

ACT ONE
SCENE ONE

{The LIGHTS COME UP on a smartly dressed
ACTOR, who is standing at a podium and addressing
the audience.

ACTOR.

I have been proud and privileged to have spent the majority of my life in the theatre. And tonight, I am pleased to place in deserving hands the highest honor the Theater knows, and to such a young lady, young in years, but whose heart is as old as Broadway. Ladies and gentlemen - the award for outstanding achievement by an actress in a musical comedy goes to Miss Kathie Zelden.

{The SOUND OF APPLAUSE fills the theatre, along
with slow, rhythmic chanting from the audience as
they call her name. MUSIC begins quietly. KATHIE
slowly makes her way to the podium. She takes her
place in front of the microphones and addresses the
audience.}

KATHIE.

It won't be easy. You'll think it's strange when I try to explain how I feel. For, I am still but an apprentice in the Theater and have much to learn from you all. As you may know, I owe a huge debt of gratitude to Hollywood star Penny Stuart and her maid. However, the lion's share of credit for my meteoric rise to stardom must go to one woman, a perky woman, a woman you've probably never heard of . . . Miss Betsy Barker.

{The LIGHTS rise on BETSY BARKER, who is standing,
frozen in position waiting to start her dance routine. She
is smiling as if her very life depended on it.}

That's the day it all started. When she decided to attend that open casting call, who could know that it would set into motion a chain of events that would bring me here tonight? May I return to the beginning? The light is dimming and the dream is too.

{The lights dim out on KATHIE and up on BETSY.
The DIRECTOR can be visible or an off-stage voice.}

DIRECTOR.

(Yelling)

Are you ready? OK, A five, six, seven, eight.

(BETSY starts to tap and is immediately
stopped.)

Next.

BETSY.

No, please. Let me have another chance.

DIRECTOR.

We have a lot of people to see.

BETSY.

But, I've come all the way from French Lick!

DIRECTOR.

You're just not the right type.

BETSY.

I can be any type. I'm very versatile. What type are you looking for?

DIRECTOR.

Someone with talent.

BETSY.

But, I have talent!

DIRECTOR.

No, you don't. And, you're too fat. Honey, dry your eyes. We don't have time for tears here. This isn't French Lick. You're in the big leagues now. This is Indianapolis.

BETSY.

You just wait. I'll show you. I'll show you all. I'm going to New York. I'm going to Broadway. I'm going to be a star!

BLACKOUT

ACT ONE
SCENE TWO

{We transition from the theatre to BETSY'S
bedroom, where she is packing her suitcase and
singing THEY ALWAYS PICK ON ME}

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BETSY.

WHEN I WAS BORN, MY MA AND PA,
THEY LOOKED AT ME AND SAID "GOOD GAWD."
THE DOCTOR SAID "IT'S A GIRL, I THINK"
AND PA WENT OUT AND GOT A DRINK.
THEN, MA SAID I "LOOKED JUST LIKE PA"
AND PA SAID I "TOOK AFTER MA."
AUNT JANE SAID I LOOKED "KIND OF DENSE"
AND I'VE BEEN THE BLACK SHEEP EVER SINCE.
THEY ALWAYS, ALWAYS PICK ON ME.
THEY NEVER EVER LET ME BE.
I'M SO VERY LONESOME, VERY SAD,
IT'S A LONG TIME SINCE I'VE BEEN GLAD.
BUT, I KNOW WHAT I'LL DO, STARTS TONIGHT,
YOU'LL SEE MY NAME IN MARQUEE LIGHTS.
AND WHEN I'M GONE, YOU WAIT AND SEE,
THEY'LL ALL BE SORRY THAT THEY PICKED ON ME.
WHEN I FIRST SAW THE LADIES DANCE,
I KNEW SOMEDAY I'D GET MY CHANCE.
I WAS PREPARED TO PAY MY DUES.
I SCRIMPED AND SAVED TO BUY TAP SHOES.
WHEN MOTHER SENT ME OFF TO SCHOOL,
THEY TREATED ME JUST LIKE A FOOL.
SO, I TOOK DANCE CLASS EVERY DAY
AND SET MY SIGHTS ON OL' BROADWAY.
THEY ALWAYS, ALWAYS PICK ON ME.

BETSY. (cont'd)

THEY NEVER EVER LET ME BE.
I'M SO VERY LONESOME, PRETTY MAD,
IT'S A LONG TIME SINCE I'VE BEEN BAD
BUT, I KNOW WHAT I'LL DO, ONE FINE DAY.
I'LL GET REVENGE AND MAKE THEM PAY.
AND WHEN I DO YOU WAIT AND SEE.
THEY'LL ALL BE SORRY THAT THEY FUCKED WITH ME.

{ALTERNATE LYRICS}

AND WHEN AT LAST I'VE MADE THE CUT,
I'LL TELL THEM ALL THAT THEY CAN KISS MY BUTT!

GRANDMA.

What's going on in here?

BETSY.

Nothing.

GRANDMA.

I thought I heard singing.

BETSY.

(Tearing up)

You did. This is a musical.

GRANDMA.

Oh, stop that crying. It's not going to do you a bit of good.

BETSY.

But, they laughed at me.

GRANDMA.

Everyone in this world who has ever dreamed of something has been laughed at. Betsy, there are two types of people in this world, the dreamers and the doers. The doers are the ones who set out to make their dreams come true, while the dreamers just sit around and moon about how wonderful it would be if only things were different.

BETSY.

Oh Grandma, I want so much more than this provincial life. I'm gonna be a doer! Look at me and tell me what you see.

GRANDMA.

I see a beautiful, slightly overweight girl.

BETSY.

Well, you ain't seen the best of me yet. I can catch the moon in my hand. Don't you know who I am?

GRANDMA.

You're Betsy Barker.

BETSY.

Remember my name.

GRANDMA.

Fame.

BETSY.

Granny, you don't understand. I'm tired of being on the outside, always looking in. Will I ever be more than I've always been? I'm tap, tap, tapping-

GRANDMA.

You want it all and you want it to be easy. Why, when I wanted something, I came across those plains in a prairie schooner with your grandfather. Oh, everyone laughed at us, too. They always said this country would never be anything but a wilderness. But, we didn't believe that.

BETSY.

It must have been wonderful.

GRANDMA.

No. It sucked. We burned in summer and we froze in winter. We kept on going because we were doing something we loved. Could you do it? Could you do it even if it broke your heart? Remember, for every dream that you make come true, you will pay the price in heart break. I know what I'm talking about. You may not believe it, but I was a young girl once, a very pretty young girl, a lot prettier than you are. I had offers from many men and a few women. Yes, Betsy, there are women out there who prefer the company of other women. Remember, I told you about them? They can be possessive. Why, when that gal put a bullet into your Grandpa, it was like it went through my body, too. But, I stayed strong. I jumped in that wagon with her and kept heading west. Three days later, your mother was born. You don't know the meaning of pain until you've given yourself a cesarean. But, I kept going. I had to. I had that dream. I wanted to be a Teamster. Are you prepared to follow your dream, Betsy, to sacrifice for it?

BETSY.

I am. I hear the music. I close my eyes, feel the rhythm.

GRANDMA.

Does it wrap around and take a hold of your heart?

BETSY.

What a feeling!

GRANDMA.

Well, maybe New York is your wilderness. If you've got one drop of my blood in your veins, you won't let anyone break your heart. You'll go right out there and break it yourself. That's your right as my granddaughter. But, always remember-

{THERE'S A BROKEN HEART FOR EVERY
LIGHT ON BROADWAY begins.}

THERE'S A BROKEN HEART FOR EV'RY LIGHT ON BROADWAY.
A MILLION TEARS FOR EVERY GLEAM, THEY SAY.
THOSE LIGHTS ABOVE YOU, THINK NOTHING OF YOU.
IT'S THOSE WHO LOVE YOU WHO HAVE TO PAY.
THERE'S A SORROW LURKING IN EACH GLOOMY SHADOW.
AND, SORROW COMES TO EV'RY ONE SOME DAY.

GRANDMA. (cont'd)
 'T'WILL COME TO YOUR BROTHERS,
 BUT THINK OF GRANDMOTHERS,
 WITH BROKEN HEARTS FOR EACH LIGHT ON BROADWAY.

BETSY.
 (Hugging her)
 Oh, Grandmother.

GRANDMA.
 Here take this.

BETSY.
 Oh, I can't take your money.

GRANDMA.
 Follow your dream child, that dream that will need all the love you can give.

BETSY.
 Every day of my life?

GRANDMA.
 For as long as you live. And Betsy, if sometime in the future, perhaps even
 somewhere in this play, you find yourself in a position to help another
 struggling artist, don't forget the golden rule.

BETSY.
 I won't. I'll do unto them.

GRANDMA. DO NOT COPY OR PRINT
 Pay it forward, Betsy. Pay it forward.

BETSY.
 I will. I promise. Oh Grandmother, how can I ever thank you?

GRANDMA.
 By giving me your solemn word that you will never ever tell a living soul
 where you got that money. Don't forget, I'm still on parole.

BETSY.
 I won't. I am not throwing away my shot!

GRANDMA.
 What?

BETSY.
 I am not throwing away my shot!

GRANDMA.
 What?

BETSY.
 I am not throwing away my shot!

GRANDMA.
 Just take your Hamilton's and go.

BLACKOUT

ACT ONE
SCENE THREE

{Lights up on the office of world famous Broadway director, JEFFERSON BLAND. He is in the process of signing his new contract. SKIP and BANKS are standing nearby.}

SKIP.

Can you make a hit out of it, Jefferson?

JEFFERSON.

I've made hit shows out of less.

BANKS.

But, we have to open by next week.

SKIP.

We certainly got a break when we got Penny Stuart.

JEFFERSON.

These days, stars like Penny Stuart are a dime a dozen. Box office poison.

BANKS.

That's why we got you Jefferson. Jefferson Bland, the greatest director on Broadway.

SKIP.

Broadway?

BANKS.

The greatest director in the world. Why, with your reputation-

JEFFERSON.

Did you ever try to pay a bill with a reputation? Don't kid yourself. I'm doing this show for one reason and one reason only - cold hard CASH.

BANKS.

But, with all your past hits, you should be sitting pretty.

JEFFERSON.

I've got just two words for you.

BANKS.

Wall Street?

JEFFERSON.

No. Fuck off.

{The TELEPHONE RINGS.}

SKIP.

(Answering phone)

Mr. Bland's office. Who's calling? One moment please.

(To Jefferson)

It's for you. It's a Dr. Brockton. Says it's important.

JEFFERSON.

Sorry, I've got to take this.

(On phone)

Bland here.

{Lights up on DR. BROCKTON.}

DR. BROCKTON.

(On phone)

Mr. Bland, I've got the results back from your examination.

JEFFERSON.

Hit me with it, Doc. I can take it.

DR. BROCKTON.

(On phone)

I'm afraid it's what I suspected. I must recommend immediate surgery.

JEFFERSON.

It's too late for that now. I've signed a contract. I've got a show to do.

DR. BROCKTON.

(On phone)

Good lord man, you're not a machine. That body of yours will only tolerate so much. Any undue strain on your part could prove fatal.

JEFFERSON.

I'll have to risk it.

DR. BROCKTON.

(On phone)

In that case, there's still that matter of your outstanding balance.

(JEFFERSON hangs up)

Hello? Hello?

{Lights out on DR. BROCKTON.}

BANKS.

Is there anything wrong?

JEFFERSON.

Why do you ask?

BANKS.

That doctor talked kind of loud. You realize that if the show doesn't open by the fifteenth, we lose the lease on the theatre, not to mention all the money invested.

SKIP.

Yeah, there's hundreds of dollars at stake.

BANKS.

I told you not to mention that.

JEFFERSON.

Don't worry. I've never let you down before and I can't afford to now.

BANKS.

Well, I need to get back to the bank. I've got a foreclosure this afternoon and you know how I love those. So long.

JEFFERSON.

Farewell.

SKIP.

Auf Wiedersehen

BANKS.

(Exiting)

Good night.

SKIP.

It'll sure be nice to be back on Broadway again.

JEFFERSON.

Broadway. I've given everything I've had to that damn 42nd Street.

(Looking out the window)

It's beautiful, isn't it? There's not another like it in the entire world.

SKIP.

Boss, we're on 43rd Street.

JEFFERSON.

What's the difference? You've seen one street, you've seen 'em all. The point is, this is my last shot. I'm going to have to reach in and pull one more hit out of my ass and you're going to have to help me. And, this time I'll sock my money away someplace that no on earth will ever be able to find it, not even my ex-wives. That's why TAP THAT has got to be a hit and it's got to be my best. It's got to support me for a long, long time.

SKIP.

But, about that phone call . . .

JEFFERSON.

What do doctors know? Medical diplomas don't make them gods. Make the chorus call for ten a.m. tomorrow.

BLACKOUT

ACT ONE
SCENE FOUR

{Lights up on a Broadway theatre. The stage is full of dancers waiting for auditions to resume, some are in various stages of practicing routines and doing stretches.}

{SKIP is doing his best to keep the crowds under control. Among the dancers are BETSY, MONA, FANNY, HARRY and PETER. BANKS and GABE are also present and checking out the ladies.}

MONA.

You OK, honey? You look a little pale.

I'll be all right.

BETSY.

When was the last time you had a decent meal?

FANNY.

I can't remember.

BETSY.

A pretty girl like you? You shouldn't have any trouble getting a guy to buy you dinner. Look over there. That's Banks Lonnigan. He's loaded.

FANNY.

You mean, drunk?

MONA.

Could you be any dumber?

FANNY.

I don't know.

MONA.

FANNY.
(To Betsy)

You stick with us kid. We'll show you how to hook a guy. It's easy.

MONA.

She's easy.

FANNY.

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Look over there. Banks is talking to Gabe Stroman, the Sausage King of Chicago.

MONA.

I sure could go for a nice big sausage right now.

BETSY.

I don't feel well. I think I might faint. I'm dizzy.

FANNY.

Nice to meet you Dizzy.

BETSY.

No, I'm serious.

MONA.

Nice to meet you Serious.

{BETSY FAINTS.}

JEFFERSON.
(Entering)

Oh, what a beautiful morning.

SKIP.
(Entering)

Oh, what a beautiful day.

JEFFERSON.

(Seeing Betsy)

Someone wake up that girl. We don't have time for naps. This is a theatre. If you want to sleep here, you've got to buy a ticket first.

{FANNY and MONA help revive BETSY.}

BETSY.

Thanks. I'm so embarrassed. This is the third time this week I've woke up on the floor.

FANNY.

You get used to it.

SKIP.

OK gang, cut the chatter. Mr. Bland is back from the john. I need everyone to get back in line.

GABE.

Who are those two girls over there?

BANKS.

You mean, Pete and Harry?

PETER.

We heard that.

HARRY.

We heard that.

GABE.

No, those two.

SKIP.

That's Mona and Fanny.

GABE.

That Fanny is a real peach.

BETSY.

Peach? I'm so hungry.

JEFFERSON.

I can't help but notice Miss Stuart has decided not to grace us with her presence.

GABE.

You know how she feels about auditions.

MONA.

(Whispering)

She thinks she's too good for us.

BETSY.

Well, she is a big star.

FANNY.

And getting bigger every day.

SKIP.

Quiet girls.

JEFFERSON.

You're just going thru a slow period.

BETSY.

That's what I've been telling myself for the last thirty seven auditions. The truth is, nothing is going to turn up. I just need a job. Look, there's nothing left for me to do here, so I'm putting myself on that line. God, I'm a dancer! A dancer dances.

JEFFERSON.

But, I've only got one spot open and I sort of promised it to that girl back stage, the one with the tits and the ass.

BETSY.

Please! Give me somebody to dance with. Give me somebody to show.

JEFFERSON.

What sort of salary are you hoping for?

BETSY.

I don't need much. Maybe some music, a mirror.

JEFFERSON.

You're hired. You're all hired!

(Everyone applauds)

All right now, you people, back in line and everybody quiet. Tomorrow morning, we're going to start a show. We're going to rehearse and rehearse and we're going to open on schedule. You're going to work and sweat and work some more. You're going to work days and you're going to work nights. It's going to be the toughest seven days you've ever lived through. You're going to dance your feet off and one week from now, we're going to have a show! We start tomorrow.

{Everyone CHEERS.}

SKIP.

Now, you're all going to need your rest. I want you all to go straight home and go straight to bed.

MONA.

Whose home?

FANNY.

Whose bed?

PETER.

HARRY.

Who's straight?

Who's straight?

JEFFERSON.

Wait! Before you all go, I have a quick question. Does anyone happen to know a young, handsome, singing, song writing, juvenile male lead? I've just received word that Gaylord Ravenal isn't available. That boat has sailed.

PETER.

Say, I might know someone. There's this new guy who frequents our club.

DICK. (cont'd)
 I CAN ALWAYS FIND A LITTLE SUNSHINE AT THE Y.M.C.A.
 MOTHER DEAR, I'M STILL WRITING SONGS
 BUT IT'S TOUGHER NOW TO EARN MY PAY.
 THE WEATHER'S COLD AND THE NIGHTS ARE LONG.
 I'M BEGINNING TO LOSE MY WAY.

{HARRY and PETER enter the locker room. They
 are also dressed in towels. They silently listen to
 DICK's song.}

BUT, DON'T WORRY DEAR, THO 'THIS MAY SOUND QUEER,
 REST ASSURED THAT ALL IS WELL.
 ON OPENING NIGHT, I'LL BE QUITE A SIGHT.
 THERE'LL BE SO MUCH TO TELL.
 YOU CAN PICTURE ME EVERY EVENING,
 AT THE CLOSE OF THE DAY,
 WRITING A LITTLE LETTER JUST TO SEND ON ITS' WAY.
 DON'T YOU WORRY MOTHER DARLING,
 FOR WHEN THE SKIES ARE GRAY,
 I CAN ALWAYS FIND A LITTLE SUNSHINE AT THE Y.M.C.A.

PETER.
 Hey, don't take this the wrong way, but that was a great song.

DICK.
 Thanks.

HARRY. - DO NOT COPY OR PRINT
 And, you're a great singer.

DICK.
 Thanks. And, you've both got amazing bodies.

PETER. Thanks. HARRY.

DICK.
 My name's Dick. Dick Hopper.

HARRY.
 Nice to meet you Dick. I'm Harry.

DICK.
 Not really.

HARRY.
 Harry Wood.

PETER.
 And, I'm Peter. Peter Burns.

DICK.
 Nice to meet you fellows. And, what do you both do? Besides keeping fit
 that is?

PETER.
We're chorus boys.

HARRY.
We're chorus boys.

DICK.
No way.

PETER.
Way.

HARRY.
Way.

PETER.
We're in rehearsals for a new Broadway show called TAP THAT. Perhaps, you've heard of it?

DICK.
Are you kidding? Everybody's heard of TAP THAT. It's that new musical based on the life of Mrs. Samuel F. Morse. I'm new in town so I don't have an agent yet but I tried desperately to get into those auditions.

HARRY.
Oh, you don't need an agent to get an audition. You just gotta know the right guy to -

PETER.
(Cutting him off)
Say, it just so happens they're still looking for a guy.

HARRY.
Yeah, it's for one of the secondary leads, the juvenile. You'd be perfect.

PETER.
What's your schedule like for the next few weeks?

DICK.
Well, I do have a few things planned. I was going to get this boil lanced, but I think I can put that off. This opportunity sounds too good to miss. How can I ever thank you guys?

PETER.
Come here.

HARRY.
Come here.

{I CAN ALWAYS FIND A LITTLE SUNSHINE
REPRISE begins}

DICK.
(Approaching)
YOU CAN PICTURE ME EVERY EVENING,
AT THE CLOSE OF THE DAY,
WRITING A LITTLE LETTER
THAT I'LL SEND FROM BROADWAY.

DICK, PETER & HARRY.
DON'T YOU WORRY MOTHER DARLING,
FOR WHEN WE'RE FEELING GAY,
WE CAN ALWAYS FIND A LITTLE
SUNSHINE AT THE Y.M.C.A.

BLACKOUT

ACT ONE
SCENE SIX

{Lights up on the Broadway stage. It is a flurry of activity. BETSY, FANNY and MONA are all warming up. GABE and BANKS are chatting. After a moment, SKIP, DICK, PETER and HARRY enter.}

SKIP.

I want you all to meet our newest cast member. He's joining the show today. This is Dick.

DICK.

Hey Gang, what's the buzz? Tell me what is happening.

BETSY.

Hi.

(To Fanny and Mona)

He's dreamy.

PETER.

We know.

HARRY.

We know.

JEFFERSON.

(Entering)

Why is everyone just standing around? We've got a show to do.

SKIP.

We're waiting on Miss Stuart.

JEFFERSON.

She's late for the first rehearsal? That really takes the cake.

BETSY.

Oh, I wish he wouldn't mention food.

GABE.

Calm down Jefferson. Here she comes now.

{The stage door opens and PENNY makes her grand entrance. She is followed by her maid, TEENIE. Both are played by male actors.}

PENNY.

OK, I'm here. We can start the show now.

{The dancers rush over to ask for autographs.}

SKIP.

Everyone get back. Give Miss Stuart room to breathe. She doesn't have time for this.

PENNY.

(Handing out photos)

Nonsense, I've always got time for my fans.

HARRY.

Miss Stuart, would you autograph this for my cousin?

PENNY.

(Taking it)

Certainly.

(Signing it)

Dear Evan Hansen, sincerely me.

BETSY.

Miss Stuart, would you sign mine?

PENNY.

Sure I will. What's your name?

BETSY.

It's Betsy Barker.

PENNY.

(Handing the photo to TEENIE)

To Betsy Barker. Gratefully Penny Stuart.

{TEENIE takes the photograph, autographs it and hands it back to BETSY.}

BETSY.

Thanks ever so much, Miss Stuart. I think you're the best.

PENNY.

Me, too.

HARRY.

You sure smell swell, Miss Stuart.

PENNY.

Thanks. It's that new perfume, Summer Rain.

MONA.

And, your nails are fantastic.

PENNY.

Thanks. Jungle Red. You see Skip, these are the people that really matter, the fans. My fans. These are the kids who work their butts off every night just to make me look good. It's these people and countless others like them that I had to ruthlessly cut down, squash and step on to become a star. I'll always have time for them.

SKIP.

Are you ready Miss Stuart?

GABE.

Not so fast. Miss Stuart doesn't do anything without a signed contract.

SKIP.

Oh, sorry. Here it is.

{GABE pulls PENNY aside and they look at the contract.}

GABE.

Looks good. They agreed to all our terms.

PENNY.
Even the Zelden clause?

GABE.
They didn't even question it.

PENNY.
Do you realize that a year ago I could have had my choice of movie scripts? Now, I'm forced to do Broadway. God, this depression thing is so depressing. If it hadn't been for you putting up the dough . . . Who would have thought it? Gabe Stroman, The Sausage King of Chicago, my personal angel.

GABE.
(Blushing)
Miss Stuart . . . I mean, Penny. I'd like to do a lot more for you. If only you'd do something for me.

PENNY.
Why Mr. Stroman, what could a simple, incredibly beautiful star with amazing legs and no gag reflex possibly do for you?

GABE.
You can start by calling me Gabe.

JEFFERSON.
Come on everybody. Enough with the coffee klatch. We've got magic to do. I want everyone to form a line.

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SKIP.
You heard the man.

{Everyone lines up.}

JEFFERSON.
When I blow this whistle, I want you each to step forward, introduce yourself and tell us your position.

SKIP.
Ready gang? A five, six, seven, eight -
{JEFFERSON blows the whistle.}

DICK.
Dick Hopper. Juvenile lead.

PETER.
(After a whistle)
Peter Burns. Chorus.

HARRY.
(After a whistle)
Harry Wood. Chorus.

FANNY.
(After a whistle)
Fanny Hertz. Chorus.

BETSY.

(After a whistle)

Betsy Barker. Chorus.

MONA.

(After a whistle)

Mona Lott.

JEFFERSON.

And, your position?

MONA.

I'm standing.

BANKS.

(After a whistle)

Banks. Banks Lonnigan. Backer.

GABE.

(After a whistle)

Gabe Stroman. Backer.

SKIP.

(After a whistle)

Skip Lightly. Choreographer and Assistant Director.

PENNY.

(After a whistle)

Penny Stuart. Singer, Dancer, Actress, Combustible Engine Enthusiast and
Star.

JEFFERSON.

(After a whistle)

What about you? The husky one in the back wearing the duty shoes. Yes, you.

TEENIE.

Oh, no sir. I'm sorry sir. I could never answer to a whistle. Whistles are for dogs and cats and other animals but not for actors and definitely not for me.

PENNY.

That's my maid. She's been with me for years.

JEFFERSON.

Is she usually this much trouble?

PENNY.

Oh, much more, sir.

TEENIE.

My name is Teenie. I'm over thirty and I definitely do not need a director.

JEFFERSON.

Well then, we'll just be friends. OK, I want everyone to clear the stage. I want to see the dance break for ALL BY MYSELF.

SKIP.

You heard the man. If you're not in the number, amscray.

BETSY.

I can't quite put my finger on it but there is something strangely familiar about that Teenie woman. She reminds me of someone.

FANNY.

It's the same actor that played your Grandma. Just a different wig.

SKIP.

Miss Stuart would you grab Dick and take your place?

{DICK and PENNY cross to center stage.}

PENNY.

Ready when you are Mr. Bland.

JEFFERSON.

From bar 18.

SKIP.

A five, six, seven, eight.

{The MUSIC begins. PENNY assumes her trademark pose.}

{They both begin a dance routine which consists mainly of DICK dancing and PENNY posing. After a moment, DICK attempts to cross. PENNY sticks out her leg and trips him. DICK falls to the floor.}

PENNY.

Stop the music!

DICK.

I'm sorry, Miss Stuart.

PENNY.

I'm sorry, too. Mister Lightly, you're the choreographer. Would you be so kind as to tell Mr. Hopper that this is a rehearsal and not a dancing school?

SKIP.

I'm sorry.

PENNY.

We've had the sorry bit. Now, what do we do?

SKIP.

Well, maybe when we get to that section, you could turn your leg in a bit.

PENNY.

And spoil that line? You tell that Dick Hopper that he's paid to get around that leg. And, smile or we get another boy. I'm going home. Keep him here 'till he learns that routine. If that ever happens, call me.

{PENNY starts to leave.}

JEFFERSON.

Please Penny . . . I mean, Miss Stuart. If you leave now, there's no point in rehearsing.

PENNY.

If you'd hire competent people, you wouldn't have all this grief. Just look at that hooper you hired. Why, he stumbles around like some kind of TROG.

BANKS.

But, he just started today and you wouldn't give him a minute to learn the routine. Yet, you'd spend an hour signing autographs for those people.

PENNY.

I came from those people. They need to adore me.

BANKS.

Honey... I mean, Miss Stuart, I've got a lot of money tied up in this show. If it keeps going like this, I'm going to end up in a STRAIGHT JACKET. Please, just give us a break.

PENNY.

I am going to give you a break. I'm giving you a break by going home. I'm going to save you a lot of money by not going back. Unless somebody shocks that company into getting down to business, this show will never open. Seven days of rehearsal for a show that should take two. The script needs jokes, the music needs cutting and the staging stinks.

BANKS.

You think it's going to be a flop?

PENNY.

No show Penny Stuart is in is going to flop, if I have to pull every trick in the book to make it hang together.

{PENNY starts to leave.}

GABE.

Penny . . . Darling . . . We're still going out, aren't we?

PENNY.

Oh, you poor lamb.

BETSY.

(Starting to sway)

Is she talking about food?

PENNY.

I was to have dinner with you, wasn't I?

GABE.

I booked us a room at Hernando's. It's a dark and secluded place.

PENNY.

But, you will have to excuse me, won't you? I'm suddenly so exhausted.

GABE.

But . . .

PENNY.

(Cutting him off)

Oh, I knew you would. You really are an angel. I'll see you tomorrow.

(Blowing him a fake kiss)

Teenie, bring those arrangements to my dressing room.

{PENNY makes a dramatic exit. TEENIE follows.}

GABE.

(Following her off stage)

But, Penny . . . Darling-

JEFFERSON.

(Holding his stomach)

The rest of you take ten. I'm not feeling well again.

(To Skip)

Those damn clams.

BETSY.

(Starting to sway)

I wish he would stop taking about food.

FANNY.

Look kid, you better eat something soon.

BETSY.

I'm OK as long as I don't think about it.

JEFFERSON.

(Starting off stage) (To Skip)

There better be paper in there. Quilted.

SKIP.

(Following him off)

Yes, Mr. Bland.

{As they rush off, JEFFERSON and SKIP pass by the others.}

PETER.

Phew! What died?

HARRY.

God, that stinks.

FANNY.

He said he wasn't feeling well.

HARRY.

He's crop dusting.

PETER.

What would you even call that?

MONA.

Mariah.

DICK.

How about that Miss Stuart? I think she might be a little nuts.

BETSY.

(Starting to sway)

Nuts?

FANNY.

She's a bigger fruit cake then Harry or Peter.

PETER. Hey . . . HARRY. Hey . . .
 BETSY. Did she say "Fruit cake?"
 {BETSY faints.}
 MONA. Someone find her something to eat.
 FANNY. I think there might be a tuna fish sandwich in my purse.
 MONA. Honey, are you OK?
 BETSY. (Waking up)
 I think so.
 HARRY. Do you know who you are?
 BETSY. I'm Betsy Barker.
 HARRY. What year is it?
 BETSY. I have no idea.
 DICK. (To the audience)
 I don't think the writers of this show do either.
 HARRY. Where are you from?
 BETSY. French Lick.
 MONA. I tried that once. I lost an earring.
 HARRY. (To Betsy)
 Are you sure you're OK?
 BETSY. I'm fine, really. My head broke my fall.
 PETER. If a person runs for 657 minutes a day and runs for 800 days, how many minutes has he ran?

BETSY.

(Getting up)

If I could just get a little air.

DICK.

(Escorting BETSY off stage.)

I'll take you Betsy. Come on. Don't worry. I was never good at story problems either.

BETSY.

Thanks.

(Exiting) (To Peter)

Five hundred twenty five thousand six hundred minutes.

FANNY.

If I was a betting girl, I'd say that TAP THAT is never going to open.

PETER.

I can't afford to be out of work.

HARRY.

Me neither.

PETER.

What are you talking about? You've got Skip.

MONA.

What's he got to do with it?

FANNY.

Boy, you are dense. Why do you think Skip always casts him? They're a couple.

MONA.

A couple of what?

PETER.

Maybe it will all blow over.

FANNY.

I doubt it. Didn't you see the way she waltzed out of here? Like some kind of QUEEN BEE.

PETER.

Yeah, she did seem a little POSSESSED.

MONA.

I think she seemed nice.

HARRY.

Nice?

{SHE'S A MEAN JOB begins.}

WHAT A GIRLIE.

ANGRY GIRLIE.

SPITEFUL.

PETER.

DISCONCERTING.
ALWAYS FLIRTING.
FRIGHTFUL.

HARRY.

VOGUEY DRESSES.
MASSIVE MESSES.
OBSESSED
BUT, THE FANS THINK SHE'S A PIP.

PETER.

FOLKS TURN 'ROUND TO STARE AT HER,
SHE'S A MEAN JOB.
TRAFFIC HALTS WHILE MOTORS WHIRL,
SHE'S A MEAN JOB.

HARRY.

WITH ONE LOOK INTO HER EYES,
MEN GO HOME AND BEAT THEIR WIVES.
SHE FOOLS THEM AND COOLS THEM
TELLING PRETTY LIES.

PETER.

ALWAYS TOUGH BUT LOVES HER FANS,
SHE'S A MEAN JOB.
AND, THOUGH FAR BETTER DANCERS I HAVE MET,
YET, TO WATCH HER DANCE AND QUIVER,
MAKES STRONG MEN SHAKE AND SHIVER.
SHE MAKES THEM SOB' CAUSE SHE'S A MEAN JOB!

FANNY.

NEVER WORRIES.
NEVER HURRIES.
KNOCKOUT.

MONA.

JUST A BUBBLE.
LOTS OF TROUBLE.
BLOWOUT.

FANNY.

NEVER LAZY.
FAIRLY CRAZY.
GOSSIP.
BUT THE FANS MADE HER A HIT.

MONA.

FOLKS TURN 'ROUND TO STARE AT HER,

ALL.

SHE'S A MEAN JOB.

MONA.

TRAFFIC HALTS WHILE MOTORS WHIRL,

ALL.
SHE'S A MEAN JOB.

MONA.
WHEN SHE MOVES HER DAINTY FEET,
MEN FALL PROSTRATE ON THE STREET.

FANNY.
SHE FOOLS THEM AND COOLS
THEM PRACTICING DECEIT.

HARRY.
HOLDS HER LIQUOR LIKE A MAN.

ALL.
SHE'S A MEAN JOB.

PETER.
AND THOUGH I NEVER HEARD THAT SHE WOULD BET, YET,
ONCE SHE TOPPED THE ROSTER,
IT ONLY TOOK AN OSCAR.
SHE LEADS THE MOB CAUSE

ALL.
SHE'S A MEAN,
SHE'S A MEAN,
SHE'S A MEAN JOB!

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ACT ONE
SCENE SEVEN

{Outside the theatre, FILMORE is waiting on a bench.}

PENNY.
(Entering)
Darling, have you been waiting long?

FILMORE.
Long enough.

PENNY.
Oh, we're going to be grouchy tonight, are we? Filmore, you know mama doesn't like it when her baby is upset. And, when you're good to mama . . .

FILMORE.
I just hate all this sneaking around and hiding in doorways.

PENNY.
I've told you, it's just until the show opens. We've got to remain ABOVE SUSPICION. I can't risk having old Stroman see us together. He's frightfully jealous.

FILMORE.
But, I'm starting to feel like a criminal.

PENNY.

But, darling, you mustn't.

(After kissing him)

There. There's nothing criminal in that, is there?

FILMORE.

I guess not.

PENNY.

Come on. We have dinner reservations at Smokey Joe's. You can pepper my ragu.

FILMORE.

But, I have to get up early.

PENNY.

I booked us a suite at the Plaza. We can take turns being the man.

FILMORE.

Will you wear those boots?

PENNY.

The kinky ones?

(Laughing) (Exiting)

Come on, we should hurry. It looks like RAIN.

FILMORE.

And, rain will make the flowers grow.