

## LIBRETTO: SHOPPING FOR HAPPINESS

WORDS AND MUSIC BY NELL CLOWDER  
WITH LINDA NENNO

### characters

Bobbie – coloratura  
Gloria – soprano/mezzo  
Witch – mezzo  
Harold – tenor  
Pennyman – baritone

*Opening scene: could be anywhere.  
Maybe Bobbie's home.*

### BOBBIE

Bills, taxes,  
war, war, war and more war,  
death and destruction!  
Another day, another wretched day  
In Suckville  
In suck, suck, suck, suck,  
su--u-u-u sssss-uck ville.  
If I were in charge things would be different,  
but alas, I'm not God.  
People are mean, bloody and ignorant,  
Even the good ones are flawed.  
Mosquitoes, deadly disease,  
Volcanoes, earthquakes, hurricanes,  
and asteroids from space!  
And then there's me, another tiny speck  
In Suckville.  
No good at all, no good to anyone,  
In Suckville.  
What is the matter with me?  
I shouldn't be so negative,  
but even when I pray I'm argumentative.  
I can't help it, I'm barely coping,  
and the only thing that helps,  
the only thing that ever helps  
is to go, is to go, is to go  
shopping.  
But I have no money,  
my credit cards are maxed out.  
Pathetic, pathetic,  
I'm such a loser.

*By some magical means, a gift card appears.*

What's this? A gift card to the Happiness Mall!  
Good for one transaction.  
Prob'ly not much but I can go shopping!

*Scene change: the Happiness Mall.  
We see the vendors standing in the doorways of their  
shops and signs identifying their businesses:  
Pennyman's Palace of Possessions  
Harold's Magical Health & Beauty  
Gloria's Glorious Romance  
Witch (Vendor 4): the doorway is darker and has no sign.  
The witch is not seen or is a shadowy figure.*

*Piano intro (and vamp): Happiness Waltz*

### VENDORS

Happiness, Happiness, Happiness Mall  
Here we have happiness for one and all.  
What is your name?

### BOBBIE

My name? It's Bobbie.

### VENDORS

*spoken:*

Bobbie! Great name! Outstanding! Beautiful name!

*sung:*

Bobbie be, Bobbie be, Bobbie be happy!  
Bobbie be, Bobbie be, Bobbie be happy!

### BOBBIE

All right! Enough! This place is not for me.

### PENNYMAN

Bobbie, wait! Give us a chance.  
Bobbie, little Bobbie, tell Mr. Pennyman  
What's missing in your life.  
Would you like a Lexus?  
Would you like a diamond ring?  
If those are too immodest, maybe flip-flops with bling?  
A hot tub? Just ask! A penthouse? No problem!  
Tell Mr. Pennyman 'cause owning things is awesome!  
What will it be, Bobbie?  
Ask for anything you want!

*Bobbie offers the gift card to Pennyman.*

### BOBBIE

Is this enough for flip flops?

*Harold seizes the gift card.*

### HAROLD

No, no, no! This card is good for one transaction  
in any amount.

### BOBBIE

Any amount? What's the catch?

### HAROLD

No catch.

*Harold returns the gift card to Bobbie.*

### HAROLD

Come over here to Harold's Magical Health & Beauty.

### BOBBIE

No! No diets or exercises.

### HAROLD

Relax! Bobbie, I want you to love your body just as it is,  
and I can give you a body to love!  
Love your thighs just as they are  
- but little bit slimmer  
Love your lovely hazel eyes  
(spoken) - note to self, add glimmer

Love your butt  
- could be tighter  
Love your breasts, the left and the right  
- I should be politer  
Love your abs just as they are  
- you will when you can see them  
Love your knees just as they are  
- we'll keep them

BOBBIE  
With one transaction I can have a beautiful, healthy body?

HAROLD  
That's right, Bobbie!

BOBBIE  
I would just wreck it eating junk food.

HAROLD  
Oh no! I thought I had her.

GLORIA  
Dear Bobbie! You don't need to be beautiful.  
What you need is love, unconditional love.  
Do you try so hard to find connection?  
Are you bruised and sore from rejection?  
Have the gods of love ignored your plea?  
A little help from Gloria is all you need.  
And you will be cherished,  
Your heart overflowing,  
And you will be desired!  
'Til dawn finds you glowing.  
Only one transaction, don't pass up this chance  
Bobbie, open your heart, embrace romance!

*Bobbie almost gives Gloria the gift card.*

PENNYMAN AND HAROLD  
Gloria's got her! Who can say "no" to true love?

BOBBIE  
Romance leads to heartbreak.

GLORIA  
But Bobbie, it's guaranteed!

BOBBIE  
You've never had a case as hard as me.

GLORIA  
She doesn't believe.

PENNYMAN AND HAROLD  
Believe, believe

VENDORS  
She does not believe  
that she can be happy.  
She does not believe  
that she can be happy  
She does not believe, she  
Just does not believe that  
She can be happy.

BOBBIE  
What are they  
talking about?  
What nonsense!  
Why do I waste  
my time at this  
ridiculous mall?

BOBBIE  
What about this other vendor?

VENDORS  
Stay away from her, Bobbie!  
She'll take everything you have.

WITCH  
I don't sell, I only take.  
Take your belief there's something wrong with you.  
I'll gouge out your conviction that you're worthless.  
I'll strangle the story that you'll never be loved.  
I'll flush the sewer of your self respect,  
And when I'm done you'll leave empty-handed.

BOBBIE  
She seems to know me —

WITCH  
Nunc extractum —

BOBBIE  
— know what's inside of me —

WITCH  
— malus cogitum —

BOBBIE  
— Would I be lost or free —

WITCH  
— ergo letum.

BOBBIE  
— without this misery?

*Bobbie hands the witch her gift card.*

VENDORS  
Bobbie! Bobbie! Bobbie!

WITCH  
Wait a minute, this card is only good for one transaction.  
I can only take one belief away.

*Vendors huddle in brief conference. We hear indistinct MUMBLING. Huddle breaks:*

VENDORS  
Then take her belief that she can't be happy.

*The witch puts her ear near Bobbie's head and raps on Bobbie's head.*

WITCH  
knock knock knock  
Malus cogitum  
Knock knock knock  
Intra cranium

*Witch casts the spell/dances the exorcism with increasing frenzy while Bobbie writhes and groans.*

WITCH  
Ahh Ahh Ahh Ahh  
Come out! Come out!  
Thou dev'lish belief  
At my command  
Thou wilt perish:  
Be gone!

BOBBIE  
Ow, ow, ow, ow  
Ow-ee-ah! Ow-ee-ah!  
Eeee!  
Aaahh!  
Ah, ih, er, ee, ow eeee  
ee-ah!

*Witch doubles over/collapses with exhaustion.*

BOBBIE  
You stopped.

WITCH  
Bobbie, do you feel different?

BOBBIE  
No

WITCH  
*Knock knock knock*  
Damn it! The bad thought is still there.

HAROLD  
The girl is doomed!

GLORIA  
That belief is really stuck!

PENNYMAN  
Let me look.

*Pennyman steps up beside the witch and shines a flashlight in Bobbie's ear and peers inside her head.*

[spoken, no music]  
Yeah, I see it. That belief is really in there. If I can just get hold of a corner – got it!

*(Like a magician) Pennyman pulls a scarf from Bobbie's ear. The witch seizes the scarf and starts pulling.*

[music resumes]

WITCH:  
Come out! Come out!

*The vendors line up behind the witch, each with a hand on the lengthening scarf, and they all pull together.*

VENDORS AND WITCH  
Yo ho heave ho  
Yo ho heave ho  
This ugly thought has  
Got to go!

BOBBIE  
  
Oh oh oh oh!  
Ee  
Ee-yah!

*The thought flies out and the vendors and witch fall down. [Music pauses]. On hands and knees, vendors and witch look at the thought that has fallen on the floor.*

WITCH, GLORIA, PENNYMAN  
Ewww! Gross! Yuck!

[Piano vamp]

*Vendors rise and Harold removes the disgusting thought from the stage.*

[Music resumes]

VENDORS  
Bobbie, do you feel different?

BOBBIE  
I feel strange.

PENNYMAN  
I say we give her a test.

WITCH  
Be careful, she needs to take little steps.

PENNYMAN  
Bobbie, would you like an ice cream cone?

BOBBIE  
Okay.

*Pennyman gives Bobbie an ice cream cone and she tastes it.*

This...is...not...  
Bad, this is not bad at all.  
In fact, I'd say that this is really tasty.

VENDORS  
It's working! It's working!

VENDORS AND WITCH (WITH BOBBIE VOCALISE)  
Happiness, happiness, happiness mall

HAROLD  
Would you like a pedicure?

BOBBIE  
Sure

*Harold seizes Bobbie's foot and begins pedicure.*

VENDORS AND WITCH  
Here we have happiness for one and all!

GLORIA  
How 'bout a hug?

BOBBIE  
Okay.

*Gloria hugs Bobbie. Vendors dance around Bobbie, showering her with attention while Bobbie sings vocalise.*

[Bobbie vocalise]

EVERYONE  
La la la ...

VENDORS AND WITCH  
Who will be our next customer?

BOBBIE  
*(to the audience)*  
The next customer –  
There is a coupon in your program.

WITCH  
*(to the audience)*  
If you dare!

EVERYONE  
Happiness, happiness for one and all,  
One and All!