

Gypsy

TESSIE & CIGAR

CIGAR. Tessie, I'm short a talking woman.

TESSIE. Tough titty.

CIGAR. Tessie, the new comic won't use a chorus girl.

TESSIE. Then let him use Mazeppa. (To LOUISE) Everyone else has. (Laughs at her own joke)

CIGAR. Now you know Mazeppa's got her Gladiator Ballet just before his spot.

TESSIE. Cut the ballet. It stinks anyway.

CIGAR. Ah, be a sport. I'm in a bind.

TESSIE. You're always in a bind in this flea-bitten trap.

I'm a strip woman, slob. I don't do no scenes. Now screw!

(To LOUISE) Have you ever heard of a first class strip woman playing scenes?

Well, you play stock in a dump like this, you gotta expect to be insulted.

CIGAR. The work is steady, ain't it?

TESSIE. But you bring in a new star for each show, don't you?

CIGAR. Tessie, it's just a few lines—

TESSIE. Fat boy, save your bad breath.

Gypsy

TESSIE + Rose

ROSE. We're very busy.

TESSIE. In *my* dressing room.

ROSE. In *your* dress—

LOUISE. (*Overlapping*) Momma—

TESSIE. You're damn right. And I don't like sharing it any more than you do.
Particularly with a troupe of professional virgins.

ROSE. We are not—

TESSIE. All right, so you're acrobats.

ROSE. We happen to be headliners from the Orpheum Circuit.
We were booked into this theatre by mistake.

TESSIE. Weren't we all! where you been all your life?

ROSE. (*Proudly*) Playing vaudeville.

TESSIE. Where? In the Vatican?

ROSE. You name a big city and we've played it!

TESSIE. Yeah? Well, you may be a gypsy, Rose Louise—say,
that ain't a bad name if you ever take up stripping—

ROSE. She won't!

TESSIE. No! But you'll let her feed lines to a bum comic for a lousy ten bucks!

ROSE. That's training: she's going to be an actress! This is only temporary!
As soon as we finish here, she goes right back to vaudeville!

ROSE turns away—and sees LOUISE'S look. Embarrassed, she sits.

TESSIE. (*Quietly*) Back to vaudeville, my eye.
There ain't any vaudeville left except burlesque.

Gypsy

MAZEPPA + TESSIE
with Louise

MAZEPPA. Miss Tura, I'll thank you not to give the boss any notion that I would ever play scenes. And one more disparaging remark about my ballet will find this bugle right up your—

TESSIE. Please: there's a lady present!

MAZEPPA. Where?

TESSIE. Open your eyes instead of your mouth.
Gypsy, meet Miss Mazeppa—and Miss Electra.

MAZEPPA. Say, you're even younger than I was when I began stripping.

LOUISE. Oh, I'm not going to strip.

MAZEPPA. (*Belligerent*) Something wrong with stripping?

LOUISE. No. I just meant I don't have any talent.

TESSIE. You think they have? I myself of course was a ballerina.
But take it from me, to be a stripper all you need to have is no talent.

MAZEPPA. You'll pardon me, but to have no talent is not enough.
What you need to have is an idea that makes your strip special.

Gypsy

TULSA & Louise

LOUISE. You didn't tell him anything, did you?
I mean that you're rehearsing a dance team act?

TULSA. How'd you know I was working on a dance team act?

LOUISE. I saw you practicing Monday after the matinée,
with your broom for a partner. I was up in the flies.

TULSA. Louise—

LOUISE. Oh, I won't tell anybody, Tulsa! I'm very secretive.
Just like you. *(Takes his hand)* That's what this means
here in your palm. And this means you make up dreams—like me.

TULSA. *(Moves away)* What do you make up dreams about?

LOUISE. ... People.

TULSA. Oh, I do that too.

LOUISE. Yes, but yours are about a partner for your act.

TULSA. She's gonna be more than a partner, I hope.
I mean, I dream ... that one day, well, you ...

TULSA starts to dance around.

LOUISE. What would she have to be like, Tulsa?
A wonderful singer and dancer, I guess.

TULSA. Oh, no. I'm going to do most of that. I don't mean I'm
going to hog it all, but—they always look at the girl ...
in a dance team. Especially if she's pretty.

LOUISE. Makeup can help. And costumes.

TULSA. I've got the costumes all figured out. A blue satin tux for me—

LOUISE. With rhinestone lapels—

TULSA. You think?

LOUISE. I'll sew them on.

TULSA. Okay. Thanks.

LOUISE. Aren't you happy someone like Mr. T.T. Grantziger thinks you can be a star?

JUNE. You're funny.

LOUISE. Why?

JUNE. Well, you're never jealous.

LOUISE. Oh. Well, I don't have any talent. I don't mind really
—except Momma would like it better if I did.

JUNE. I guess that's what she likes about me. Momma's no fool. I'm not a star.

LOUISE. You are.

JUNE. I'm not! Mr. Grantziger could make me one if—

JUNE'S voice cracks. LOUISE puts an arm around her.

LOUISE. Momma can make you a star, too.

JUNE. *(In control again, moves away)* Momma can do one thing: she can make herself believe anything she makes up. Like with that rhinestone finale dress you sewed for me. Momma wants publicity so she makes up a story that three nuns went blind sewing it! Now she believes it. She even believes the act is good.

LOUISE. Isn't it?

JUNE. *(Cold anger)* It's a terrible act and I hate it! I've hated it from the beginning and I hate it more now! I hate pretending I'm two years old. I hate singing those same awful songs, doing those same awful dances, wearing those same awful costumes—I didn't mean it about the costumes.

LOUISE. No. You just meant you're too big for them now.

JUNE. Do you ever feel like you didn't have a sister?

LOUISE. ... Sometimes.

JUNE. It's Momma's fault.

LOUISE. You can't blame everything on Momma.

JUNE. You can't, maybe. I wish she'd marry Herbie and let me alone.

LOUISE. Herbie doesn't want to marry her. All he cares about is the act.

JUNE. Oh, honest Louise.

LOUISE. Well, he's an agent!

Gypsy

HERBIE + ROSE

ROSE. All right, you say we're never alone. I wanted to have dinner tonight, just the two of us, but what was I going to do with the girls? They're babies.

HERBIE. Rose, no matter how you dress 'em, no matter how you smother 'em, they're big girls. They're almost young women—

ROSE. They're not and they never will be!

HERBIE. I'm embarrassed in front of them! When are you going to marry me, Rose?

ROSE. Don't forget to take our scrapbooks to Mr. Grantziger's tomorrow.

HERBIE. When are you going to quit stalling?

ROSE. We got to have proof that we headlined on the Orpheum.

HERBIE. Rose—

ROSE. All right; so it was a long time ago.

HERBIE. *(Gets up)* Rose, if I walk out, you'll be stuck with the check!
(ROSE pulls HERBIE back into the chair) Honey, don't you know there's a depression?

ROSE. Of course I know! I read Variety.

HERBIE. Don't you know what it's doing to vaudeville?
Don't you know what the talkies are doing to vaudeville?
Don't you know I love you?

ROSE. Do you think I'd be unfaithful to my husbands if you didn't?
But I have to think of my girls and their happiness.

HERBIE. Louise is very happy being the front of a cow!

ROSE. It's better than being the rear end! Anyway, she loves animals.

HERBIE. She and June should both be in school—

ROSE. And be like other girls; cook and clean and sit and die!

~~(To HERBIE) I promised June she'd be a star and she will be.
I promised I'd get her on the Pantages Circuit and I did.
I promised I'd get her on the Orpheum Circuit and I did.~~

HERBIE. I did! And you promised me that after I did, you'd marry me.

ROSE. I promised her she'd headline on Broadway and—

HERBIE. Didn't you hear what I said?

ROSE. Yes, but I'm ignoring it. ~~(To HERBIE) It isn't very polite for a gentleman to remind a lady that~~

~~(To HERBIE) It isn't very polite for a gentleman to remind a lady that she has welched. There was no date on that promise—~~

HERBIE. ROSE, STOP HANDING ME THAT BULL—

Gypsy

Baby Louise
Baby June
with Rose

LOUISE. That's dog food, Momma.

ROSE. That's what she thinks. I'm hungry.

LOUISE. Then why didn't you eat some of our chow mein after the show?

ROSE. Because you two did the work and we gotta save every cent.

(To JUNE, who brings ROSE a hair brush—as she brushes JUNE'S hair)

I had a dream last night: I dreamt a whole new act for you!
Baby June and Her Newsboys!

JUNE. How are you going to get the boys, Momma?

ROSE. Louise can be a boy—*(LOUISE exits)*—and I'll find three others.

JUNE. How are you going to pay them?

ROSE. The experience'll be their pay. I've got just enough saved up for
scenery and costume.

LOUISE. June says you said she can sleep with you tonight.

ROSE. You know how high-strung the baby is after a performance.

LOUISE. I performed.

ROSE. It ain't the same. Now say goodnight and go to bed.

LOUISE. Momma, how come I have three fathers?

ROSE. Because you're lucky ...

GYPSEY

UNCLE JACKO + ROSE

JOCKO. Madam, do you realize you are absolutely—

ROSE. I do, Uncle Jocko, but I want to save your very valuable time for you.

JOCKO. In that case—

ROSE. When I saw your sensitive face at the Odd Fellows Hall—
my first husband was an Odd Fellow—

JOCKO. I am not an Odd Fellow!

ROSE. I meant a Knight of Pythias. My second husband was—

JOCKO. I'm not a Knight of Pythias!

ROSE. Then where *did* you catch our act?

JOCKO. At the Elks.

ROSE. My father is an Elk! I have his tooth in here someplace.

(To the conductor) Professor,

I just marvel how you can make a performer into an artist.

(GEORGIE follows ROSE as she gads about) Now if you could

help my little girls by giving them a good loud La-da-da, de-da, da!

JOCKO. What is going on here?

ROSE. ~~Oh, taking off the baby's dress, you'll ruin it up~~—Do you know of a
really good agent who could book a professional act like ours?

JOCKO. A professional act! Hey Georgie! Get a load of this—

ROSE. (Suddenly grabbing JOCKO) Don't you laugh! Don't you dare laugh!
... That child is going to be a star.

JOCKO. That's what they all say. All right—

ROSE. But we're not finished!

JOCKO. They are as far as I'm concerned.

ROSE. Because you're trying to play favorites!

JOCKO. (Stops) What?

ROSE. How dare you let that rotten, untalented,
fat balloon block up my babies?
I won't leave this stage till she does!

JOCKO. That child—

ROSE. Have you no loyalty to the Elks?

JOCKO. I'm not an Elk!

ROSE. Well, the editor of the *Gazette* is!