all time
That if we try we can fly!
(Music continues segue to next song)

Docent And just like you, they were only too happy to have some time off from school!... *(All exit)*
(Lighting transitions to next scene)

SCENE 1B: WINTERY OHIO DAY (Set: Neutral)

SONG: "SCHOOL'S OUT"

School Kids

School's out and I'm happy to say that
School's out, oh why can't it stay forever?
School's out, no more hassles and homework
Loud and clear— shout it out
School's out even if it's for only
Two weeks for Christmas and snow and New Years
School's out, no more teachers and headaches
Loud and clear, shout it out
Freedom, oh freedom. Now for good times everyone
Now that we're starting our break I know that
We're gonna have some fun (We're gonna have some fun)
Winter's the time for snowfall so we head to the hill everyone
School's out and I'm gonna go sledding
Last one to the bottom's an old rotten egg
Let's go to the top of the sled run, race down fast, here we go
This snow is the best in a long time
I think that my sled is faster than yours
We'll see but nobody cares because school is out, shout it out
Loud and clear, shout it out
Loud and clear, school is out.
(End of song)

Percy So how about it Orville, Wilbur? Meet you at Parson's Hill in fifteen minutes and you can see me take the big slope on the new sled my Pop just bought me.
Sally Brand new?
Percy Of course... the best money can buy!
Orville *(Mocking)* "The best money can buy!" Don't you ever get tired of saying that?
Percy *(Sniffing the air)* Hey fellas, you smell that?
Toady Al Smell what?
Percy Sour grapes! *(He guffaws)* Come on boys, let's get some fresh air!
Toady Al Yeah, fresh air. Ya comin' Chauncy?
Chauncy *(Uncomfortably)* Well... uh... meet you guys there. Don't mind him Orville.
Orville Aw... he thinks his father's so rich!
Wilbur Because he is! Chauncy's right, you shouldn't let Percy get to you.

Chauncy So... you guys coming then?
Wilbur Well... we ought to get Katharine home. *(Calling to Katharine)* Kate! Hey, come on, quit dawdling!

Katharine *(Perturbed)* I'm not dawdling. I'm waiting for Allison Flannery. We girls are going to her house and her mother is going to teach us how to bake.

Orville Bake? Ha, that's a laugh! Mother has to hog-tie you to get you to cook at home.
Chauncy *(Dimly)* How can she cook if she's hog-tied?
Wilbur *(Laughing)* All right Kate, but make sure someone walks you home.
Chauncy So you can come then... great! Wait here while I go get my sled, will ya, fellas!
Allison *(Entering)*... so then she said to me "You'll never believe what she said!" and I said "Try me."
Rachael So what did she say she said?
Allison I can't say. Oh... there you are, Katharine. Did your mother say you could come?
Katharine Um hummm! Are you coming too, Rachael?
Rachael *(Prissily)* No. I have to go ask Mrs. Richardson to Sunday dinner, then I'm hurrying right home to study. As Mother always says: "Smart young ladies always say that homework comes before play."

Katharine *(Excitedly)* What do we get to make Allison, cookies?
Allison No! Mother says that we were such good helpers last week with the canning that she's going to teach us how to make blueberry pie! *(They exit past Wil & Orv)*

Katharine Her prize winning pie?
(Allison nods yes)

Katharine Oooh, I can just taste it now.
Wilbur Yeah, well, don't forget to bring us home a slice!
Katharine *(Nose in the air)* Hummph!
Orville *(Toward Katharine)* Exasperating girl! *(Sobering)* We should just go home, Wilbur. It won't be much fun going without a sled.

Wilbur Chauncy will let us use his. I say we go.
Orville I still wish father could have helped us build one. It seems like we never even get to see him any more with him out on church business all the time.

Wilbur He's helping a lot of people with his preaching Orv, bringing them to the Lord.
Orville Yeah... but... the snow's perfect right now.
Wilbur The snow will hold until he gets home.
Chauncy *(Racing in with his sled, breathless)* I'm back! Hey fellas, hurry! I heard that Percy took the hill in eight seconds flat! *(He runs offstage)*

Orville Willakers!

(Music begins)

Wilbur Come on, Orville... let's go see Mr. "King of the Hill's" new throne.
Orville All right. Hey, with any luck, he'll hit a rock and we'll get to see him "dethroned!"
(They exit laughing)
(Lighting transitions to)

SCENE 2: WRIGHT FAMILY KITCHEN

(Stage lights up)
(Sitting at the table with school books) **Katharine** Mummy, how do you spell Cincinnati?
Susan C-I-N-C-I-N-N-A-T-I. What's that you're doing dear?
Katharine I'm just finishing up my history report on Ohio. It's not due until we go back, but I wanted to make a nice map to go with it, you know, for extra credit.
Susan Good girl! Put in the extra effort and you'll go far!
Katharine All the way to college, just like you, Mummy! *(Hopefully)* Mmmm, do I smell hot cocoa?
Susan You do. It's getting late and the boys will be frozen when they get in. This will warm them up. *(She laughs as Katharine gives her a pathetic look)* Don't worry my girl, there's plenty here for you too. *(She pours her a cup as the boys come trudging in)*
Katharine Oh, thank you, Mummy!
Susan Ho! And here's our intrepid Arctic adventurers now!
Wilbur Hello, Mother. *(He kisses her cheek)* Something smells wonderful!

(Music fades)

Susan Hot cocoa. You two peel off those icicles and warm up with a cup.
(The boys take off their gear and sit down)

Susan And after supper there's a lovely pie for dessert.

Wilbur Did you make the pie, Kate?

Katharine *(Proudly)* Of course!

Orville If she made it, I passss...
(Wilbur and Susan look at him hard)

Orville ... pass on the hot cocoa so I can have... *(Dejectedly)* two pieces of pie.

Susan Just for that, my boy, you may have both. But... what's that frown? What's bothering you my boy?

Wilbur Percy's father bought him a new sled and...

Orville And he's lording it over everyone!

Susan It's fast, huh?

Wilbur A real hum-dinger!

Orville We could build a faster one, I know we could, if only Father was here to help us! We miss out on all the fun.

Susan Now, you mustn't blame your father, Orville. He's got important work to do, and does all he can when he's home. And you mustn't covet what others have either, that's an abomination to God. As Solomon said in the Book of Proverbs: "The sluggard craves and gets nothing, but the desires of the diligent are fully satisfied."

Wilbur What do you mean Mother?

Susan Get me a piece of paper and a pencil, and I'll show you.
(Wilbur jumps up and gets them as Susan clears a space on the table, Katharine has seen this happen before)

Katharine *(Aside)* Not again! *(Big sigh)* Mummy, Rachael's cat just had kittens; may I go over and see them?

Susan *(Already deep in thought)* Certainly dear... but hurry back... supper's nearly ready. And bundle up!

Katharine Yes, ma'am. *(She goes to put coat, etc... on)*

Susan We've got quick minds and able hands. We'll plan out our own sled, the fastest one ever, and surprise your father with it when he gets home. We'll draw it out first so we know how to cut it. Now, what are the dimensions of Percy's sled, Wil?

Wilbur I guess... about... four feet long by two wide and... probably a foot off the ground.

Susan Well, that's fine for a two person sled, but if we lengthen it, then the whole family can ride. Let's make it narrower too. And we should make it lower to the ground. Do you know why we would want to do that Orville?

Orville Because... uh...

Katharine Wind resistance silly! *(She sticks out her tongue and flounces out the door)*

(Music begins)

Wilbur Of course! Like when you're walking up hill on a windy day and you lean into the wind to make the going easier. If we build the sled lower, the wind will go right over our backs. It'll be faster than greased lightning!

Orville *(Embarrassed)* I knew that... I knew that! *(He grabs the drawing)* Well, let's get cutting!

Susan *(Taking the plans back)* Now, not so fast my boy; we have to make sure the plan is just right. And always remember: measure twice, cut once. That's how you get things done!

SONG: "MEASURE TWICE, CUT ONCE"

Susan Measure twice, cut once. Think it out, write it down on paper
Measure twice, cut once. You can build anything

Wil & Orv *(Measure twice, carefully we draw our plan, as we write it down on paper)*
(Think it through carefully we plan it out. We can build anything)

Susan One day, you never know, the places you will go
Wil & Orv (Think it through plan it out)

Susan The science mysteries were made to be
Wil & Orv (Write it down follow the plans we've made)

Susan Discovered by someone, it might be both of you, who will find
Wil & Orv (Maybe you maybe me)

Susan Answers there, where others fail to see, be sure to think it through
Wil & Orv (Carefully write it down think it through)

Susan Be sure to write it out, the lessons you will learn, will be your guide
Wil & Orv (Write it out we will learn)

Susan So never fail to see and learn from history
Wil & Orv (Lessons will be our guide and never fail)

Susan The great inventors' lives were times to maximize their potential
Wil & Orv (History were times to maximize their potential)

Susan Measure twice, cut once. Think it out, write
Wil & Orv (Measure twice, carefully we draw our plans as we write)

Susan It down on paper. Measure twice, cut once. Think it out
Wil & Orv (It down on paper. Carefully we draw our plans as we)

Susan Write it down on paper. Measure twice, cut once. Think it out
Wil & Orv (Write it down on paper. Think it through, carefully we plan it out)

Susan You can build anything
Wil & Orv (We can build anything)

All Anything you (we) put your (our) mind to,
Anything you (we) put your (our) heart in

Susan Anything, anything, anything
Wil & Orv (Measure twice, cut once, do it carefully, measure twice, cut once, we can build anything)
(Musical segue to next song)

(Black out)

(Lights up on)

SCENE 3: WINTERY OHIO DAY (Set: Neutral w/Snowy Embankment)

(The action resumes at the stage apron as the boys walk in with their newly built sled under their arms)

Orville I don't know about this, Wilbur. This sled is so different... do you really think it will work?
Wilbur Of course; Mother knows what she's doing, and the best way to test it is in a contest.
(Percy and the others enter. Percy has his sled)
Percy If it's an ugly sled contest, you win hands down!
Orville It's not ugly!
Toady Al It ain't no rosebud!
Percy Looks like it might break in a strong wind! Look at that skinny thing fellas! I wouldn't sit on it;

Chauncy it'll crack right down the middle for sure!
Wilbur (*Nervously*) How come your father build it so low, Wilbur? Did he run out of wood?
Percy My father didn't build it, we did. And our mother helped us plan it out.
Orville Mother! Who ever heard of a mother building a sled?!
 Our mother can do lots of things! She went to college and studied math and science and a bazillion other things!
Toady Al Yeah... she took a special class on how to build sleds that don't go nowhere!
 (*All but Chauncy and boys laugh*)

SONG: "SLED RACE"

Kids That is the craziest looking sled I've ever seen
 Don't even try to race down the hill in that ugly thing
 The Wright brothers have done it again
 With that design they'll never win
Wil & Orv Let's race
All Ready, set, go
Kids Look at them go, far from the last
 I can't believe how they got it to go so fast
 (The Wright) brothers have beaten the rest
 Their design was really the best
 The old kind of sled went down to defeat
 Now we can see what it means to be obsolete
 (*Musical segue to next song reprise*)

Percy Say! Do you want to sell that sled?!
Wilbur Nah, we're keeping this one! (*They exit the stage and the others follow*)
Orville Yeah! This one's the best that money can't buy!

SCENE 4: KITTY HAWK AVIATION MUSEUM (At side) WITH DOCENT

SONG: "THE TOUR" (Reprise)

Docent The Brothers Wright put everyone to shame
 Their sled was faster than the rest
 And because they did their best
 They would relish every test
 And God would surely bless—
 The Wright Brothers were tight Brothers
 Who shared their lives and dreams of flight
 From fast sleds they were soon led
 To set their sights on some kites!...
 (*Music segues to next song*)

SCENE 5: OHIO SPRING DAY (Set: Neutral)

(School Children are seen with coats and sleds)
Teacher (*Calling after children*) Now remember, there's a history report due the day you all return, and make sure you all study for the spelling bee...
 (*She is drowned out by the chatter and exits, perturbed*)

SONG: "SCHOOL'S OUT" (Reprise)

School Children School's out and I'm happy to say that
 School's out, oh why can't it stay forever?
 School's out, no more hassles and homework

Loud and clear— shout it out
 School's out, even if it's for only Spring Break
 For Easter and Passover now
 School's out, no more teachers and headaches
 Loud and clear, shout it out— Freedom, oh freedom
 Now for good times everyone
 Now that we're starting our break I know that
 We're gonna have some fun (we're gonna have some fun)
 Spring is the time for breezes so we head to the hill everyone
 School's out so let's go fly our kites now
 Let's see who can get their kite high in the sky
 Let's go to the top of the hill and fly our kites
 Here we go
 This wind is the best in a long time
 I think that my kite goes higher than yours
 We'll see but nobody cares because school is out, shout it out
 Loud and clear, shout it out— Loud and clear, school is out
(Music trails to a conclusion after 15 seconds)

Chauncy Ah... Spring break at last! Hey, see you two at the hill with your kites?
Orville Us... sure... but not for a couple of days. Our father's home and we have to help him with chores.
Chauncy Great! See ya there then! *(He exits)*
Wilbur What'd you tell him that for Orville?
(He follows Orville who walks down the stairs to a bench where Katharine is already seated, licking a lollipop)
Wilbur You know we don't have any kites!
Orville Well, I've had my eye on one of those new ones at Jensen's Mercantile. I've been saving up for the last couple months...
Wilbur You've saved enough?
Orville Well... no... but if we pooled our funds...
Wilbur Don't look at me, I gave my savings to the church food drive.
Orville All of it?
Wilbur Yep.
(Orville looks at Katharine who doesn't bother to look back)
Katharine I'm saving for a set of encyclopedias.
Orville But...
Katharine *(Shaking her head matter-of-factly)* Uh-oh.
Orville *(Resigned, but then brightening)* *(Sigh)* So... I've been thinking ... if we want to get some extra pocket money we need to come up with a plan.
Katharine You got that from Mummy!
Orville Quiet, Squirt! We've got to go door to door, offer to do chores...
Wilbur *(Doubtfully)* Most folks around here do for themselves.
Katharine You could make things.
Orville I said quiet, Squ— what did you say?
Katharine You could make things, and sell them. Everybody wanted to buy your sled after all.
Wilbur Hey, that's true! But... where would we get the money for the materials of... whatever we make?
Orville We got some scrap wood around the shop.
Wilbur Not much though. No, we have to come up with more of that plus other things; nails and such, and maybe even some scrap metal, and all for free.
Orville How are we going to do that?
(The boys get off the bench and begin to pace. Mr. Carmody enters carrying a large burlap bag stuffed full of junk)
Mr. Carmody Hello, children. What are you three up to? You look like you're all in a downright dither.
Katharine *(Brightly)* Oh, hello, Mr. Carmody... *(Sudden realization)* Mr. Carmody!
Orv & Wil *(Inattentive, deep in thought)* Hello, Mr. Carmody... *(Sudden realization)* Mr. Carmody!
Mr. Carmody Sumpthin' I can do for you, gents?
Orv & Wil *(Fast and furious)* "Sure you can help us!" "You see, we need money" "For kites," "You have

junk..." etc.

Mr. Carmody Wait a minute, wait a minute, one at a time; slow yerselves down now!
(The boys take a breath, Orville takes the lead)

Orville We... a... well you see...

Wilbur We'd like to offer you a business proposition, Sir. You see, Orville and I, we want to start our own business...

Mr. Carmody To earn pocket money.

Wilbur So we thought we'd manufacture things and sell them.

Orville We'd make them out of old junk...

Wilbur ...like the kind you collect...

Orville ...you being the "King of Junk" and all.
(Wilbur gives him a dirty look and shakes his head. Katharine breaks the tension)

Katharine It was my idea!

Mr. Carmody *(Chuckling)* Your idea— huh, little lady? *(He chicks her under the chin and winks)* A family run enterprise, eh?

Wilbur Yes, sir! And naturally, we'd give you a percentage of the profits if you'd agree to supply the raw materials sir.

Mr. Carmody Well, that's what I like to hear; enterprising young men... and ladies... ready to work hard for what they want. Course, I'd like to help you out...

Orville Really? That's swell!

Mr. Carmody Now, hold yer horses son! As I was about to say... well, you weren't far from right; I did use to be the "King of Junk" around these parts. But pickin's have been a mite sparse as of late, since my ol' mule Betsey up n' died. You see, I can't collect near as much junk without Betsey. That cart of mine was pretty light fer her, but it's a sight heavier fer this ol' back, so I've been havin' to collect on foot you see. It's really cut back on my inventory.

Wilbur Well... two backs are always better than one sir!

Orville Sure! We can haul the cart for you Mister. Carmody, and make the collections lickety-split.

Mr. Carmody Well, the wheels on it are a mite testy...

Orville We'll fix 'em for you, Mr. Carmody! We can do anything we put our minds to.

Mr. Carmody Boy, yer a godsend. Tell you what— you do that and you can have all the junk you can cart home. And mayhaps I have some ol' bicycle wheels that'll work on it; you come 'round and see.

Wilbur Gee wiz, Mr. Carmody, that's great! We'll come right away.
(Mr. Carmody exits, the boys start to follow)

Katharine My two brothers... the junk collectors. *(She runs after them)*

Orville We'll need to get some axle grease from home for those wheels to cut down on the friction so the wheels will hold up to the weight of the cart. *(He sees Katharine and stops her)* Hey, where do you think you're going, Squirt?

Katharine With you. We're in business, remember?

Orville Uh-uh! No Squirt's allowed.

Katharine *(Stomping her foot)* But it was my idea!

Wilbur *(Trying to calm her)* So it was. But listen Kate, this junk business... well, it's a dirty business, requiring strong backs, not strong minds. Besides, Mother would never let you go door to door. But...

Katharine Look, Katharine... I'm sure you'll be a help to us... someday. But if you really want to help, why don't you ask Mother if you can sell some of those peach preserves you've been making. After all, we'll still need to buy nails and such.
(They exit. Katharine stomps off toward home)

(Musical segue begins)

Katharine Ooh! Girls never get to do anything!
(Black out)
(Lighting transitions to)

SCENE 6: WRIGHT FAMILY KITCHEN

Katharine *(Milton Wright stands, suitcase in hand, saying farewell to his wife and a tearful Katharine)*
(Tightly embracing her father) Papa, don't go! California is too far away!

Milton I don't want to, sweetheart, believe me. The Lord's work is never easy. Every time I come back, you're an inch taller and a mile prettier! Look, I promise I'll write everyday.

Katharine Promise?!

Milton Cross my heart. *(He hugs her, then looks at Susan)*

Susan Promise?! *(They laugh softly and embrace)*

Milton It's just a few weeks at most.

Susan A few weeks too many...

Milton *(Kissing her softly)* Thanks... for always keeping the home fires burning.

Susan They burn brightest right here. *(She touches her heart. They hug again)* Come back soon.
(The boys bound in breathless)
(Music trails off to conclusion)

Milton Well, there's my two "Captains of Industry!" I almost thought I'd miss saying goodbye!

Wil & Orv Sorry, Father.

Wilbur We... we ran all the way, because Orville insisted on stopping at the mercantile to see the kites.

Orville Well, I...

Milton You mean you've saved enough already?

Orville Well, no, we've only just started really...

Wilbur But we were noticing as we watched the boys fly their kits, that the store bought ones seem to be of shoddy construction. So we went to the mercantile for a closer look.

Orville And decided we could probably make a better one ourselves.

Susan Of course you can!

Milton Good idea!

Wilbur We... we thought we'd start planning after you left, Father.

Milton Which, unfortunately, I must do right now or miss my train! *(He shakes the boys' hands)* Good-bye boys, take care of your mother and sister. *(He hugs the girls again and exits as everyone says good-bye)*
(The children sadly watch him leave. After a moment, Susan tries to lighten the mood)

Susan So... boys... tell me about these shoddy-made kites.

Katharine You mean like the kites they wanted to buy with my encyclopedia money?

Susan Boys, you didn't!

Orville I just asked Mother. I didn't know. Anyway, what does she need encyclopedias for; she's a walking encyclopedia!

Wilbur That's true... she'll probably be a teacher or something! Why, the way you're going Kate, you'll probably graduate college before Orv and I graduate high school!

Orville If we graduate high school...

Susan What was that?

Orville Well, gee Mother, you're always saying that our minds are our most precious possession. If we could use them to invent something, a better kite for instance, and sell them, well, it just seems like a waste of time to finish school.

Susan Never let me hear you say that again Orville, not even in jest! Nothing is a substitute for a good education! Are you trying to break your poor mother's heart?

Wilbur He didn't mean it Mother, truly.

Susan Well, all right then. Now about these kites...

Wilbur We'd like to make a kite that stays up longer and flies higher. Percy Robbin's kite did all right until it got up about 60 feet...

Orville ...then it started to dip and swerve like a banshee!

Susan Do you think a longer tail might help?

Wilbur Maybe.

Orville But we thought also if we use lighter wood for the cross bars, and made the belly band a little tighter... maybe used piano wire to wrap...

Wilbur Whoa, slow down will you! *(To Susan)* His brain's been going a mile-a-minute since we left the shop, Mother. I can't keep up with him!

Susan Well, you'd better get it down on paper then, before your brother's brain explodes entirely!
(They all laugh)

Susan Katharine and I will leave it to you two, we need to go to the grocery and library before dark.
We'll be back.
(She and Kate exit)

(Music begins)

Wilbur All right, Mother.
Orville *(Pencil, paper, and straightedge in hand)* All right, so like I was saying, we can try a different tail, but I really think that the reason Percy's kite flopped was that it was bound too tightly in the middle cross bars. It couldn't flex, so it broke.
Wilbur Only way to tell is to make one up and test it.
Orville Sure, but let's hurry; I think the wind might pick up.
Wilbur Now, Orville, you can't speed up perfection. Remember what Mother always says...

SONG: "MEASURE TWICE, CUT ONCE" (Reprise)

Wilbur Measure twice, cut once.
Think it, write it down on paper
Measure twice, cut once
We can build anything
Orville We can build anything
Wilbur Anything we put our minds to
Orville Anything we put our heart in
Wilbur Anything
Orville *(Measure twice, cut once)*
Wilbur Anything
Orville *(Measure twice, cut once)*
Both We can build anything
(Music segues to next song)

Orville I've been thinking, Wil.
Wilbur Not a surprise to me!
Orville I've been thinking that... well... if a kite can soar so high and steady-like, I bet you and I might fly some day. If we could attach ourselves to a really big kite, maybe we could go so high... *(He trails off. Both boys look toward the heavens expectantly, then at each other)*
Both Nah!
(Musical segue with the sound of wind under it)
Wilbur Hurry up, Orville! The wind is kicking up! Let's give this thing a try!
(Music rises)
(Black out)
(Lights up on)

SCENE 7: A WINDY HILL (Set: Neutral)

(The Wright brothers arrive with their kite just as the others are packing up theirs. They gather around the Wrights)
Chauncy Hey fellas, where'd you go off to?
(The boys ignore him as they frantically prepare to launch their kite)
Percy You can't seriously be thinking about sending that thing up! The wind's blowing too hard; just about everyone else's kite has crashed!
Toady Al Yeah, what are you, dodo birds or something?!
(The boys continue to determinedly ignore them all)

SONG: "KITES"

Kids That is the craziest looking kite I've ever seen
Don't even try to compete with us with that silly thing
The Wright brothers have done it again
With that design, they'll never win

Wil & Orv
All
Children

Let's try it
Ready, send it up, go!
Look at it go, look at it fly
I can't believe how they got it to fly so high
(The Wright) brothers have beaten the rest
Their design was really the best
The store-bought kites down to defeat once again
We can see what it means to be obsolete
(Instrumental continues under following short dialogue)

Toady Al
Orville
Percy
Wilbur
Percy

(Excitedly) Say, do you want to sell that kite?
Maybe...
How much? *(Orville and Wilbur smell a sale)*
Forty cents.
Forty cents! My store bought kite cost that much!

Wil & Orv

(Song resumes)
If you want to buy our kites then you'll have to pay the price
You can get a cheaper kite
But it won't fly as high as our kites will
Just you wait and see, we both know we're gonna be
Inventors and entrepreneurs
(Music segues to next song)

Toady Al
Wilbur
Percy
Orville

I know what an inventor is, but what's an enterpre... entrepre...
An entrepreneur is someone who comes up with an idea and starts a business
Some business... selling kites!
Not just kites! We can invent and sell sleds, better wagons, anything! Why, with brains and hard work, the sky's the limit!

(During the next song, the boys "grow" to become young men. The song starts with them as boys and finishes with them as young men; Susan and Milton observe young men from side special light)

SONG: "ENTREPRENUERS"

Wil & Orv

Entrepreneurs, you can insure profit is yours when you endure
Business in America, the way to get ahead is have an idea
Then make it real, hire some help. Get out and sell
If you've really got what it takes
We can take it, we are gonna make it
Work it on out, never a doubt, what do you say, starting today
We'll be partners in our own enterprise, it'll change our lives
Entrepreneurs, gotta be sure, makin' our schemes, followin' dreams
Right here in America
That's the way it came about for Thomas Edison
Andrew Carnegie made steel, and such a deal
So if we really stick together, something we would rather
Do to get ahead there's nothing we couldn't make
Entrepreneurs, you can insure profit is yours when you endure
Business in America, yes, that's our plan
Then make it real, hire some help, get out and sell
Business in America, yes, that's our plan. We're gonna be entrepreneurs
(Music continues as a 20 second transition, trailing to end)
(Lighting transitions to)

SCENE 8: OHIO (Set: Neutral)

(Milton and Susan wistfully watch the boys exit)

Susan Aaah, the years have flown by, haven't they, Milton? Our boys have become hardy young men.
Milton And Katharine is a lovely young lady. I wish I could have watched them grow as you did, Susan.
Susan You've been a wonderful provider, dear heart. And no man could love his children more.
Milton But as a husband...
Susan You've taken good care of this old girl.
Milton You look just as beautiful as the day we met.
Susan Well, it's nice to know your eyes are still playing tricks on you!
(Music ends)

(Wilbur and Orville enter with hockey sticks and skates. Katharine enters a moment later all dressed up)

Milton Here's our girl, and all gussied up too!
Susan Why, don't you look nice my dear! Are you off somewhere?
Katharine Yes, Mummy, to the hockey game with you and Papa.
Orville Hockey! Dressed like that? You hate hockey!
Katharine Well... I can't say as I'm fond, but Chauncy...
Orv & Wil *(Teasing and rolling their eyes...)* Ooooh! Chauncy!
Katharine *(Ignoring them)*... Chauncy wanted me to watch him play. Oh, and he also asked if he might have the honor of escorting me home. I told him he may, with yours and Papa's permission of course.
Susan Chauncy's a good and trustworthy young man. I think it would be...
Wilbur Mother, I'm sorry to interrupt, but if we don't leave now, we'll get passed over when the teams choose up.
Milton Well, we'd best be off then!

(Musical introduction to next song begins as underscore)
(The children exit to the floor quickly. Milton and Susan remain shortly as dialogue continues)
(Apron lights up for dialogue)

Milton *(Worried)* Susan, am I missing something? Has young love bloomed without me noticing?
Susan Kate and Chauncy you mean? Oh no dear, she's fond of Chauncy, but she'd never consider a serious romance until she finishes her education.
Milton Oh my, that's a relief.
(They enter back on stage)

SCENE 9: A HOCKEY RINK (Set: Neutral)

Player *(To Wilbur and Orville)* Come on fellas, you're late! Some boys from the army post showed up, and we're going to give them a lesson on how real hockey players play!

SONG: "HOCKEY GAME"

Players

Choosing sides for a hockey game
The greatest sport in the land
Oh yeah, the boys are gonna get rowdy
We're gonna skate as hard as we can
Baseball, basketball and football are nice
But only of you can't find any ice
Rock 'em, sock 'em, stomp 'em, stop 'em, not for the tame
Hockey is the name of the game
Get your skates, lace 'em up real tight
Everybody gather around
We'll do our best not to get in a fight
But that'll never slow us down
Bank shot, slap shot, not for the tame
Hockey is the name of, we can't get enough of
Shows the stuff we're made of, hockey is the name of the game

Spectators Rock 'em. Sock 'em. Stomp 'em. Stop 'em
 Hockey is the name of the game.
 Don't anyone get excited
 There's no need to bash in your brains
 There's no need for riots incited
Players You'll still be friends after the game
 Friendship of course is a good thing
 But all good things have limits too
 So just drop the puck, let's get started
All Get into the game through and through
 Getting' ready for a hockey game
 The roughest game of all
 Oh yeah the sticks are flyin' around us
 And we can hear our destiny call
 Baseball, basketball, and football are nice
 But only if you can't find any ice
Spectators Rock 'em, sock 'em, stomp 'em, stop 'em, not for the tame
 Hockey is the name of
Players We can't get enough of
 Shows the stuff we're made of
All Hockey is the name of the game
 Rock 'em, sock 'em, stomp 'em, stop 'em
 Hockey is the name of the game
 (*Music underscore continues as game starts*)

(*A scramble for the hockey puck ensues, during which a player swings at the puck, misses and hits Wilbur hard. Wilbur turns on his heels, dazed and disoriented. Milton runs to him. Everyone else freezes*)

(*Music ends abruptly*)
Wilbur (*Bleeding from the mouth*) Yes... Father... Ha ha... (*He takes a few steps forward and passes out cold on the stage. Chaos breaks out*)
Crowd "Wilbur!" "What's happening!" "Somebody get a doctor," etc.
Milton (*Shouting over them*) Orville, your brother's out cold. Get Doc Spittle!
 (*Orville runs off*)
 (*Blackout*)
 (*Transitional music of 25 seconds begins*)
 (*House wagon with bed on*)
 (*Last thing that should be heard is Milton's voice shouting into the distance "Wilbur... Wilbur!"*)

SCENE 10: WILBUR'S BEDROOM (Set: Neutral)

(*As the sound of the crowd subsides, a ticking and tolling grandfather clock is heard*)
 (*Susan is seated by her son's bed where Wilbur lies, unmoving*)
Susan Wilbur... Wilbur... wake up, son. Wilbur, it's Mother dear... time to wake up now.
Wilbur (*His eyes flutter open and his hand goes to his jaw. With great difficulty...*) Mo-Mother...
Susan Oh, my dear, there you are at last! Now, you mustn't talk, son. Oh, that must hurt something awful. The doctor's been putting iodine and sulfur on those gums, you lost a bit of blood and some teeth there.
Wilbur I'm all right, Mother. How... how long?
Susan It happened yesterday. You've been out all night and half the day. My brave boy, you hardly winced when it happened. (*Weakly he tries to sit up*) Now, now, you must lie still. I'm going to let the others know you're awake at last. Then I'll bring you some nice broth, you'll need it to regain your strength. (*She kisses him tenderly and exits to the others*)
 (*Katharine runs to her*)
Susan Awake... he's awake at last. I'm going to take him that broth now.
 (*Katharine looks soberly at the doctor and his father. Then she offers...*)

Katharine Mother... mother let me do it please? You and Father, you've been up all night. I want to do it, please?

Susan Oh, precious girl, I'm sure your brother would love that.
(Katharine exits to get soup, then goes into feed Wilbur)

Susan Where... where's Orville? He'll want to know...

Milton He's out in the workshop.

Susan *(Smiling)* I should have known... Well, I'll go to him, then.

Milton *(Stopping her tenderly)* He needs to be alone now, Sue.

Susan Why? Whatever... *(She stops to look into Milton's eyes)* What is it you've not told me?
(He doesn't answer)

Susan Doctor?

Dr. Spittler Well Susan, by the sound of it his heart's been damaged by the blow. I'm afraid there's not much I can do for him, but try to fight the infection. He's in God's hands now.

Susan Oh Milton... my boy, my poor boy. *(She breaks down in Milton's arms)*
(The doctor leaves sorrowfully)
(Stage lights go down in all but Wilbur's bedroom)

Katharine *(Feeding Wilbur)* You're doing well, Wil.

Wilbur *(Painfully)* 's good Kate.

Katharine If you keep eating like this, you'll be up and about in no time.
(Orville enters the room sheepishly, grinning)

Orville Wil, it's about time you were up. What a connivin' way to get me to do your chores.

Wilbur *(Tries to smile as Kate feeds him another spoonful)* No more, Kate. 'm sorry... it hurts.

Katharine *(Tenderly)* Well, all right. But I'll be in later with the rest. *(She takes Orville's hand as she exits, and he squeezes it gratefully)*

Orville So... I've been out in the shop.

Wilbur Got the printin' press ru...running?

Orville Well... close. Hey, I thought of a name for the paper... "The Westside Tattler!"... How does that sound? Who knows, maybe we'll be big-time publishers, eh?

Wilbur Good.

Orville So... uh... you... you remember this? *(He lays a small helicopter in Wilbur's hand)*

Wilbur It's... it's the...

Orville The whirlybird Father brought from California when we were kids! Remember, when you wound it up it would hover a couple of inches above the table?

Wilbur Until it broke...

Orville Yeah! Broke into about a dozen pieces! Well, I... I scooped 'em up into a box, it's been on the top shelf all these years.

Wilbur ... wondered what that was...

Orville *(Chuckles)* Yeah, well, I put it back together. Remember, we were going to try to redesign it so we could get it to stay up longer.

Wilbur Doe-zit work?

Orville Well no, not yet. That's what I need you for. If we can figure out how to...

Wilbur Orv... I'm awful tired Orv...

Orville Oh, yeah... sure... Doc says you need your rest. Well... I'll just set this here *(He puts the toy on the chair as he stands)* so you can think on it when you wake up... *(He starts to leave)*

(Music begins)

Wilbur Orv?

Orville *(Turning back quickly)* Yeah?

Wilbur Couldjew stay? Jus' till I fall 'sleep?

Orville What's a matter brother, afraid of the dark! *(Sobering)* Sure... sure Wil, no problem. *(He holds the helicopter and sits down again. Wilbur closes his eyes. During following song, lights highlight other singers in specials)*

SONG: "WHAT WOULD I DO WITHOUT YOU?"

Orville *(To the melody "Love Has to Wait")*
What would I do without you my brother?

What would I do without you?
 Without you, what a dreary world for me!
 My best friend and my co-conspirator
 You're my mentor, my guide
 You are the very best that I can be
 You are the one who keeps my feet
 On the ground
 When my thoughts fly too high, you
 Help me reach the sky!
Kate & Orv What would I do without you, my brother?
Susan & Orv That's a thought I can't bear! *(Kate goes to her parents)*
Orv & Family Wil, whatever you ask of me...
 (We ask You Lord...)
 Any trial, any task of me...
 (Save our son)
 ...I will do! Be strong, brother, and live
 (God's will be done!)
Orv & Family I give you now my most solemn vow
 (We) (Our)
 That I'll stand beside you as I have breath!
 (we'll) (together) (we)
 And whatever the dream
 We will make it come true **(Orville)** me and you...
 So dream and live!
(Music segues to underscore the following)
(Black out)
(Bed goes off, table and chairs come on)

SCENE 11: WRIGHT FAMILY KITCHEN (Ohio) AND WALKWAY

(Lights rise on "walkway" area)
Mrs. Welch Yes, well, I was there and saw the whole thing! Wilbur was hit so hard in the mouth that he lost several teeth!
Mrs. Dean I've always said those boys play too rough!
Mrs. Welch Well, they certainly did this time! It's been weeks, and the poor boy is right at death's door!
(Chauncy enters and happens to overhear the conversation)
Leslie Poor Wilbur!
Mrs. Dean And his poor mother! I must take her some jelly!
Mrs. Welch Well, here's Chauncy O'Connell!
Chauncy Hello, Mrs. Welch, Mrs. Dean, Leslie.
Leslie Oh, hello, Chauncy!
Mrs. Welch Are you off to the Wrights?
Chauncy Yes, ma'am.
Mrs. Dean Oh, do pay our respects, won't you? The poor dear boy, I suppose he hasn't long in this world!
Chauncy Well... actually ma'am, Wilbur's much improved.
Mrs. Welch Really... I hadn't heard!
Chauncy Yes... I saw Kate in town yesterday, and she says it's practically a miracle.
Mrs. Welch I should say! Well then, do give our best regards!
Chauncy I will ma'am. Good day... to you all. *(He exits to stage)*
Mrs. Dean *(As the gossips exit)* So, it's Kate now, is it?
Mrs. Welch Yes, and you'll never believe what I heard...
(Lights transition to Wright family kitchen)
(Chauncy goes to house where Kate sits at a table full of books)
Chauncy *(Shyly)* Kate?
(Music ends)
Katharine Chauncy, hello!

Chauncy I... I came to give Orville this advertisement for "The Tattle," oh, and to see Wilbur too, of course!

Katharine Oh, well, Wilbur and Father are out getting some fresh air. I think they're having sort of a father-son chat.

Chauncy Oh... I won't bother them, then.

Katharine As for the advertisement... well... I'm not sure, but I think Orville's closed down the presses... given up.

Chauncy Already?

Katharine Well, he's not much of a writer, Wilbur was supposed to do that part. And he's been muttering the past few days about there being "no news in this boring ol' town."

Chauncy Oh... well... what are you doing there, Kate? Maybe I could help you with that.

Katharine This? Well, it's just calculus.

Chauncy (*Befuddled*) Oh...

Katharine (*Smiling*) Why don't you go on our and see if Orville needs some help in the shop.

Chauncy Oh... all right. (*He starts to leave, crestfallen*)

Katharine And Chauncy, when you're done, why don't you come back for a piece of pie and a nice cup of tea.

Chauncy (*Brightening*) Sure Kate... sure!
 (*Lights go down in house*)
 (*Lights rise on "walkway" area or other side opposite kitchen*)
 (*Father pushes Wilbur in a wheelchair*)

Milton Your mother said you had a hard time sleeping last night Wilbur. How are you feeling now, do we need to have Doc Spittle back?

Wilbur No, Father, I'm feeling much better today, a little stronger too. You mustn't worry about me.

Milton Wilbur, you know these last few weeks have given me a lot of time to think. I'll be leaving on that short trip to Idaho tomorrow... and maybe it's the hardest trip I've made. I've been gone so much all these years, leaving the work at home for your mother to do and missing so much time with the family. I don't think the good Lord intended that when he called me into the ministry. I'm sorry son, that I've missed so much of your life.

Wilbur That's all right, Father, I understand; all of us do. You've done so much good for so many people, helped them find their way in life. I've had a lot of time to think too, Father.

Milton What about, Son?

Wilbur Well, you once told me that you knew what God wanted you to do with your life by the time you were my age. I was wondering if maybe I shouldn't become a preacher too.

Milton Wilbur, a very wise man once told me that you should only become a preacher if you couldn't bear not being one. Some are called to it, some aren't. It's a rewarding, but very difficult job and if you're meant to do it, then the Spirit will burn within you and nothing will stop you. Talents don't go away, Wilbur, but sometimes God waits to reveal them.

Wilbur What do you think I'm good at, Father?

Milton Well, the thing that comes to mind right away is the way you can see a problem, take it apart to figure out what it's made of, and then come up with a clear idea of how to solve it.

Wilbur But Father, all of that is just for fun.

Milton There's no sin in enjoying your work, Wilbur. And you and your brother make a good team by-golly! The two of you work at a thing until you conquer it, even when others don't believe it can be done.

Wilbur Like a sled and kite, It was you and Mother who taught us never to give up.

(Musical introduction to song begins)

Milton Few people have that kind of determination son. Sounds like a God-given talent to me. But think about it Wilbur, pray about it, and see where God leads you. I fully believe He has a plan for your life. God's Spirit will lead you wherever your dreams take you.
(Milton pats Wilbur on the shoulders and exits)

Wilbur Thank you, Father.

SONG: "WHAT WILL I DO WITH MY LIFE?"

Wilbur Looking ahead I don't see anything right for me
 Lying awake at night, my dreams just wander uselessly
 What will I do with my time? I can't seem to make up my mind

Where should I set my sights? What will I do with my life?
Will I grow to understand all the mystery of who I am?
Will I see what I'll be on this path I must find all alone?
But will anyone help me, will anyone tell me—
What will I do with my life?

(Music continues for 20 seconds as underscore, trailing to an end)

*(By end of song, Wilbur has stood up from wheelchair)
(Possible black out)*

(Orville comes striding past, engrossed in a piece of paper)

Wilbur
Orville

Latest edition of the "Tattler" Orville? What goes on in this sleepy old burg?
Nuthin!... absolutely nuthin!... huh? *(He looks up, surprised to see Wilbur out of his chair)* Ho, ho brother, look at you! Why, you're looking like your old self again! It's a real pity you couldn't have looked better, eh? Ha!

Wilbur

(Sitting back down in his chair, a wry grin on his face) Yeah, well, wait till I get stronger and then let's see if you dare to be such a joker! Is that this week's edition? What did we make the lead story?

Orville

(Quickly hiding paper behind his back) Oh... uh... listen, Wil, did you hear that Percy's rich daddy just bought him one of those new safety bikes?

Wilbur
Orville

The ones that have the same size wheels you mean? That's our big headline?
No, no no! Forget the "Tattler" will ya?! Look... I just suddenly got this fantastic idea! Now listen, it's like this, you know that once Percy gets a thing, the whole town goes crazy to get it too.

Wilbur
Orville

(Getting suspicious) Yeah, usually...

Wilbur
Orville
Wilbur

Usually... always you mean! So... the whole town starts buying bicycles, but they're a brand new invention; their design isn't quite perfected. So they break down a lot and nobody can fix them.
So?

Orville

So, look at this Wil, just look! *(He hands the paper he's been hiding to Wilbur)*

Orville

It's a handbill.

Wilbur
Orville

It says that Sherman's Bakery is closing their doors... going out of business... for good! You know, the bakery on Main Street, right next to the undertaker's. It's a prime location Wil! You see what I'm getting at, don't you?

Wilbur

We're going to become bakers?

Orville

Yeah... What?! *(Wilbur laughs)* Very funny, come on, quit kiddin' will ya! This could be our future Wil!

Wilbur

Cashing in on the bicycle craze? Orville, next time you get one of these brainstorms, would you at least give me a little warning so I can ease into the idea gentle-like?

Orville

You... you don't like it?"

Wilbur

Well, it's a thought I suppose, but Orv, we don't have the least little idea how to go about this.

Orville

Look, if we rent the bakery, we'll have the location, we already have most of the tools, we have the know-how and what we don't know, we'll learn! And we won't just be fixin' bikes Wil; I've contacted the Springfield Bicycle Company, they're going to let us be their official parts distributor in this county. And if we manage to sell a few of their top-line bicycles, we can make a tidy profit!

Wilbur

But how can we do that and still run the paper?

(Music begins— introduction to following song)

Orville

(Sheepishly) Well... I... I sold the press to Ed Sines this morning. I had to, to put down the rent on the bakery!

Wilbur

You... you already rented... you just had this idea, huh? *(Sigh)* Well, setting all that type was kind of dull. And we do have a lot of spare parts lying around.

Orville

Ha! I knew you'd go for it!

Wilbur

I don't suppose you've come up with a name for this grand enterprise.

Orville

'Course I have! *(Dreamily)* "The Wright Cycle Company." It sounds great, doesn't it?

Wilbur

(Getting up slowly) What it sounds like brother, is a lot of work!

(Lighting transitions to)

SCENE 12: BICYCLE SHOP EXTERIOR (Set: Neutral)

(During the following song the bakery is converted to a bike shop, i.e.: Cake in window display now houses bike equipment, signs are exchanged, bicycle parts are taken into shop. Chauncy, Milton, and a small hired boy can help so brothers can sing. Included in the final display is a free-standing flat that says. "Picture yourself on a new bicycle!" It is painted with a Victorian couple on a bicycle built for two. The faces are cut out so people can put theirs in. Another shorter flat (waist height) pulls out making the bike into one for four. Only legs are painted on this. A "Grand Opening" sign is also displayed)

SONG: "ENTREPRENEURS" (Reprise)

Wilbur & Orville

Entrepreneurs, you can insure profit is yours
When you endure business in America
The way to get ahead is have an idea, then make it real
Hire some help, get out and sell— if you've really got what it takes
We can take it, we are gonna make it
Work it out, never a doubt
What do you say, starting today
We'll be partners in our own cycle shop, and we'll never stop
Entrepreneurs, gotta be sure, set up the chores, open the store
Wil and Orville's Cycle Shop
That's the way, start out small and build our market share
Then we can expand for real, and such a deal
So if we really stick together, we could make a rather
Healthy profit for ourselves, so we gotta go
Entrepreneurs, you can insure profit is yours when you endure
Business in America, the way to get ahead is have an idea
Then make it real, hire some help, get out and sell
Business in America, yes that's our plan
Now we are entrepreneurs
(Music continues as underscore; transitions to next song)

Mrs. Welch My, my, look at this place! Maybe you two will make something of yourselves after all.
Wilbur Uh... thank you Mrs. Welch. Is there something we can do for you?
Mrs. Welch Well, I bought myself one of these new fangled bicycles, but the tire went flat at the society picnic!
Orville Looks like a tube problem. We can fix that in a jiffy. *(He takes bike into "shop")*
Mrs. Welch How are you feeling Wilbur... on the mend?
Wilbur Feeling fit as a fiddle ma'am.
Mrs. Welch *(Sadly)* Oh. *(Brightening)* How about your Mother, Wilbur? Rumor has it she's been under the weather.
Wilbur Oh, well, she has been pretty tired lately what with nursing me and all, but Katharine's taken over most of the household so Mother can rest up.
Mrs. Welch Really? Well, Katharine's becoming quite the little homemaker isn't she? I never thought it was her strong suit. Now you must tell her if she needs anything, anything at all, she's to call on me, you hear?
Wilbur You can tell her yourself, ma'am. She'll be here this morning to help us out with the grand opening, since Father's home and wants some time with Mother. We're expecting to do a brisk business today with this new bicycle craze.
(Cyclists start riding in. Toward the end of the song the shop will exit to be replaced later with Susan Wright's bedroom)

SONG: "BICYCLES"

Townspople Come ride with me, come ride with me
It's like we're gliding on air
The weather's clear, come on my dear
Let's feel the wind in our hair
This easy-to-use transportation
Is sweeping across the whole nation
The bicycle makes it so easy to get to
The places we all want to be
Adventure is calling, my darling
Come ride, come ride with me

Katharine & Chauncy The bicycle makes it so easy
To get to the park or the lake
I'll meet you on Saturday morning
Are you asking me out on a date?
Yes ma'am
All it takes is our own muscle power
We can go any place any hour

Chauncy A nice little place with no others
Katharine I bet she brings both of her brothers!
Chauncy Ride on the trails, on the roads feel the breeze
Townspople Enjoy the outdoors in the sun
Ride through the meadows and forest of trees
For work and for play and for fun

Chauncy Let's go have some races, we'll count off the paces
Nasal Woman Let's see who can ride really fast
Townspople Up to the track and don't even look back
Or you'll find yourself coming in last
(Remove wagon)

Children Come ride with me, come ride with me
It's like we were gliding on air
The weather's clear, come on my dear
Let's feel the wind in our hair
The bicycle mania's sweeping the nation
The feeling of freedom and pure fascination
There's nothing quite like it in all of creation

Townspople Come ride with me
(The bicycle mania's sweeping the nation)
Come glide with me
(There's nothing quite like it in all of creation)
Come and ride
(Pedal your bike, come and pedal your bike, come and ride)
(Music continues 20 seconds and fades as townspople exit, leaving the Wrights on stage)

Women
Men & Boys
Women & Girls
Men & Boys
Women & Girls
Men & Boys

Young Boy *(Runs in breathless)* Wilbur, Orville, Miss Katharine, come quick! Yer pa sent me; seems yer ma's collapsed!
(They run from the stage)
(Stage lights out)
(Bedroom wagon on)

Orville *(Running out)* Has someone called the doctor?
Young Boy *(Running out)* Doc's already there. Yer pa says you best hurry!
(Lighting transitions to)

SCENE 13: SUSAN WRIGHT'S BEDROOM

(Lights go up in house. Milton sits next to Susan, who is on her deathbed. The doctor meets the children as they arrive)

Wilbur Doctor Spitler! How is Mother?
Orville What's happened?
Katharine Oh, I never should have left her!
Dr. Spitler Don't blame yourself, Katharine. I believe that this disease has been progressing for quite a while.
Wilbur Disease?!

Dr. Spitler Tuberculosis. It might have been treatable if we'd caught it sooner, but... well... she's very weak. I'm afraid it would take another miracle...

Milton *(From the bedroom)* Katharine... boys... you're mother is asking for you.
Katharine *(Kneeling beside bed)* We're.... we're here Mummy.
Wil & Orv *(Awkwardly)* Hello Mother...
Susan *(Struggling for breath)* How... how did the opening go?
Orville *(After emotional pause, he says with pretended joviality)* Sensational Mother, a real hum-dinger. You should have been there!

Susan I was, Son, right with you... in here. *(She touches her heart)* I knew you'd do well... I've always believed in you... all of you. You've grown into fine adults and made your mother and father very proud. Now listen, I... I've put a little money aside, it's in the stone crock in the kitchen. Half is for Katharine's college, and the rest is for you boys. You take it... for you boys. You take it... for your shop. It's my small investment in your future.

Wilbur That's... that's so wonderful of you, Mother, but... but all we want in our future is you.
Orville Yes, Mother! We can't do it without you!
Susan And I'll always be with you, Orville, no matter where the Lord may take me. Never lose that inquisitive spirit, sweet boy. It will help you to "soar on the wings of eagles" as the Good Book says. And my precious Katharine, make sure to follow your dreams too. You'll make a wonderful teacher. And all of you... take care of your father...

Milton *(Breaking up)* Susan...
Susan We've built a good life together. I cherish the memories we've made. We were always two people with one heart.
Milton One heart. My only regret is the time we've spent apart.
Susan You're here now.
Dr. Spitler Time to rest now, Susan. You must conserve your strength.

(Music introduction begins)

(The children kiss their mother and exit. Milton does the same, reluctantly. The doctor attends to Susan and they freeze as singing begins)

(Lights dim slowly in house)

(Lights up to spotlight family)

SONG: "WHAT WILL I DO WITH MY LIFE?" (Reprise)

Milton, Kath, Wil, Orv And so we stand alone, as we stand together
Milton Facing the world's uncertainty
Katharine Facing the future we cannot see
Orville Give us hope
Wilbur Give us courage
All Let us know
Tell us how we can go on
What we can rely on
What will we do with our lives?
Milton Will I know how to guide them
Katharine I'll be there beside them
Orville & Wilbur What will we do with our lives?
All We will honor her mem'ry
By becoming what she
Wanted us to be in our lives
(Song rises to crescendo)

(Black out)

End of ACT I

ACT II

Entr'acte

SCENE 1: **WORLD'S FAIR, CHICAGO COLUMBIA WORLD EXPOSITION OF 1883**
(Set: Neutral)

SONG: "WORLD'S FAIR"

Chorus

Go to the World's Fair, take me to the World's Fair
The exposition of the century
We'll see the wonders of science and industry
We'll even watch them demonstrate electricity
Go to the World's Fair, take me to the World's Fair
Chicago is the city for me
There's no better place to be to find opportunity
At the dawning of the twentieth century

Barker

(Spoken over instrumental section of music)

Ladeez and gentlemen, girls and boys, welcome to the 1893 Columbia World Exhibition, where you'll see sights to dazzle your eyes, stir your imagination, warm your hearts, and— most importantly— things to help you part with a substantial portion of your hard-earned money! Yes, indeed folks. We have balloon rides, Ferris wheels, roller coasters, and many other rides to frighten you out of your wits. On the more intellectual side, we have symposiums of the great scientists from around the globe, giving the fascinating presentation on the latest developments in all areas of scientific knowledge. We also have for your viewing pleasure the beautiful and 'scantily clad' queen of all exotic dancers: Little Egypt!

(Enthusiastically getting in line outside the "Little Egypt" door, as music changes to "exotic dancer theme")

Little Egypt, Little Egypt, we want to see Little Egypt

(Sung)

The exposition of the century
Who cares about the wonders of industry
We want to watch her demonstrate anatomy

(Spoken)

Little Egypt, Little Egypt, we want to see Little Egypt

(Sung)

Little Egypt is the girl for me
There's no better place to be to find opportunity
At the dawning of the twentieth century
(Music slows down slightly as the women drag the men away from the Little Egypt door, then picks back up to tempo as song resumes)

Chorus

Go to the World's Fair, take me to the World's Fair
The exposition of the century

We'll see the wonders of science and industry
 We'll even watch them demonstrate photography
 Go to the World's Fair, take me to the World's Fair
 Chicago is the city for me
 There's no better place to be to find opportunity
 At the dawning of the twentieth
 The dawning of the twentieth
 The dawning of the twentieth century
 (*Carnival music continues*)

Milton I'll take one adult.
Ticket Taker That'll be two bits, Bub.
Orville Father, there you are! Look at that balloon! It must be one hundred feet in the air! Ha! We don't know where to start, there's so much to see!

Milton I promised Katharine I'd meet her at the Eiffel Tower exhibit. You boys go ahead and see
 the sights, we'll meet you at the Ferris Wheel at five o'clock. You boys have pocket money?
Orville Oh, sure, we've got plenty!
Wilbur Orville, over there. (*He looks at a map*) That way to the Hall of Inventions.
 (*They head on over*)
Orville (*Awed*) Wilbur, take a look at this! I can't believe you can light up a whole city like this!
Wilbur Come on, let's find the inventors. I heard that they have a boat in here somewhere that has a motor engine that runs on gasoline.
Orville (*Incredulous*) A motor, on a boat? Jeepers, who ever would'a thought?
Wilbur That's what I say! But it might just catch on, you never know. Hey look, here's a picture of it. Gee, that motor looks a lot smaller than I figured it would on such a big boat!
Orville Wonder if you could use such a thing on a bicycle, or a kite?
Wilbur The bicycle I could see, but the kite... what for?
Orville Oh, I don't know, it's an idea, that's all. Wonder how you make an engine in the first place?
Wilbur I bet mother could have figured it out.
 (*They sigh, lost in thought until vendors interrupt*)

Vendor 1 Get your Cracker Jacks here. New, delicious caramel popcorn with peanuts for extra crunch. And a spectacular toy surprise in every pack!

Vendor 2 Frankfurters! Hot and delicious frankfurters! A delectable new tidbit from Germany! A treat to titillate and tantalize yer tastebuds; try it today! Get yer cheese and chili on top!

Vendor 3 Juicy Fruit Gum, get your new Juicy Fruit Gum!
Orville Hey! That one I've heard of!
Vendor 3 'Course ya have sonny-boy. Originally from the deep, dark jungles of South America, the long lasting taste of Juicy Fruit Gum. Heightens the health and sweetens the breath too.
Orville How much!?
Vendor 3 Just a penny! Lasts all day!
Orville Let's buy some
 (*They do, and stuff it in their mouths*)
Wilbur This is the best stuff I've ever tasted. Let's get some for Katharine! (*He buys some more*)
 (*They begin walking*)

Telegraph Demonstrator Take a look, young man. No need to say a word. You can now transport your thoughts with this ingenious machine. Each and every letter has it's own sounds. Put those letter sounds together and you have words. Put those words together and you have sentences— easy as that! It's the future of long distance communication. You can talk to people around the world.
 (*They move on to kinetograph demonstration*)

Kinetograph Demonstrator Go ahead. Give it a try! The pictures flip like a deck of cards in rapid succession giving the illusion of a non-stop moving picture.
Orville (*Spotting a large poster*) Hey, over there is a series of lectures on flying machines. That might be interesting. Some fellow named... Octave Chanute is leading it. Ha! What a name!
Wilbur Octave Chanute? I've heard that name before, in fact, I've read some of his articles on heavier-than-air flying machines.
Orville Aren't all flying machines heavier than air?
Wilbur No, it... it means machines that don't depend on a balloon to lift them and keep them in the air. I've gotta hear this guy! (*He heads off stage toward poster*)

Orville But, it's nearly five o'clock. We're supposed to meet Father and Katharine for supper.
Wilbur Who can think of food at a time like this? This flying is amazing stuff, Orv, the stuff of dreams.
Orville Dreams hug? Lead on brother, I'm right beside ya!
(They exit through curtain)

Chorus *(Song resumes)*
Go to the World's Fair, take me to the World's Fair
The exposition of the century
We'll see the wonders of science and industry
We'll even see the latest in cartography
Go to the World's Fair, take me to the World's Fair
Chicago is the city for me
There's no better place to be to find opportunity
At the dawning of the twentieth
The dawning of the twentieth
The dawning of the twentieth century
(Music segues 25 seconds to the next scene)
(Black out)
(Shop interior wagon on)
(Lights up on)

SCENE 2: BICYCLE SHOP INTERIOR (Set: Neutral) AND AVIATION MUSEUM

(Orville and Wilbur are on their way to the shop as the wagon [set] comes on)

Orville I tell ya! I just can't get over the amazing things we saw at the fair. All those glider designs that Octave Chanute fellow was showing, why he made our kite experiments look like child's play!
(Music ends)

Wilbur We had to start somewhere, Orville. Every major invention started with small steps, not giant leaps. The more we play with our design of a kite wing, the more I'm convinced that manned flight is a real possibility; but figuring out how wing design affects flight is a mystery that'll take a lot of research to solve.

Orville Well, when we do solve it, you can bet that I'll be the first to volunteer to go up! Like that fellow with the glider that Chanute spoke about, what was his name?

Wilbur Otto Lilienthal.

Orville Right! He's been up, not once, not twice, but hundreds of times, can you imagine? What a feeling that would be, nothing holding you to the ground! *(He spreads his arms like a little kid playing airplane and darts about the stage still talking, not paying attention to anything)* The wind, coming at you, cool and easy while you looked down at the countryside! Why, you'd feel free as a bird!

(He arrives at the shop and nearly collides with a startled Charlie)

Wilbur Holy cow, Orv! Are you trying to mow down our customers?

Orville Oh, ha ha, sorry! *(He grabs Charlie's hand and shakes it vigorously)*

Charlie *(Uncomfortably)* You, you own this shop? You're the Wright Brothers?

Orville Wright, that's right, we're Wright, right? *(He grins)*

Wilbur Never mind him, he's the black sheep. I'm Wilbur Wright and this is my "unfortunate" brother, Orville.

Charlie Oh, ha ha! *(He attempts a laugh)* Right... I mean... uh, I'm Charlie, Charlie Taylor. I, uh, I heard you were looking for help in your shop.

Orville Oh, we are, we are! Business is really booming!

Wilbur So, tell me what you know about bicycles, Charlie.

Charlie Not that much actually, but I know about mechanics in general. I've owned my own shop, and right now I'm working for the Dayton Electric Company as a machinist, but I'm looking for something closer to home; I live not far from here.

Wilbur I thought you looked familiar. Well, you sound like the kind of help we could use. The job pays eighteen dollars a week.

Charlie That much? Gosh, business must be booming!

Orville So, when can you start old fellow?

Charlie Oh, any time, right now if you need me!

Orville Terrific! *(They enter the shop)* Well, this is it; look around, make yourself familiar with the place. This is our current job *(He points to a dismantled bike and hands Charlie a tool apron)* There it is, go to it!

(During this dialogue, Wilbur has been reading the newspaper he had under his arm)

Charlie *(Laughs this time for real)* Ha... all right!

Wilbur Hey, Orville... look at this *(Wilbur crosses)* That fellow, that Otto Lilienthal we were just talking about.. he crashed! He was killed instantly when he lost control of his glider...

Orville You're kidding! Jeepers creepers! It says he crashed due to control problems.

Wilbur That's what Octave Chanute was saying... that even though Lilienthal made a number of flights, the way he changed directions by leaning this way or that just wasn't a reliable way to control a heavy glider. That's why Chanute was doing that research. This isn't just some harmless experiment, Orv. It could be really dangerous.

Orville I know Wilbur, but I know that the answers to every problem are out there, waiting to be found. Why not by us! Sure, there's risk, but the greatest risk in life is not to take any risk at all! That's what Mother taught us, and I bet Otto Lilienthal would agree!

Wilbur Lilienthal is dead, and Mother would have also reminded you that there is such a thing as unacceptable risks. You mustn't waste life in vain pursuits, Orv... Still, if we do the research, plan carefully, do it right the first time...

Orville Then we'd make Mother really proud!

Wilbur *(Looking to heaven)* She is proud, Orville. Right! *(He shoves things about the table just like Susan used to do)* Enough talk, time to build us a glider!

Orville Whoo hooo! Yes! Now the way I see it, we need to deal with three problems: we need wings for lift, a steady wind, and a way to control turns.

Wilbur True! Without control, we're just flying kites! *(He takes a large roll of paper and starts drawing)*

Orville Birds make it look so easy; they turn their wings a little, their whole body follows. They drop their tails and they can slow down and stop on a dime. How do they do that?

(Wilbur stands up suddenly puzzling, looking into space)

Orville What's a matter Wil, why'd you stop? Are you stuck or something?

Wilbur No... I'm... I'm thinking about what you just said. *(He looks surprised)* You may have just stumbled onto something; I think it might solve one of our problems! *(He extends his arms wide to demonstrate)* Look, Orville, if a bird twists his wing like this, he turns to the left. It's like he warps his wings to turn. One side goes up, the other automatically goes down. The bird turns effortlessly, without even thinking. If it works for a bird, why not for our glider?

Charlie *(Listening in, he finally speaks up)* Listen... excuse me for saying so, seeing as how you're my bosses and all, but... do you know how nuts you both sound? You're talking about doing something that even our government scientists can't figure out.

Orville Being crazy hasn't ever stopped us before.

Charlie Have you two heard of Charles Langley? He got something like... fifty grand from the government to develop a flying machine and he ain't come up with nothin' yet.

Wilbur And...?

Charlie And even Thomas Edison and Alexander Graham Bell have been trying to build a flying machine. Now if they can't do it, with all their brains and their millions of dollars, what make you think you can?

Wilbur Hey Orville, looks like we've hired a thinker here, he's got all the facts and figures down.

Charlie Listen to me, fellas... that Otto Lilienthal guy, he should have been happy eating his bratwurst, but no, he... he has to get himself killed.

Orville You're a smart man, Charlie, wanting to keep your bosses alive and keep yourself in a job. Why, you might even wind up a partner that way.

Wilbur By the way, Charlie, how are you at building engines?

Charlie Well, I never have before, but I'm sure I could if I had the details. Hey... you don't mean for this... flying gizmo! What for? That would be like puttin' an engine on a kite!

Orville Now you got the idea, boy!

(Orville and Wilbur silently and clearly go back to their plane discussion, Charlie stares at them unbelieving. Action freezes)

(Music begins; introduction to “Otto Lilienthal” song)

Docent

And so the race was on to find out who would be the first to fly. The idea of flight had intrigued mankind from the days of ancient Greece, and probably before that, too. Some very interesting techniques were tried— most with tragic results. But the skeptics and disasters couldn't discourage these bold and sometimes foolish thinkers. Not even a tenacious skeptic like our friend here, Charlie Taylor.

(The museum crowd is dumfounded as Charlie suddenly comes to life and steps from the exhibit. He starts to sing)

SONG: “OTTO LILIENTHAL”

Charlie

Otto Lilienthal, he was in the thrall of flying, gliding
Didn't really think about dying
Otto Lilienthal, first to be in the hall of fame, he died
He couldn't quite control his aeroplane
It's not that he was lazy, though people thought he was crazy
He couldn't find a consistent way
To control his glider in any weather
So thought he would rather
Shift his balance from side to side
Otto Lilienthal was not the first fall from the sky
Oh my, many others thought they could fly
Laws no one can defy, will assert their presence by and by
So you think you wanna fly
Did you ever think you might die?
It's a long way to fall from up there to down here
And don't you ever doubt it

(Charlie is joined by students in the museum)

Charlie

All

Others came before and they didn't open any doors
All they did was make a mess for
Those around watching on the ground
Everyone would be so pleased
If you really did succeed

Student #1

But if history's any guide, well you're fried
In ancient Greece there was a story of feathers
Two guys used wax to hold some wings together
But disappointingly, they fell into the sea

All

Student #2

Student #3

Student #4

All

Sure, it's a myth, but it just goes to show
That wise men through the ages said to use caution
And faulty logic makes your conclusion a false one
And what about that man who didn't understand
That flapping wings on a big machine cannot do a thing
To lift any plane from the ground to the sky
Hist'ry doesn't lie, so learn a lesson now before it's too late
Everyone who has tried ended up a failure
Don't be mulish

Charlie

All

Charlie

All

Everybody thinks you're foolish!
Otto Lilienthal sacrificed it all too soon
He met his doom, you ain't gonna zoom
This ain't gonna work for you. Yeah!
(Musical segue back into next scene)

SCENE 3: WRIGHT HOUSE EXTERIOR (The shop wagon turns around)

(Katharine is receiving a large stack of letters from the mailman. She hands him a few, mimes a

Orville *thank you, good-bye, and he exits. She starts sorting through the pile as Orville runs up)*
Katharine That the mail Kate? Anything for me?
 Just a lot of bills for you and Wilbur. *(She hands him a bunch and continues through the stack)*
(Music ends)

Orville *(Dejected)* Bills, huh?... *(He looks through them quickly, then back to her)* But, isn't there anything else? It... wouldn't look like a bill...
Katharine There's nothing else here. Would it be from someone in particular?
(Wilbur enters unseen by Orville)
Orville *(Reluctantly)* Well.... Yes... a Mr. Octave Chanute.
Wilbur *(Startling Orville)* Octave Chanute.
Katharine The Octave Chanute? That silly fellow that you two went on and on about after the World's Fair?
Orville He's not a silly fellow! I'll have you know that he happens to be a brilliant engineer, regarded by many as the foremost authority on the dynamics of manned flight!
Katharine Really... has he ever flown himself?
Orville No...
Katharine *(Smugly)* I rest my case!
Wilbur What makes you think Octave Chanute would be bothered with writing us, Orv?
Orville Because... *(Reluctantly)* Because I wrote to him. I... told him a bit about our experiments and our glider design *(Quickly so Wilbur won't be alarmed)* no details of course! And I asked him for advice on the best location to launch our test flights.
Wilbur I already made inquiries with the National Weather Service about that.
Orville I know, but I just thought we could use his input.
Wilbur You should have told me before you mailed that letter, Orv, so I could have approved it. This is supposed to be kept under wraps.
Orville Well, I have the letter right here; well, a draft of it, at least. *(He pulls a worn piece of paper from his pocket and hands it to Wilbur, who fumbles around for his eyeglasses)*
Katharine I'll read it if you like, Wil.
(He hands it to her. She reads)
 "Dear Mr. Chanute: My name is Orville Wright of Dayton, Ohio. My brother, Wilbur and I were privileged to attend your lecture on the development and difficulties of manned flight last year at the Chicago Exposition. For some years, we have been afflicted with the belief that flight is possible to man. Our disease has increased in severity and we feel that it will soon cost us an increased amount of money if not our very lives. We have been trying to arrange our affairs in such a way that we can devote our entire time from the months of September through January to experiment in this field. We would be particularly thankful for advice as to a suitable locality with dependable winds of about fifteen miles per hour, without rain or much inclement weather... It... it ends there.
Orville *(Taking it back from her)* Well, that's the gist of it, like I said, no details...
Katharine And just what was that part about your experiments costing you your life?! This letter sounds awfully fatalistic!
Orville Now Kate...
Katharine Don't "Now Kate" me! What did you mean!?
(Mailman interrupts)
Mailman Uh, 'scuse me Miss Wright. Just found this letter. I couldn't read it rightly because the script looks a little foreign...
Orville *(Grabbing letter)* It is... it is Wil! It's from him! Ha! *(He starts ripping it open)* And you thought he'd be bothered... *(He reads excitedly)*
Wilbur *(Getting excited himself)* Well, what does it say?
Orville Dear Mr. Wright: Though I have received a good many letters from crackpots and would be conquerors-of-the-heavens, the sincerity and resolve by which you have expressed your intentions has caused me to believe that you and your brother are genuine men of science and therefore worthy of any small help or advice that I can bestow. Chicago, of course, has the dependable wind currents that you desire, but in my humble opinion the area just outside of the small town of Kitty Hawk, North Carolina, would be more congenial locale. It has not only consistent wind velocity, but a sandy hill terrain with only short scrub vegetation, which would be conducive to an easy, unencumbered take-off and cushioned landing.
Mailman *(Befuddled, scratching his head)* Eh? That fella speakin' English? What does he mean?

Orville *(The boys grin at each other)* It means, we're going flying! It also say here that the contact man there is the local postmaster, Bill Tate. Right!
(He starts to the house followed by Wilbur)

Orville You send a telegram to this Tate fellow—
(He hands Wilbur the letter)
— to tell him when we'll be there and I'll get the suitcases...

Wilbur I should write and thank Mr. Chanute.

Orville Oh, sure. And let's see, we've got that parts list, where'd we put that?
(Mailman leaves, scratching his head)

Katharine Wait? Telegrams, suitcases; you two get a letter and you're leaving, just like that?!

Wilbur Hardly "just like that," Kate. We've been working on this well over a year.

Katharine But it's dangerous! And who's going to run the shop while you're gone?

Orville It's off season; Charlie can run it.

Katharine Charlie!

Orville Sure, what's wrong with Charlie?

Katharine Aside from the fact that he's uneducated, smokes those smelly cigars incessantly and thinks he knows-it-all, you mean?

Orville He does know it all, about mechanics anyway. Besides, who else would run the business?

Katharine What about me?

Orville *(Unbelieving)* You? You're a girl!
(Katharine's face turns to stone and she huffs past him, crossing the stage)

Orville *(To Wilbur)* What? What did I say?

Wilbur *(Glancing with understanding at Katharine, he says to Orville)* (Sigh) Look, I think that parts list at the shop. We have the metal fasteners and fittings, and the spools of 15 gauge wire, but we need the satin fabric for the wings...

Orville We can find that in Cincinnati and I can pick up that lightweight spruce for the frame in Chicago. You go ahead and scout out the location, and I'll follow with the rest of the supplies. Let me get that list. *(He exits)*

Wilbur *(He crosses to his sister)* Kate... Kate, I know you don't want us to leave, but...

Katharine Not want you to leave! Of course I want you to leave. It'll be refreshing to have a little peace and quiet around here for a change; I'll be able to hear myself think!

Wilbur *(Chuckles, then sobers)* Kate... about the shop and all, well, Orville didn't mean what he said. I mean, it's true that you're a girl, but we both know that you're more than capable of watching things. It's just that Charlie's a good fellow, really. Oh, he's rough around the edges, but the customers like him. So it's just good business sense to...

Katharine *(Turning to him)* Business sense? Since when did you two have business sense? Which reminds me... *(She draws a small bank book from her pocket, handing it to Wilbur)*... here. There's two hundred dollars in there; I'll withdraw it from the bank first thing tomorrow.

Wilbur But Kate, isn't this your tuition money?

Katharine Yes, but *(Wilbur starts to protest)* a semester or two without books won't kill me. Look, you two already owe so many creditors— besides, Cincinnati, Chicago, that Kitty... bird place; just how were you two planning on getting everywhere? *(She chuckles)* Were you going to fly?!

(Musical segue "Otto Lilienthal" begins)

Wilbur I appreciate this Kate, really. And I promise you, you'll get this back, just as soon as we...

Katharine Well, you'd better. Just make sure you don't go and get yourself killed. I'm investing in you staying alive!
(Wilbur hugs Katharine and exits to the house. Katharine watches him with a smile, then her face sobers with worry)
(Black out)
(Lights up on)

SCENE 4: KILL DEVIL HILL, KITTY HAWK AND WRIGHT HOME INTERIOR

(Lights up on tent area only)
(Wilbur is seated on a camping stool, writing on a tablet, Orville arrives suitcases in hand)

Orville Wilbur!

Wilbur Orville! *(He stands)* You made it! I thought you'd never get here!

Orville I didn't either! I arrived in town yesterday and started asking how to get out here. It may be only seven miles away, but it might as well have been another country. Whenever I asked for directions to Kill Devil Hill, all I got was blank stares and dumb looks. *(He demonstrates, they both start laughing)* I swear, nobody in Kitty Hawk knows where this place is!
(Music ends)

Wilbur I got news for you, brother, nobody anywhere else knows where Kitty Hawk is!

Orville Well, maybe we'll be the ones to put it on the map!

Wilbur Maybe! So, how'd you find me?

Orville I ran into Bill Tate and he pointed the way. I managed to just catch the last ferry over.

Wilbur I asked him to watch for you. He didn't come over too? He's been a big help to me.

Orville No. But he'll be over early tomorrow with all the supplies and equipment. We had to bribe the ferryman to make a special early crossing.

Wilbur Bribe, eh? How much did that cost?

Orville Plenty! So, you worked out that wing problem, yet? Is that what you were working on there? *(He refers to the paper pad)*
(Wilbur pours Orville a cup of coffee and they sit down)

Wilbur Oh... no. I was just writing Kate. I promised I would write her often, but so far I haven't much to say.

Orville Well, read me what you've got so far.
(Musical underscore begins)

Wilbur All right. "Dear Katharine, here is the letter I promised you, though I must admit that nothing much has happened here so far. I continue to...
(Lights come up on the other side of the stage where Katharine sits in a chair, reading the letter to Milton who looks over her shoulder)
(Lights dim on tent)

Katharine ..."to research and refine the plans for the glider while waiting for Orville's arrival. I hope that you and Father are well. I think of you and home mostly at night. Nighttimes here have proved to be most disagreeable; last night I was chilled to the bone. A cold nor'easter is blowing, and though I have two blankets, I freeze most every night. The wind blows over my head, so I pull the blankets up, then when my feet freeze, I pull them down. I keep this up all night, and in the morning, I am hardly able to tell where I'm at in the bedclothes." *(Kate looks up)* How ridiculous, Father! Remind me to send him more blankets— long ones!

Milton All right, Kate.

Katharine *(Continuing)* "The sand is everywhere, dense clouds of it blow up suddenly and then it's completely gone in a few hours. I am amazed how nearly it almost blinds me. This is what I imagine the Sahara to be like." *(Looking up again, worried)* Father, really, this is not to be believed! What a terrible place!

Milton Go on, Kate, perhaps it will get better.

Katharine "The mosquitoes are unbelievable. They chewed clean through my underwear and socks. Lumps began swelling all over my body... misery."
(Lights up quickly on tent area)

Orville Mosquitoes? There's mosquitoes here? I haven't seen any!

Wilbur Big as my hand! Just wait till the sun goes down.

Orville Sounds lousy! Look, so far this letter is all doom and gloom. You better put something hopeful in it, you know what a worrier Kate is.

Wilbur Well, tell me what to write, you're better at that sort of thing.

Orville All right. Put this: Actually, though, this place is grand. The sunset...
(Lights shift again to other side of the stage)

Katharine "...is the prettiest I have ever seen. The moon rises in much the same style, and it lights up this pile of sand almost like day. I read my watch at all hours of the night without the aid of any other light than the stars shining brightly through the canvas of the tent."
(Lights up on both sides)

Orville She'll love that last part. Do you think it'll soften her up a bit?

Katharine Orville must have arrived and added that part. Wilbur never waxes poetic like that, Wilbur always tells the truth!

Wilbur It's a masterpiece brother, a work of art. Of course, you haven't been here at night yet.
Orville I have an imagination. Speaking of which, I'm tired, let's call it a night.
Wilbur All right, I can finish this up in the morning. Besides, we'd better turn in before the mosquitoes find us.
(He smiles wickedly as Orville slaps at a mosquito. They go into the tent)
(Music ends after 10 seconds)

(Lights off on tent side)
Katharine This was written five days later. "By the way, Orville has arrived at last." *(To Father)* I knew it! "Word has spread among the townfolk that we are making a flying machine. Some have come to scoff, but they keep their distance and don't bother as much. Folks around here believe in a good God, a hot hell, and more than anything else... that the same good God did not intend that man should ever fly. I hope we can prove them wrong." *(Sighing)* It ends there. Oh Father, forgive me, but sometimes I feel like one of those holier-than-thou scoffers. Why are they doing this father?! The criticism, the discomfort, the danger, what could possibly make anyone want to endure such hardships?

(Music begins; introduction to "You Will Finally Fly")
Milton Katharine, try to understand. You're not so different from your brothers. All your life you've searched for your own truth in your books, even when others tried to discourage you. The boys are searching too. Because the greater truth Kate, is that we are all meant to seek out and discover things, to mirror in our efforts the greatness of God and His creation.

SONG: "YOU WILL FINALLY FLY"

Milton Deep in the heart of man there lives eternally
A yearning to find
All the answers of the universe around us
To build, to explore, to understand, to embrace
Ev'ry wonder, ev'ry mystery at hand
And so we learn how to patiently seek the knowledge
That brings us to the dream
That our hearts have placed before us
So lift up your eyes to the heavens
To the starry skies and
Dream into the future
Follow your adventure
Finally you will even fly
(Music transitions briefly to next scene)
(Black out)
(Lights up on)

SCENE 5: BICYCLE SHOP INTERIOR (Set: Neutral)

(Orville and Wilbur run tests with a wind tunnel by using a noisy motor-driven fan and model planes which seem to be "flying")
(Motor sound effect)

Orville *(Working fan)* Enter into log.
Wilbur *(Writing info in a journal)* Enter into log.
Orville Test number 184, four-inch wing, monoplane.
Wilbur Got it? Ready to test.
Orville Wait, let me adjust this blade angle. All right, ready. Step aside.
(Wilbur moves out and runs into Mrs. Welch who is with Mrs. Dean)
Mrs. Welch Charlie? *(Startled)* Oh, Wilbur! Wilbur Wright! Why, what are you doing here, is that Orville there?

Wibur Yes, Ma'am. Sorry, I didn't see you. Well, we're... we're back ma'am. The weather got rough, so we decided to come home and run some more tests.

Mrs. Welch Oh, what a shame, so that flying contraption of yours didn't work. Well, it was the hand of Providence, Wilbur. But you've got a nice little business and a comfortable life. Don't worry my boy, no one here will think any less of you if you give up.

Wilbur Actually, Mrs. Welch, we did fly; in fact, we actually set some gliding records— 400 feet and 2 minutes in the air.

Mrs. Dean Really?

Wilbur Yes, really. And next season, when the weather's good again, and we've raised the money, we'll be right back at Kitty Hawk, trying to better those records.

Mrs. Welch So what, pray tell, is your brother doing with that... thing?

Wilbur That's a wind tunnel, ma'am. Orville's testing the lift and drag on different wing shapes so we can find the most efficient one. So far we've tested over 180 combinations.

Mrs. Dean No offense Wilbur, but do you think that is the best use of two grown men's time? After all, if the Good Lord meant for man to fly, he'd have given us all wings.

Mrs. Welch Amen to that!

Orville *(He has stopped his testing)* And if we were meant to ride trains we would have been born with wheels and a smokestack... forgive me, Mrs. Welch, Mrs. Dean, but that sort of thinking just doesn't make sense! Now, if you'll excuse us, we need to finish up these tests.
(The boys go back to their work. The women start to exit)

Mrs. Dean Well, I think it's safe to say those two are obsessed.

Mrs. Welch Obsessed, ha! I think it's safe to say they're crazy!
(They exit)

(Music begins; introduction to next song)

Wilbur You were kind of rude, Orville.

Orville Oh, I... I know. I didn't mean to be, it's just that well, we don't seem to be getting anywhere!

Wilbur We crashed another one?

Orville Yep, I just can't seem to come up with the right combination.

Katharine *(Entering the scene with Milton, startling the boys)* Maybe if you gave those overactive brains a rest...

Milton Get out of this stuffy old shop...

Katharine And got a little supper in those stomachs...

Orville Now look, Kate...

Katharine You wouldn't be so grouchy!

Milton Your sister and I decided to come and rescue you from impending starvation.

Katharine That's right. You two were out before breakfast, and I bet you skipped lunch.

Orville Look, we don't need fresh air, or fool, or anything but peace and quiet. Besides, Wilbur is on a diet.

Katharine A diet, since when?

Orville He needs to lose a few pounds...
(Wilbur looks like he's going to protest)

Orville ...to lighten the load! Less load, greater lift! Look Kate... Father... please! We're just on the brink of something here!
(He takes the ledger from Wilbur and starts making notes in it. The boys become quickly engrossed, totally ignoring Katharine and Milton)

SONG: "QUIET OBSESSION"

Wilbur One more angle to measure
Orville One more fact to recall
Wilbur Looking for the answers to it all
Orville One more theory to relinquish
Wilbur One more experiment to try

Orville How to make a change in the design
Wilbur One more problem to ponder when we analyze all our facts
 We only find we're
Orville (Quietly, steadily, hopefully, confidently we only find we're)
Wil & Orv Changing our minds
Wilbur Late nights, more conversations
Orville Then up early again
Wilbur Quietly obsessive to get there
Orville Are we crazy or just lonely
Wilbur What force compels us to discover
Orville Driving us away from everything else
Wilbur Making more observations, writing every result
 We'll finally decide
Orville (Quietly, steadily, hopefully, confidently we decide)
Katharine Come to the table now and eat your supper
 Give it a break so you can get some rest
 Be refreshed
Katharine But I think we're in the middle of it, what about if we tried
Wil & Orv Warping wings, could we fly?
Kath & Milt Don't get so focused that you lose your sanity
Wil & Orv (Have we lost our sanity)
Kath & Milt Don't let your theories get way too big
Wil & Orv (No this is way too big)
Wil & Orv There's nothing wrong with taking time to find a
Kath & Milt (We've got no time to find a)
Wil & Orv Life out of your work. Don't be so
Wil & Orv (Perfect answer to this problem that keeps coming up again
 Coming up again)
Kath & Milt Narrow.... Now
Wil & Orv (We've got to find the way to control it now so find any way)
Wilbur Find any way to get by
 (We can fly)
(Music continues 20 seconds, trailing off)

(At the end of the song, a bunch of townspeople begin to gather on the stage, led by Mrs. Welch, obviously gossiping)

Katharine Oh, all right, but they'll be eating another cold supper! Ha, maybe next time we attempt a rescue
 we should call out the Marines, eh?
(They laugh and exit through crowd which has suddenly become very quiet)
Mrs. Welch Why, afternoon, Bishop Wright, Katharine.
Milton Good afternoon, Mrs. Welch. Everything all ready for the church rummage sale?
Mrs. Welch Naturally, I've got everything under control.
Milton Glad to hear it. Well, good-day.
(Mrs. Welch nods and smiles as Milton and Katharine exit, then the whole group begins to silently but animatedly gossip again)
Orville We already tried that one, Wil. That was test 57, see? Oh, this is impossible!
Wilbur You're right, it is impossible! Look, Orv, we're hungry, we're tired, we're just not thinking
 straight anymore. Father and Katharine were right, we need a break.
Orville But...
Wilbur No... no more, Orville, I'm going home. *(He puts on his coat and starts out. Orville soon follows)*
Mrs. Welch I tell you, I saw them!
Mrs. Dean Me too!
Mrs. Welch Grown men, wasting their time with a bunch of little bird wings!
Mrs. Dean And talking a bunch of mumbo jumbo!