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Dramatists Guild
of America

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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 rhythmic chanting from the audience as they call her name. MUSIC begins quietly. KATHIE slowly makes her way to the podium, 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 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.}

KATHIE. (cont'd)

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 stars to tap) Next.

BETSY.

No! Please, Zach. 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}

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.

BETSY. (cont'd)
 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.
 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!

AND THEN AT LAST, I'LL SHOW SOME CLASS
 AND TELL THEM ALL THAT THEY CAN KISS MY ASS.

{GRANDMA enters. She is played by a male actor.}

GRANDMA.
 What's going on in here? I thought I heard singing.

BETSY.
 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.

(MORE)

GRANDMA. (cont'd)

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'm gonna be a doer. I want so much more than this provincial life. 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.

(MORE)

GRANDMA. (cont'd)

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 we 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.}

GRANDMA. (cont'd)

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
'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.

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 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 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?