

~~*Old Timers*~~
ALZHEIMERS

Home



(A serious musical in One Act)
Book and Lyrics by Sidney Goldberg
Music by

All rights reserved.
©TXU 1-576826

Please Contact:

Sidney Goldberg
20 W. Palisade Avenue #3120
Englewood, NJ 07631
201 567-6533
Sidneyg6@Gmail.com
www.SidneyGoldbergWriter.com

Author's note

This play takes place in the mind of Moses' dementia driven world of fantasy, where the past is 'HIS' reality. The flickering of purple lights, perhaps the sound of wind chimes and thunder will denote the transition from reality to 'HIS' world of dreams. These transitions are instantaneous and continuous, as members of the HOME become 'HIS' characters in the circus and then back again. The last flashback with Timothy and his father is Timothy's memory.

WE will cross-fade from a black and white stage left, which is reality to a very colorful world of fantasy which is stage right. This action occurs throughout.

Cast

MOSES: An old black man who suffers from acute dementia, Alzheimers. HE plays his harmonica and constantly lives in 'HIS' past.

P.T Barnum: Charismatic; HE exists primarily in MOSES' fantasy.

The following are dual roles: The first existing in the HOME. The second in MOSES' dementia.

NURSE / -30s. A pioneer, mother, survivor.

CHARITY / 30 years old. P.T Barnum's wife.

CHORLAVITCH / An old bearded Jew. Dose not understand English.

MADAM CLOFULIA. World renowned Madam Clofulia, Queen of the Gypsies. Barnums' exhibit.

MISS JORDAN / 60s – Born with mental defociencies, never speaks. /

JOYCE HETH / 80s. Was Pt.T. Barnum's first big act.

ALL played by TIMOTHY / the nurses son.

JENNINGS / shopkeeper.

LINSEY / promoter.

THORTON / Attorney.

HOW and WO / Newly arrived Chinese immigrants.

ENG and CHENG are the famous Siamese Twins.

~~Old Timers~~
ALZHEIMERS
Home

Songs

I DON'T WANT TO SAY GOODBYE (Moses)...(Not recorded).....1-1-4

WE NEED THIS HOME (Nurse)..... (Not recorded).....1-1-7

I DON'T WANT TO SAY GOODBYE (Refrain).....1-1-8

SIMPLE WAYS (Charity).....1-1-13

SIT BACK (Moses).....1-1-18

TALK ABOUT LUCK (Timothy)..... (Not recorded).....1-1-22

MAMA DIE, WE CRY (How and WO)..... (Not recorded).....1-1-23

SAY HELLO (PT and Charity).....1-1-26

I GOT'S G-D (Joyce).....1-1-30

STEP RIGHT UP (PT, Moses and Charity).....1-1-35

ROLL WITH THE PUNCHES (Joyce).....1-1-40

CLOFULIA'S SONG (Chorlavitch).....1-1-48

STRETCH THE TRUTH (PT).....1-1-52

STEP RIGHT UP (Refrain).....1-1-53

AMERICA LOVES A HUMBUG (CHARITY, ALL).....1-1-60

HELLO NEW YORK (PT).....1-1-64

AFRAID OF BEING WRONG (Moses and PT).....1-1-66

THE PLAGUE OF BARNUM (Voices).....1-1-67

HOME (All).....1-1-77

ALZHEIMERS

PROLOGUE

1800

In total darkness, perhaps lights flicker or we hear a wind chime. Spot lights 65 year old Moses, playing harmonica. We see HIS mother, father, twelve siblings and we hear the voice of a white slaver pointing at 15 year old MOSES.

SLAVER (voice over)

You can keep your other twelve brats, I just want this big one. Ev'rybody wants big ones these days. Here! Here's your money, take it!

MOSES

(Crying.)

I don't want to leave you mama. I don't wanta be no white man's slave. He gonna take me far away. Crossed the ocean mama, cross the ocean... I'm afeared papa, I'm afeared I ain't ever gonna see you again. What am I gonna do with out you huggin' me mama...?

(Sings ♫)

Mama?

I DON'T WANNA SAY GOODBYE

I don't wanna say goodbye.
'Cause I need you night 'n day.
I know that my heart will ache.
'N I won't wanna sleep.

Got to hear you sing a song.
Need you huggin' me at night.
Seems I always loved you most.
You is my lucky star.

Mama, you're ev'rythin' to me.
You taught me how to be.
Mama, without you don't wanna live.
Won't be nothin' left to give, Mama.

Ain't you supposed to love me?
I got to be by your side.
'N what about papa?
I want to be like him.

I'll miss my little sisters.
Won't teach my brothers how to fish.
Won't see the sun a shinin'.
Won't hear my birdie sing.

Mama, you're ev'rythin' to me.
You taught me how to be.
Mama, without you don't wanna live.
Won't be nothin' left to give.

(LIGHTS flicker as scene changes.)

1850

**MOSES in wheelchair is ushered in by
P. T. He is panicked and crying.
We will see a run-down home with a
sign; "GOD BLESS OUR HOME."**

MOSES

Whatcha bring me here for Boss? Whatcha bring me here for?

P. T.

You'll be much better off here. They'll take good care of you.
I've arranged for everything.

MOSES

(Crying.)

What'd I do Boss? What'd I do...? How can you do this to me?
What'd I do, what'd I ever do to you...? This ain't the circus, n'
I need my friends. Can't live with out my friends, Boss.

P. T.

They'll wash and feed you Mr. Moses and you can play your
harmonica as late as you want. You'll have a wonderful time and
I'll come visit you. I'll be back before you know it. Promise.

MOSES

What about me n' you Boss? Ain't we still partners?

P. T.

You'll make lots of new friends here, Mr. Moses. There are lots
of people here just like you.

**(MOSES plays "STEP RIGHT UP" on harmonica which we will
hear later.)**

P. T. (cont'd)

(To nurse.)

I'm P. T. Barnum ma'am. Number one impresario in the world.
According to your ad, I hear you're starting a new home for
"Special people." Well, here's the most special person I know.

NURSE

I don't believe it. You're really P. T. Barnum, aren't you? Why, you're so famous.

P. T.

Suppose I am young lady. Suppose I am. Now how much did you say it would cost to take care of my dear friend, Moses?

NURSE

About a dollar a day.

P. T.

One whole dollar a day? That's \$365 per year. Do you actually think I'm gullible enough to give you \$365 to take care of my best friend? What happens if you run away with my hard earned money, good looking?

NURSE

I'm sure I'm going to love these people too much to ever desert
(Sings ♪)
them, or my son.

WE NEED THIS HOME

We need this home.
Lord knows we do.
Need a place to rest our head.
A cozy fire a nice warm bed.
We'd be alone with out this home.

We need this home.
Fixed it myself.
Kitchen table where we eat.
The woolen socks for our feet.
We'd be alone with out this home.

Dear Lord, am I asking too much?
Dear Lord, am I being selfish?
Dear Lord, need a man to touch.
Dear Lord, please grant me this wish.

We need this home.
Friends love it too.
The flowers that's a growin'.
Our boat we're a rowin'.
We'd be alone with out this home.

P. T.

May I ask you your name, good looking?

NURSE

Nurse Griffin.

P. T.

Why that's the strangest first name I ever heard.

NURSE

Strange?

P. T.

What kind of parents would name their beautiful daughter, Nurse? Is that Mrs. Nurse Griffin?

NURSE

It's Sara and I'm not married...

P. T.

Well "Miss" Sara you sure are pretty. Now am I to believe that you can take care of all these people by yourself?

NURSE

I'm sure I'll manage just fine, thank you. I always do and if I need any help, I'll be sure to call you Mr. Barnum.

P. T.

(Counts and gives money.)

Fine, you do that, but make sure you call me P. T. All my friends do. Now, here's ten crisp \$1000 bills to start.

NURSE

(Stunned.)

Oh, my God... \$10,000... I don't believe it.

P. T.

If that's not enough, I'll gladly give you more.

NURSE

No, not at all. That's more than generous. Thank you, thank you very much.

P. T.

Just do me one favor, gorgeous. Make sure he gets everything he wants and I mean everything. Now you make sure you stay in touch, you hear?

NURSE

Oh, I will, I most certainly will. And I do hope you stay in touch, too. They can get very depressed if no one visits them. Thank you again Mr. Barnum, I mean P. T.

MOSES

(Shouts

plays harmonica.)

Whatcha bring me here for Boss? Whatcha bring me for?

(WE hear musical refrain of "I DON'T WANT TO SAY GOODBYE.")

P. T.

Circus is calling Moses. Now you make sure and listen to Miss Sara and do everything she tells you, 'cause she loves you and she'll take real good care of you. Now, I'll be back before you know it... Before you know it.

(P. T. exits. NURSE kisses money and puts it in cookie jar and listens to MOSES play.)

NURSE

You play beautifully Mr. Moses. What a lovely melody. What's it called?

MOSES

Don't right know. Heard it one time, real long ago. Seems I've been hearing it ever since.

NURSE

(To ALL.)

Ladies and gentlemen, with the money we just received from Mr. P. T. Barnum, along with the funds from Mr. Chorlavitch's family and the government stipend for Miss Jordan, looks like our opening is a success.

(Not understanding, ALL will stare and smile.)

NURSE (cont'd)

Mr. Moses, I'd like you to meet Miss Jordan, Mr. Chorlavitch, along with Mr. How and Mr. Wo who will attend to all your needs.

HOW

Ne how ma? (How are you?)

WO

Ne how ma? (How are you?)

NURSE

Unfortunately, neither of them speak English yet, but they will. Now, since you've all just arrived this week, let's try to make the best of it.

(Not understanding, ALL stare and smile.)

CHORLAVITCH

(shakes Moses hand - in Yiddish)

Nu, vous machst du? (So, how are you?)

MOSES

(Shakes Chorlavitch's hand.)

"*Vous makes you...? Vous makes you?*"

CHORLAVITCH

(Excited, shakes head yes.)

Yor. Vous machst du, vous machst du?

MOSES

N' how are you brother, how are you?

CHORLAVITCH

(Excited.)

Yor, yor. How du brudder, how du brudder? Vous machst du?

MOSES

Oh, I get it. "Vous mahkes you?" means "How are you?" right?

CHORLAVITCH

(What else?)

Vuh den...?

HOW

... "Ne how ma, ne how ma?" (How are you?)

(MOSES shakes HOW and WO's hand)

HOW and WO

(Excited.)

"Ne how ma, ne how ma?"

MOSES

Oh, I get it; "*Ne how mama's,*" is how are you, right?

(Shaking hands.)

N' how you, brothers? Chinese, ain'tcha?

CHORLAVITCH

Du vilst essen? Ich vil essen.

MOSES

"Es-sen?"

CHORLAVITCH

(Touches mouth.)

Yor, essen, essen.

MOSES

(Touches mouth excited.)

"Es-sen" means eat, right? You want to eat. You want to eat. Fantastic. I got it, "Es-sen" means eat.

HOW and WO

Essen eat! Essen eat!
ne

mama's

Ne how mah?

How ah yuh? How ah yuh?

Cha vai yuh?

MOSES

Ev'rybody, "*Es-sen*" means eat. N'
how mama's how are you? Anybody
 feel like "*Es-sen?*" I feel like
 "*Es-sen*" myself. N' nee *how*
 is *How're* you?

HOW**WO****CHORLAVITCH****NURSE**

(Approaches baby carriage.)

We're fine, but most important, I'd like to introduce my wonderful son, Timothy. We just celebrated his first birthday.

MOSES

(Approaches baby.)

What a nice boy. Me and you are gonna be real good friends, Timothy.

(HOW, WO and CHORLAVITCH approach carriage)

HOW

Tim-o-ty.

WO

Timo-ty.

HOW

Tim-o-ty, *vous makes du?*

WO

Yessen, yessen.

CHORLAVITCH

{what a nice boy.}

Ah za shayna boichic.

{you should live to be a 120}

Zolst laben biz a hundert

un tsvonstik, Timothy.

MOSES

Ne how mama, Timothy? *Vous*
makes you?

MOSES

(Approaches baby.)

What a nice boy. Me and you are gonna be real good friends, Timothy.

NURSE

Well, you certainly are special, aren't you Mr. Moses. Speaking all those languages...

MOSES

You can too, Miss Charity. I'll teach you.

NURSE

I think I'd like that Mr. Moses. Now, Mr. How, Mr. Wo, while I
(Giggles.)
make us some "Essen" I believe it's time to prepare everybody's
rooms...

(Not understanding, HOW and WO smile.)

HOW

(With Chinese accent throughout.)

Yessen, yessen.

WO

Yessen, wooms.

NURSE

No, not yessen. Not wooms. The rooms. The rooms. You remember,
I showed you, yes, make their beds. Put their clothes away. Make
sure the bathroom is clean... Alright, I'll show you again. Just
because no one else wanted the job, I had to hire two immigrants
who don't speak a word of English. I hope you're not illegal.

MOSES

What's the matter, Miss Charity? Why'n't you tell ole' Moses?

NURSE

(Sings 🎵)

My name is Sara, Mr. Moses... Lord give me the strength.

SIMPLE WAY

I like Sunday prayer meetings.
And helping the needy.
Good at readin' and writin'.
Don't believe in fightin'.

I'm for giving and taking.
The smell of home baking.
I like running through flowers.
The first April shower.

The Lord be praised
For the simple ways.
Singing hymns makes sunny days.
The Lord be praised for the simple ways.

I like being a daughter.
And drinking well water.
I'm ford I mean nothing can stop me because I'm determined to
become a real Jew, too.

Got my ma's disposition.
And I'm firm on decisions.
And he'll call me pretty.
But he'll know that I'm strong.

The Lord be praised.
For the simple ways.
Singing hymns makes sunny days.
The Lord be praised for the simple ways.
And he'll call me pretty.
But he'll know that I'm strong.

(Lights fade.)

End of Prologue

HOME

ACT I

Scene 1

15 years later

In the Home.

ALL will now be in wheelchairs.

MOSES is alone playing harmonica as we see NURSE count money and put it in cookie jar. Sneaking, TIMOTHY sees where she hides money. It is very late when she joins MOSES. carries in a wilted Christmas

tree.

MOSES

Seems likes the music just disappeared into thin air. How come, Miss Charity, how come?

NURSE

My name is Nurse Sara. I do wish you'd stop calling me Charity. You remember, you old faker. Now, didn't you promise me you would go to bed?

MOSES

I'm goin', I'm goin', but I just gotta ask you this one more thing.

NURSE

Promise it's the last thing? It is rather late.

MOSES

When the Boss brought me here, he said he had to 'cause I kept forgettin' things. Said, he be back before I know it. Seems he ain't been back for a long time, n' how come I ain't forget that, Miss Charity? How come?

(feigning entrance, TIMOTHY slams door. P. T. enters barely visible)

NURSE

Is that you, Timothy?

MOSES

Is that you P. T.?

MOSES

Yes sir. Looks like P. T. finally showed up. Just like I said he would. Knew you'd come partner, knew you'd come. Bring the magic,

(Will always be accompanied by laughter.)

Boss, bring the magic?

NURSE

I suppose you're talking to "Mr. Barnum" again, aren't you, you old rascal... Well, don't forget to mention me.

(NURSE giggles as TIMOTHY enters.)

TIMOTHY

..He's always talkin' to his "P. T. Barnum," damn it! Always! But P. T. Barnum never comes, does he. He doesn't even know you exist.

MOSES

(To P. T.)

Well come on in Boss. Come on in.

NURSE

I'm glad you're home Timothy. What's the matter?

TIMOTHY

I need a couple of dollars, ma.

NURSE

You know I can't.

TIMOTHY

...Just a couple of dollars. Is that asking so much?!

MOSES

Don't do it Miss Charity. Don't give him the money. We need it to save our home.

TIMOTHY

You better shut your mouth. I need a couple of bucks, ma. Give it to me!

NURSE

I know what you want the money for and I don't approve.

TIMOTHY

(Shakes nurse.)

I need it ma. I'm in a bad way, don'tcha understand? I'm hurtin' and they're gonna come after me.

MOSES

You leave your mama alone, and show some respect, boy! Show some respect!

TIMOTHY

(Grabs Moses.)

I told you, stay out of this nigger...!

NURSE

...Don't you dare use such language
and leave him alone...!
say.

MOSES

Oh, please don't hurt
me, I'll do anything you
say.

(A purple light will flicker and we cross-fade to MOSES' fantasy world - A general store. TIMOTHY becomes JENNINGS the shopkeeper and the NURSE becomes CHARITY who is shopping.

JENNINGS (TIMOTHY)

Damn right you'll do anything I say. So you better concentrate on workin' or I'll send you back to where you belong, my pappy's "coal mine."

MOSES

Oh, please don't do dat, Massah. Moses hates workin' in dem mines.

JENNINGS

(Laughing.)

With coal bein' the color of your skin, I thought you liked coal mines, boy. Now, you start loadin' these sacks of flour. Then you got the sugar and corn to tend to.

MOSES

Anything you say, massah.

(JENNINGS pushes MOSES who falls at P. T.'s feet. Then MOSES picks up sack of flour and does an ingenious dance step. P. T. does a double take, and drinks from his flask. Seeing P. T.'s response, MOSES does it again and P. T. drinks again. P. T. and CHARITY eye each other. CHARITY will marvel at P. T.'s bravado.)

P. T.

Afternoon ma'am. Nice day ain't it.

CHARITY / Nurse

Nicer for some than for others, wouldn't you say?

P. T.

How much for all those sacks of flour, sir?

JENNINGS

Twenty sacks? A dollar a sack. \$20, sir.

CHARITY

Twenty sacks. You must be feeding an army.

P. T.

Not yet, but give me time. And how much for all that sugar. sir?

JENNINGS

Five sacks. \$2 a sack. \$10.

P. T.

Sounds fair and how much for all your molasses?

JENNINGS

Dollar-fifty a jar. Let's see, that's 15 jars... That's...

P. T.

\$22.

JENNINGS

That's right.

P. T.

And fifty cents.

JENNINGS

Is that all?

P. T.

That's all.

JENNINGS

The total is \$52.50.

P. T.

...And I also might be interested in acquiring the services of this young man. What might be the cost sir?

JENNINGS

Ain't right int'rested in sellin' the negra, but thanks for askin'. Now what about the flour, the sugar and...

P. T.

...Just as well. Probably ain't what I'm looking for any way.

(waves \$50 bill)

Now, if he could sing and dance, I might pay \$50 just to see it.

JENNINGS

Why, nigger you better dance and sing your heart out or you'll be back in my pappy's coal mine before you know it! \$50 for a singin' negra. I don't believe it.

MOSES

(sings ♫)

SIT BACK

Since the day I was born,
I been pickin' cotton and corn.
But that ain't why I left Missy's farm.

Girls I went to see,
They were sniffin', smellin', sayin' it was me.
I ain't got no cow under my arms.

I'm handsome enough,
But lovin' sure can get tough.
I'z jes a slave from the ole South.

Gee you look surprised.
Did ya think I'd have blue eyes?
Just for you I brought my mouth.

Sit back and I'll thrill you musically.
N' all you got to do is applaud for me.
Sit back 'n I'll thrill you musically.
'Cause singin' and dancin' comes naturally.

Who's foolin' who?
Aw, don't tell me it's you.
I guess there goes my money.

I'm payin' the price.
And it still sure enough, still don't feel nice.
Somebody done stole my honey.

Sit back and I'll thrill you musically.
'N all you got to do is applaud for me.
Sit back and I'll thrill you musically.
'Cause singin' and dancin' comes naturally.

I finally learned my lesson.
So how come I keep forgettin'?
I swear I heard those alibis.

Thought I was gettin' smarter.
How come it keeps gettin' harder?
Folks pull the wool over my eyes.

Sit back and I'll thrill you musically.
'N all you got to do is applaud for me.
Sit back 'n I'll thrill you musically.
'Cause singin' and dancin' comes naturally..

JENNINGS

(Applauding.)

Niggers sure can sing, can't they?

P. T.

(Hands Jennings \$50.)

Well, not quite what I was lookin' for, but thanks anyway.

(Takes out \$100 bill.)

Just wonderin', don't suppose you know what you can do with one of these?

JENNINGS

Why, that's a \$100 bill. Ain't never seen a \$100 bill before. Can I hold it?

P. T.

Probably could buy a foal or two for a \$100.

(Waves four bills.)

What do you think you could buy with...

JENNINGS

...\$400?!!

P. T.

Probably buy two or three horses to go with those foals. But I got something that's better than money. Do more, buy

(Shows lottery tickets.)

more. Buy you your dreams. That's what these lottery tickets can do. Now, I hear everything got a price, sir. Ain't that right?

JENNINGS

Well... I suppose...

P. T.

Good, 'cause I just changed my mind. Even though he ain't exactly what I'm lookin' for, here's 250 dollars worth of lottery tickets for him. I know I'm being a fool...

JENNINGS

...Lottery tickets? Do you think I'm crazy?

P. T.

Crazy, did he say crazy? Why ain't you heard? Farmer Brown won seven thousand dollars last week on these same lottery tickets. Imagine winning seven thousand dollars. Just what do you think you could do with all that money, sir.

JENNINGS

Why I'd buy me a nice spread. Hundred head...

P. T.

...Don't suppose you heard that your own preacher Colson won five thousand U.S.A. on the lottery.

CHARITY

Why yes. I did hear something like that.

JENNINGS

So that's why he left town in such a hurry... He won \$5,000.

P. T.

How's it feel to be the only one that ain't winning around here?

JENNINGS

Don't feel too good I expect. Don't feel too good at all.

P. T.

...Tell you what I'm gonna do. Because, I want to be your friend, I will split the difference right down the middle. Here, take it. 400 hard earned dollars worth of "winning lottery tickets." Your dreams, destiny is yours. Take them and let me be gone.

CHARITY

May I buy one of those tickets sir?

P. T.

Why certainly, young lady. Be my pleasure.

JENNINGS

\$400! Gimme those winnin' tickets. They're mine all mine. Ha, ha, I only paid two hundred for him. Looks like you just bought yourself a slave, sucker. Pleasure doin' business with ya, "sir."

P. T.

The pleasure is all mine, sir, and now the papers, please. I'm a very busy man. Oh, I won't be needing the flower, sugar and molasses after all.

(takes papers and gives them to Moses)

Now, Mr. Moses, you make sure you rip up these papers real quick, 'cause from now on "you are a free man!"

MOSES

Ain't never been a free man before. Don't rights know how it feels...

P. T.

(Disappears.)

Nothing like it, Moses. Man's born to be free.

(Lights flicker back to reality.)

MOSES

Man's born to be free. P. T.'s right, man's born to be free.

TIMOTHY

You'll never be free. You're in jail for life. Why don't you tell him the truth ma? He'll never be free.

NURSE

Timothy! Stop that!

TIMOTHY

But I will. "I GOT TO BE FREE."

NURSE

SO YOU CAN DRINK. SO YOU CAN GET DRUNK AGAIN. IF YOU GET DRUNK AGAIN, DON'T COME BACK, DO YOU UNDERSTAND? DON'T COME BACK!

TIMOTHY

(Sings 🎵)

TALK ABOUT LUCK

I can't believe you're my mother.
I've hated you since who knows when.
I sure wish you were dead.
Not only you, I hate them.

Talk about luck, I never had any.
Don't have no friends, not a red cent, not a penny.
I have this pain, I'm all alone.
And I'm insane from this rotten home.

Since I was a kid, didn't belong.
Didn't fit in, they thought I was nuts.
That's why God made me strong.
Won't take shit, if ands or butts.

The reason I drink's to get away.
Never felt too com'fable.
I never had a reason to stay.
My mamma is despicable.

Talk about luck, I never had any.
Don't have friends, not a red cent, not a penny.
I have this pain, I'm all alone.
And I'm insane from this rotten home.

(TIMOTHY walks away and sizes up cookie jar.)

NURSE

Please forgive my son. Teenagers. They sure are a wild bunch these days.

HOW

Ev'rybody wild bunch in "Chungwo." They crazy. That's why mama bring us to *Fan wey*, Merica... Poor mama.

WO

First time my brother say truth. People so hungry in "Chungwo" they eat dog, even rat. I no eat rat, he eat rat. He like rat. You give us plenty food and shoes. We never have shoes. I like shoes.

HOW

In "Chungwo" only rich people have shoes... Mama never have shoes. Not like "*Fan wey*," Mericans.

NURSE

Yes, I know, you've told me many times.

(HOW and WO sing.)

MAMA DIE, WE CRY

WO

We on boat many months.

HOW

No food, boat very dirty. We need "*zhong yi*," healer.

WO and HOW

Mama get sick, she die, we cry.
We always cry for mama.
Then we find you our Nurse.
Life in 'Merica good.
Like it should.
Life no more worse.

WO

Then we have no one.

HOW

No one care for us no more.

WO and HOW

Mama get sick, she die, we cry.
We always cry for mamma.
Then we find you our Nurse.
Life in 'Merica good.
Like it should.
Life no more worse.

WO

Mama teach me to laugh.

HOW

Mama say we no lie.

WO and HOW

Mama get sick, she die, we cry.
We always cry for mama.
Then we find Nurse.
Life in 'Merica good.
Like it should.
Life no more worse.

HOW

Now you our mama.

WO

You give us home.

HOW

You very kind lady.

WO

We no feel alone.

HOW and WO

Mama get sick, she die, we cry.
We always cry for mama.
Then we find Nurse.
Life in 'Merica good.
Like it should.
Life no more worse.

(End of song.)

WO

If mama alive, she like you very much.

HOW

I like you very much.

WO

We stay with you forever because we love you.

NURSE

I really appreciate all the help you've given me.

HOW

We no help you. You help us. When you give us home, it first time we feel wanted. Not even in "Chungwo," we wanted.

NURSE

Not only are you wanted, you are needed. Now please excuse me
(Puts tinsel on tree. How and Wo exit. After a beat.)
while I decorate our tree. Merry Christmas everyone. Merry
(Starts to cry. Moses nears her.)
Christmas.

MOSES

Why ya cryin' again Miss Charity...? Come on, give Moses a hug. Ya know a hug always makes ya feel better.

NURSE

You're such a devil. Leave me alone you devil.

MOSES

Come on, tell the devil what's the matter.

NURSE

What am I going to do? How am I ever going to pay the mortgage? Dealing with the bank is hopeless... And now Timothy is completely out of control... It's been more than 15 years since there's been a man in our lives. Lord knows how we need one. Someone to make decisions, deal with the bank, broken windows... to hold. Let him be strong. Timothy won't listen unless he's strong. Sure need a man around here.

MOSES

Sure wish P. T. was here for you, Miss Charity. Said he always wanted a son. Make the perfect father for your boy n' he got lots a money too. You n' him were made for each other. Two gold fish in a pond.

NURSE

Oh, Mr. Moses, you're such a kidder. What a sense of humor.

MOSES

Laugh at yourself n' the world'll be your friend.

NURSE

Laugh at yourself and the world will be your friend. How profound, Mr. Moses. How revealing.

MOSES

(Makes funny face.)

A cute dementia, Miss Charity? Ain't I a cute dementia?

NURSE

(Laughing - tickles Moses.)

I don't know what to make of you. You certainly are a cute devil, aren't you? Always teasing me, especially about Charity and P. T. Barnum...

MOSES

...You both lonely. You need somebody, n' he needs somebody more'n you. I know 'cause he tells me. He tells me everything.

(Lights flicker and P. T. enters.)

MOSES (cont'd)

(laughs)

Speakin' of the devil. Is that you... it is. Bring the magic Boss? Hope you brought the magic, 'cause you will not believe who is here. You remember how I been tellin' you 'bout a sweet Miss Charity? Well, hang on to your britches, 'cause you won't believe it. Look who's here, Boss, look who's here. Miss Charity, this here's the man I been tellin' you all about.

(P. T. and NURSE, who becomes CHARITY face each other and they will fall in love.)

P. T.

Why, Miss Charity's even prettier than you said, Moses. She's absolutely beautiful.

CHARITY / Nurse

(Embarrassed.)

Why, thank you very much, Mr. Barnum.

(BOTH sing ♪)

SAY HELLO

CHARITY

I'm a girl that wants to marry.
Children, I someday will carry.
Thank you Lord for giving me the man I want.

P. T.

I'm the man she's gonna marry.
My two son's someday she'll carry.
Thank you Lord for sending me someone, she's so beautiful.

P. T. and CHARITY

Say hello, that's what I should do.
Say hello, it's nice meeting you.
Here I go, wish me luck.
Step right up and say hello.

P. T.

Hope she knows...
And I know...
'Cause I know...
love.

CHARITY

I'd like to meet him.
All about him.
That I could give him all my

CHARITY

Hope he knows....
Want to know...
All I know...

P. T.

I'd like to meet her.
All about her.
I feel inside,
Something wonderful's arrived.
Say hello, that's what I should
Say hello, it's nice meeting

do.
you.

P. T. and CHARITY

Here I go. Wish me luck.
Step right up and say hello.

P. T.

It's a wonderful day, don't you agree.

CHARITY

A wonderful day, yes I agree completely.

P. T.

A glorious day.

CHARITY

A fabulous day.

P. T.

May I introduce myself? My name's P. T.

CHARITY

And mine's Charity.

P. T.

Hello Charity.

CHARITY

Hello.

P. T.

The name's P. T., gorgeous and I do love your name.

CHARITY

Why, thank you again P. T.

P. T.

Don't suppose you heard that I'm getting ready to build the greatest show on Earth?

CHARITY

How exciting. And where do you plan to build your greatest show on Earth?

P. T.

On my own Ivy Island. Best piece of property this side of the Mississippi, and one day I plan on taking you there.

CHARITY

I think I'd love to go to your Ivy Island and see the greatest show on Earth. Yes, I think I would.

P. T.

Oh, you will. I promise, 'cause you are never going to get rid of me, gorgeous.

MOSES

You two gonna get married. I'm tellin' you... I now pronounce
(laughs)
you man n' wife. N' you're gonna have three kids. All girls.
Sorry 'bout that Boss. Three girls.

P. T.

Now Moses, you remember what we talked about, don't you?

MOSES

Sure I do. We got to build a circus. Our circus.

P. T.

Well, I'll need your help. A circus needs acts and I can't get them by myself, can I?

MOSES

Don't you worry Boss. I'll get 'em for you. Soon as I see the bearded lady; Madame Clofulia, ole Joyce Heth, the Siamese Twins, that little guy, Tom Thumb, the Fatman, I'm supposed to...

P. T.

Supposed to what Moses. Supposed to what?

MOSES

Sign 'em up for the greatest show on Earth.

P. T.

Perfecto! Now beautiful, I have to take care of some business, but
(Kisses her hand and exits.)

I'll be back before you know it.

(Lights flicker to reality and MOSES plays harmonica.)

NURSE

Now, it's time we brush our teeth, wash our face and comb our hair.

(As HOW and WO approach CHORLAVITCH, HE opens mouth and THEY brush HIS teeth and comb HIS hair. Nearing MISS JORDAN, SHE covers face and throws things at HOW and Wo, who throw everything back. Tumult.)

NURSE

MISS JORDAN! This is the third time this week. Please! You must control yourself. Please.

(MISS JORDAN throws comb at HER.)

MOSES

She sure can act crazy, can't she?

NURSE

And she's been that way since childhood.

MOSES

Childhood? Thought dementia meant an ole-timers thing.

NURSE

(Touches Miss Jordan endearingly.)

Old timers thing, I never thought of it that way. And this old timer's getting very old, aren't you sweetheart?

MOSES

(Takes Miss Jordan's hand.)

She sure is old, ain't she.

NURSE

Now, I must go to town to purchase some supplies. I expect you all will be on your best behavior. Mr. How, Mr. Wo, you're in charge, and you too, Mr. Moses.

(As NURSE exits TIMOTHY enters unseen. Lights flicker)

MOSES

(Looking at Miss JORDAN.)

Oh, my God, It's her alright. I can't wait to tell P. T. I dun found... Sure glad to see you, Joycie. Merry Christmas, merry Christmas. Let's all say hello to good ole Joycie Heth, who P. T. bought from this guy, think his name was...

Lights flicker and we are in a hall, with lots of people in attendance. A banner flying, "Oldest Natural American Phenomenon. See 160 year old Joyce Heth, formerly the property of the father of our Nation. P. T. is talking to LINSEY, who TIMOTHY has become.

LINSEY (Timothy)

The names Linsey, sir and as far as this astounding old relic is concerned, these papers prove beyond a shadow of a doubt she's 160 years old. We should only look so good at her age, right sir?

P. T.

A 160 years old? I don't believe it... Why she must be the oldest person that's alive...

LINSEY

I believe that ever lived sir. Forgive the correction, that ever lived. A living fossil. Raised the father of our country, she did; George Washington. Even seen him cut down his ole cherry tree. Why this here coot smokes a corn pipe, hardly any hair, has no teeth. Open your mouth, Joycie. Show him your gums. Stick your tongue out again She sure has a sense of humor... And all I'm askin' is \$1200 for ole Joycie 'n her handkerchief.

P. T.

Her handkerchief?

LINSEY

Belonged to President George Washington himself.

P. T.

(Aside.)

Hmmm, why she could become the star of my first traveling circus. Now, Mr. Linsey, I would like to do some business with you. I'm sure you heard of the lottery. Don't ask me, ask farmer Brown how it feels to win \$7,000. Ask Reverend Colson how it feels to win \$5,000 U.S.A. and don't forget to ask Grandma Waters who just won \$10,000 on one little ole lottery ticket. Wonder where she got it, don't you? Well here it is, just what you've been waiting for. I am willing to give you 1500 dollars worth of winning lottery tickets in return for little old Joycie, here... Goin' once! Goin' twice! Goin'...

LINSEY

...Keep those winnin' tickets for those suckers. If you want Joyce Heth, it's gonna cost you 1200 dollars, cold, hard cash. Goin' once! Goin' twice...!

P. T.

...Now, you're sure she's a 160 years old...? Come on Moses.

(WE see P. T. give money and exit. Again lights flicker and WE are back in the home.)

MOSES

(Laughs.)

Is that you P. T.? Bring the magic Boss? Bring the magic?

TIMOTHY

Here we go again. Come on Mr. Moses, why don't you call me P. T. Barnum? "Please," I ain't heard it since yesterday.

MOSES

You ain't P. T., boy. You that smart-ass Linsey. Well, Mr.
(Touches Miss Jordan.)

Linsey, looks like Joycie's finally free.

TIMOTHY

(Laughs sarcastically.)

Calling me Linsey again, huh? What happened to Jennings and Thorton? Why can't you call me Timothy? Not good enough for you? And hello Miss Jordan. Did I wish you Merry Christmas? Why, it's the best Christmas I ever had, don'tcha think? I'm having a great time, best time ever, don'tcha think? Why don't you answer me? Somebody cut your tongue out, or maybe you're just crazy like the rest of them. Doesn't even know what her name is. She doesn't have any bad memories like the rest of you, because she can't remember a freakin' thing! Nothing!

CHORLAVITCH

"Vilde chaya vous du bist." (wild animal that you are)

TIMOTHY

And this ladies and gentlemen is our very own Jew, Mr. Chorlavitch. Never saw a real Jew before, did you? Take a bow Jew, take a bow! And where's your horns? Hidden with your damn diamonds, right? Is it true you killed Christ? Well, is it?! Merry Christmas, Jew!

MOSES

Told you not to drink, boy. Better calm down and leave Clofulia alone.

TIMOTHY

Clofulia? This is Korlavitch. He's supposed to be a freakin' rabbi or somethin'.

CHORLAVITCH

I am not a rabbi. I'm a chazin, a cantor.

TIMOTHY

You canta? What do you mean you canta? Canta what, God damn it. Canta what? And I wonder why your freakin' family sent you here. Probably 'cause they love you so much. They didn't want you in their home. Ain't that right Rabbi?

CHORLAVITCH

I have no family and I'm not a Rabbi.

TIMOTHY

He don't even remember he's a freakin' Rabbi! Ever seen a Rabbi pray? Come on, show us how you pray, Rabbi. Get down on your knees and show us how you pray.

CHORLAVITCH

(you are vermin, crazy!)

"Du bist ah chorlehrya, ah meshugeneh.

HOW - WO

LEAVE HIM ALONE!

TIMOTHY

I can't believe it! I'm the only one that has to live with two chinks, two niggers and a crazy Jew! I HATE YOU, I HATE YOU! I
(Nears cookie jar.)

I HATE ALL OF YOU! NOW GET OUT OF MY WAY!

CHORLAVITCH

(get shot, go to hell)

"Vare geshussen, gay indrehd.

HOW / WO

Go Way!

MOSES

P. T. gave you your money. What do you want Linsey?

TIMOTHY

Stop callin' me Linsey and what's the Jew sayin'? Is he callin' me a chicken? If he is, I'll...

MOSES

...He didn't call you a chicken. He didn't call you a chicken.

TIMOTHY

How the hell do you know?!

MOSES

We're brothers, 'n brothers understand each other. 'N this is our home, so leave us alone, you hear? Leave us alone.

TIMOTHY

(Shows knife.)

Always wanted to see if a Jew really bleeds. Come here Rabbi.

(MOSES is looking at CHORLAVITCH as HIS imagination takes hold. Again there is an eerie purple light)

MOSES

No, no, he ain't Jewish. Can't ya see? I'm Moses n' this is the bearded lady, Madame Clofulia. You're making a big mistake. This is Madame Clofulia, Madame Clofulia. She reads fortunes, n' this is Joyce Heth; Oldest woman in the world. We're all goin' with P. T. Barnum to Ivy Island to start the greatest show on earth.

CHORLAVITCH

(I think I'm a Jew)
"Ich denk ich been ah yid."

HOW / WO

He bad boy. I afraid.

TIMOTHY

You're always talkin' about the greatest show on Earth, and do you know why? You're crazy! All of you. Just stay out of my way.
(exits)

(TIMOTHY takes some money from cookie jar. Again lights flicker and CHORLAVITCH rises wearing a gypsy dress. He has become MADAME CLOFULIA)

CHORLAVITCH (Clofulia)

(looks at Moses' palm)
How do you do and who are you... Don't tell me, let me see.

MOSES

I'm Moses n' I been lookin' all over for you.

CLOFULIA

(Reading palm.)

That's right, I can see. It says it right here.

MOSES

I'm mighty glad ta meet ya Madame Clofulia.

CLOFULIA

(Reading palm.)

I know and I'm glad to meet you too. I'm a seer, a mystic. Crystal balls, stars, Tarot cards, palms, you name it. How'd you like your

(shuffles cards)

fortune told? Good fortunes cost a little more.

(Donning a smock, which makes them appear as one, HOW and WO have become ENG and CHENG the Siamese twins. MOSES is amazed.)

MOSES

I don't believe it. How lucky can I get? Looks like we even found those Siamese Twins I been lookin' all over for. Eng n' Cheng, right? Howya doin'? Howya doin'?

HOW (Eng)

He Cheng, big liar. Me, Eng, like this country very much. He no like.

WO (Cheng)

He not Eng. He liar. I Eng, ha, ha. Always Eng. I love this country.

ENG

You not Eng! How many times I tell you?! You not Eng!

CHENG

How you know, damn it?! How you know?!

MOSES

Don't really matter. Anyway, I got a proposition for ya. How'd you like to work for P. T. Barnum?

CLOFULIA

If the price is right I just might be interested.

MOSES

Interested? Why he's the greatest showman there is, ever was, n' he can make you all famous overnight. How'd ya all like to become rich n' famous? Ya see he's gettin' ready ta build a circus on Ivy Island, n' he wants all of you ta be a part of it. Sorta like one big family.

CLOFULIA

Rich and famous... I think I like that, in fact I know I do!

JOYCE / Miss Jordan

(Sings 🎵)

Shoo, I'm supposed to be rich n' famous too. Mama told me that.

I GOTS GOD

I'm a hunnert and sixty years old.
I'z bought some things, 'n I'z been sold.
Through all my trial 'n tribulations.
Prays to the Lord for my salvation

Pray ev'ryday.
'N I does what he say.
There ain't nothin' too hard.

I gots God.

He chose little ole me.
To raise a whites baby.
Namea Georgie Washington,
Likes my own son.

Yeah, I teached him respect
Well, watcha expect?
He was the President,
That heaven sent.

You can tell by his eyes.
That boy could never lie.
Cut down some cherry tree,
Child 'n he tol' me.

Pray ev'ryday.
'N I does what he say.
There ain't nothin' too hard.
I gots God.

ENG

(To Cheng.)

She got God, but I be rich and famous too, but not you.

CHENG

Not you too!

MOSES

That sure is great. Okay, now that we're all together, I want you ta meet the number one impresario in the whole world, my best friend, the amazin' P. T. Barnum.

P. T.

(Enters.)

Thank you, Moses, you're too kind. Okay, are we ready to build the biggest and most exciting circus man has ever seen? Well, let me hear it!

ALL

We're ready P. T. We're ready!

P. T.

Well, then what are we waiting for, Moses? Seems some folks around here are in an awful hurry to get to Ivy Island and become rich and famous, but before we all go and become one big happy family, I think it's only fair that we teach them our "Pitch," partner.

MOSES

Perfect time to give'em a little magic. Lead the way Boss and I'll help you out.

(P. T., MOSES and CHARITY will sing. 🎵)

STEP RIGHT UP

P. T.

Step right up.
Stupendous death defying.
Step right up.

MOSES

Guaranteed satisfying.
Step right up.
Come and see the real wooly horse.

P. T.

Siamese twins of course.

MOSES and P. T.

It costs a dime.
For a grand time.
Form a line.

CHARITY

He was a true American.
And his friend President Abe Lincoln said.
Barnum I do believe.
You will succeed,
To put a smiling face
on the whole human race.

P. T., MOSES and CHARITY

It costs a dime
For a grand time.
Form a line.

P. T.

Step right up.
Stupendous death defying.
Step right up.
Guaranteed satisfying.
Step right up.
Come and see the real wooly horse,
Siamese twins of course.

CHARITY

He was a true American
And his friend President Abe
Lincoln said: Barnum I do
believe, you will succeed,
To put a smiling face
on the whole human race.

ALL

It costs a dime
For a grand time.
Form a line.

P. T.

Step right up. Ladies and gentlemen. Women and children alike, everyone step right up. Don't crowd sir. Just come this way. Only costs two small nickels. Ten small pennies and step right up. And you sir with the small bow tie, Step right up sir...

P. T.

Tom Thumb, Jenny Lind,
all my special friends,
I saw in you some one I
knew was it me. I'm
young and I'm rich, still
I have one wish, wish I could
say please stand by me Charity.

CHARITY

He was a true American and his
friend President Abe Lincoln
said: Barnum I do believe you
will succeed to put a smiling
face on the whole human race.
It costs a dime for a grand
time. Form a line.

MOSES

Step right up.
March in the greatest parade.
Step right up.
Led by the Fiji mermaid.

P. T.

Step right up.
Come and see the ugliest, prettiest.
Heaviest, skinniest.

ALL

It costa dime.
For a grand time.
Form a line.

MOSES

And Clofulia
Queen of the Gypsies.
She's the bearded lady.

ENG and CHENG

Don't miss Joyce Heth
Coming next week.
It's a treat.

ALL

Step right up.
his
Stupendous death defying.
Step right up.
Guaranteed satisfying.
Step right up.
Come and see the real wooly
horse, Siamese twins of course.

CLOFULIA

He was a true American and
Friend President Abe Lincoln
said, Barnum I do believe you
will succeed to put a smiling
face on the whole human race.

ALL

It costs a dime.

For a grand time.
It costs a dime.
For a grand time.
It cost a dime
For a grand time.
STEP RIGHT UP!

(ALL mount a large carriage that MOSES will drive.)

MOSES

Wait'll they see it, right Boss? Ten acres of prime land; Gold mines, diamonds, ev'rything, right Boss?

P. T.

Finest property there is. And this is the start of our destiny, I think this calls for a "celebration."

JOYCE

YA HOO!

CLOFULIA

What are you waiting for?

ENG

Me first

CHENG

You wait, I older!

(P. T. takes big swig and passes bottle to CHARITY.)

CHARITY

Normally I don't imbibe, but, since we're celebrating, what the
(takes small sip)
heck.

JOYCE

What about ole Joycie? Ain't I celebratin' too?

(CHARITY passes bottle around and ALL drink.)

P. T.

Moses, I hope you remembered to leave enough food and water for Jumbo.

MOSES

Don't I always, Boss? Don't I always?

ENG

What Jumbo?

CHENG

What are you asking me for?

MOSES

Remember how much money we made with Jumbo, Boss?

P. T.

Made a fortune. Largest pachyderm on record.

JOYCE

Packawhat?

CHARITY

A pachyderm is another name for an elephant, Joyce. And P. T. called it Jumbo, the amazing elephant.

P. T.

Sure was amazing alright. JUMBO THE ELEPHANT! What a name, what a name! I advertised in every newspaper in America and they came in droves. In droves you hear?!

MOSES

N' we didn't charge a penny to see it.

JOYCE

Yeh, that'd be the day.

MOSES

(falsetto voice)

You don't believe it, huh? Oh, Mr. Barnum, we've come all the way from Kentucky to see Jumbo the amazing elephant.

P. T.

Why thank you very much for coming so far, ma'am.

MOSES

(Falsetto voice.)

The advertisement did say it was free of charge, did it not?

P. T.

Oh, it certainly is free of charge to see Jumbo the amazing elephant, ma'am. But, unfortunately, Jumbo is on that island, and to cross the bridge cost ten cents, two nickels, or if you prefer and it is entirely your decision, ten small pennies.

JOYCE

Told you that Barnum is brilliant. The man knows how to make money. Seein' the elephants free, but crossin' the bridge ain't.

P. T.

We sold Jumbo cigars and hats and fans. We sold Jumbo everything and we made a fortune, didn't we Moses?

MOSES

N' then we got the Fiji mermaid.

CHARITY

A real mermaid? How exciting.

MOSES

Wasn't any old mermaid. She was the one and only Fiji mermaid. Come from China, too.

ENG

She was my girl friend. I love Fiji mermaid.

CHENG

She wasn't your girl friend, she was mine!

ENG

How you know, damn it?! How you know?!

MOSES

Then I think P. T. bought the Fatman, Tom Thumb, the Wooly horse, Indian chiefs, the greatest singer there ever was, Jenny Lind and weirdest thang I ever saw, Man-monkey.

CHARITY

Oh, come on, there's no such thing as a man-monkey. Really, a man-monkey.

MOSES

But I guess his proudest possession was ole Joycie, here. Ain't that right, Joycie?

(P. T. takes a swig and gives JOYCE the bottle who takes a swig and becomes stoned, a remarkable transformation occurs.

SHE no longer slumps but becomes erect. She then puts her teeth in her mouth, talks beautifully and begins to swagger ala Mae West. P. T. and MOSES are astonished.)

JOYCE

Personally, I prefer Chablis to this cheap rotgut you're drinkin'.

P. T.

Oh, my God, don't tell me I've been hog-tied and bamboozled again. Not again?!

MOSES

You better cool it Joycie, 'cause somebody jes might find out 'bout you n' we be in a whole messa trouble. Now, me n' you is friends ain't we? So, tell me the truth. Is you really a hunert-n'-sixty years old, Joycie?

JOYCE

How olds I look?

MOSES

Older'n Thusaleh.

P. T.

I ain't going to open in Ivy Island! No siree, not me boy. Why they'll run me plumb out-of-town before I can make my first million, if they find out you're not really a 160 years old.

MISS JORDAN / Joyce

(Takes out teeth.)

Oh, Massah Barnum, massah Barnum, I'z jes a poor ole black negress. Please don't send me back to de misable Lousiana mud holes. I'z

(Transformation.)

afeared of de swamps. Not that you could, sonnyboy. You, did not buy me, you only purchased a worthless piece of paper. Somewhere in the Bill of Rights it states quite clearly that it is against

(transformation laughs)

the law to trade or transport slaves. N' as youz knows, ole

(transformation)

Joycie's jes a po negress slave. Now, young man, you may still be green behind both of your infantile ears, but you are one smooth talker and you have been blessed with ability, that is long as you hangs around with old Joycie.

P. T.

You're pretty confident, aren't you?

JOYCE

Like you, the moment my mother suckled me, she knew I was destined to become an extremely valuable piece of property. An asset. I guess that's why she made certain that I learned to act like a

(Sings ♪)

sophisticated lady. You see...

ROLL WITH the PUNCHES

Well I sang French songs.
Bon jour misseur.
When I sang an English ditty.
They simply begged for more.

And let me tell you 'bout them Spanish songs.
Viva amour.
Now folks want 'Merican songs.
'Bout my Georgie's war.

You gotta roll with the punches.
You gotta roll with the tide.
You gotta roll with the punches.

That's how ole' Joycie survived.

So give 'em what they want.
That's the idea.
I promise things gonna be alright.
Just sit down over here.

Seems folks call you some kind of business man.
That's what I hear.
Now I promise me and you.
Gonna be rich before next year.

ALL

You gotta roll with the punches.
You gotta roll with the tide.
You gotta roll with the punches.
That's how we'll all survive.

CLOFULIA

I come to this country.
To become rich.
Who cares that they laugh at Clofulia.
Make money is my wish.

ENG and CHENG

Say goodbye to Chungwo.
We won bon don.
We happy to live in 'Merica.
Because we have so much fun.

ALL

You gotta roll with the punches.
You gotta roll with the tide.
You gotta roll with the punches.
That's how we'll all survive.

P. T.

(To Moses.)

...What are we going to do partner? Looks like I'm destined to be hornswoggled.

JOYCE

Honey, now don't you start feelin' sorry for yourself. Just think about it. If I fooled a smart man like you, I can fool anybody. And so what if I'm not a 160 years old. Maybe I'm only... who cares. Believe me, soon as I start layin' it on real good and you start your smooth talkin', they're gonna eat us up like chitlins n' hogmaws, 'cause nobody talks like you massah, n' talkin' is

what makes people believe. Now too bad I'm so tired 'cause I'd give you a good taste of what you really need. Some good ole fashioned lovin'.

(SHE shakes hips and gives P. T. a romantic hug. Uncertain, HE pulls away.)

JOYCE (cont'd)

Suit yourself, mister. Well then, the only thing you have to worry (sings) about is when ole Joycie has to met her sweet Lord. "Prays ev'ryday, n' I does what he say. Ain't nuthin' too hard, I gots God." Then they're gonna do some post mortem on ole Joycie. Better look out boy, better look out when those nosy reporters come snoopin' around n' start askin' how come you told all those lies. Whatchoo gonna say, boy? Whatchoo gonna say?

(MOSES will mouthe some lines that P. T. says.)

P. T.

I'll tell 'em I didn't know. The deed I bought said she was a 160 years old. I trusted the man I bought her from and I was taken just like all you good folks think you've been taken by me. Yeh, I'm sorry, real sorry for being so naive and trusting that city slicker, and anyway I can, I will make it up to you. Why, you just ask good old P. T. You just ask him for anything and see what you get. Double. He'll you give back double.

MOSES

N' don't forget to tell 'em that you gave me my freedom, n' that's more n' anything. 'Cause you're the most honest man there is and don't mean nobody no harm. You're my best friend and I owes you my life Boss, 'cause the good Lord willed it that way, but he coulda willed it that I was born P. T., a white Protestant and you was born me, Moses, a black slave. Then you woulda owed me your life, right Boss? History sure woulda been different, that is if the good Lord was a willin'.

P. T.

Dream on brother, 'cause dreaming is what makes this country great. Now that we're finally going to Ivy Island, sure wish my Grandfather was alive.

CHARITY

You mean the Grandfather who's name you got christened?

MOSES

Please, Boss, let me be the preacher this time.

(Lights flicker. A fantasy within a fantasy)

"BARNUM

In church, WE see a banner;

GETS SUCKERED." A mother, father
two Grandfathers will be heard via
voice over. Standing near baby
carriage are MOSES and P. T. sees
his Baptism and both comment.)

MINISTER / Moses

This fine lad, born to Annabel and Philo Barnum in the year of our
lord, 1810, on the fifth of July, to the Protestant faith in the
God fearing land of Bethel, Connecticut, I hereby Christen thee,
"Moses, Mr. Moses.

P. T.

Moses?! Are you crazy...?

OLD EPHRAIM (v/o)

...EPHRAIM! RIGHT DAUGHTER? EPHRAIM!

OLD PHINEAS (v/o)

OVER MY DEAD BODY, YOU OLD COOT! IT'S GOT TO BE PHINEAS, RIGHT
SON?

P. T.

(laughing because he knows the outcome)
Well, Phineas or Ephraim. Make up your mind. Make up your mind.

OLD EPHRAIM (v/o)

IT WILL BE EPHRAIM BECAUSE EVERYONE KNOWS PHINEAS MEANS BRAGGART!
AND WE ALL KNOW HOW GOOD PROTESTANT FOLKS FEEL ABOUT A...

OLD PHINEAS (v/o)

...I'LL GIVE YOU BRAGGART, YOU OLD SHOW OFF! WE'RE GONNA HAVE IT
OUT ONCE AND FOR ALL! PUT 'EM UP DAMNIT! PUT 'EM UP!

MOSES

Just call him Moses n' ev'rything will be fine.

P. T.

It won't do you any good, Moses. Nothing can change history.

MOSES

Wanna bet?

OLD PHINEAS (v/o)

I'm going to knock your block off once and for all!

ANNABEL (V/O)

Please, I'm begging the both of you. Are we not a united family, like these United States? Please, I beseech thee, I beseech thee.

OLD EPHRAIM (V/O)

Well, since I have them five, fine acres up state, what do you think about me leaving them to little Ephraim, here? That is after I've gone to meet my maker of course.

OLD PHINEAS (V/O)

I guess five acres ain't half bad compared to "TEN PRIME ACRES, IVY ISLAND." It's private and I own it. Up in New Hampshire. Beautiful state. And since I want my grandson to become a major land baron like me. I've decided to give him those "Ten Prime Acres on this very day. Right now, but I'm sure that don't mean nothing, right children...?"

P. T.

OLD PHINEAS (V/O)

...You call him what you like... You call him what you like.

MINISTER / Moses

Wish I had me twenty acres, then they'd name you Moses for sure.
(laughs)
Don'tcha love the way Moses sound?

ANNABEL (V/O)

I just love the way "Phin-e-as" sounds, don't you sweetheart?

OLD PHINEAS (V/O)

Yeh, Phineas sorta grows on you, don't it sweetheart?

MINISTER / Moses

Then it's settled! I hereby christen thee...

ALL

PHINEAS TAYLOR BARNUM!

(Lights flicker and we are back to wagon.)

MOSES

N' that's how my best friend come by his fantastic Ivy Island.
(laughs)
Still think they shoulda named you Moses.

(lights flicker. CLOFULIA is seated at her crystal ball which is glowing eerily. SHE is chanting incoherently as if in a trance. A curious ENG and CHENG approach and stare at crystal ball.)

ENG

I like you read fortune, Madame Clofulia. Read fortune.

CLOFULIA

And what about yours shorty?

CHENG

I no want. He one that unhappy.

ENG

He crazy? I not unhappy. I just want to know my future.

CHENG

(Mimics Eng.)

Your future by my side, damn it! "I want to know my future."

CLOFULIA

(Looks into crystal ball.)

So, you want to know your future. I see you were born in China and you were born in Korea. I'm only kidding. I'm only kidding.

(goes into trance.)

When you two were born, village was scared. They call you "Won bon Don." What the heck is that?

CHENG

Two devils, one body; "Won bon don."

ENG

He devil. Me good boy. Very good boy.

CLOFULIA

Everyone was scared of you. They hated your guts.

ENG

Mama never kiss me.

CHENG

Mama never hug me.

CLOFULIA

Your parents wanted to get rid of you so they sold you to doctors who wanted to do experiments on you.

ENG

We escape...

CHENG

...We come to 'Merica.

CLOFULIA

Sometimes people do things that the ones that love them the most, regret for the rest of their lives. What are you going to do...?

Yes, I see a double wedding. A great celebration. Hard to believe but you are both going to get married...

ENG

We finally get married and I finally get rid of you. You're such a pest!

CHENG

And I'll finally get rid of you and good riddance.

ENG

How will we sleep?

CLOFULIA

(To Eng.)

Together, always together. And four babies. You are going to have
(to Cheng.)
two beautiful daughters. And you are going to have a boy and a girl.

CHENG

I have boy, I have boy and you have two ugly daughters.

ENG

She make mistake. Tell him you make mistake. I have boy, dummy. I have boy.

CLOFULIA

NEXT! Who's next...? Come on Joycie, what the hell are you waiting for?

JOYCE

Alright, Shit, I ain't doin' anythin' anyway, but I don't want no crystal ball.

CLOFULIA

(Looks at Joyce's palm.)

Then give me your palm... I see you have a long life line.

JOYCE

You're kiddin'..

CLOFULIA

Your father was a minister and your mother was a teacher.

JOYCE

Tell me somethin' that I don't know.

CLOFULIA

You will never marry and have children.

JOYCE

I know all that already. Gimme back my damn palm!

CLOFULIA

(Trance.)

Wait... I see you reaching the stars. A million people call your name, and then the star falls. There is much anger and pain.

JOYCE

(Pulls palm away.)

What the hell you keep remindin' me of pain for? Hey, Moses, stop playin' that thing and come over here. This gypsy's finally givin' out fortunes for free.

MOSES

(Stops playing.)

Well, if it's for free, might as well mosey on over n' get me a

(Sits by Clofulia.)

taste too. Start shufflin' those cards young lady. Now, lemme hear somethin' real good.

CLOFULIA

(Shuffles and turns cards.)

I see you climb a mountain. You are holding two tablets with strange writing... Wait, wrong Moses. Pick a card, any card. I'm kidding. Shuffle the deck. Now, cut the deck. Give me three cards. You want to know your future. Who doesn't. You'd like a few answers.

MOSES

When's P. T. gonna become President? He sure deserves it.

CLOFULIA

(Spreads cards.)

SILENCE! The cards speak to me... The eight of Batons... The sky was blood red and the animals cried when they took you away from your mother's breast. Sold to the highest bidder because you were the strongest. They always want the strongest.

JOYCE

Lord sure give him some big hands, didn't he? But he don't put 'em on me. How come?

CLOFULIA

You must not talk when spirit speaks to me. It's annoying.

(Turns card.)

The magician! Aleph! Air! He comes into your life on wings of prayer. Your spirits soar... Freedom.

MOSES

That P. T. sure is some spirit, ain't he? Always givin' me my freedom.

CLOFULIA

Together you build a castle. A temple to enrich you and your loved ones... There is much joy. Enlightenment. Many friends.

JOYCE

'Bout time you got back to me, know what I'm sayin'? I'm his friend, but I could be his girl friend, then I'd show 'em.

CLOFULIA

(Turns card.)

SILENCE! The king of swords! Leader of many. Lord of dreams... On the road you are alone. Searching. Looking for what was taken away. A broken heart... Such torment. I'm sorry... An old man returns, but, perhaps a moment too late.

ENG

P. T. always late. He busy making lots of money.

CHENG

He make all the money and I do work.

JOYCE

The man can't do no work, 'cause he has to come up with the ideas. Man's an idea man.

CLOFULIA

SILENCE! The spirits demand silence!

JOYCE

(To Eng.)

Sure would like to know where she gets all this spirit stuff, wouldn't you smiley?

ENG

Where you get spirit? I want spirit!

CHENG

You must be gypsy to find spirit, right Madame Clofulia? I have son, you have ugly daughter, ha, ha, ha.

MOSES

We're family, ain't we Madame Clofulia? We're all gypsies.

CLOFULIA

I'm not your regular gypsy mister. I am Queen of all gypsies. They've been killing us for over 5,000 years and we're not even Jewish...

Excuse me, is there a place called Ivy Island around here?

MAN 2 (v/o)

Used to be just up the road, 'round the bend. Better hurry 'fore it disappears.

JOYCE

What the hell you mean, disappears? Islands don't disappear.

P. T.

(excited)

You hear that sweetheart? It's just up the road around the bend.

CHARITY

Pardon me sir, would you please be so kind and direct us to Ivy Island?

MAN 3 (v/o)

Used to be just over that rise.

ENG

Rise...?
rise?

CHENG

What the heck is

P. T.

Hear that Charity?

ENG

It over rise. I love rise.

CHENG

Hallelujah for rise.

MOSES

Ivy Island, here we come.

CLOFULIA

Happy New Year. At last, our new home.

(To their dismay THEY arrive at a swamp.)

P. T.

I can't believe it! All I see are hornets and...

JOYCE

...Dead stumps. I hate dead stumps.

MOSES

N' lotsa crawlin' snakes.

CHARITY

And there's nothing I hate more than snakes.

CLOFULIA

And look at all those rats.

ENG

Cheng love rats. He eat.

CHENG

You liar! He eat rat, that why he look that way. He eat rat.

P. T.

I don't believe it. Why it ain't nothin' but a low-down...

ALL

...SWAMP!

(Through an eerie haze, in the distance WE see HIS Grandfather and hear the town laughing at P. T.)

OLD PHINEAS (V/O)

Sure glad you finally found your Ivy Island, Phineas my boy... Betcha you been waiting a long time. Me too. Now, tell me the truth, boy, ain'tcha glad you come? Ain't it just what you expected?

(The laughter becomes inundating.)

P. T.

I don't believe it. My own Grandfather... My mother, father, the whole town knew, didn't they...?

CHARITY

Nobody was sure, but knowing your grandpa, they all suspected.

MOSES

It's alright Boss. We'll just find another place, Boss. Ain't no reason to get so upset.

P. T.

Now I know why they always laughed at me. Worse than a blind Jack-rabbit and a dumb horse's ass, I've been a damn fool. "How's your Ivy Island? Find any diamonds lately?" they used to say. "It'll be worth even more next year," I'd answer. "Worth even more." I've been plumb taken. Suckered by my own family.

(P. T. climbs off carriage, removes bottle and has a big swig.)

P. T. (cont'd)

Go back to Bethel where you belong woman and leave me be... Leave me be.

CHARITY

Oh, my darling Phineas. I'm so sorry. What will you do?

P. T.

Maybe I'll go to New York, New Jersey, out west, or down South. Who cares. Maybe someday, when I feel up to it, we'll get married and settle down. Now, I think it's best you leave. Everybody, get out of here!

MOSES

I don't want to leave you Boss. I can't, I just can't.

CHARITY

Dearest P. T. In moments like this... I once heard a prayer. We need the Lord...

P. T.

The LORD?! I don't need the Lord. I need land! Now, leave me alone. All of you.

(ALL leave except Moses. Drinking, P. T. will read the deed. Again we will hear laughter.)

P. T.

Ten acres called Ivy Island... Not one word mentioning prime, even good land. Nothing. And me like some hard nose jackass never bothered to read the deed. The prime land, the circus I was going to build, all those diamonds I was going to find was all inside my head. Sucker, sucker, sucker! I believed because I wanted to believe you... Well I ain't no different than anybody, because everybody wants to believe in something, someone, specially their own... Can't even trust your own grandpa. No one, never...

(Glams enthusiastically.) realization

Yeh, I see, I see all right. Listen folks, how's about me introducing you to the man in the moon? Have him over for dinner. Sounds interesting, don't it? Ever see it snow in the summer? Personal friends with the man that made it happen twice. Yessiree, best friend I ever had.

(Drinks, stumbles.)

Of course, in the beginning everyone knows that Adam believed Eve and Eve believed the snake. It takes two ya know,

(Cups hand ala megaphone and looks to future.)

it takes two. There they are. Look at them. Millions hanging on a cloud and they want me, P. T. Barnum, to sell them their dreams.

(Sings ♪)

Yessiree! Right grandpa?

STRETCH THE TRUTH

I believed, everything you told me was true.
Who was I to be doubting you.
A father tells a a son all he knows.
But, if suppose he would lie.

It only hurt when I found out.
Well, okay dad you've won the bout.
But I ain't gonna cry and feel sad.
I'm just damn mad.

Stretch the truth, ain't a sin.
Someone must always win.
Adam cared and Eve shared.
One believed and one deceived.

I'll never let them prove me wrong.
And I will show them that I'm strong.
It's positively up to me.
I will control my destiny.

Here I am, standing at the crossroad I think.
What I need right now is a drink.
I'm leaving the past far behind.
Locked in my mind, now let's see.

Talking is the best thing I do.
The sky is pink you think it's blue.
And living on the moon is a man.
I have a plan.

Stretch the truth ain't a sin.
Someone must always win.
Adam cared and Eve shared.
One believed and one deceived.

I'll never let them prove me wrong.
And I will show them that I'm strong.
It's positively up to me.
I will control my destiny.

There must be, ten million suckers just like me.
Escaping from what's meant to be.
Well, I'll turn their needs into gold.
Yes sir I'm sold.

There they are, hanging on a cloud so it seems.
They want me to sell them their dreams.

Well, it don't do no harm to pretend.
Because I am your friend.

(P. T. and MOSES sing at same time.)

MOSES

"Step right up, stupendous, death
sin,
defying. Step right up, guaranteed
Adam
satisfying. Step right up, come
the real wooly horse, Siamese
twins of course. It costs a
a dime, for a grand time, form
line.

will

P. T.

Stretch the truth ain't a
Someone must always win.
cared and Eve shared. One
believed and one deceived.
I'll never let them prove me
wrong and I will show them
that I'm strong. It's
positively up to me. I
control my destiny.

**(Lights flicker, P. T. exits. MOSES and ALL are back in
Home in wheel chairs. Spot lights MOSES playing harmonica.
MISS JORDAN and CHORLAVITCH stare at Christmas tree.**

MOSES

I'm tellin' you, when P. T.'s Grandfather give him Ivy Island and
bragged it was prime land, that was the meanest thing I ever saw.

NURSE

Oh, so now we're back to Ivy Island, are we? And I thought P. T.
opened his circus in New York City.

MOSES

Sure he did, but first we got to buy that Winslow Trade Center, so
that Joycie and Clofulia can start rehearsin'.

NURSE

Rehearsing? Will they be singing and dancing? Come Miss Jordan,
Mr. Chorlavitch, let's sing and dance.

**(NURSE claps to beat as TIMOTHY enters. HE is drunk and has
been beaten.)**

NURSE (cont'd)

Timothy! What happened to you?

TIMOTHY

Ain't nothin' happened to me and why are you staring at me, ma?

NURSE

Oh, my God you're bleeding. Let me help you.

TIMOTHY

You can't help me, ma.

NURSE

Oh, Timothy. How many times does this have to happen?

TIMOTHY

Shut up, ma, it's your fault! I told you I needed some money.

NURSE

And last week, was it my fault also? Was it those drunks you hang around with? Was it?

TIMOTHY

I owe them some money. Gamblin' money. I couldn't pay them, so they...

NURSE

(Tries to caress Timothy.)

Oh, my Timothy. My dear sweet Timothy. I'm so sorry.

TIMOTHY

Don't you dare touch me. It's all your fault. Now, they're after me and I have to leave town. Are you satisfied, Ma? Are you satisfied?

NURSE

Where will you go?

TIMOTHY

Maybe I'll go to South America like Pa did. I hear there's a boat leavin' tonight. Maybe I'll leave you like Pa did. You remember him, don'tcha? Now I know why he left you. All you care about is yourself and your damn crazies. I'm gonna pack my bag. See ya

(exits)

Ma and thanks for nothing.

NURSE

Timothy, Timothy... Dear God, what will I do without my baby?

MOSES

Now, take it easy Miss Charity. No sense in gettin' so upset. He'll be alright.

NURSE

No, he's not alright Mr. Moses and neither am I.

MOSES

You feel all alone, don'tcha? Sometimes P. T. feels all alone, too.

NURSE

With all the money your P. T. Barnum has, he has nothing to worry

about, but I am about to lose everything I have.

MOSES

Nonsense. The Boss worries about all of us n' as long as we have each other, we'll be jes fine. That's what you're always tellin' me, ain't it Miss Charity?

NURSE

My name is Sara... You're absolutely right, Mr. Moses. As long as we have each other... And I believe it's time for me to take matters into my own hands!

(Lights flicker back to fantasy.)

CHARITY

I say let's forget about Ivy Island. To hell with "IT" and his Grandfather. I read there's a large building in New York City called the Winslow Trade Center. It's supposed to be enormous and with a little ingenuity, I'm certain we can turn it into P. T.'s dream... Our dream.

MOSES

You sure is wonderful Miss Charity.

JOYCE

Well then, what the hell are we waitin' for? Let's get goin'!

(Cross fade. ALL enter a law office. TIMOTHY plays THORTON. WE see / hear two spinsters; MARTA and GERT.)

THORTON (Timothy)

Miss Gert Winslow, Miss Marta Winslow, I, Mortimer Thorton, as probator of your late father's will, it is my sworn duty to fulfill his wishes. The Winslow enterprise must be sold to the highest bidder. Naturally, the decision will be...

GERT (V/O)

...Entirely ours!

MARTA (V/O)

Of course.

GERT (V/O)

And no butchers!

MARTA (V/O)

We hate meat!

THORTON

S Goldberg

ALZHEIMERS

1-1-55

Bid number one; To house a farmers market, \$10,000.

GERT (V/O)

I hate broccoli and so does my sister!

MARTA

And besides, we've had enough of these greedy merchants!

THORTON / Timothy

Bid number two. For construction of a shoe factory. \$12,000.

MARTA

Don't you hate those tight shoes, Gert?

GERT

Always pinch my corns. Always!

THORTON

Bid number three. Barclay's restaurant and bar. \$8,000.

MARTA (V/O)

People are fat enough!

GERT (V/O)

And I hate sops!

(ALL enter in a huff.)

NURSE / Charity

I know I'm a little late, but may I please, please tender my offer.

THORTON

I'm sorry, but your offer was supposed to have been submitted in writing. Unfortunately, business is business.

GERT (V/O)

What kind of business do you have in mind, young lady?

NURSE / Charity

Names Charity, ma'am and it's a real pleasure to meet you.

MARTA (V/O)

Why thank you. Charity, what a lovely name. Isn't she sweet, Gert.

GERT (V/O)

Well, let's hear your offer. And be sure to make it a good one, young lady.

NURSE / Charity

Charity ma'am. My friends call me Charity. I'm here for P. T.

Barnum. He has plans to build an American Museum, where parents can bring their children to be enriched and enlightened by the many wonders of the world. From Africa, the far East, Egypt, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, even China.

GERT (V/O)

I do declare, the wonders of the world. Why isn't that wonderful.

MARTA (V/O)

Right proper, if I say so myself. Right proper.

THORTON

American Museum, huh? Surely we must have an American Museum somewhere. And how much are you offering for the space, young lady?

CHARITY

We expect 20,000 people at each show. At a dollar per person, five shows a day, that comes to...

THORTON

...\$100,000 a day. Why that's incredible. Unheard of.

CHARITY

That's show business and that's seven days a week. We are prepared to share every penny we make with you. I believe "WE" are going to make a fortune. Millions.

THORTON

(Disgruntled.)

Hmmm... Show business. According to the terms of the probate...

MARTA (V/O)

...Never mind the probate Mr. Thorton. Please continue young lady. That is quite a sum of money...

GERT (V/O)

...Yes, quite a sum. We are most eager to hear about your proposal, Mrs. Barnum.

CHARITY

We are prepared to split the profits the first three years and then...

THORTON

...Does Mr. Barnum have any unencumbered titles?

NURSE

Why of course. P. T. owns Ivy Island. It has been said that it is ten acres of the primest land there is.

GERT (V/O)

Did you say ten prime acres?

MARTA and GERT (V/O)

WE LOVE LAND!

CHARITY

It's in the beautiful state of New Hampshire.

CLOFULIA

"Prime property."

THORTON

And who may I ask are you?

MOSES

Why she's Madame Clofulia, the bearded lady; The Queen of the Gypsies. She's the most famous fortune teller in the world.

THORTON

Gypsies? You mean this is a real gypsy?

JOYCE

We gonna make a lot of money. More'n you can count.

CLOFULIA

I see it in my crystal ball. I read in the cards, saw it in the stars. "Success!" I see a partnership between two very attractive sisters and the most famous man in America; P. T. Barnum.

JOYCE

She predicted plain as day, that as partners we're gonna be a hugh success.

THORTON

Success, huh? Well, thank you and your "Gypsy fortune teller" for your proposal, but unfortunately the late Mr. Winslow would never permit "These kind of people" to do business on his premises.

MARTA (V/O)

What's your rush, Mr. Thorton? I see nothing wrong with "These kind of people," do you Gert?

GERT (V/O)

Perhaps our beloved Daddy was wrong. And I believe we are paying you, Mr. Thorton. Is that not right?

THORTON

American Museum, show business. Well, I don't know...

MARTA (V/O)

I believe it is us, not you that is to know, Mr. Thorton. What a wonderful idea, Mrs. Barnum. Just wonderful.

MOSES

Wonderful "Mrs. Barnum." You sure know your stuff.

NURSE

Just think, enlightening the people of our beloved country.

GERT (V/O)

Why, enrichment is exactly what our people need.

THORTON

Barnum, huh? You did say P. T. Barnum?

MARTA (V/O)

Where have I heard that name before?

JOYCE

Why everybody's heard of P. T. Barnum. The man's famous.

GERT (V/O)

Why yes, I believe I have heard that name before. How wonderful. He is famous.

JOYCE

He's only the number one impresario in the world.

CHARITY

"My husband" is an entrepreneur, that's why the papers are always writing about him. He is very famous.

CLOFULIA

But I am his star. His only star.

JOYCE

Only star? What the heck do you think I is, chitlins...?

ENG

You not star. I star. I always star.

CHENG

You not star. You never star. I star. I real star.

THORTON

P. T. Barnum, huh? I have read about him, but I can't recall what. A humbug... Yes, they called him a humbug.

MARTA (V/O)

(Excited.)

Why yes, I believe he could be "The Humbug."

GERT (V/O)

How lucky can we get? To be partners with a humbug.

THORTON

I wonder what a humbug actually means? Let me get my dictionary.

CHARITY

(Sings ♪)

There's no need for that.

AMERICA LOVES A HUMBUG

He stirs the imagination.
The spirit of our nation.
Gentleman, entrepreneur.
Everything you ever hoped for.

He is a real acheiver.
In God a strong believer.
Asked to help his fellow man.
And he'll do as much as he can.

America loves a Humbug.
America loves a Humbug.
America loves a Humbug.
Like the Germans love their beer.

He makes a real fine husband.
Kind to dogs and children.
What he says he'll always do.
"Til it's done he's never through.

CLOFULIA

He makes the perfect partner.

JOYCE and CLOFULIA

I know he is your answer.

ENG, CHENG, JOYCE and CLOFULIA

Fortune and fame await.

ALL except Thorton

Act now before it's too late.

America loves a Humbug.
America loves a Humbug.
America loves a Humbug.
Like the English love their tea.

ALL

America loves a HUmbug.
America loves a Humbug.
America loves a Humbug.
Like Frenchmen love their wine.

CHARITY

(to sisters)

It has been said that P. T.'s
America's greatest Humbug.
Together we'll build the greatest
show on Earth.

ALL including GERT, MARTA and THORTON

America loves a Humbug.
America loves a Humbug.
America loves a Humbug.
Like the German's love their beer.

MOSES

Easy money. Like takin'
candy from a baby.

JOYCE

We gonna be rich before next year.

MARTA and GERT (V/O)

We've always loved a Humbug!

THORTON

Especially a humbug with ten prime acres of land.

(ALL sign papers and celebrate as we cross-fade to P. T. entering.)

MOSES

How ya doin' Boss? Bring the magic, bring the magic? Yes sir, we
sure got us a fine piece of property here, Boss. Mighty fine if I
do say so myself.

P. T.

(Beaming.)

Sure looks like it, don't it partner? Sure looks like it.

MOSES

Betcha we can get 20,000 people in if we knock out some of those
walls and build three tiers. Maybe 25,000 people. We're gonna be
rich for sure. Bring the magic, Boss...?

P. T. and MOSES

(Laughing.)

...Bring the magic?

P. T.

You're doing splendidly, Moses. Please continue.

MOSES

(cups hands ala megaphone)

You men, set up the big top over there! You two, make sure all

the seats are nice and tidy! You, check Jumbo, make sure he has plenty of water. And you, you'll be in charge of the tickets! Make sure they're in order!

P. T.

You're doing fine Moses...

MOSES

Thanks Boss. MAKE SURE THE SAFETY NET IS SECURE! Can't let those flyin' Russians get hurt, can we? And you, young fella, you're in charge of the popcorn n' candy. Now get a move on.

JOYCE

Shoo, I could use me a young fella too. I'm tired of bein' ole all the time. I want some young blood. Know what I mean?

MOSES

Now, don't get no funny ideas, Joycie. I'm too busy fixin' up the
(to P. T.)
place. Gettin' ready to open real soon. N' ya see the one ring you call a circus, Boss?

P. T.

(Laughing.)

Yes, I see the one ring I call a circus, Boss.

MOSES

(Laughing.)

What about givin' the people three rings to look at, Boss? Three rings got to be better'n one wouldn't ya say?

P. T.

(Smiles.)

Well now, I'm not sure who's the real Boss? Did you just say three rings? What a splendid idea. Three rings. Brilliant.

MOSES

Bring the magic, Boss? Bring the magic?

P. T.

I'm going to see about your three rings right now, Boss. What an
(Exits.)
idea! I'll be back before you know it Moses, you're a genius.

(lights flicker. MOSES plays harmonica as we hear the excitement of the circus as P. T. and CHARITY MOSES stretch banner across stage; "GRAND OPENING TONIGHT!" We hear

fanfare,
lots of festivity. Sound of crowd gathering.)

MOSES

Hope you all set Boss, 'cause the President of New York City himself is waitin' to cut the ribbon.

P. T.

You mean the mayor, Moses.

CHARITY

How exciting, P. T. How truly exciting.

MOSES

Sure dresses like the President, don't he Charity? Must be a million people lined up, waitin' to come on in. Looks like you're famous Boss. You're Famous! Well, ready or not, say hello to New York, 'cause here they is.

P. T.

I couldn't have done it without you, partner. You too, sweetheart, you too.

P. T., MOSES and CHARITY

(Sing ♪)

HELLO NEW YORK

P. T.

Dreams, I make them
come true.
I'll do anything
for you.
Hello New York.

MOSES

To me he is the
king.
He can do
anything.
Hello New York.

CHARITY

Fell in love
with P. T.
He is pure
ecstasy.
Hello New York

Fun, they're all
having fun.
It looks like my
time has come.
Hello New York.

He gave me
my freedom.
'N I sure had
me some fun
Hello New York.

One day we will
get wed.
We'll sleep in
the same bed
Hello New York.

P. T.

There is no man.
Happier than,
The greatest showman.
Hello New York.

I should feel like a king.
'Cause I have ev'rything?

Hello New York.

ALL

There is no man.
Happier than.
The greatest showman.
Hello New York.

(P. T., CHARITY and MOSES go to top of bleachers to watch the people enter)

MOSES

I don't believe it, but you've done what no other human being even dared to dream, Boss. Why half of New York City is either inside or waitin' to get in... Now, I hate to put a damper on all of this, but nobody's leavin'. Looks like they're gonna stay

(laughs)

forever. How you gonna get those other folks in if nobody's departin' the said premises? Seems like they parked their carcasses forever.

P. T.

Can you believe their audacity, Moses. They're not leaving. Not one of them!

MOSES

You better do somethin' real quick, Boss, or you'll be out of business before you make your first million.

CHARITY

Don't you worry Moses. P. T. will think of something. Won't you honey.

P. T.

Oh, I'll think of something alright, or all those paying customers will never be able to enter our said premises.

(Signs appear. "DON'T MISS THE EGRESS." SEE THE EGRESS." "STRAIGHT AHEAD FOR THE ONE AND ONLY EGRESS."

P. T. (cont'd)

Ladies and gentlemen, step right up and see the one and only "EGRESS!" Made right here in the good old U.S.A.

MOSES

Don't miss the "Fabulous Egress!"

JOYCE

Straight ahead for the internationally renowned, "EGRESS!"

ENG

If you afraid? No bring children. Too scary.

CHENG

You have weak heart. No come. Too scary.

CHILD 1 (v/o)

Oh, mommy, can we see the egress? I want to see the egress!

CHILD 2 (v/o)

I have to see the egress, Ma. I just have too. Please.

CHILD 3 (v/o)

I want to see the egress. I want to see the egress.

P. T.

This way. Please don't crowd, ma'am. There' plenty of room to see the egress.

ENG

What the heck is an egress?

CHENG

Dummy! It's exit.

(Musical intro of AFRAID of BEING wrong begins.)

P. T.

Hot dog! They're finally out.

MOSES

Let the new ones in Boss? Let the new ones in?

P. T.

I thought you'd never ask.

MOSES

Boss, ain't nobody like you, 'cause you are a miracle worker.

MOSES and P. T.

(Sing ♪)

AFRAID of BEING WRONG

MOSES

Why do you suppose.
When the emperor wore new clothes.
They all cheered, except one kid that kept a blinkin'.

P. T.

The king, the king is naked.

I said, but you can fake it.
You made me see, it's really so easy.

ALL

Afraid of being wrong.
They have to tag along.
They wanted to believe.
That's why you get deceived.
Afraid of being wrong.

MOSES

Playing with fire burns.
And you still want your turn.

P. T.

I call it Phineas Taylor Barnum's golden rule.
You just got to admit it.
There's one born every minute.

MOSES and P. T.

Afraid of being wrong.
They have to tag along.
They wanted to believe.
That's why they were deceived.
Afraid of being wrong.

P. T.

I call it Phineas Taylor Barnum's golden rule.

MOSES and P. T.

Afraid of being wrong.

(ALL dance.)

**(cross fade to: Much fanfare is heard. Signs stating
"BARNUM FOR PRESIDENT." "NEW YORK LOVES BARNUM." "BARNUM
PUTS A SMILE ON HUMAN RACE." P. T. and CHARITY exit.)**

MAN 1 (v/o)

Hail to Barnum, our conquering hero.

WOMAN 1 (v/o)

A most wonderful time had by all.

MAN 2 (v/o)

160 year old Joyce Heth wows 'em!

WOMAN 2 (v/o)

P. T. Barnum called the greatest showman of our time.

MAN 3 (v/o)

Barnum spreads his magic.

WOMAN 3 (v/o)

Barnum knows how to awe.

MAN 4 (v/o)

Having wowed New York with Joyce Heth, what will the amazing Barnum do for an encore?

MOSES

(Stage left, we see the

nurse

take **MISS JORDAN'S** pulse.

I mean the opening was called

stare.

ALL

There is much concern.

the greatest event ever to happen in New York City. Papers called Barnum the greatest showman that ever lived. They went wild over Madame Clofulia. She read fortunes as they touched her beard. People could not believe the Siamese twins. They couldn't believe seeing two people in one body. N' Joycie was sure layin' it on

PANIC

MISS JORDAN dies. **NURSE**

puts

sheet over her.

how old she was.

ENG

She dead! Poor Joycie dead.

(Voices are outraged. They shout and sing "THE PLAGUE of BARNUM," as MOSES tries to convince audience.)

VOICES

Hoax, humbug, fraud!
He would even fool the Lord.
Tar and feather his reward.
Hoax, humbug, fraud!

Sham, corrupt, quack!
He says white, believe it's black.
He gives one and takes two back.
Sham, corrupt, quack.

Heed thee and rid thee of the plague of Barnum.
Heed thee and rid the of the plague of Barnum.

MOSES to audience

VOICES

You're wrong, all wrong.
P. T.'s the nicest, most
honest man there is. He
don't mean you no harm.
He don't mean nobody no
harm.

P. T. to audience

I'll tell 'em that the deed
I bought said she was 160
years old. What did I know.
Just like you trusted me, I
trusted that chiseler. I
trusted the man I bought
her from. How was I
supposed to know he was a crook?

No appearance of ossification.
Her eyes and organs surprisingly
young. And teeth only recently
out of her gums. Behold the lecher
has shown his greed. The markets
are failing and prices are soaring.
The devil connives to get what he
needs. Heed thee and rid thee of
the plague of Barnum. Heed thee
and rid thee of the plague of
Barnum. BARNUM! BARNUM!
BARNUM!

**(Segue into STEP RIGHT up. P. T. disappears. MOSES
talks to air.)**

MOSES

Just because Joycie's dead, don't mean we have to close the
circus, do we Boss? Ain't the circus still our home? Where are
you Boss, where are you? Is you hiding from me again?

(Lights flicker as P. T. enters.)

MOSES (cont'd)

Why there you is Boss. Bring the magic Boss? Bring the magic?

P. T.

You can forget the magic, Moses. Would you please tell me where
you've been?

MOSES

Now that Joycie's done gone, I been tryin' to take care of
business. What are we gonna do Boss? Poor Joycie's gone.

P. T.

Why Joycie died 15 years ago. Don't you remember?

MOSES

15 Years ago? You sure? Why, seems like I was just talkin' to
her.

P. T.

And since she died, you and I have toured these United States,

together, haven't we?

MOSES

Joycie died 15 years ago...? Really? How could that be?

P. T.

So partner, where have you been these last few days? We've all been worried sick about you.

MOSES

Last few days...? Why, you know I was right here, tellin' 'em that you is the nicest and most honest man there is. Why, you even give me my freedom. Seems, maybe I got lost. Couldn't find my way back home.

P. T.

Remember when I asked you to double check the safety net?

MOSES

Flyin' Russians got hurt, didn't they?

P. T.

Then I asked you to feed and water Jumbo...

MOSES

Poor pachyderm almost died... Real sorry Boss, real sorry. Must of forgot. That's what it was, I just plain forgot. But ev'rybody forgets, don't they Boss?

P. T.

(Points to wheel chair pushes wheel chair.)

Come here Moses. Sit down. We're going to take a little ride.

MOSES

Where we goin' Boss? Where we goin'?

P. T.

To your new home.

MOSES

What do I need a new home for, Boss?

P. T.

Because you've been forgetting things and I'm too busy to be watching over you all the time. Sorry partner, but I'm just too busy.

(Lights flicker and as in Scene 1, P. T. wheels MOSES into home.)

MOSES

(Crying.)

Whatcha bring me here for Boss? Whatcha bring me here for?

P. T.

You'll be better off here, Mr. Moses. They'll good care of you. I've arranged for everything.

MOSES

What'd I do, Boss? What'd I do? How can you do this to me? What'd I do, what'd I ever do to you...? This ain't the circus, Boss. N' I need my friends. Can't live without my friends.

P. T.

They'll wash and feed you Mr. Moses and you can play your harmonica as late as you want. You'll have a wonderful time and I'll come visit you. I'll be back before you know it. Promise.

MOSES

What about me n' you Boss? Ain't we still partners?

P. T.

You'll make lots of new friends here, Mr. Moses. There are lots of

(Exits.)

people here just like you. I'll be back before you know it. Promise.

(Lights flicker and we are back in home.)

MOSES

(Screams

Cries.)

If I had me a gun I'd... Take me now Lord, take me now....

NURSE

Please, Mr. Moses, try and calm down. We're all upset that Miss Jordan passed away.

HOW

You take easy.

WO

Please, play harmonica. I love song very much.

CHORLAVITCH

(she is dead, she is dead)
"Zee is toit, zee is toit"

MOSES

She's dead. We're all gonna die. We're all gonna die.
Take me now, Lord, take me now.

(MOSES collapses and stares. ALL rush to HIM. Unseen, Timothy enters with suitcase and goes for cookie jar.)

HOW

Mr. Moses, Mr. Moses, what wrong? On boat coming to Merica, mama look same way. Then she die.

WO

Then we alone until we come here, to our home. Please, somebody help Mr. Moses.

(TIMOTHY accidentally drops cookie jar. The nurse turns and catches him.)

NURSE

Oh Timothy, how could you...? You're just like your father.

(Lights flicker as TIMOTHY has a flashback of HIS drunken father.)

FATHER (V/O)

What the hell you slobberin' over this baby for? Babies are supposed to be asleep this time of night. Put him to sleep and get me my liquor! And I want all the money ya hear?! Where's the cookie jar? Why there's my little cookie jar. Same place where it always is. Good.

NURSE

Please John, it's for Timothy's educa...

FATHER (V/O)

Who the hell cares about his education! Go get my liquor bitch! What the hell are you looking at whore? Forget about that baby and get me my liquor! Do it damn it! Do it before I...

(The FATHER disappears as lights flicker back to reality.)

TIMOTHY

(rubs eyes as if coming out of daze)
He used to hit you, didn't he...? Why didn't you tell me he took all our money? Why didn't you tell me what a bastard he was...?

(cries)

He was a no good drunk... I'm just like him, aren't I, ma? Just like him.

(P. T. enters. HE doesn't notice MOSES who is still in a

daze.)

P. T.

Hello, maybe you could help me?

NURSE

I'm sorry, but not now... Oh, are you from the bank? If you are, I'm afraid you'll have to come back another time.

P. T.

I'm sorry, but I'm looking for Nurse Sara...

NURSE

Can't you please give us a few more months...? Alright, I only have part of the money, but I'll give you what I have.

P. T.

I'm sorry, ma'am, but I didn't come for your money. I came to see my dear friend, Mr. Moses.

TIMOTHY

(Amazed.)

Don't tell me you're...?

P. T.

...P. T. Barnum at your service, son.

NURSE

P. T. Barnum. It's been so long. I tried... I've written you many times, but you never responded.

P. T.

...Guess it has been a long time, hasn't it? And I swear, I never got one letter. Not one. Now, how is my best friend?

TIMOTHY

Best friend?! How come you never visited your best friend? Afraid you were going to catch the crazies? Why'd you come back? What the hell do you really want?

P. T.

(Stares.)

I'd tell you the truth, but you wouldn't believe me.

TIMOTHY

Try me mister. Why don't you try me?

(MOSES stares. ALL bow head as CHORLAVITCH sings solemn prayer.)

CHORLAVITCH

"Shama yis-roel, adonoi elohaynu, adonoi eh-chud..."

TIMOTHY

What's he singing Ma?

NURSE

I believe he's found his lost prayer.

P. T.

Moses! Can you hear me Moses? It's me...? Why doesn't he understand what I'm saying? He is alright, isn't he?

TIMOTHY

There he is. Look at him, just look at him. Doesn't even know you came back. That you're actually here. He can't hear you. Look at your "Best friend." He's dying.

NURSE

(Jovial.)

Mr. Moses, Mr. Moses. P. T. Barnum's here. He's come back to

(To P. T.)

see you... I'm sorry but your friend is very sick and unfortunately I don't know how much longer he'll last, or for that matter how much longer we'll last. I'm afraid the banks going to close this nursing home down. \$2,000 Mr. Barnum. \$2,000 will allow us to continue for another year.

P. T.

(To Moses.)

Mr. Moses... It's me, P. T. Your best friend Don't you understand? I know you, you old faker. I know you can hear me.

(feigns laughing)

I really miss you, partner. I really do... Bring the magic Boss. Bring the magic?

TIMOTHY

Mr. Moses always said, one day you would come and I never believed him... I never believed he was really your partner.

P. T.

(Starts to sob.)

You no good song and dance man, let me hear you laugh. I want to hear you laugh. Please, pretty please... Somebody, somebody please do something.

NURSE

Sometimes they just sit there and don't say anything for hours, months, even years...

P. T.

You don't remember me, but I sure remember you Boss.

P. T.

Er, did you say you needed \$2,000? Tell you what I'm gonna do.

(Takes out money.)

Here's \$10,000. And I promise, the next time I visit, I'll give you more...

TIMOTHY

(In awe.)

\$10,000. I don't believe it.

P. T.

That's right son. You can have anything, long as you put your mind to it... Now, before I go... Circus calling you know. Only three ring circus in the world and it was all his idea... Now, you make sure you say hello to my best friend for me when he wakes up tell him I came back to say I love him.

NURSE

Oh, my God. He's awake, Mr. Barnum. He's awake... How do you feel Mr. Moses?

MOSES

Seems like the music just disappeared, 'n now it done come back. How come Miss Charity? How come?

P. T.

(Rushes back. Emotional.)

Moses... How are you partner? How are you partner?

(After a beat.)

MOSES

Partner? I ain't your partner, mister. I ain't nobody's partner. Never was n' never will be.

P. T.

Of course you're my partner, Moses. We've always been partners. Don't you remember? Me and you... Bring the magic Boss, bring the magic? You remember, don't you?

MOSES

I'm afraid I don't know nuthin' 'bout no magic, mister.

P. T.

What's this mister business? It's me. P. T., P. T.

MOSES

I'm sorry, mister, but I don't know no P. T.

P. T.

Don't know no P. T.? Go on... Step right up... Why it's the greatest show on Earth.

MOSES

This ain't no greatest show on Earth. This is my home.

P. T.

You don't remember me, do you...? I want to hear you laugh again. I used to love to hear you laugh. When we were trying to make it, we laughed and cried together, didn't we? Always together. You remember me, P. T. P. T.

MOSES

Don't know no P. T., mister.

P. T.

Don't you remember? We started our first museum together. Then we opened our first circus. Show business, Moses. Show business.

MOSES

You must be tetched, mister. I ain't in no show business.

P. T.

Life was so exciting then... I guess this old man came back for a little taste. A little laugh... Please, Moses, won't you laugh for me?

(MOSES plays harmonica.)

NURSE

If it wasn't so sad it would almost be funny. Despite the fact that you never came to see him, nothing stopped "Your best friend" from talking about you night and day. He called it "Oletimers" and he laughed all the time. He loves you Mr. Barnum... He's missed you all these years.

(ALL will sing.)

H O M E

NURSE

This home means everything to me.
It's where I raised my Timothy.
It always keeps me warm.
It's my shelter from the storm.
It always keeps me warm.

HOW

We both born in country Chungwo.

WO

It very bad place we sure you know.

HOW

No shoe it feel like ice.

WO

They want sell us for big price.

HOW and WO

No shoe it feel like ice.

TIMOTHY

Never knew I had that much to loose.
Happens when a drunk drinks booze.
At last this fool can see.
The problem was only me.
At last this fool can see.

P. T.

I brought my best friend here years ago.
He created my three ring show.
I didn't keep in touch.
Now, it really hurts so much.
I didn't keep in touch.

ALL

A place to rest our head.
A cozy fire my own bed.
And friends that always care.
They smile they're always there.
In our home.
We need this home.
God bless our home sweet home.

(MOSES plays harmonica as P. T. cries, kisses MOSES on the head and walks away.)

(Lights)

THE END