

SCENE 5 – VAUDEVILLE

2019 *That's Entertainment*

Mid is open 1/3. Two Flip-Form platforms directly behind mid. Just out of sight on platform is make-shift "curtain" on 2 poles.

Annabeth: *(enters DSR – looking around)* Hello? Anyone here? *(walking, looking)* Maybe I got off on the wrong floor. *(louder)* HELLO!?

Announcer (Tzion) *Enter SDL:* You don't have to shout! I'm not deaf, I'm just a little late.

Annabeth: Late for what?

Announcer: For you. I'm here to help you learn from some of the Vaudeville greats.

Annabeth: I doubt there's anything from that genre than would be useful for today's audiences. Vaudeville is ancient history and the "greats" are all dead.

Announcer: Death's not a problem for us, but let's start with our little "Vaudeville Promo" that we put together just for you. If you'll just step over there, we'll set up our stage. *(Points DSL)*

Annabeth: *(to herself while walking DSL)* I SO wish I could find George. This place is getting creepier by the minute.

(Joseph & Lucy move pole to stretch out "curtain" for the stage. Underscore Music starts when Announcer speech and "Vaudeville Troupe" mimes actions during speech)

Announcer: From 1880 into the 1930's Vaudeville was home to more than 25,000 performers who traveled all over the country performing on stages large and small. The shows had a wide variety of entertainment: from gimmick acts – like Cannonball Richards whose stomach of steel could handle a cannonball shot at him on stage every night, animal acts like Gus Visser and his singing duck (sfx "Quack"), physical acts like plate spinners, acrobats, and magicians, but mostly it was singing, dancing, and lots of comedy. These hardworking performers lived on the road and often did 4 shows a day – they deserve a big round of applause. *Actors all take bow.*

Music out. Midcurtain closes after bow. 5 chairs on platform & 4 Vaudeville Actors sitting

Annabeth: *(trying to escape, crosses SR)* That was great! So informative. Gotta go, now!

Announcer: *(grabbing her arm)* Wait! You can't leave. You're scheduled to host the Memory Lane Talk Show.

Annabeth: What!?! I don't do talk shows. I'm a producer....or I was a producer.

Announcer: Great. Then you're available. *(Curtain opens to reveal chairs & actors)* Just take your seat in the middle *(guiding Annabeth to chair and "helping" her sit)* and ask away! *(exit SL)*

Annabeth: Didn't I just see all of you in the Movies Exhibit?

Jerry Lewis (Niko): Do you think performers only know how to do one genre?

Sammy Davis (Hikma): We've had success in movies, Broadway, TV, Records, Directing

Jerry Lewis: even producing.

Annabeth: Well, that certainly makes my sole career in producing feel small.

Julie Andrews: My dear, don't take offense, but you're just a baby. Ten years is nothing. I've been performing 75 years - since I was 10.

Ginger: And still going strong, Julie. By the Way, I really enjoyed the dancing in Mary Poppins.

Julie Andrews: Thank you. They were fun, but nothing can compare to the iconic dances you and Fred did, Ginger.

Ginger: You're kind. I enjoyed every minute of my 70 year career, although I was a mature 14 when I started.

Jerry Lewis: You're both light-weights. I started at 5 and performed until I was 91.

Sammy Davis: No one's going to beat Jerry Lewis' 86 year performance record! I only made it to 57 years but I win the youngest performer award – I started at 3.

Jerry Lewis: Those were the days. Both our parents had great vaudeville acts. Why wouldn't they have their children join them on stage?

Ginger: I could have never survived in the business without my mother! She knew the business end of things and helped with many of my contracts.

Julie Andrews: How fortunate for you, for many careers end not because of a lack of talent, but because of poor business.

Annabeth: Is that remark meant for me....because I don't think it's fair to assume that bankruptcy means you're bad at business. Sometimes it's just bad luck. Oh course, you guys wouldn't know anything about that. People loved you – you had it made.

Sammy Davis: Maybe they loved me on stage, but for many years I couldn't sleep or eat in the hotels I performed in. They wouldn't even give me a dressing room.

Ginger: People loving you doesn't make it easier. Audience expectation just grows and grows. Fred and I would spend 8 weeks creating new and innovative dances before we even started filming. Everyone expected perfection, so we'd shoot a dance over and over until our feet were bleeding and we could hardly stand. Our record was 47 takes for *Shall we Dance*.

Julie: Fortunately the Actor's Union wouldn't let that happen today, but even the union can't protect us from the toll our bodies take. Look at Jerry – all those pratt falls that people laughed at, left you with 37 years of chronic back pain.

Jerry: To be fair, the worst pain was caused when I accidently landed on a small stage microphone. Eventually I couldn't sleep, even morphine wouldn't help. If it hadn't been for the implant in my spine in 2002, I'm not sure I could have kept going.

Sammy: No one would have ever guessed how much pain you were in when you performed.

Ginger: That's what we all learned in Vaudeville – performing was hard work but your job was to make it look easy – no matter what.

Julie: Unless the “no matter what” takes away your ability to sing. Then you have no choice but to stop performing.

Ginger: I'm so sorry, Julie, I forgot that you lost your singing voice when a surgical treatment went badly.

Sammy: As a singer, I can't imagine how devastating that would be. Singing is like breathing.

Julie: Yes, it was quite a blow but, as Maria said in the Sound of Music, “When God closes a door, somewhere He opens a window.”

Jerry: Yep. You went back to movies , tried directing, writing, and created a preschool television series. Everyone has to restart at least once in our career. For me it was when Dean Martin and I broke up....

Ginger: For me it was going back to serious acting after Fred and I finished dancing.

Sammy: For me it was after I lost my left eye in a car accident and recorded my first studio album.

Julie: So my dear (*looking at Annabeth*), *what are YOU going to do to restart?*

BLACK OUT