

"THE GREATEST SHOWMAN ON EARTH"

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1-3 OMITTED

1-3

A strummed BANJO begins... A BASS DRUM joins, beating time.

4 INT. CIRCUS TENT - NIGHT

4

Absolute darkness. Then, a single narrow spotlight goes on, revealing a RINGMASTER, with top hat, his back to us, alone.

With his head bowed, the top hat casts his face in shadow. As the MUSIC picks up, he sings in a hushed, dramatic voice:

RINGMASTER
[BARNUM SINGS]
[BARNUM SINGS]

QUICK CUTS -- CLOSE UPS of the RINGMASTER, seen from behind, in fast-passing shots. The iconic top hat; the cane; red swallowtail coat; shiny black boots; sawdust...

RINGMASTER (CONT'D)
[BARNUM SINGS]
[BARNUM SINGS]

The Ringmaster (from behind) looks upward. Another spotlight goes on. Way up high in the darkness, a beautiful African-American aerialist, ANNE WHEELER, is spinning on a rope.

RINGMASTER (CONT'D)
[BARNUM SINGS]
[BARNUM SINGS]

The Ringmaster looks the other way -- a new spotlight hits a beautiful TIGHTROPE WALKER, way up high, seemingly walking on air through the vast darkness.

RINGMASTER (CONT'D)
[BARNUM SINGS]

A cannon FIRES -- sending a HUMAN CANNONBALL flying through the darkness, spotlight following, til he lands in a netting.

RINGMASTER (CONT'D)
[BARNUM SINGS]

The Ringmaster turns, into the light.

It is P.T. BARNUM. Handsome. Confident. Exuberant. At the height of his powers. A showman's smile; a scoundrel's wink.

BARNUM
[BARNUM SINGS]
[BARNUM SINGS]

*

(CONTINUED)

He turns left -- roving SPOTLIGHTS find glimpses of DAREDEVIL horse riders circling a circus ring, doing amazing stunts. *

BARNUM (CONT'D)
[BARNUM SINGS]

He turns right -- SPOTLIGHTS catch ACROBATS in a circus ring doing an insane teeter-board act. Bodies fly through the air.

BARNUM (CONT'D)
[BARNUM SINGS]

*

As the SONG ESCALATES, two FIRE BREATHERS step up and...

...BLOW huge COLUMNS OF FIRE in the air over Barnum's head.

Suddenly, all the FOOTLIGHTS go on, revealing a full-throttle 3-ring Circus in full motion all around Barnum -- elephants doing handstands; lion tamers cracking whips; jugglers tossing rings across the room; horses dancing on two hooves.

Barnum strides thru it all -- grinning; happy -- and singing his heart out -- welcoming us to his world: The Big Top.

BARNUM (CONT'D)
[BARNUM SINGS]
[BARNUM SINGS]

His SONG is joined by group of ODDITIES, whom we will get to know in due time, both in their strangeness and high-spirited humanity. The gentle O'CLANCY THE IRISH GIANT, the tallest man in the world. LETTIE THE BEARDED LADY; CHANG AND ENG, the legendary Siamese twins...

One by one, they join in, walking with Barnum.

ODDITIES
[ODDITIES SING]
[ODDITIES SING]

*

We become aware of a CROWD outside the three rings.

BARNUM
Ladies and gentlemen! Cads and crooks!
Children of all ages! Welcome to another
world! Where beauty walks with danger!
Where the impossible is commonplace! And
where nothing is quite what you expect...

*
*
*
*
*

Barnum concludes by throwing his head back, arms wide...

BARNUM (CONT'D)
Welcome... To the Greatest Show on Earth!

The crowd, in the dim light outside the rings, goes wild.

Now ALL the PERFORMERS join in, singing.

PERFORMERS

[PERFORMERS SING]
[PERFORMERS SING]
[PERFORMERS SING]
[PERFORMERS SING]

As the Performers sing, Barnum takes in CHILDREN'S FACES in the crowd, their awe; their wonder; their delight.

Then Barnum turns to watch the show with them. SOUND FADES as Barnum, in a brief moment, sings to himself about the long road it took to get here. In counterpoint to the Performers exuberant singing, Barnum's words are reflective and wistful.

BARNUM

[BARNUM SINGS TO HIMSELF]
[BARNUM SINGS TO HIMSELF]

BARNUM is yanked out of his reverie by the Performers. Jolted back to reality, he joins their spirited song again.

BARNUM/ALL

[BARNUM AND ALL SING]
[BARNUM AND ALL SING]
[BARNUM AND ALL SING]
[BARNUM AND ALL SING]

As the SONG reaches a climax, abruptly ALL THE LIGHTS go out, leaving Barnum again alone in the SPOTLIGHT.

BARNUM

Ladies and gentlemen, tonight we offer you a story. A parable, if you will. Of a man caught between the real world and the world of his dreams. A world where anything is possible, if you only believe...

As the CAMERA circles him, Barnum sings the last few lines.

BARNUM (CONT'D)

[BARNUM SINGS]
[BARNUM SINGS]

As the song ends, we PUSH IN to a close-up of BARNUM, silhouetted against the blinding lights and MATCH CUT TO:

5

EXT. WATERFRONT ESTATE - DAY

5

SILENCE. A close-up of YOUNG BARNUM (10) silhouetted against the sun. Someone else is with him, but hard to see. We don't know where we are. Young Barnum speaks gently. *

YOUNG BARNUM
All you have to do is jump.

YOUNG CHARITY (O.C.)
I'm scared.

YOUNG BARNUM
That's what makes it fun! *

WIDER -- Young Barnum and Young Charity (also 10), stand on the limb of a giant old tree that reaches out over the water. She wears a white party dress. He is in scuffed work clothes. It's a 20 foot drop to the water -- no small feat.

YOUNG CHARITY
I shouldn't be doing this. *

YOUNG BARNUM
That also makes it fun! *

YOUNG CHARITY
You always make me do crazy things! *

YOUNG BARNUM
It's like you're flying! For one second,
you feel free! *

She looks down a moment, then pulls back. *

YOUNG CHARITY
I can't do it.

YOUNG BARNUM
Of course you can! You just have to take
that first step...

She half-smiles, still scared. Nods bravely -- let's do it!

YOUNG BARNUM (CONT'D)
Ready? One, two, three...!

They jump. And fall, side-by-side... SPLASH! They surface. She is laughing, delighted. She just became a braver person.

YOUNG CHARITY
Let's do that again! And again, and
again, and again!

(CONTINUED)

He grins -- dazzled by her delight. They swim to the shore and climb steps up onto a lawn -- laughing, high-spirited.

YOUNG BARNUM

I saw a sea nymph underwater!

*

YOUNG CHARITY

You did not!

YOUNG BARNUM

She was wearing a white dress!

She laughs. He drinks in her laughter. Behind them, we SEE grounds of a massive, old-money Connecticut estate.

MR. HALLETT (O.C.)

Charity!

They turn. MR. HALLETT, patrician and stern, steps forward, glaring balefully. Behind him, a grounds-keeper with a rake, PHILO BARNUM (40s), in work clothes, looks on worriedly. Charity quickly bows her head -- becoming docile, obedient.

MR. HALLETT (CONT'D)

Is this how we have taught you to behave?
Like a person of no breeding? Come here!
Look at your dress! How many times have
I told you not to trouble the help!

*

*

*

She walks to her father, not looking at Young Barnum.

PHILO

It's the boy's fault, sir. I'm sorry.
He's a bit touched in the head, you know.
Come on, son. There's work to do.

*

*

MR. HALLETT

You've done quite enough today, Mr.
Barnum. There's that for your troubles.

He hands over a nickel. Philo bows obsequiously.

PHILO

Thank you, sir. Apologies again.

*

Mr. Hallett turns, walks back to his estate. Charity follows dutifully. Barnum watches. Then she turns, and, behind her father's back, smiles at him. Young Barnum is thunderstruck. This smile, a beacon of joy, will become his North Star. Philo -- seeing his son's love-struck gaze -- swats his head.

*

PHILO (CONT'D)

Are you crazy? Let's get home.

*

6 INT. BARNUM HOUSE - KITCHEN - BETHEL - DAY

6

Nothing quaint here, the austere room reflects a hardscrabble Yankee life. The family sits at the table as Barnum's four younger SIBLINGS (ages 3 to 7) are served thin soup by their mother IRENE. Barnum is telling them stories, and they are giggling and enthralled. Philo listens in impatient silence.

YOUNG BARNUM

...And when I get to India, I shall ride an elephant! And capture a tiger!

IRENE

And what will you do with a tiger?

YOUNG BARNUM

I'll give my tiger as a gift to the Raj. And everyone will want to come see it! And the Raj will become my best friend, and he will offer me half his kingdom...

*
*

PHILO BARNUM

Phineas.

YOUNG BARNUM

...And I shall say, "No, thank you, sir!"

Philo SLAMS his hand on the table. Everyone jumps. Silence.

PHILO BARNUM

As of Monday, you'll join me on the farm.

IRENE

What about his schooling?

PHILO BARNUM

A waste of time. His place is in the fields.

YOUNG BARNUM

But father...!

Philo silences him with a sharp look. It hurts to say:

PHILO BARNUM

You can dream all you want, son. It won't put food on the table.

Barnum stares. He gets up, leaves the table, and exits.

7 OMITTED

7

8

EXT. BEACH - SUNSET

8

Young Barnum sits on a beach -- his father's words echoing in his head. He looks up to see young Charity approaching.

YOUNG BARNUM
How did you get out?

YOUNG CHARITY
I climbed out the window once father got into his Port.

She sits down next to him. She is downcast as well.

YOUNG BARNUM
Were you scolded?

YOUNG CHARITY
Were you?

They share a look -- they both were. They turn to the sunset, sad and pensive. Then Barnum picks up a piece of driftwood.

YOUNG BARNUM
Do you know what this is?

She can't help but smile, knowing that a story is coming.

YOUNG BARNUM (CONT'D)
Look carefully. You see?
(he turns it in his hand)
It's the fossil of a Mermaid from
Atlantis.

She looks. Amazingly, the driftwood has a mermaid-like shape.

YOUNG BARNUM (CONT'D)
It's a priceless treasure.

He gives it to her. She smiles, but is suddenly teary-eyed.

YOUNG CHARITY
I'm going to miss you.

He turns to her -- what does that mean? She turns to him.

YOUNG CHARITY (CONT'D)
Father is sending me to finishing school.

YOUNG BARNUM
When will I see you again?

She shakes her head -- never. He is caught off guard.

(CONTINUED)

8 CONTINUED:

8

YOUNG CHARITY

I don't know what my future will be.
Father says I am to be a lady, but...
It's all so dull when you're not there.

*
*

He looks at her. He has one chance to not lose her forever.

YOUNG BARNUM

I can see my future. And yours too.

*

YOUNG CHARITY

No, you can't.

YOUNG BARNUM

I can. I'll show you...

MUSIC starts under, a simple piano theme, both sweet and sad.

9 EXT. MANSION - NIGHT

9

Barnum leads Charity up the front walk of a huge neoclassical mansion that has fallen into disrepair.

*

YOUNG BARNUM

It's okay. No one lives here anymore.

10 INT. MANSION - NIGHT

10

It's dark, lit only by the moon. Barnum leads Charity through the rooms. As he sings about a world he envisions, we see trophy animals, oriental antiques, and curiosities.

YOUNG BARNUM

I CLOSE MY EYES
AND I CAN SEE
A WORLD THAT'S WAITING UP FOR ME THAT
I'LL CALL MY OWN

Barnum lights a match, suddenly illuminating a stone LION. Charity gasps, then smiles at him with relief. Barnum smiles back -- with the joy of showing someone the unexpected.

He lights a CANDLE. The SHADOW of the lion comes to life, roaring. Around the room, SHADOWS flicker with GLIMPSES of tumblers, acrobats, trapeze artists, elephants, and clowns.

YOUNG BARNUM (CONT'D)

THROUGH THE DARK
THROUGH THE DOOR
THROUGH WHERE NO ONE'S BEEN BEFORE BUT IT
FEELS LIKE HOME

And then, as if Barnum has willed it to happen --

(CONTINUED)

10

CONTINUED:

10

THE ROOM IS SUDDENLY LIT BY HUNDREDS OF CANDLES - In Barnum's imagination the SHADOWS UNITE to show us the vision of what the three-ring circus will become.

YOUNG BARNUM (CONT'D)
THEY CAN SAY, THEY CAN SAY
IT ALL SOUNDS CRAZY
THEY CAN SAY, THEY CAN SAY
I'VE LOST MY MIND

Charity is transported. They move through the menagerie.

YOUNG BARNUM (CONT'D)
I DON'T CARE, I DON'T CARE
SO CALL ME CRAZY
I WILL LIVE IN A WORLD THAT I DESIGN

They gaze at each other, Charity leaning in for a kiss. Barnum pulls back. He's bold, but not yet that bold.

11 EXT. BARNUM HOUSE - KITCHEN - BETHEL - NIGHT 11 *

Barnum, 15 now, sits alone, writing a letter, with a single lantern on the table. His face is dirty, his clothes rags. *

YOUNG BARNUM (V.O.)
'CAUSE EV'RY NIGHT I LIE IN BED
THE BRIGHTEST COLORS FILL MY HEAD *

11A INT. FINISHING SCHOOL - DORMITORY - NIGHT 11A *

Charity, 14 and beautiful, sits at a moonlit window sill and opens the letter. She pulls out a pop-up origami: two faces in profile; a boy and a girl. As she unfolds it, the faces come together, as if kissing. She smiles to herself, charmed. *

YOUNG BARNUM (V.O.)
A MILLION DREAMS ARE KEEPIN' ME AWAKE *

12 EXT. CHURCH CEMETERY - BETHEL - DAY 12

Philo Barnum's funeral in a run-down cemetery. Just the PRIEST and Barnum's Mother and four Young Siblings. Barnum gazes at the family that's dependent on him now -- wishing there were some way to take their misery away: *

YOUNG BARNUM (V.O.)
I THINK OF WHAT THE WORLD COULD BE
A VISION OF THE ONE I SEE

Behind him, a figure approaches. He turns. It's Charity, out of place in this humble setting. She meets his eyes, steps up beside Barnum, discreetly holds his hand. *

(CONTINUED)

12 CONTINUED: 12

YOUNG BARNUM (V.O.)
A MILLION DREAMS IS ALL IT'S GONNA TAKE
A MILLION DREAMS FOR THE WORLD I'M GONNA MAKE *

13-14 OMITTED 13-14

15 INT./EXT. HALLET'S HOUSE - BETHEL, CONNECTICUT - DAY 15

MUSIC continues under. Barnum strides up the front walk of the Hallet's grand house -- scared but determined. He's an adult now, a younger version of the man we first met.

As he steps onto the porch, the door is pulled open. Mr Hallet stands in the doorway, scowling, blocking his way. Barnum takes off his hat -- humbly dressed, but respectful.

BARNUM
Mr. Hallet, I know how I look to you, but you have my word, I will take care of your daughter. And one day, I'll buy her a house like this one --

MR. HALLETT
With what?! You have no education, no prospects... No common sense! *

Barnum is hurt but not surprised. He sees something over Hallet's shoulder. Mr. Hallet turns to look. Charity, 18, carries a suitcase down the grand staircase to the foyer.

MR. HALLETT (CONT'D)
Charity! If you walk out that door now, I am cutting you off from everything. *

Charity summons up her strength... And walks past him. She pauses to kiss her distraught mother on the cheek. *

CHARITY
Goodbye, mother. *

She steps onto the porch, smiles up at Barnum. He takes her suitcase. Charity slips her arm thru his, and they run off.

16 INT. RAILROAD TUNNEL - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS) 16

Barnum, carrying Charity's suitcase, leads her through a dark railroad tunnel. MUSIC continues under.

CHARITY
Where are you taking me?

BARNUM
Just a little further.

He comes to a stop in the middle of the tunnel.

BARNUM (CONT'D)

Now. What do you see?

CHARITY

Darkness.

BARNUM

I see the future. OUR future.

CHARITY

And what does our future hold, Mr. Barnum?

He leans in and kisses her.

BARNUM

Magic.

And just then the TRAIN arrives above them, light and steam filling the tunnel with wonder.

CHARITY

HOWEVER BIG
HOWEVER SMALL
LET ME BE PART OF THEM ALL
SHARE YOUR DREAMS WITH ME
YOU MAY BE RIGHT
YOU MAY BE WRONG
BUT SAY THAT YOU'LL BRING ME ALONG TO THE
WORLD YOU SEE

BOTH

TO THE WORLD I CLOSE MY EYES TO SEE I
CLOSE MY EYES TO SEE

BARNUM

'CAUSE EV'RY NIGHT I LIE IN BED
THE BRIGHTEST COLORS FILL MY HEAD

CHARITY

A MILLION DREAMS ARE KEEPIN' ME AWAKE

Barnum and Charity dance together.

BOTH

I THINK OF WHAT THE WORLD COULD BE
A VISION OF THE ONE I SEE
A MILLION DREAMS IS ALL IT'S GONNA TAKE
A MILLION DREAMS FOR THE WORLD WE'RE
GONNA MAKE
FOR THE WORLD WE'RE GONNA MAKE

(CONTINUED)

16

CONTINUED: (2)

16

From the MAGIC and SWEEP of this musical climax we CUT TO:

16A

INT. OFFICE - DAY

16A *

Barnum hunches at a desk, punching buttons into a mechanical Burroughs adding machine, writing the results into a ledger. *

WIDER -- His is one desk in a vast office of Accountants, all crammed in tidy rows. A CACOPHONY of adding machines. It's as far from his youthful dreams as he could have imagined. *

A BOSS, 60s and well-dressed, walks out and waves his arms. Gradually, everyone stops working. The room goes silent. *

BOSS

Gentlemen, I regret to say you're all dismissed. Company's gone bankrupt. *

BARNUM

Bankrupt? What happened?

BOSS

Typhoon. All our trading ships are at the bottom of the South China Seas. Better luck with your next job. If you find one. *

He claps Barnum's shoulder, walks off. Barnum slumps back, gut-punched. He frowns, eyes darting, thinking fiercely. *

Everyone else gets up and begins to filter out of the room. A HUBBUB of MURMURS. Only Barnum remains seated. *

He sees a pencil holder (a metal can dotted with holes) on his desk. Reaches over, dumps the pencils out. Holds it up. *

BARNUM

Would you mind if I take this home? *

BOSS

Take anything you can carry. It's all junk now. *

The Boss departs, leaving Barnum alone. He turns and scans the office, mind racing. He frowns, frowns... And smiles. *

17

INT. BARNUM'S TENEMENT - NIGHT

17

Barnum enters, exhausted from work. He carries the pencil holder, and several large files. It's a cramped tenement. *

Barnum and Charity are in their 30s now. His daughters, CAROLINE, 7, and HELEN, 3, greet him with cries of happiness.

(CONTINUED)

17

CONTINUED:

17

QUICK CUTS -- Barnum assembles a gift from scavenged office equipment. Charity and the Girls watch as he binds a candle to a spike, lights it, and places the pencil holder over the candle, onto the spike. Charity blows out a lantern. *

Suddenly, the room is only lit by a hundred points of light, emitted from holes. Barnum spins the pencil holder, and the points of light spin around the room. The Girls are dazzled. *

BARNUM
Happy birthday, Caroline.

CAROLINE
What is it?

BARNUM
It's a wishing machine. Built by the King of Siam. Stolen by pirates. Lost in a great storm. It's the only one in the whole world. You tell it all your wishes and it holds them safe. *

HELEN
My wish is to marry Santa Claus!

BARNUM
That's a good wish!

CAROLINE
I wish for a pair of ballet slippers, so I can be a ballerina.

Barnum smiles, but he's flat broke. It rips his guts out.

18 OMITTED 18

19 OMITTED 19 *

20 EXT. BARNUM'S TENEMENT APARTMENT - ROOFTOP - NIGHT (LATER) 20

MUSIC continues as Barnum sits on the ledge, flipping thru a pile of BILLS, many stamped OVERDUE. Barnum sings, wistful: *

BARNUM
'CAUSE EV'RY NIGHT I LIE IN BED
THE BRIGHTEST COLORS FILL MY HEAD
A MILLION DREAMS ARE KEEPIN' ME AWAKE *

Charity steps out to find Barnum gazing out at the lighted skyline. She kisses the back of his head, sits beside him. Barnum shakes his head and looks at the bills in his hand. *

BARNUM (CONT'D)

Ballet slippers. Can't even afford that.
I work all day to make rich men richer.
And every time I have an idea to do
something on my own, I lose our savings.

CHARITY

At least there wasn't much to lose...

She smiles, but he can't return it. She rubs his back.

CHARITY (CONT'D)

You see things other people don't.
That's what I love about you.

BARNUM

(shakes his head)

When I think of the life you gave up...

CHARITY

I didn't give it up. You saved me from
it.

Finally, he looks at her -- quietly admitting the hard truth.

BARNUM

This isn't the life I promised you. I
know that.

CHARITY

I have everything I want right here with
you.

BARNUM

What about that house we were going to
fill -- with magic and wonder?

CHARITY

What do you call those two girls
downstairs?

He looks at his wife, finally smiles. She's gotten through.
Charity leans against his shoulder. Delicately, he ventures:

BARNUM

Charity... I've had another idea.

She turns -- intrigued and worried. Now what?

CLOSE ON: A window sign that reads: LOTTERY TICKETS INSIDE!

21 CONTINUED:

21

There is a line out the door, waiting to buy. Barnum, as a barker, seems to really believe his own pitch -- there's an urgent sense of trying to save people from a humdrum life. Caroline stands nearby, handing out lottery fliers.

BARNUM

Come one, come all! Step right up! This is a chance to live your dreams! Everyone has an equal shot! All you need is a ticket! Someone's going to go home rich! Why not you?! Why not buy a ticket?! Why not buy ten?!

Suddenly, a police WHISTLE. A SQUADRON of COPS swarms into the store. CUSTOMERS in line react with catcalls and BOOS.

COP

Sorry, Barnum. The State of New York will never condone lottery gambling.

BARNUM

A lottery isn't gambling! It's hundreds of people coming together with a dream --

COP

Yeah -- while you skim twenty percent!

BARNUM

Twenty? I skim thirty at least!

Another COP pulls down the Lottery sign and rips it up.

BARNUM (CONT'D)

Oh, come on. I *just* paid two dollars for that!

As the COPS dismantle Barnum's makeshift lottery stand, he turns to see Caroline watching him. Barnum smiles bravely.

22 OMITTED

22

23 EXT. LOWER EAST SIDE STREET - MANHATTAN - DAY (LATER)

23

A crowded shopping street. Barnum walks in the crowd, deeply frustrated by this setback. Caroline tags along with him. He stops on the curb, as a HORSE-DRAWN WAGON drives past.

CAROLINE

Why'd they close it down?

BARNUM

Because they can't *see*! And if they can't see it, it doesn't exist!

(CONTINUED)

23

CONTINUED:

23

CAROLINE

I don't understand. *

As they cross the street, Barnum stops, searching for the right words -- beyond frustrated. Up the street, a MAN steps into the path of the HORSE-DRAWN WAGON. Its DRIVER yanks the horse's reins, causing the wagon to JACKKNIFE. Barnum turns.

Suddenly: SEVERAL HUNDRED BRIGHTLY-COLORED BALLS...

...spill out onto the street, bouncing and rolling past them in every direction. It's a wondrous moment. They're right in the center of it. All other activity stops as CHILDREN, and ADULTS, gather up the balls, tossing them back and forth.

Barnum watches as the ashen street is transformed into a festive tempest of color and joy. Barnum leans in, pointing.

BARNUM *

Look! *

CAROLINE *

They're dancing...! *

24

EXT. STREET - DAY

24 *

PEDESTRIANS -- Avoiding the balls, trying to keep their balance -- seem to mimic a choreographed circus routine. A brief explosion of joy, color, movement, mirth, excitement... *

25

EXT. LOWER EAST SIDE STREET - MANHATTAN - DAY

25

Barnum is transfixed by his sudden glimpse. To Caroline:

BARNUM

You see? When the unexpected happens, everything is possible! The rules go out the window! Life becomes joyous!

Caroline nods, sharing his excitement. Then, gradually, street activity returns to normal. Barnum shakes his head.

BARNUM (CONT'D)

If I could capture that...!

And as he watches wistfully, a last ball rolls across the street and comes to a stop in front of a derelict three-story building with a FORECLOSURE NOTICE on the front door.

Barnum turns his eyes up at the building. An idea forming.

26

OMITTED

26 *

27 INT. BANK - MANHATTAN - DAY 27

Barnum sits opposite a BANK MANAGER.

BANKER

Mr. Barnum, this venture you propose is risky, if not downright bizarre. The bank is going to need substantial collateral --

Barnum puts a full set of legal documents on the desk.

BARNUM

I own the deed and title to every trading vessel in this flotilla.

*
*

The Banker looks at the documents, then at Barnum, impressed.

BANKER

I see. And where are these ships now?

*

BARNUM

(all-too-literally true:)
In the South China Seas.

BANKER

(nods, approving)
Ah. Well, then! What do you plan to call this... scheme of yours?

28 EXT. LOWER EAST SIDE STREET - MANHATTAN - DAY (WEEKS LATER) 28

Barnum shows his family his new building, spruced up with flags and colorful posters. A sign introduces 'BARNUM'S AMERICAN MUSEUM OF CURIOSITIES.' Caroline reads it, puzzled.

CAROLINE

Barnum's American Museum of Curiosities.

HELEN

What kind of museum is it, Daddy?

BARNUM

It's a place to be transported! To let your imagination soar! To see things you never in your life thought you'd see!

CAROLINE

What sort of things?

29 INT. BARNUM'S MUSEUM - DAY 29

THWACK! A GUILLOTINE BLADE comes down, cutting off Marie Antoinette's head. Helen covers her mouth in shock.

(CONTINUED)

HELEN

What is it?

Barnum energetically leads them through a room filled with famous figures. Many have been slightly damaged in transit.

BARNUM

A wax figure! They're all the rage in Europe now! Look -- there's Napoleon!
(waves in his face)

Hello! And Marie Antoinette, with the sore throat! You can meet them all! The most famous people who every lived! Everyone knows they're not real, but it doesn't matter! People want to believe, so they do!

*
*
*
*

CHARITY

Speaking of which... I brought this.

*
*

Charity holds out something wrapped in a blanket. Barnum unwraps it. It is the driftwood mermaid from the beach. Barnum is touched. He looks up at Charity. She smiles.

*
*
*

CAROLINE

What's that?

*

Barnum gently sets piece of wood into a display case.

*

BARNUM

It's a mermaid. Straight from Fiji!

*

HELEN

It looks like driftwood.

BARNUM

Only to the most literal-minded!

He looks to Charity for support. Charity, however, looks around skeptically -- the room filled with a rather sorry collection: a pygmy skeleton, half-melted wax figures, etc.

*
*

CHARITY

I'm not sure people are going to pay to see a handful of wax dummies --

BARNUM

Exactly! Which is why I also hired... Acrobats!

*

He whistles and a FAMILY of elderly Romanians stumble on to do a routine. Barnum beams as the girls look on in wonder. Charity leaves, needing a moment. Barnum watches her go.

*

30

INT. BARNUM'S MUSEUM - A FEW MINUTES LATER

30

Barnum comes into the lobby to find Charity, fretting.

BARNUM
I know how it looks.

CHARITY
Good. If you didn't, I'd be worried.

BARNUM
This is just the beginning...

CHARITY
How much did we put into this again?

BARNUM
It's complicated.

CHARITY
-- how much?

BARNUM
(hesitates)
Everything.

Charity takes a moment to absorb that.

CHARITY
You're either a genius or a madman.

BARNUM
Or both.

Off Barnum's grin, we

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BARNUM'S MUSEUM - A FEW WEEKS LATER

A small MUSICAL BAND rehearsing in the corner. Not very well. Barnum moves through the place trailed by Helen and Caroline, in their best dresses, as he makes sure everything is ready.

They approach ANNE WHEELER, the acrobat from the opening, doing a one-handed handstand on the raised palm of her brother W.D. (20, African-American, with a boxer's build). The girls are transfixed. Anne sees them, and dismounts.

ANNE
Sorry, Mr. Barnum. Opening day jitters.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BARNUM

Please, call me P.T. Girls, this is Anne Wheeler, and her brother, W.D. The greatest acrobats in the entire world!

Anne rolls her eyes at the hyperbole and smiles at the girls.

ANNE

Maybe Brooklyn.

BARNUM

Okay, everyone, take your places!

31 INT. BARNUM'S MUSEUM - LOBBY - A BIT LATER 31

Barnum marches across the festively decorated lobby, complete with a "GRAND OPENING" banner. He is trailed by Caroline and Helen. A CASHIER, MR. O'MALLEY, gets ready to sell tickets. The Band strikes up their best festive Opening Day music.

BARNUM

All right, now! Is everyone ready?

CHARITY, CAROLINE AND HELEN

Ready!

He reaches the front doors, takes one last look around, then throws them open grandly, his face filled with expectation... No one is there. Outside, on the street, ordinary life goes on, ignoring them. Everyone deflates a bit. Except Barnum.

HELEN

No one cares...!

BARNUM

No, they *do* care. They just don't know it yet.

He picks up an old-fashioned megaphone, puts on his hat.

32-34 OMITTED 32-34

35 EXT. BARNUM'S MUSEUM - DAY (CONTINUOUS) 35

Barnum comes out, sees a parade of grey PEOPLE, trudging through their daily grind. He starts hawking the PASSERSBY:

BARNUM

That's right, ladies and gentlemen! Step this way! You won't believe your eyes! Through these doors are more mysteries and beguilements than have ever been assembled under one roof!

(CONTINUED)

35

CONTINUED:

35

No one pays attention. He tries again.

BARNUM (CONT'D)

(into megaphone)

Right this way, folks! Be the first to see the wonders of the Barnum Museum! Come one, come all! See things you've never seen! Things you never imagined!

He stops. Dozens of people walk past, ignoring the museum. Then he notices Caroline and Helen, by the front door, watching him fail to draw a crowd. He turns, mind spinning, desperate not to fail again. He turns and takes stock of his assets -- Anne, W.D., Charity, Caroline, Helen...

...And O'Malley, the pudgy, earnest, fresh-off-the-boat Irish ticket seller. Barnum marches over to the ticket booth.

BARNUM (CONT'D)

Mr. O'Malley. What are you doing?

O'MALLEY

At the moment, sir? Very little.

BARNUM

Exactly. Come out. I need your help.

O'Malley exits the ticket booth, uncomfortable with Barnum's attention. Barnum throws his arms over O'Malley's shoulder.

BARNUM (CONT'D)

Here's what we're going to do -- I'm out here trying to get as many people as possible to buy tickets to my museum.

O'MALLEY

And you want me to help.

BARNUM

No. I want you to tell everyone they *shouldn't* buy tickets.

O'Malley looks baffled. Barnum leads him into the museum.

BARNUM (CONT'D)

Let me explain...

36-37 OMITTED

36-37

38 EXT. BARNUM'S MUSEUM - DAY

38

Barnum and O'Malley step onto the street, nervous. People pass by without a second look. Barnum speaks sotto.

(CONTINUED)

BARNUM

Okay. Let's sell this. If things go wobbly, make a quick exit. Ready?

O'Malley nods. Barnum lifts his megaphone, in barker mode.

BARNUM (CONT'D)

Come one, come all! See the wonders of the Barnum Museum! Step right up, folks!

O'Malley takes a breath. Suddenly, he is an unhappy customer.

O'MALLEY

Sir, I want my money back! You should be ashamed of this museum! Ashamed, I say!

*
*

A few people are drawn by the ruckus. Barnum "confronts" him.

BARNUM

Now see here, sir! You bought your ticket and saw the sights...!

O'Malley, getting into it, goes big -- almost hysterical.

O'MALLEY

Oh, if only I hadn't! If only I could unsee what my eyes have glimpsed! It's unfit for decent people, what you have in there! Unfit for decent society! Look what you've done to my wife and children!

*
*

Charity approaches, looking stricken, clutching Caroline and Helen to her sides. The girls cover their faces and "weep".

CHARITY

(Irish accent)

Y' should be ashamed of yourself, Barnum! It's not fit for children and ladies!

BARNUM

Maybe not for ladies, but what about you?

O'MALLEY

You can't talk to my wife that way!

He grabs Barnum. They tussle. Women SCREAM. A big crowd forms. Suddenly, a police WHISTLE. A Cop pushes his way through the crowd. (The same one who broke up the lottery.)

COP

Break it up! Break it up! What's going on here? Who started this?

(CONTINUED)

He pulls them apart. O'Malley turns and addresses the crowd.

O'MALLEY

This museum is unfit for decent society!
No one should buy a ticket! No one!

BARNUM

You can't tell these good people what to
do! They can think for themselves! Make
up their own minds! Isn't that right,
folks?

The CROWD roars in agreement. Barnum's got them with him.

CROWD

Yes! Yeah! We can think for ourselves!

O'MALLEY

You are wicked, sir! Wicked!

Barnum attacks him. They wrestle. The Cop pulls them apart.

COP

That's it, Barnum! You're under arrest!

Barnum, scared, breaks away and sprints back into the museum.
The Cop puts a hand on his holster, and runs after him.

COP (CONT'D)

Stop right there! Stop or I'll shoot!

Barnum runs into the museum. The Cop follows. The crowd,
watching it all agog, erupts in a HUBBUB.

INT. BARNUM'S MUSEUM - CONTINUOUS

Barnum runs in, stops. The Cop comes in and joins him. It's
immediately clear that they are, in fact, confederates.

BARNUM

Here we go! Stand back!

He strikes a match, lights a small string of firecrackers.
Barnum tosses them on the floor, the first one POPS loudly.

EXT. BARNUM'S MUSEUM - DAY

From inside, a muffled POP. Another POP, POP, POP, and a
SCREAM. The crowd surges forward. Everyone is now
completely desperate to see what's inside the museum. W.D. *
leaps into action, waving the crowd toward the box office.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

W.D.

This way, folks! See what's inside! Have your money ready! Children half-price!

O'Malley, Charity, Caroline and Helen stop acting and watch, amazed, as the crowd surges in, all desperate to buy tickets.

39

INT. BARNUM'S MUSEUM - NIGHT

39

W.D. is seeing the last CUSTOMERS out the door.

W.D.

Thanks for coming, folks! Tell your friends! And come back soon!

He closes the door. Charity opens the door to a back office. Barnum and the COP are kicked back, playing cards.

BARNUM

Are they gone?

CHARITY

(incredulous)

You. Are. Shameless!

*
*

Barnum grins, peels off a few bills, slips them to the Cop.

BARNUM

Thanks for coming in, Tommy. Sorry about the short notice.

COP

Any time, P.T. I always wanted to be an actor. Nice workin' with ya, Charity!

He tips his hat to her and exits. Barnum turns proudly.

BARNUM

So... How many tickets did we sell?

CAROLINE

We don't know!

HELEN

We ran out of tickets!

Barnum couldn't be happier. Charity looks at him -- both impressed and concerned. Barnum sees her look, and grins.

*
*

BARNUM

They may not get exactly what they paid for, but they're getting their money's worth.

40 OMITTED 40

41 INT. BARNUM'S MUSEUM - NIGHT (SEVERAL WEEKS LATER) 41

Barnum, upbeat, sees out the last visitors of the day.

BARNUM

Have a good night! Come see us again!

The visitors file out, looking only moderately impressed. Barnum shuts the doors behind them and allows his false cheer to fade. He heads back to where W.D. is counting the take:

W.D.

Less than yesterday.

Barnum nods. He plops into a chair -- edgy, his mind racing. *

BARNUM

The museum's not working! There are things to see, but it doesn't add up! People visit but they don't come back! *

W.D.

Why would they come back? *

BARNUM

(leaping up)

Exactly! I want them *happy* when they walk out of here! Transformed! Open to possibilities again! All I've got now is a crummy museum! *

He sits again -- stewing, seething. W.D. cautiously avers: *

W.D.

Well... Maybe you could show 'em something while they're here. That's the business you're in, right? Showing? *

Barnum freezes -- his mind going a million miles an hour. He snaps his fingers, jumps up, and paces like a caged tiger.

BARNUM

You're right! I don't need a stuffed lion, I need a real lion! Not a wax soldier, a real soldier! It needs to be an experience -- an *event!* -- with music and magic and death-defying feats! Something you'll want to see over and over! Not a museum but a show! Not just any show -- The greatest show anyone has ever seen! The greatest show on earth! *

42

INT. BARNUM'S TENEMENT APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

42

Barnum tucks Caroline in next to Helen, who's already asleep.

CAROLINE

Will there be dancing girls?

BARNUM

Every show has dancing girls.

CAROLINE

What about acrobats?

BARNUM

Every show has acrobats. Or trained animals. Or daredevils...

CAROLINE

Why don't you have them all? A show with everything?

BARNUM

That's not a bad idea. A show with everything! But still... It's just more of the same, isn't it?

CAROLINE

But... What else is there?

BARNUM

I don't know! I want performers you can't see anywhere else. Someone who couldn't possibly exist but there they are, right in front of you! A man with two heads! Or a giant, ten feet tall! Like you're walking into a dream! And when you walk out, you're glad you were alive to see it!

*
*
*
*
*

CAROLINE

What about Tom Thumb?

BARNUM

Tom Thumb?

CAROLINE

He's a boy we read about in school. They say he's the size of your thumb.

BARNUM

(holds up his thumb)

Tom Thumb. I like that. You should be doing my job.

(CONTINUED)

42 CONTINUED: 42

He leans down and kisses Caroline. She smiles.

43 EXT. SMALL WOODEN CABIN - PORCH - DAY 43

Barnum knocks on the door. A CRONE-LIKE WOMAN opens it and peers out, not saying a word.

BARNUM

Good day, Madam. I am looking for a Mr. Charles Sherwood Stratton.

WOMAN

Never heard of him.

She starts to close the door. He stops her.

BARNUM

That's a funny thing to say about your own son.

Her look confirms he's right.

BARNUM (CONT'D)

Please, ma'am. You have no idea what I've gone through to find him. I have a proposal that could change his life.

The woman, MRS. STRATTON, hesitates, not sure she understands what he said. Finally, she pulls the door open.

44 INT. SMALL WOODEN CABIN - DAY 44

Barnum sits in the main room, waiting. After a moment, CHARLES STRATTON enters the room. 25 inches, 20 pounds. He is a boy, but the same chromosomal glitch that affects his growth also makes him look like a much older man. His mother turns away, clearly ashamed. But Barnum is delighted.

BARNUM

Hello. My name is Mr. P.T. Barnum.

Barnum stands, realizes he's way too tall, sits back down. Stratton stares at the floor, guarded, defensive, tense.

STRATTON

What you want with me?

BARNUM

I'm putting together a show. And I want you to star in it.

A snort from Mrs. Stratton. Stratton looks up accusingly. A lifetime of alienation and ridicule has made him scrappy.

(CONTINUED)

STRATTON

Why? So people can laugh at me?

BARNUM

They're laughing anyway, kid. You might as well get paid.

They are shocked. No one's ever spoken so bluntly to them.

MRS. STRATTON

Really, Mr. Barnum. You should be ashamed.

BARNUM

I was, Mrs. Stratton. For a long time. I was poor, and I was laughed at. I've been called a fool many times...

STRATTON

Oh, please, you're breaking my heart!

Barnum turns, facing down the tiny but glowering Stratton.

BARNUM

...But I don't care about that anymore.

STRATTON

Good! Neither do I!

BARNUM

Because we all have just one life, Mr. Stratton. One can wallow in self-pity...

STRATTON

Thank you, I will! Goodbye, Mr. Barnum!

Stratton exits, slamming the bedroom door. Barnum, it seems, has failed. The mother gently ushers Barnum to the door.

MRS. STRATTON

Leave us alone. Please.

At the door, Barnum hesitates, noticing some TOY HORSES and SOLDIERS on the window sill. He picks one up, turns. He speaks out loud, conjuring a vision, selling a dream...

BARNUM

Here is what I see, Mr. Stratton -- a soldier... Not just a soldier, a general! On horseback! Riding across the stage! With a sword, a gun! The most beautiful uniform ever made!

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

44

CONTINUED: (2)

44

BARNUM (CONT'D)

People will come from all over the world to see him ride and shoot and be a commander of men! I am creating a great spectacular, Mr. Stratton, and I want you to be my star!

*
*

Silence. The back door CREAKS open. Stratton peeks in. Barnum can see him wavering. With fervent conviction:

BARNUM (CONT'D)

No one ever made a difference in this world by being like everyone else. You can come with me now, and live your dreams. Or stay here with your self-pity, and your mother.

Beat. The door opens fully. Stratton stands, unguarded and vulnerable -- it's like Barnum has looked into his soul.

BARNUM (CONT'D)

What do you say, Tom?

STRATTON

My name's Charles.

BARNUM

(grins)

Not anymore.

45-46 OMITTED

45-46

47 EXT. BARNUM'S MUSEUM - NIGHT

47

CLOSE ON -- A giant poster on the marquee features a drawing of Stratton, in a general's uniform, riding a gigantic horse: GRAND OPENING! TOM THUMB - THE SMALLEST GENERAL IN HISTORY!

CRANE DOWN to find a small CROWD, a few hundred customers, filing down the sidewalk into the museum entrance.

48 EXT. BACK ALLEY - NIGHT

48

In a nearby back alley, Barnum stands with Tom, helping him struggle into the jacket of a tiny military uniform.

TOM THUMB

This thing is itchy! Didn't you say my uniform would be nice?

BARNUM

For the audience! Not for you! Are these enough medals for a general?

(CONTINUED)

TOM THUMB

How should I know? I'm eleven.

BARNUM

And that's the last time you ever say that. Because today you turn fifty-two. Let me hear you say it. How old are you?

TOM THUMB

I'm fifty-two.

BARNUM

Right. Now do you need to use the bathroom before you go on?

Tom shakes his head. Off screen, the CROWD ROARS at an pre-opening act. Tom turns, nervous, starting to get cold feet.

TOM THUMB

This was a mistake. I can't do this!

BARNUM

Sure you can! You have to!

TOM THUMB

(freaking out)

No, this is crazy! They'll know I'm faking! I'm not a General! Look at me!

Barnum crouches down, grabs him, looks him in the eye.

BARNUM

Listen to me... Listen! It doesn't matter where you're *from* anymore! What matters is where you're *going*! You can *choose* who you want to be! All of us can, don't you see?!!! When you ride out there on that horse, you will be a solider! A General! And you're going to be the tallest and bravest man in the room!

(beat)

Be proud of who you are, Charles.

TOM THUMB

Tom.

BARNUM

(hesitates; points at Tom)

Exactly!

(they share a grin)

Come on, kid. What do you say we give these people a show?

*
*
*

(CONTINUED)

48 CONTINUED: (2)

48

Tom looks at Barnum -- scared, but willing to try. They're jumping off this cliff together.

49 INT. BARNUM'S MUSEUM - NIGHT

49

The audience is seated on benches now, right in the middle of the main floor attractions. Anne, W.D., and other PERFORMERS do a few acrobatic tricks. Barnum hasn't worked it out yet, but we can see the idea of the circus starting to take shape.

BARNUM

Ladies and gentlemen, cads and crooks!
For the first time ever in New York -- I
give you untamed creatures of the wild!
The mayor has kindly sent his finest men
to protect us, should one of you do
something to upset the animals --

*
*

He tips his hat to a few POLICEMAN. Then he nods to W.D., who stands in the back with a TRAINER and two BEARS.

W.D.

Go!

The trainer enters the performing circle, coaxing the bears, who walk on hind legs, to YELLS OF DELIGHT from the crowd. Helen sits on Caroline's lap, laughing and applauding loudly. Barnum nods to W.D., who slides open a FREIGHT DOOR.

*

BARNUM

And now, for our final attraction --
They say good things come in small
packages. Ladies and gentlemen -- the
bravest, fiercest, wildest, most
dangerous soldier who ever lived--...!

*
*
*
*
*

The expectant crowd turns. There are GASPS as General Tom Thumb rides out on a LITTLE PONY.

BARNUM (CONT'D)

-- please make way for General Tom Thumb!

The crowd roars as Tom Thumb rides his pony across the full length of the museum, firing his gun. He seems transformed, cocky and mischievous, and full of joy. As is the audience. Barnum, thrilled, takes a seat next to Charity. She smiles, taking in the laughter and delight around them.

*
*
*

CHARITY

I don't know what you were trying to do,
but I'm pretty sure you're doing it.

*

Barnum smiles at his wife, elated by the energy in the room.

50

INT. BARNUM ARMS - NIGHT

50 *

An after-show party. Tom Thumb entertains the others by drinking from a bottle while balancing on W.D.'s out-stretched hand. Barnum plucks the bottle from his hand, replaces it with a glass of milk, to much LAUGHTER.

*
*
*

Barnum, in high spirits, downs a drink at the bar with Anne, then turns to see SAM ROTH, a grumpy newspaperman who watches the antics with opprobrium. Roth lifts his glass to Barnum.

*

ROTH

Impressive, Mr. Barnum.

BARNUM

Thank you, sir. And you are?

ROTH

Sam Roth.

BARNUM

From the Tribune! You got my letter!

(claps his shoulder)

It's an honor, sir! How much do I have to pay you to write a good review for us?

*
*

ROTH

I don't know if you have that much money.

BARNUM

You might be surprised, Mr. Roth.

ROTH

Yes, well... No one ever went broke underestimating the intelligence of the American public. Your show is proof of that. Though even the public has it's limits, I hope...

*
*
*

Barnum is thrown by this.

BARNUM

I think perhaps you missed the point --

*

ROTH

-- Really? Was there a subtext to the prancing dwarf that went over my head?

BARNUM

You're over-thinking it. We aim to show people the wonders of the world...

(CONTINUED)

50

CONTINUED:

50

ROTH

Wonders? Is that what you call freaks being paraded for entertainment?

BARNUM

Sir, the man you are calling a freak is my colleague, and my friend...

*
*

ROTH

Oh, is that how you treat your friends? Putting them on display for everyone to gawk at? I hate to waste ink on this atrocity, but I have a duty to warn the public. And when I'm finished, I hope you will be finished as well.

*
*

Roth finishes his drink and departs, leaving Barnum worried.

51

INT. BARNUM'S MUSEUM - DAY

51

Morning. Barnum, Charity, W.D., Anne, and Tom sit at a table by the stage, as Charity finishes reading Roth's review.

*
*

CHARITY

"...insulting, degrading, and perhaps just shy of criminal, P.T. Barnum's show is the singularly most unpleasant evening I have spent in years, calling to mind the most primitive aspects of the Roman Circuses of yore."

She stops -- it's too painful to go on. Uneasy silence. Barnum takes the review and scans it, thinking fiercely.

CHARITY (CONT'D)

Phin... I'm so sorry.

Barnum looks up -- eyes shining, seemingly elated.

BARNUM

It's fantastic.

He leaps up, rips out the review and hands it to W.D.

BARNUM (CONT'D)

Go to the Tribune and buy a half-page ad. Tell them to reprint the entire review, word for word.

Everyone is stunned. This is borderline insanity.

CHARITY

He called you The Prince Of Humbug.

(CONTINUED)

BARNUM

Humbug is merely the time-honored use of hyperbole to create excitement and joy.

CHARITY

Humbug is a lie, dear.

BARNUM

What's important is: we made page one.

(to W.D.)

And tell them I'll give half-price tickets to anyone who brings in a review.

(off their looks)

When other papers see people rushing to buy the Tribune, they'll review us too.

W.D. starts for the door, then turns back to Barnum.

W.D.

You sure, Mr. B.? The whole city will read this by dinner time.

Barnum, hesitates, doubting his bravado for a second. Charity, clocking it, comes to his rescue. *

CHARITY

Of course he's sure. He was born sure.

W.D. nods and leaves. Barnum smiles at his wife.

EXT. BARNUM'S MUSEUM - DAY (WEEKS LATER) *

The line outside the museum is now three times longer. We are FOLLOWING a WOMAN who pushes her way thru the crowd, her face UNSEEN by us. People react as she passes. As she approaches W.D. in the box office window, he looks up. His jaw drops. *

ANGLE -- LETTIE LUTZ, mid-30s, has dark hair, strong pleasant features, and a FULL BEARD. She smiles. *

LETTIE

I'd like to see Mr. Barnum.

INT. BARNUM'S MUSEUM, BACKSTAGE - DAY

W.D. leads Lettie in. Barnum is busy helping O'CLANCY, the Irish Giant, onto stilts. Humbug -- behind the scenes. *

Nearby, Tom Thumbs sits, strumming on a ukulele, while an enormously fat man, the LORD OF LEEDS, plucks out a simple tune on a banjo (the melody to COME ALIVE). Opposite Barnum, TWO MEN sit on a sofa, their backs to us. In the background, acrobats and jugglers casually practice their routines.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

W.D.

Excuse me, P.T., this lady --

She barrels forward.

LETTIE

Lettie Lutz. Nice to meet you. Let me
get to the point, Mr. Barnum. I've never
been one for self-pity or embarrassment.
So when I read in the paper about folks
paying good money to see a short man, a
tall man *and* a fat man, I thought -- Why
should they be the only ones making out?
Heck, I'm as weird as any of 'em.

*
*
*

Barnum stands, clearly charmed.

BARNUM

Weird isn't the word I'd use, Miss Lutz.
More like rare, blessed... Beautiful.

Lettie beams, no one has ever spoken to her like this.

BARNUM (CONT'D)

Allow me to introduce you. O'Clancy, the
Irish Giant. Nine feet tall...!

O'CLANCY

...With two feet of help.

BARNUM

The famous Tom Thumb. Our biggest star,
the Lord of Leeds. And my new friends.
Chang, and Eng. Of Siam.

Smiles and greetings. The seated men stand and turn. Meet
CHANG and ENG, the legendary Siamese twins, 40. Each bows
and extends a courtly hand. Lettie lets out a laugh, takes
both their hands. This place already feels like home.

LETTIE

Oh fellas... I think you got me beat.

MUSIC starts under...

*

POSTER MONTAGE

*

QUICK CUTS -- Posters are rolled up on the side of the Museum
advertising the wondrous attractions inside with Barnum hype:

*
*

-- "TALLEST MAN ALIVE! O'CLANCY, THE IRISH GIANT!"

*

-- "LETTIE LUTZ! AMERICA'S BEARDED WOMAN!"

*

-- "THE LORD OF LEEDS! HEAVIEST MAN ON EARTH!"

*

54 EXT. BARNUM'S MUSEUM - DAY 54

The line is now around the block. W.D. supervises more TICKET TAKERS. A sign: "BY POPULAR DEMAND, SECOND SHOW TONIGHT." *

As CUSTOMERS move quietly through the doors, there's more a sense of drudgery than excitement -- people with hard lives. Barnum walks down the line, eyeing the Customers in line. *

BARNUM
I STUMBLED THROUGH MY DAYS
HAD MY HEAD HUNG LOW
MY SKY A SHADE OF GRAY
WAS TOLD TO HIDE AWAY

55 INT. BARNUM'S MUSEUM - EVENING 55

Barnum walks "backstage," singing as he passes all of the performers preparing to go on; Chang and Eng dressing together, Anne stretching, Lettie combing her beard. He stops by each one -- helping them get ready for the show, trading grins and supportive smiles, keeping everyone happy. *

BARNUM
STAYIN' LOCKED INSIDE
AND MADE TO FEEL ASHAMED
SOMEONE WHO HAD BEEN FORGOTTEN
TOLD IT WAS MY ONLY OPTION

BUT THEN I FLICKED A SWITCH AND
BRIGHTENED UP THAT DARKEST DAY
SUN IS UP, NOW THE COLOR'S BLINDIN'
TAKE A WORLD AND REDEFINE IT
ANYTHING YOU WANT TO BE, IT'S TIME TO LET 'EM SEE

56 INT. BARNUM'S MUSEUM - NIGHT 56

The cavernous first floor has been transformed, dominated by a circle of tiered BLEACHERS surrounding a massive STAGE. Barnum stands alone, singing to the crowd, illuminated by a carbon lamp and candle footlights. *

BARNUM
COME ALIVE
COME ALIVE
GO AND LIGHT YOUR LIGHT
LET IT BURN SO BRIGHT

REACHIN' UP
TO THE SKY
AND IT'S OPEN WIDE
YOU'RE ELECTRIFIED
AND THE WORLD BECOMES A FANTASY
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

BARNUM (CONT'D)
AND YOU'RE MORE THAN YOU COULD EVER BE
'CAUSE YOU'RE DREAMIN' WITH YOUR EYES WIDE OPEN
AND WE KNOW WE CAN'T GO BACK AGAIN
TO THE WORLD THAT WE WERE LIVIN' IN
'CAUSE WE'RE DREAMIN' WITH OUR EYES WIDE OPEN
SO COME ALIVE!

In the wings, Lettie stands in a sequined gown, suddenly unsure of herself. She makes eye contact with Barnum, who offers a warm, reassuring smile. She will be safe here. He gestures to the stage. She smiles, and steps into the light.

Then Barnum encourages a PARADE of ODDITIES to take the stage. Those who were once hidden in the shadows now step into the spotlight, and feel accepted for the first time. *

O'CLANCY
YOU STEP OUTTA THE DARK

LETTIE
CAN'T BELIEVE YOUR EYES
YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT IS REAL

TOM THUMB
NOW THEY'RE SEEIN' WHO YOU ARE

CHANG AND ENG
AND ALL YOU FEARED JUST FADES AWAY
YOU GOT A WHOLE NEW THING TO FEEL

LORD OF LEEDS
NEVER BEEN APPRECIATED
WONDERED WHY YOU'D BEEN CREATED
BUT NOW THEY'RE FLIPPIN', FALLIN', HEAR
'EM CALLIN' OUT YOUR NAME

LETTIE/W.D.
A LITTLE BIT OF LIGHTNIN' STRIKIN'
BOTTLED UP TO KEEP ON SHININ'

BARNUM
YOU CAN TRY, YOU CAN'T DENY
YOU'LL NEVER BE THE SAME

ALL
COME ALIVE
COME ALIVE
GO AND LIGHT YOUR LIGHT
LET IT BURN SO BRIGHT
REACHIN' UP
TO THE SKY
AND IT'S OPEN WIDE
YOU'RE ELECTRIFIED

(CONTINUED)

56

CONTINUED: (2)

56

People gasp as they suddenly see Anne circling in a wide arc above their heads. Children point and laugh as circus performers tumble into each other on the stage. Then a massive LION enters, led by a colorfully dressed LION TAMER. It is a show of astonishments, almost too much to take in.

In the wings, Barnum helps Tom Thumb onto his pony, readying him for his big entrance. Then Barnum turns. Eunice the elephant is there, towering over them. Barnum turns back, looks at Tom thumb. They make eye contact. Uh oh. *

JUMP TO: Eunice the elephant enters the ring, with Tom Thumb riding on top, causing the place to explode. We realize we are watching the birth of the circus as we know it. *

57

OMITTED

57 *

58

INT. BARNUM'S MUSEUM - DAY

58 *

Barnum watches the Oddities lined up to take a bow. Lettie comes and pulls him from the wings out onto the stage. She places a tin CROWN on his head. It reads: "PRINCE OF HUMBUG." Barnum plays to the joke, proudly strutting across the stage. In the audience, Helen shouts out to Charity and Caroline.

HELEN

What's humbug?

CHARITY

They say it's fakery. Trickery. Flim-flam. *

CAROLINE

No! It's magic! *

The whole circus unites behind the smiling, tin-crowned Barnum. It is a joyous, exuberant moment. *

ALL

AND THE WORLD BECOMES A FANTASY *
AND YOU'RE MORE THAN YOU COULD EVER BE *
'CAUSE YOU'RE DREAMIN' WITH YOUR EYES WIDE OPEN *
AND WE KNOW WE CAN'T GO BACK AGAIN *
TO THE WORLD THAT WE WERE LIVIN' IN *
'CAUSE WE'RE DREAMIN' WITH OUR EYES WIDE OPEN *
SO COME ALIVE! *

ODDITIES

COME ONE, COME ALL *
Come IN, COME ON! *

BARNUM

TO ANYONE WHO'S SEARCHING FOR A WAY TO BREAK FREE *

59

EXT. BARNUM'S MUSEUM - NIGHT

59 *

People spill out in the street after a show -- elated, abuzz with delight, and transformed by the experience. They are literally grabbing their friends and pulling them toward the box office -- you gotta see this! Hawkers sell merchandise -- children buy Tom Thumb DOLLS, Eunice the Elephant LOLLIPOPS.

Barnum surveys the people as they exit. He sees Sam Roth skulking in the alley and flashes a triumphant smile at him.

ROTH

Tell me, Barnum. Does it bother you that what you're selling is fake?

Barnum steps onto the sidewalk. Roth steps out as well now, so the two men are facing off just a few feet apart.

BARNUM

Do those smiles seem fake? Or the applause? It doesn't matter where it comes from. The joy is real.

ROTH

So now you're a philanthropist?

BARNUM

I'm an entertainer.

ROTH

The prince of Humbug.

BARNUM

Hyperbole isn't the worst crime, Mr. Roth. Men suffer more from imagining too little than too much.

ROTH

Ah -- the creed of a true fraud.

BARNUM

There's nothing sadder than a cynic, except perhaps a cynic with a pen.

ROTH

A philosopher too! Please, sir, don't add pretension to your list of sins.

BARNUM

Mr. Roth -- when is the last time you smiled? Or had a good laugh? A real one?

The simplicity of the question silences Roth. Barnum smiles.

(CONTINUED)

BARNUM (CONT'D)

A joyless reporter covering the theater.
Now who's the fraud?

Roth waves him off and starts to leave. Barnum stops him.

BARNUM (CONT'D)

By the way, Roth, That word you used to
describe my show --

Barnum points to the marquee. 'AMERICAN MUSEUM' has been
painted over. The new sign reads: 'P.T. BARNUM'S CIRCUS.'

BARNUM (CONT'D)

It has a nice ring to it.

Roth lets out a snort, leaves. Barnum steps into the middle
of the street and calls after him defiantly.

BARNUM (CONT'D)

I'm still here, Roth! I'm still here!

The grand finale, every act on stage. Barnum beams as he
takes in the delirium in the audience, feeling as much at
home with the Oddities as he has felt anywhere in his life.

*
*

ALL

BREAK FREE! BREAK FREE!
AND THE WORLD BECOMES A FANTASY
AND YOU'RE MORE THAN YOU COULD EVER BE
'CAUSE YOU'RE DREAMIN' WITH YOUR EYES WIDE OPEN
AND WE KNOW WE CAN'T GO BACK AGAIN
TO THE WORLD THAT WE WERE LIVIN' IN
'CAUSE WE'RE DREAMIN' WITH OUR EYES WIDE OPEN

BARNUM/LETTIE

COME ALIVE
COME ALIVE
COME ALIVE
COME ALIVE

ALL (CONT'D)

AND THE WORLD BECOMES A
FANTASY
AND YOU'RE MORE THAN YOU
COULD EVER BE
'CAUSE WE'RE DREAMIN' WITH
OUR EYES WIDE OPEN
AND WE KNOW WE CAN'T GO BACK
AGAIN
TO THE WORLD THAT WE WERE
LIVIN' IN

ALL (CONT'D)

'CAUSE WE'RE DREAMIN' WITH OUR EYES WIDE OPEN
'CAUSE WE'RE DREAMIN' WITH OUR EYES WIDE OPEN
SO COME ALIVE!

60 CONTINUED:

60

END SONG.

Over the sounds of enthusiastic APPLAUSE we CUT TO:

62 EXT. STREET - BETHEL, CT. - DAY

62

A beautiful tree-lined street. Barnum steps out of a ZEBRA-DRAWN CARRIAGE, then helps a blindfolded Charity out. Helen and Caroline jump out after them. Time has passed -- they are all better-dressed and more polished than they used to be.

BARNUM

Right this way, m'lady.

CHARITY

I'm going to break my neck.

Barnum removes the scarf. Charity is stunned to see the same MANSION that she and Barnum broke into as children.

CHARITY (CONT'D)

This is the same--...?!

BARNUM

It is.

In the gated backyard, there is an actual GIRAFFE grazing!

CHARITY

Oh, Phin. Can we afford this?

BARNUM

Of course. And even if we couldn't, it's an investment. Land is the one thing they're not making any more of.

(to Helen)

I think there's something on the porch for you.

Helen looks and sees a GIANT WOODEN DOLLHOUSE on the porch. She shrieks happily and runs up to claim it. They come up the stairs behind her. Barnum opens the door. He grabs a small WHITE BOX from the foyer, turns to Caroline.

BARNUM (CONT'D)

Something for you too.

She opens the box and pulls out a PAIR OF BALLET SLIPPERS. She looks up at him -- it's what she's always wanted.

BARNUM (CONT'D)

And, funny enough, there's a ballet school just down the street.

(CONTINUED)

62

CONTINUED:

62

Caroline jumps for joy and kisses him, then runs to catch up to Helen, who's already inside the house and headed upstairs.

BARNUM (CONT'D)

Your parents still live nearby, don't they?

CHARITY

Phin. If I didn't know you better, I might wonder if you bought this house to rub my parents' noses in your success.

BARNUM

OUR success. And of course not. It's true that I've accomplished everything your father said I never would --

CHARITY

Yes... But you know, to them, house or no house, you'll always be a bum from the south side.

BARNUM

Yes, but now I'm a bum with a huge house they have to walk past every Sunday.

She laughs. He sweeps her up in his arms and carries her up the steps and across the threshold.

63

INT. BARNUM MANSION - CONTINUOUS

63

CHARITY

It's beautiful!

She runs upstairs to look around. Barnum stands at the foot of the stairs watching happily as the members of his family appear and disappear from rooms. Finally Charity slides down the banister -- a little circus in her -- and lands in Barnum's arms. They do a little dance around the room. *

BARNUM

It took twenty years longer than I planned, but... Welcome home, Charity.

He dips her back. They kiss. Brings her up again. *

CHARITY

And the giraffe is not staying.

BARNUM

Right. *

64 INT. BARNUM MANSION - FORYER - ANOTHER DAY

64

Caroline sits at the foot of the stairs, putting on her ballet shoes. She practices a few motions - she has clearly already begun her classes.

MUSIC: Orchestral version of "A Million Dreams."

Caroline dances around the foyer, confidence growing. She disappears around the staircase and when she emerges she is TWO YEARS OLDER, dressed in a tutu.

65 The lights go down - she is lit by a single spotlight as she 65 dances with skill and maturity. We are no longer in Barnum's mansion, but on a dark stage. As Caroline finishes her dance, she is joined by six other ballerinas. They bow to a round of applause. We DISSOLVE TO:

66 INT. METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART - LOBBY - NIGHT (LATER)

66

A reception for students and parents, where the upper crust gather to turn their daughters into swans. Barnum and Charity stroll among the other guests. He is upbeat, ebullient.

BARNUM

Remember when we couldn't afford ballet slippers? And now -- look at this.

Barnum tips his hat to another couple, MR. and MRS. WINTHROP.

BARNUM (CONT'D)

Good evening, Mr. and Mrs. Winthrop!
Lovely recital, don't you think?

They barely nod to him as they pass. Charity shakes her head.

CHARITY

Why do you still bother?

BARNUM

I know I shouldn't. I just love the look on their faces when I do.

He watches the Winthrops go join a small crowd encircling a handsome, jaded young man, PHILLIP CARLYLE. Barnum frowns.

BARNUM (CONT'D)

Who is that man?

CHARITY

Phillip Carlyle? His new play is a hit on Broadway.

(CONTINUED)

BARNUM

Play, huh? Pfff! You pay good money to watch people stand around and *talk* for two hours! They call *me* a con man!

But as he watches others flock around Phillip, he can see the social power of artistic success. Barnum suddenly makes a beeline, joining the small crowd. Charity follows. As he arrives, the Winthrops are begging Phillip for a favor.

MRS. WINTHROP

...We know it's sold out, but if you could find us two tickets for Sunday...

PHILLIP

Yes, of course. I'll see what I can do. Excuse me.

He slips off -- louché, bored by the attention. The Winthrops know they've been dissed. They look disappointed. Barnum, witnessing this, can't help himself. He steps up, genuine.

BARNUM

You know, if you ever want to take in the circus, we'd love to have you. As my guest, of course. Bring the family --

MRS. WINTHROP

Thank you just the same, Mr. Barnum.

They turn on their heels and walk off, with another COUPLE. Barely out of hearing, the Winthrops lean into each other:

MR. WINTHROP

My God, what was that smell?

MRS. WINTHROP

Peanuts.

They and the other Couple laugh. A nearby group of Ballerinas SNICKER, and turn, parting to reveal... Caroline, among them, with the Winthrop's daughter MARY. Caroline's eyes well up, but she forces a smile. The Winthrops stop short, covering.

*
*
*

MRS. WINTHROP (CONT'D)

Oh hello, girls! Caroline, dear, I believe your parents are looking for you.

RACK FOCUS ACROSS the room to see Barnum staring darkly. He has witnessed the entire exchange.

67 EXT. STREET - BRIDGEPORT, CT. - NIGHT (LATER)

67

Charity and Helen walk ahead while Barnum strolls with Caroline, who is withdrawn and a bit down.

BARNUM

I was so proud of you tonight, Caroline.
You were amazing up there.

CAROLINE

I really wasn't.
(then)
I've actually decided to quit the ballet.

BARNUM

Quit?! Why?

CAROLINE

I started too late. I'll never catch up.
I'm just not good enough.

BARNUM

Not good enough?! You were the best
dancer on that stage!

Caroline looks away, too old to buy into his hype.

CAROLINE

What would you know about it?

BARNUM

You think I can't spot talent?

CAROLINE

How many ballets have you seen in your
life?

BARNUM

Well...

CAROLINE

Not everything's like the circus, you
know. Ballet takes years of hard work.
(pointed, sharp)
You can't just fake it.

She runs off, bounding up the steps ahead of Charity and Helen. We hold on Barnum, who looks stricken.

68 INT. BARNUM MANSION - BEDROOM - NIGHT

68

Charity moves in and out of the room, preparing for bed.
Barnum is slumped in a chair, sad and worried.

(CONTINUED)

BARNUM

It'd be a shame if she quit. She just feels out of place with the other girls.

CHARITY

I should hope so. I've never seen so many entitled little prima donnas.

BARNUM

Those prima donnas are the most important thing in the world to her right now. She just wants to fit in.

Charity gives him a look. This is about more than Caroline.

CHARITY

People like the Winthrops will never accept us, Phin. If they did, they'd have to stop judging. And then they might actually have to do something with their lives.

BARNUM

I don't want it for me.

CHARITY

Caroline will be fine. Eventually.

BARNUM

She's embarrassed by me.

CHARITY

She's a teenager.

Charity puts her arms around him, smiles. But he won't be assuaged. He shakes his head -- this cuts too deep.

BARNUM

No. I want her to be proud of who she is. Her family. Proud of me.

CHARITY

She *is* proud of you. In her way.

He looks at her -- that seals it. She gazes at him, worried.

CHARITY (CONT'D)

Phineas...?

*

PRELAP: Sound of polite applause.

69

EXT. WINTER GARDEN THEATRE - NIGHT

69

Barnum exits, pulling on his coat, and spots Phillip Carlyle standing under the marquis, beside a poster advertising the play that just ended: "THE DRUNKARD or THE FALLEN SAVED," a temperance movement drama that was the snob hit of 1857.

BARNUM

Excuse me, Mr. Carlyle? I believe you produced this play --

PHILLIP

Yes, and I apologize. Refunds are available at the box office.

BARNUM

(offers his hand)
P.T. Barnum.

PHILLIP

(shakes it vigorously)
From the circus? I'm a great admirer of what you do, Mr. Barnum.

BARNUM

Oh come now --

PHILLIP

I'm serious. People leave your shows transformed, or at least a good deal happier than when they came in. Which is more than I can say for my play. Can the evils of alcohol be the theme, plot, and moral all at the same time? *

He glances around at the sober-faced survivors of his play. *

BARNUM

Yet you have no trouble selling tickets.

PHILLIP

My audience believes it makes them sophisticated. I exploit that pretension, and everyone wins. Except art, of course. Art takes a bit of a beating.

BARNUM

I don't suppose I could buy you a drink. That is, unless you don't --

He gestures to a PHOTOGRAPH of the abstemious Mr. Cribbs from the play. Phillip takes a flask from his vest pocket.

(CONTINUED)

69

CONTINUED:

69

PHILLIP

How do you think I get through this play every night?

70

INT. PRIVATE CLUB - BAR - NIGHT

70

A fancy room, almost empty at this late hour. A lone piano player plays. They are a few rounds in. Barnum is low-key, but he's in full sell-mode -- passionate, a true believer.

BARNUM

If we present legitimate entertainments, we can expand our appeal. Bring in the carriage trade. Go after the high-brows.

PHILLIP

Funny, you want to attract the snobs and I've spent my entire life wishing to get away from them. They are suffocating.

*

He downs his drink, feeling vaguely sorry for himself. Barnum smiles, leans back.

BARNUM

So, come join the circus! You clearly have a flair for show business.

PHILLIP

"Show business"?! I've never heard that term before!

BARNUM

Because I just invented it.
(smiles)
And you were there!

*

*

PHILLIP

I like it. But I'm still not clear on what you think I can do for you.

The last few drinkers make their exit, leaving Barnum and Phillip alone with the piano player.

BARNUM

Teach me how to appeal to the snobs, as you call them. Make it fashionable. Sophisticated. Ennobling. Shakespeare, and all that. Exploit their pretensions.

*

*

PHILLIP

You've created this wonderful show and now you want to pervert it with culture?

(CONTINUED)

BARNUM

Anything to fill seats, Mr. Carlyle!
And I'll teach you everything I know
about the circus.

*

Phillip grins at Barnum -- he really likes him. However.

PHILLIP

I appreciate the offer, Mr. Barnum. But
such an association could, at the very
least, cost me my inheritance.

Barnum waves dismissively -- cheerful and high-spirited.

BARNUM

Oh, it'd cost you a lot more than that!
Your inheritance, your reputation! Your
place in society! Why, people would look
at you the same way they look at me!

PHILLIP

(sheepish)
No offense.

BARNUM

None taken!

The pianist hits a chord, and Barnum starts to sing.

BARNUM (CONT'D)

RIGHT HERE, RIGHT NOW
YOU KNOW THE OFFER'S OUT
DO I HAVE TO CHASE YOU DOWN AND MAKE YOU SEE IT?
YOU RUN WITH ME
AND I CAN CUT YOU FREE
OUT OF THE DRUDGERY AND WALLS YOU KEEP IN
'CAUSE YOU CAN DO LIKE YOU DO
OR YOU CAN DO LIKE ME
STAY IN THE CAGE OR YOU FINALLY TAKE THE KEY
OH, DAMN SUDDENLY YOU'RE FREE TO FLY
IT'LL TAKE YOU TO THE OTHER SIDE

*

PHILLIP

DON'TCHU KNOW THAT I'M OKAY
WITH THIS UPTOWN PART I GET TO PLAY
'CAUSE I GOT WHAT I NEED
AND I DON'T WANNA TAKE THE RIDE
I DON'T NEED TO SEE THE OTHER SIDE
SO GO AND DO LIKE YOU DO
I'M GOOD TO DO LIKE ME
AIN'T IN A CAGE SO I DON'T NEED TO TAKE THE KEY
OH MAN, MAYBE YOU SHOULD WONDER WHY
THEY'RE LAUGHIN' ON THE OTHER SIDE

(CONTINUED)

BARNUM

HOW WOULD YOU LIKE TO SPEND YOUR DAYS?
YOU CAN PROMISE NOT TO ROCK THE BOAT
OR YOU CAN MAKE THE WAVES
YOU GOTTA LIVE A LITTLE
GOTTA LAUGH A LITTLE
GOTTA GIVE YOURSELF THE FREEDOM TO DREAM
AND IT'LL
FORGE A WORLD THAT YOU'LL BE SHAPING
TAKE YOUR WALLS AND START 'EM BREAKING
NOW THAT'S A DEAL THAT SEEMS WORTH TAKING
BUT I GUESS I'LL LEAVE IT UP TO YOU...

Barnum turns and walks away from Phillip. Over his shoulder, he points back to Phillip's flask and casually says:

BARNUM (CONT'D)

You know, you might not have to drink so much if you actually *enjoyed* your life.

Phillip looks down at the flask in his hand, realizing Barnum is right. He's won over, but won't yet admit it. Barnum and Phillip end up on opposite sides of the piano, negotiating.

PHILLIP

WELL IT'S INTRIGUING BUT IT'S GONNA COST ME GREATLY
WHAT'S MY PERCENTAGE OF THE MONEY THAT YOU'RE MAKING?

BARNUM

WELL, FAIR ENOUGH, YOU WANT A PIECE OF ALL THE ACTION
I'LL GIVE YOU SEVEN, NOW LET'S SHAKE AND MAKE IT HAPPEN

PHILLIP

EIGHTEEN WILL BE JUST FINE

BARNUM

(laughs, sarcastic)
SHOULD I JUST GO AHEAD
AND GIVE YOU NICKELS ON THE DIME?

PHILLIP

FIFTEEN.

BARNUM

MAKE IT EIGHT

PHILLIP

TWELVE

BARNUM
I'LL DO NINE.

PHILLIP
TEN

Barnum considers it, then nods. Phillip extends his hand.

PHILLIP (CONT'D)
Sir. You have yourself a junior partner.

Barnum gives the hand a wry look, but doesn't shake it. He pours himself a drink, shoves a bottle in Phillip's hand. *

BARNUM
What I have is an over-compensated apprentice. *

They both toss back a last drink (Phillip from the bottle). Then turn and walk out of the club, arm in arm. END SONG. *

INT. BARNUM'S MUSEUM, BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

Barnum enters and walks Phillip through the large backstage space. It's surreal. Oddities, acrobats, jugglers, animals, contortionists -- Phillip takes it all in. Barnum welcomes him into the fold with an exuberant, well-practiced patter.

BARNUM
Welcome to the circus, Mr. Carlyle! The most dangerous collection of wild, feral animals ever assembled under one roof!
(grins)
And that's just the performers.
(pointing)
We've got big, we've got small, we've got bearded, we've got tall! But there's one thing that unites all of them!

Tom Thumb, playing cards with O'Clancy the Giant, looks up.

TOM THUMB
We're underpaid.

BARNUM
We are free here. To be ourselves. We are vagabonds! Gypsies! Bohemians! Pirates! Let the rest of the world be dull and grey! Let the rest of the world spend their days in drudgery and grub-work! We are here as prophets of wonder and joy! Fun is our work, and our work is fun! Come on, I'll show you how it's done... *

INT. BARNUM'S MUSEUM - NIGHT

They step off a ladder, onto a catwalk above the last row of bleachers. From here, you can see everything. *

The vast space is dark, though you can HEAR a packed house. SPOTLIGHTS sweep the room, tracking an acrobatic act. Phillip leans forward to see what's going on, when...

...The CROWD beneath them parts, and Anne comes swinging up from below, arms free. Her arc ends almost face to face with Phillip. Then gravity whips her back in the other direction.

Phillip turns to Barnum. Barnum grins.

PHILLIP

Who was that?

LATER -- As another act, a daredevil HORSE RIDER, takes over, circling the ring, Anne disengages from her ribbons with W.D.'s help. Barnum steps up with Phillip.

BARNUM

Miss Anne Wheeler? I'd like to introduce my newest hire, Mr. Phillip Carlyle.

Anne takes in Phillip with her eyes, then shakes his hand.

ANNE

And what's your act, Mr. Carlyle?

PHILLIP

I don't have an act --

ANNE

Everyone's got an act. *

Instant chemistry. Anne, freed from her ribbons, smiles, flirty, and walks off. Phillip, smitten, turns to check out Anne. When he turns back, he finds W.D. glaring at him. *

72

INT. THE "BARNUM ARMS" - DAY

72

A pub across from the museum. Barnum sits at the bar with Tom Thumb, Lettie, and O'Clancy, a stack of newspapers in front of them. He reads from Roth's review in the *Tribune*:

BARNUM

"... Barnum's reputation as the national clearinghouse for the grotesque remains firmly intact. How much longer will the public indulge this man's reckless forays into the unseemly depths of bad taste?"

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

BARNUM (CONT'D)
(incredulous)
Can you believe he's reviewing us again?!

LETTIE
What do you care about Roth for? He's a prig and a snob.

BARNUM
Yes, and all the snobs in New York read him. He does their thinking for them.

Barnum throws the paper down, frustrated. Phillip bursts into the pub. Clearly excited.

BARNUM (CONT'D)
Have you seen this?

PHILLIP
I have.

BARNUM
I thought I was paying you to class up the joint.

PHILLIP
I've been working on it. Everyone...?

He turns to the others, holds up a folded piece of paper.

PHILLIP (CONT'D)
If you want society to accept you, do you start at the bottom? Or in the middle? No -- you start at the very top.

BARNUM
And what's the top?

He hands the paper to Barnum. It's a telegram. He reads:

BARNUM (CONT'D)
"You are hereby invited to an audience with Her Royal Majesty, Victoria..."
(looks up, stunned)
Is this real?

*

PHILLIP
It took some doing, but I got us invited to England! To meet with the Queen!

GASPS and CHEERS from the assembled Performers.

LETTIE
The Queen, huh? How much is she payin'?

72 CONTINUED: (2)

72

Barnum stares at the telegram, a smile forming.

73 EXT. BARNUM MANSION - FRONT PORCH - A FEW NIGHTS LATER

73

Charity sits on the porch swing as Barnum alights from a carriage and rushes up the front walk to join her.

BARNUM

Sorry I'm late. Are the kids in bed?

CHARITY

They tried to stay awake for you...

Barnum sits next to her on the swing, upset to miss them.

BARNUM

There's just a hundred things to do --
sending the whole troupe to London...

*

CHARITY

I know, Phin. It's okay.

She rubs his back, and gazes at him, already sad.

CHARITY (CONT'D)

You know what I realized? We haven't
spent a night apart since we got married.

BARNUM

I have to go. If the Queen of England
likes us, everyone there will.

CHARITY

And everyone here too.

Barnum smiles, she can always see through him.

BARNUM

I don't mind if people call me coarse.
But when my daughters suffer for it...
(shakes his head; quietly)
...It breaks my heart.

CHARITY

Just tell me I'm not going to lose you to
the snobs.

*

She leans in, playful. Barnum pulls her into an embrace.

*

BARNUM

Not to them. Not to anyone.

He kisses her passionately. MUSIC starts under.

74 INT. BARNUM MANSION - VARIOUS ROOMS - NIGHT (LATER)

74

Barnum sings a farewell LULLABY (that will become a duet with Charity), to Helen and Caroline, both of whom are asleep.

BARNUM
CLOSE YOUR EYES
REST YOUR HEAD
WHILE THE STARS ARE SHINING BRIGHTLY
YOU'LL STAY
IN THESE ARMS
THEY WERE MADE TO HOLD YOU TIGHTLY
HERE WITH ME
YOU'LL ALWAYS BE
WITHOUT A WORRY IN THE WORLD

Next he sings to Charity, as she sleeps:

BARNUM (CONT'D)
IF YOU'RE SCARED
IN THE DARK
CALL MY NAME AND I WILL GUIDE YOU
FOR I
WILL BE THERE
LOOK AROUND I'M RIGHT BESIDE YOU
I AM HERE
DREAM SWEET DREAMS, MY DEAR
WITHOUT A WORRY IN THE

75 INT. BARNUM MANSION - FOYER - DAWN

75

Music continues to play under as Charity watches from atop the stairs as Barnum prepares to leave. From downstairs, Barnum catches her eye, and smiles lovingly at her. She smiles back and comes downstairs.

BARNUM
DREAM SWEET DREAMS MY DEAR

BARNUM/CHARITY
WITHOUT A WORRY IN THE WORLD
WITHOUT A WORRY IN THE WORLD.

Barnum kisses her and steps out the front door.

SONG ENDS as we linger on Charity at the front door, watching him go -- a look of concern on her face. *

*

76 EXT. BUCKINGHAM PALACE - DAY

76

The circus performers disembark from their carriages. They have all tried to dress up, with varying success. Anne wears a dazzling gown. Phillip helps her down from her carriage.

(CONTINUED)

76

CONTINUED:

76

PHILLIP

Miss Wheeler. You look like royalty.

ANNE

I'm just an acrobat.

PHILLIP

No. In the aristocracy of talent, I would say you are a Queen.

His meaning is clear. She meets his eyes, then moves on.

77

INT. BUCKINGHAM PALACE - CORRIDOR - DAY

77

The group is led down an endless hall by a prim and proper LORD-IN-WAITING. Even dressed up, they look wildly out of place. The enormous Lord of Leeds is wheezing and falling behind. Tom Thumb tugs on the bottom of his coat.

TOM THUMB

Only a mile to go, tubs. Don't die on me.

LORD OF LEEDS

I won't die on you. I may sit on you...

LORD-IN-WAITING

Don't speak to the Queen unless spoken to. Don't offer your hand unless she offers hers first. And never turn your back on Her Royal Highness. You must enter and exit the room facing forward.

LETTIE

Well, at least she can't talk about us behind our backs!

LAUGHS and HOOTS. Phillip shoots Barnum a glance, sotto:

PHILLIP

I'm starting to think this was a bad idea.

BARNUM

This was *your* idea!

PHILLIP

You shouldn't have listened to me! I'm an apprentice, for God's sake!

78

INT. BUCKINGHAM PALACE - QUEEN'S DRAWING ROOM - DAY

78

The double doors open to the Queen's drawing room. Members of the royal entourage, luminaries, and visitors are present. *

(CONTINUED)

HERALD (V.O.)

Ladies and Gentlemen, Mr. Phineas T.
Barnum and his troupe from America --

Barnum enters with Tom, Lettie, Chang and Eng, and the Lord of Leeds, all five hundred pounds. Anne follows in her gown, with Phillip on one side, W.D. on the other. The place falls silent. Everyone stares as a path is cleared to...

QUEEN VICTORIA, 30. Barnum and Tom, leading the way, slowly approach the seated queen. Beside her is a small KING CHARLES SPANIEL on a leash held by one of her courtiers.

PHILLIP

Your Majesty. It is in an honor to meet you. May I present Mr. Phineas T. Barnum.

BARNUM

I am honored, Your Highness.

QUEEN VICTORIA

The honor is mine, Mr. Barnum. And I have heard all about your little Colonel from my friends in America.

TOM THUMB

General, ma'am.

QUEEN VICTORIA

Forgive me. General. Oh My! You're even smaller than I expected.

TOM THUMB

You're not exactly reaching the top shelf yourself, sweetheart.

The assembled nobility GASP. Phillip holds his breath. The room remains silent until the Queen suddenly bursts into laughter. Everyone immediately joins in, relieved.

The Queen's dog starts to BARK at Tom -- who barks right back. They growl and nip and tug at each other. The Queen throws her head back, laughing even harder at Tom's antics. Barnum and Phillip share a look of relief.

DISSOLVE TO:

Barnum's group is now off to the side, mingling with other guests. Lettie stands proud and pretty. Chang and Eng bow to each side. Tom grabs a creamy pastry off a passing server's tray and bites into it, leaving a dab of cream on his nose. *

(CONTINUED)

There is a small stir near the doors, as the crowd is hushed.

HERALD

Ladies and gentlemen, Miss Jenny Lind.

GUESTS applaud as JENNY LIND enters. In her early 30's, she is a stunning Scandinavian beauty. Barnum turns to Phillip.

BARNUM

Who is that?

PHILLIP

Only the most famous singer in Europe.

BARNUM

Another singer, huh?

He rolls his eyes. But as he watches everyone scurry to form a crowd around Miss Lind, Barnum's expression changes. *

As he watches, the Queen herself (regal but plain) chats and smiles with Jenny, clearly taken by her beauty and presence.

On Barnum, watching as the old-fashioned royalty of birth is superceded by the new royalty of talent, beauty, celebrity.

Suddenly, it clicks for him. He takes off across the room, headed for Miss Lind. Phillip, alarmed, rushes to keep up.

PHILLIP

Where are you going?

BARNUM

To meet Miss Lind.

PHILLIP

You can't just march up to someone like that and talk to them --

BARNUM

Why not? I'm personable, and she's a person.

He quickens his pace. Phillip scrambles to keep up. As Jenny withdraws from the royal presence and Barnum steps up to her.

BARNUM (CONT'D)

Miss Lind. My name is P.T. Barnum.

JENNY

From America. I've heard of you.

She smiles slyly -- suggesting what she's heard. He grins.

(CONTINUED)

BARNUM

Well, if you heard of me all the way over here, I must be doing something right.

JENNY

(suggestive)

Or else very wrong.

BARNUM

When it comes to publicity, Miss Lind, there's hardly a difference.

JENNY

(mock admonishment)

Between right and wrong? Those are words of a scoundrel, Mr. Barnum.

BARNUM

A showman, Miss Lind. Just a showman.

He gives her his most winning smile. She returns it. They are on the same wavelength, speaking the same language.

JENNY

And what can I do for you, Mr. Barnum?

BARNUM

I'd like to bring you to America.

That surprises her. She smiles at him.

JENNY

Is that a proposition?

BARNUM

Oh, no. Mrs. Barnum would be displeased. But I'd like to put you on tour there.

JENNY

Have you heard me sing?

BARNUM

No. And I look forward to it very much. But I see the way everyone in this room is looking at you. You outshine the Queen herself. That's all I need to know.

JENNY

(intrigued)

I've never been to America.

(CONTINUED)

BARNUM

It will be the largest musical event ever staged. The grandest theaters! The finest orchestras! The best of everything! And when you're done you'll have more money than you can spend in a dozen lifetimes.

*
*

JENNY

I give most of my earnings to charity, Mr. Barnum -- to widows and orphans.

BARNUM

Then all the more reason to say yes!

*

Jenny laughs, charmed by his unflappable optimism. Her eyes take him in. Intrigued, possibly even attracted.

JENNY

I have to ask, Mr. Barnum, why me?

Barnum thinks about it -- a moment of real reflection.

BARNUM

People come to my shows for the pleasure of being hoodwinked. Just once I'd like to give them something that can't be faked. Something real.

Jenny smiles.

*

JENNY

Well... Honesty. I didn't expect that.

Barnum smiles back. He has her.

*

DISSOLVE TO:

A stone castle in Battery Park. A CROWD surges past POSTERS touting the 'PREMIERE CONCERT OF THE SWEDISH NIGHTINGALE!'

BARNUM (V.O.)

Ladies and gentlemen, I recently had the pleasure of hearing the most incredible--

A spectacular circular theatre. Barnum stands on stage. He nods to Charity, Caroline and Helen, dressed to the nines.

*

BARNUM

...Most divine voice I have ever heard.

81 CONTINUED:

81

A WOMAN sitting behind Charity turns to her HUSBAND, scoffs.

WOMAN IN AUDIENCE
Suddenly he's a connoisseur?

Caroline looks down, embarrassed. Charity takes her hand.

BARNUM
Now I know that sounds like Barnum hype.

This gets a warm laugh. Barnum spots Roth in the audience, arms folded, prepared to disapprove --

BARNUM (CONT'D)
But I have no doubt that tonight, even
the most joyless critics will be moved.

*

He catches Roth's eyes and grins.

BARNUM (CONT'D)
May I present the Swedish Nightingale,
Miss Jenny Lind.

A ten-piece orchestra starts to play. Jenny appears far upstage and walks quietly forward, a mirage coming into focus in a simple but stunning dress. There's an audible reaction to her beauty. Charity's grip on Caroline's hand tightens.

Then Jenny sings.

SONG: An epic love song. Jenny's voice, and the song itself, both stun with their beauty and power.

In the audience, Phillip gazes at Anne. She looks over. Their eyes meet, finding meaning in the words. Then she looks away.

Barnum, backstage, watches, surprised to find himself moved by the simplicity and beauty of her song.

He turns and peeks out at the audience. An entire theater filled with high society, embracing Jenny and, in a way, him.

He gazes on Caroline, her face impossible to read.

82 INT. CASTLE GARDEN THEATER - BACKSTAGE - NIGHT (LATER)

82

MUSIC continues under. There's an air of excitement that only comes after a perfect show. Cheers continue as Jenny leaves the stage, followed by STAGEHANDS carrying BOUQUETS. She is met by Barnum, who looks at her, truly impressed.

BARNUM
Miss Lind...! It was, well...

(CONTINUED)

JENNY

(laughs)

Why Mr. Barnum, I believe you are speechless.

Charity rushes in with the girls.

CHARITY

Miss Lind, I've never heard anything so divine.

JENNY

Aren't you lovely.

BARNUM

I'd like you to meet my wife, Charity. And our girls, Caroline and Helen.

JENNY

A pleasure.

HELEN

You look like a princess, ma'am.

JENNY

But you're the beautiful one.

She offers Helen her hand -- to shake, or to kiss, Helen isn't sure. So she curtsies. Caroline steps forward, shyly.

CAROLINE

You have the most exquisite voice!

JENNY

Thank you, dear. Do you perform?

CAROLINE

Yes, I... I'm studying Ballet.

BARNUM

You are?!

*
*

CAROLINE

Of course I am.

Barnum turns to Charity and beams.

BARNUM

Of course she is.

CAROLINE

My class will perform at the Met Gala this year.

(CONTINUED)

82

CONTINUED: (2)

82

JENNY

Oh! What I would give to see that!

(takes Caroline's hand)

I think you and I are going to be very good friends.

Caroline glows. Barnum puts his arm around Charity -- he has pulled off the impossible.

83

INT. THE "BARNUM ARMS" - DAY

83

Barnum sits at a table as Phillip runs in with the paper.

PHILLIP

Hot off the press.

Barnum flips through roughly, looking for the review. As he reads it, his expression goes from elation to dismay.

BARNUM

"Jenny Lind's singing is both ethereal and transcendent. In the hands of a true purveyor of the arts, this would be a cause for celebration. But now we can only watch in dismay as the notorious P.T. Barnum inevitably turns her into one of his sideshow freaks. Next thing we know, she'll be sporting a beard."

(stops reading)

What is wrong with that man?

*

PHILLIP

Like most critics, Roth just vents the bitterness over his own failures by attacking those who succeed. Just take comfort in the fact that every time you sell a ticket, a little part of him dies.

BARNUM

Well, then. Let's sell more tickets.

84

EXT. CASTLE GARDEN THEATER - NIGHT

84

SOUND OF: Ecstatic applause. Calls of "Brava" and "Encore!"

Night after night, the 'SOLD OUT' sign is hung in the box office window.

85

INT. CASTLE GARDEN THEATER - JENNY'S DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT

85

The room is crammed with well-heeled ADMIRERS and bouquets of flowers. Barnum glad-hands people while Charity feigns interest. Jenny smiles politely, accepting accolades.

(CONTINUED)

MRS. WINTHROP (O.S.)

Mr. Barnum.

He turns to see the Winthrops, in the doorway, slightly at sea. Mrs. Winthrop turns to her husband, who takes his cue:

MR. WINTHROP

Barnum. I confess, I had my doubts...
But this is a triumph. Well done, sir.

Barnum lights up, claps Winthrop on the back. It's taken a lifetime to get here.

BARNUM

Thank you very much, Mr. Winthrop.

Charity watches from across the room, somewhat concerned.

MRS. WINTHROP

Do you suppose we might... That is...

BARNUM

You want to meet Miss Lind?

MRS. WINTHROP

If it's not asking too much.

BARNUM

Not at all! Not at all!

Barnum pulls them in the room, closes the door, but there's an immediate KNOCK. Barnum opens the door again, expecting more Swells. This time, however, it is Lettie, Tom Thumb, O'Clancy, and all the rest of the oddities. They smile.

LETTIE

Mr. B... You think we could meet Miss Lind? Good Lord, that lady can sing!

Barnum wavers, looks back in the room -- at the Winthrops, Jenny, etc. He turns back. And makes the wrong choice...

BARNUM

It's a bit crowded right now, Lettie.
Why don't you all come back later?

The Oddities are surprised and insulted. Before they can respond, Barnum has closed the door on them. Charity sees this, and frowns, as Barnum leads the Winthrops to Jenny.

DISSOLVE TO:

86

INT. BARNUM'S MUSEUM - NIGHT

86

Tom Thumb sits, playing the Ukulele to the sold out crowd.
Lettie sings "Oddities", a celebration of the self-acceptance *
that Barnum has given them, but somehow can't give himself. *

LETTIE
WHY DID GOD CREATE ME
INTO SUCH AN ODDITY
IS IT SO WRONG
I WANT TO BELONG
THERE'S GOT TO BE A PURPOSE FOR ME.

The other Oddities appear on stage to harmonize.

LETTIE (CONT'D)
UNUSUAL IS SO BEAUTIFUL
THAT IS IN-DISPUTABLE
IT AIN'T SO WRONG
YOU WANT TO BELONG

CHANG AND ENG
(Harmonizing)
YOU'LL FIND IN ME
THAT WE'RE ALL

ODDITIES *
ODDITIES *
ODDITIES *

ON BARNUM in the wings, watching the show with one eye, and *
his pocket watch with the other. Finally, he grabs his coat. *

ODDITIES (CONT'D)
WE'RE THE MONSTERS *
WE'RE THE FREAKS
WE'RE THE MISFITS
WE'RE THE FREAKS

87

EXT. BARNUM'S MUSEUM - SAME

87

Barnum exits. On the sidewalk is a small CROWD of PROTESTERS *
holding signs: "Close the Circus!" and "No More Freak Show!".

ODDITIES (V.O.) *
IT AIN'T SO WRONG *
WE ALL BELONG *
TO ONE FAMILY... *

Barnum slows for a second -- he's never seen these people. *
Then he climbs into a waiting carriage. It drives off. *

88 INT. CASTLE GARDEN THEATER - BACKSTAGE HALLWAY - NIGHT (SAME)88

Barnum finds Jenny signing autographs and greeting high-society type in a backstage hallway. He attempts to mingle, but no one has any interest in him. He greets a Couple who don't respond in kind. He himself is an oddity there.

ODDITIES (V.O.) *
AND WE'RE ALL ODDITIES *
ODDITIES... ODDITIES.... *

EXT. NEW YORK STREET - DAY *

Anne, in her Sunday finest, window shops outside a clothing store. She goes to enter, only to have the door shut in her face. A sign is flipped from "Open" to "Closed for Lunch". *

She absorbs this indignity, stoic, and moves on. Across the street, Phillip has seen this. His heart breaks for her. *

ODDITIES (V.O.) *
IT AIN'T SO WRONG *
WE ALL BELONG *
TO ONE FAMILY... *

INT. CASTLE GARDEN THEATER - BACKSTAGE - NIGHT *

Barnum smiles and nods to a well-heeled couple, who completely ignore him as they walk past. We INTERCUT: *

89 THE ODDITIES 89 *

Singing raucously, then, back to... *

90 BARNUM, IN THE HALLWAY 90 *

Trying to engage. People squeeze past, jostling as they try to get to Jenny Lind. Finally, he gives up. He turns and watches as the cream of New York society crowds around Jenny, showering her with the respect they will never give to him. *

TRACK IN on Barnum, alone, as he stares at Jenny. She is the personification of everything he's ever wanted for himself.

Then, in the midst of the crowd, she glances up and sees him watching her. She smiles at him with warmth and gratitude -- he's made all this come true. A connection across the room.

Something stirs in Barnum -- a consuming, almost pathological need for acceptance and adulation. He sees now he will never get there on his own. He needs Jenny Lind.

90 CONTINUED:

90

ODDITIES (V.O.)
WE'RE THE MONSTERS
WE'RE THE FREAKS
WE'RE THE MISFITS
WE'RE THE FREAKS

91 INT. BARNUM'S MUSEUM - SAME

91

BACK AND FORTH between Barnum and the Oddities, wrapping up. *

TOM THUMB
IT AIN'T SO WRONG
WE ALL BELONG
TO ONE FAMILY
AND WE'RE ALL

ODDITIES
ODDITIES.... ODDITIES

The number ends and the crowd APPLAUDS wildly, on their feet. *

92 INT. WINTER GARDEN THEATER - BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

92 *

Barnum stares as Jenny chats with the Winthrops. Grimly determined, he moves forward to join the conversation. *

He puts on a smile as he joins them, bowing to Mrs. Winthrop and shaking Mr. Winthrop's hand. It's like shaking hands with the Devil. As circus APPLAUSE echoes, we CUT TO: *

93 INT. WINTHROP MANSION - NIGHT

93

Quiet. People mingle in the drawing room, while Jenny stands beside the piano, greeting well-wishers. Barnum and Charity stand to one side, taking it all in. Charity asks quietly. *

CHARITY
Remind me why you agreed to a private
recital for the Winthrops?

BARNUM
They asked.

CHARITY
Simple as that?

She smiles, wry. Barnum shrugs. She knows him too well. Charity looks across the room, and gasps softly.

CHARITY (CONT'D)
Oh my God...

(CONTINUED)

Barnum follows her gaze to the older couple that has just entered, looking somewhat uncomfortable.

BARNUM

Is that...?

CHARITY

My parents.

Charity makes eye contact with Mr. and Mrs. Hallet from across the room. Her mother offers an uncertain smile.

PRE-LAP: Jenny's singing.

INT. WINTHROP MANSION - NIGHT - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Jenny sings to the assembled guests, accompanied by a lone pianist. Caroline sits between Barnum and Charity.

JENNY

[SINGS EPIC LOVE SONG]

As Jenny sings, her eyes find Barnum's in the audience and rest there, like she's singing to him. Charity clocks the look between them warily. Barnum turns, surveys the audience, listening raptly. He finally has an act they can't say no to. *

The SONG ends in applause. Caroline, looking around at the reactions of her friends and parents, smiles and claps. *

As Jenny bows, Barnum joins her in the center of the room. He takes her hands and kisses her ceremonially on each cheek.

BARNUM

Thank you all very much. And thank you, Miss Lind, for sharing your gift with us. You know, ladies and gentlemen, these days, I am largely associated with elephants and acrobats and oddities.

Here he smiles and gets a bit of a chuckle from the crowd.

BARNUM (CONT'D)

But to me, the noblest art is that of making others happy. And that applies to a circus for the masses, or a virtuoso vocalist for you good people here.

Barnum pauses. ON Charity and Caroline, watching nervously.

CHARITY

(to herself)

No, don't... Don't, don't, please don't!

BARNUM

I grew up not far from here. As a matter of fact, my father tended the lawns of some of your homes. So I never imagined I'd actually be an honored guest in one of them. Or that I'd own the largest house in the neighborhood.

Charity closes her eyes in dismay.

BARNUM (CONT'D)

Actually, I did imagine it. When you're born into poverty -- and treated with scorn because of it --
(glares at the Hallets)
-- imagination is your only recourse.

Mr. Hallet returns the glare angrily, feeling the eyes of the room suddenly on him. Abruptly, he stands and, taking his Wife by the arm, exits the room -- walking out in a huff. *

This is an act of social aggression, intended to ostracize Barnum. It works: the Winthrops look embarrassed. There are MURMURS of disapproval. Judgmental eyes turn back to Barnum. Barnum, caught off guard, looks up sees the pained expressions of Charity and Caroline. Awkwardly, he wraps up. *

BARNUM (CONT'D)

And right now I imagine I've said a bit too much. Thank you for letting us entertain you. Good night. *

Polite applause. Barnum looks to Caroline, who is mortified. As he walks back to rejoin them, Caroline turns, walks away. Barnum is stung. Charity looks at him -- sad, acerbic. *

CHARITY

You still know how to charm my parents, don't you?

BARNUM

I don't worry anymore about impressing your parents. *

CHARITY

Clearly. *

She follows Caroline off. Barnum is left alone. He gazes around the room -- suddenly, a social pariah again. His face hardens -- the chip on his shoulder has just become huge. *

PHILLIP (V.O.)

This is insanity...!

95

INT. BARNUM'S MUSEUM - BARNUM'S OFFICE - DAY

95

CLOSE ON a poster for the Jenny Lind tour. It is wildly extravagant -- the 19th Century version of Las Vegas. Barnum loves it. Phillip is desperately trying to reason with him.

PHILLIP

...A ninety piece orchestra?! Custom sets! Indoor fireworks! No one's ever done anything like this!

BARNUM

Exactly! We're giving the world something they've never seen before!

PHILLIP

With good reason! You've had to pay the theaters in advance! You've paid Jenny in advance! You won't see a penny of profit til the fortieth show, at least! You're risking everything you've built!

BARNUM

And how do you think I built it? By risking everything!

Phillip flops down in a chair, anxious and overwhelmed.

BARNUM (CONT'D)

Calm down, man. What's eating you?

Phillip holds up a telegram.

PHILLIP

Miss Lind's contract.

BARNUM

Isn't it done? *

PHILLIP

She won't sign. You're asking her to do two shows a night. She insists on one. You've got to hold the line on this, P.T. You're risking too much already.

BARNUM

I'll handle Miss Lind.

Barnum plucks the contract from Phillip's fingers, grabs his hat, heads for the exit. Phillip turns. *

PHILLIP

Or will she handle you?

(CONTINUED)

95 CONTINUED:

95

But Barnum is already gone.

96 INT. HOTEL DINING ROOM - DAY

96

Barnum walks in to find Jenny finishing a lunch. He has the papers in his hand, looking serious. She sees him, smiles.

JENNY

Mr. Barnum! To what do I owe the pleasure?!

BARNUM

I received a draft of your contract.

JENNY

Oh, dear. Is something wrong?

BARNUM

Not at all. It's just that I have booked each hall for two shows a night...

JENNY

...And I can only perform once.

Barnum is baffled by this. He strains to be polite.

BARNUM

Is there something *else* you will be doing for twenty three hours?

JENNY

Mr. Barnum, I am not a cuckoo clock. To be perfect, my voice requires rest.

BARNUM

If it is just less than perfect, I assure you, no one will know the difference.

JENNY

I will know the difference.

BARNUM

But you are not buying tickets.

JENNY

You told me you wanted the best for this tour, Mr. Barnum. Or was that humbug too?

Her challenge throws Barnum. He struggles to control himself.

BARNUM

I am paying you top dollar.

(CONTINUED)

JENNY

This isn't about money...

BARNUM

What else could it be about?

She looks at him with affection. She's tacitly pleading with him to change himself and become "respectable".

JENNY

The question is simple, Mr. Barnum -- do you want to give your audience something real? Or just hoodwink them again?

Barnum half-smiles. He sits next to her, shakes his head.

BARNUM

It's certainly easier to hoodwink them. Not to mention more fun and profitable.

She looks at him: what kind of man is he? He nods -- this is the price of respectability. Holds up the papers.

BARNUM (CONT'D)

I'll have it changed before you leave.

JENNY

You mean before we leave?

He stops short. They look at each other, both surprised.

BARNUM

You don't think I'm going with you? *

JENNY

Why would you not?

BARNUM

I have a business to run!

JENNY

I don't know anyone in this country!

BARNUM

(exasperated)
You'll meet people!

JENNY

I need someone I can trust!

BARNUM

You can't trust me! I'm P.T. Barnum!

(CONTINUED)

She laughs, letting her eyes linger. He meets her gaze. There is a connection here. She looks at him, quizzical.

*

JENNY

This tour will make your reputation. You will be the most famous man in America. But only if you show up.

*

She smiles at him -- don't you want that? He wavers, at war with himself. Finally, he smiles and nods.

BARNUM

I'll see you on tour.

She smiles, squeezes his hand, then rises and walks out of the restaurant. Barnum looks up to see a WAITER holding the check. He takes the check and sighs, outmaneuvered again.

Phillip walks out of Barnum's office, looking at artwork for the Jenny Lind tour. He is troubled and anxious. He stops.

In the middle of the otherwise empty Museum, Anne practices her acrobatic routine, spinning on a rope high up. She is graceful, athletic, beautiful. He gazes at her with longing.

Muffled SOUNDS of a RUCKUS outside. Phillip turns, frowns.

*

EXT. BARNUM'S MUSEUM - DAY

Phillip steps outside. In front of the box office, a CROWD of PROTESTERS are gathered behind a banner, "LEAGUE OF DECENCY". They hold up signs -- "Close the Circus!" and "Protect Our Children!" A MAN with a bullhorn is shouting.

*

BULLHORN

Immoral! Indecent! Not fit for polite society! An insult to family values!

When they see him, the Protesters erupt with CATCALLS and BOOS. Phillip is taken aback by their JEERS and angry faces. Anne joins him at the door, gazing out fearfully. They share a look. Bravely, Phillip goes and confronts the Bullhorn Man.

*

*

*

*

PHILLIP

What is going on here?

*

BULLHORN

We're shutting you down!
(into bullhorn)
Freaks belong in freak shows! Not here!
Send them back where they belong!

CONTINUED:

PHILLIP

Sir, you have a right to protest, but you cannot block our ticket booth.

PROTESTER

What are you gonna do about it, boy?!

He shoves Phillip. Phillip, not a fighting man, is stunned. *

PROTESTORS

We don't want you here! You don't belong here! Go back to where you came from!

Anne is incensed. She steps out, pointing at Mr. Bullhorn.

ANNE

I'm from New York! I'm from right here!

BULLHORN

Then go back to where you belong!

PROTESTORS

That's right! Go home! Go back where you belong! Go back to Africa!

Anne is stung to the core. Phillip sees this. She turns and retreats into the museum. He runs in after her.

98-99 OMITTED

98-99

100 INT. BARNUM'S MUSEUM - NIGHT (LATER)

100

The giant space is empty, quiet. Anne sits on the edge of a trampoline, shaken and upset. Phillip stands before her, holding her hand. They are in the middle of a heart-to-heart. He is courting her, tenderly. She is sad, skeptical.

PHILLIP

You can't listen them. Those people are hateful. Ignorant. *

He tries to touch her face, but she pulls away, nervous. *

ANNE

Don't... Please... We shouldn't even be here like this. *

PHILLIP

Why not? What's wrong with our being together? *

She smiles sadly -- the question seems naive, quixotic. *

(CONTINUED)

ANNE

It is dangerous.

*
*

PHILLIP

Then let us live dangerously. I won't let those people dictate how I live.

*
*
*

ANNE

It's not just them. Look at the world... Any time I step outside this building...

*

PHILLIP

Oh, damn the world! If it is made up of fools, that is their problem, not yours!

*

She looks at him, heart melting. He leans in for a kiss. Anne leans to kiss him, then pulls away -- sad and scared.

He sees her unhappy reluctance -- he must convince her. MUSIC starts. Phillip sings a LOVE SONG with a driving beat.

PHILLIP (CONT'D)

YOU KNOW I WANT YOU
IT'S NOT A SECRET I TRY TO HIDE
I KNOW YOU WANT ME
SO WHY KEEP SAYING OUR HANDS ARE TIED?

YOU CLAIM IT'S NOT IN THE CARDS
AND FATE IS PULLING YOU MILES AWAY
AND OUT OF REACH FROM ME
BUT YOU'RE HERE IN MY HEART
SO WHO CAN STOP ME IF I DECIDE THAT
YOU'RE MY DESTINY?

She climbs the trapeze ladder... dives onto the trampoline, then bounces and rotates elegantly in the air... landing directly in front of Phillip. He pulls her into a dance.

PHILLIP (CONT'D)

SO WHAT IF WE REWRITE THE STARS
SAY YOU WERE MADE TO BE MINE
NOTHING COULD KEEP US APART
YOU'D BE THE ONE I WAS MEANT TO FIND
IT'S UP TO YOU
AND IT'S UP TO ME
NO ONE CAN SAY WHAT WE GET TO BE
SO WHY DON'T WE REWRITE THE STARS
BABY THE WORLD COULD BE OURS
TONIGHT

Phillip lets her go.

ANNE

YOU THINK IT'S EASY?
YOU THINK I DON'T WANT TO RUN TO YOU?
BUT THERE ARE MOUNTAINS
AND THERE ARE DOORS THAT WE CAN'T WALK THROUGH

*

Phillip starts up the ladder. He takes a blind leap, landing unsteadily on the trampoline. They dance again, closer now.

*

ANNE (CONT'D)

SO HOW DO WE REWRITE THE STARS?
SAY YOU WERE MADE TO BE MINE
WHEN EVERYTHING KEEPS US APART
CAN YOU BE THE ONE I WAS MEANT TO FIND
IS IT UP TO YOU?
IS IT UP TO ME?
WHEN EVERYONE TELLS US WHAT WE CAN BE
HOW DO WE REWRITE THE STARS?
CHANGING THE WORLD TO BE OURS
TONIGHT.

Phillip grabs a low-hanging trapeze and they sit on it, swinging higher and higher. They drop off the trapeze and fall to the trampoline, where they lie together, singing.

ANNE & PHILLIP

SO HOW DO WE REWRITE THE STARS
SAY YOU WERE MADE TO BE MINE
NOTHING CAN KEEP US APART
IF YOU ARE THE ONE I WAS MEANT TO FIND

*

He helps her off the trampoline. They hold each other close.

ANNE & PHILLIP (CONT'D)

IT'S UP TO YOU
AND IT'S UP TO ME
NO ONE CAN SAY WHAT WE GET TO BE
SO HOW DO WE REWRITE THE STARS
CHANGING THE WORLD TO BE OURS
TONIGHT

*

As the SONG ends, they seem about to kiss... She pulls back.

Eyes filling with tears, she shakes her head -- it can't work between them. She turns, walks away. He watches, heartbroken.

INT. BANK - PRESIDENT'S OFFICE - MANHATTAN - DUSK

Barnum sits with the BANK PRESIDENT as a CLERK enters with a sheaf of papers. He sets the papers before Barnum.

CONTINUED:

BARNUM

I appreciate your making this loan to me
on short notice...

*
*
*

BANK PRESIDENT

Usually we discourage using one's own
home as collateral. But it's quite a lot
you're borrowing for this tour...

*
*

Barnum hesitates, then signs the document.

BARNUM

Let's keep this between us, if you don't
mind. I don't want to worry Mrs. Barnum.

The banker nods, though he can't hide his concern

104

INT. BARNUM MANSION - BEDROOM - DAWN

104

Barnum finishes packing his suitcase while Charity sits up in
bed, watching him.

CHARITY

I don't understand why you're leaving.

BARNUM

I just need to be there.

CHARITY

Why? What are we risking this time?

BARNUM

Just the usual.

This is true only technically -- he is risking everything.

CHARITY

Then don't go. Don't go -- I mean it.

BARNUM

This will be the biggest musical tour in
the history of the country.

CHARITY

They'll do fine without you.

BARNUM

We're going to make millions --

CHARITY

We don't need millions.

He looks up at her, as a tear run down her face.

(CONTINUED)

CHARITY (CONT'D)

When is it going to be enough?! What's the point of it all -- those two girls, this family -- if you're never here?

*
*
*

BARNUM

I will be, as soon as the tour is over.

CHARITY

(darkly)

The tour will never be over.

BARNUM

That's ridiculous.

CHARITY

Is it? You don't need the whole world to love you, Phin. Just a few good people.

She stares at him, can feel him wavering.

CHARITY (CONT'D)

Don't go, Phin. Please.

He considers, but he's not ready to hear everything she said.

BARNUM

I have to. I'm sorry.

Barnum has turned the kick-off of the tour into a 19th century media circus, with an entire train commandeered and painted to advertise the event. Jenny Lind moves down the platform, surrounded by REPORTERS and FANS.

Barnum kisses his girls goodbye. They cry and hug him. He turns to Charity, who is still cross. He kisses her cheek.

BARNUM

I'll be back as soon as I can.

She is unrelenting. The train whistles. He shrugs sadly, turns and heads to the train. Charity eyes Jenny Lind, blowing kisses to her fans. She watches Barnum disappear onto the train. We STAY ON CHARITY as she sings "Tightrope," a song conveying her fears about Barnum leaving with Jenny.

*
*
*

CHARITY

SOME PEOPLE LONG FOR A LIFE THAT IS
SIMPLE AND PLANNED
TIED WITH A RIBBON
(MORE)

105 CONTINUED:

105

CHARITY (CONT'D)
 SOME PEOPLE WON'T SAIL THE SEA 'CAUSE
 THEY'RE SAFER ON LAND
 TO FOLLOW WHAT'S WRITTEN
 BUT I'D
 FOLLOW YOU TO THE GREAT UNKNOWN
 OFF TO A WORLD WE CALL OUR OWN

*

108 INT. THEATER - NIGHT

108 *

Jenny finishes singing on stage and basks in the loud
 applause and thrown flowers. Barnum stands in the wings,
 watching happily. She turns to smile at Barnum in the wings,
 who smiles back, elated at her reception.

*

CHARITY (V.O.)
 HAND IN MY HAND
 AND WE PROMISE TO NEVER LET GO
 WE'RE WALKIN' A TIGHTROPE

INT. RECITAL THEATER - NIGHT

*

Caroline finishes a small ballet recital with her fellow
 Ballerinas. They bow. In the audience of parents and
 friends, Charity and Helen applaud. Barnum is not there.

*

*

*

CHARITY (V.O.)
 HIGH IN THE SKY
 WE CAN SEE THE WHOLE WORLD DOWN BELOW
 WE'RE WALKING A TIGHTROPE

*

*

INT. HOUSE - LATE NIGHT

Charity walks through the giant house alone. Lonely, she
 dances by herself, imagining him there. On the floor, his
 SHADOW joins with hers, dancing, though her arms are empty.

CHARITY
 NEVER SURE, NEVER KNOW HOW FAR WE COULD FALL
 BUT IT'S ALL AN ADVENTURE THAT COMES WITH
 A BREATHTAKING VIEW
 WALKIN' A TIGHTROPE
 WITH YOU-OO-OO-OO-OO
 WITH YOU-OO-OO-OO-OO WITH YOU

110 INT. RESTAURANT - DAY

110

Barnum and Jenny are guests of honor at a huge dinner party
 in Chicago. The Mayor raises a toast to Jenny. Jenny stands
 and bows graciously. Then she reaches for Barnum. He
 resists, but she coaxes him to his feet. Everyone applauds.

*

110 CONTINUED:

110

CHARITY
MOUNTAINS AND VALLEYS AND ALL THAT WILL
COME IN BETWEEN
DESERT AND OCEAN
YOU PULL ME IN AND TOGETHER WE'RE LOST IN
A DREAM
ALWAYS IN MOTION
SO I RISK IT ALL
JUST TO BE WITH YOU
AND I RISK IT ALL
FOR THIS LIFE WE CHOOSE

111 INT. HOUSE - NIGHT 111 *

At the Barnum house, Charity and the girls eat dinner. They *
are telling stories and laughing. But Charity can't help *
notice Barnum's place at the table is conspicuously vacant. *

CHARITY (V.O.)
HAND IN MY HAND
AND WE PROMISE TO NEVER LET GO
WE'RE WALKIN' A TIGHTROPE
HIGH IN THE SKY
WE CAN SEE THE WHOLE WORLD DOWN BELOW

INT. BOOKSTORE - DAY *

At a bookstore in Kansas City, Barnum signs copies of his
latest autobiography. Jenny stands by his side, at one point
resting her hand on his shoulder in an almost wifely pose.

CHARITY (V.O.)
WE'RE WALKING A TIGHTROPE
NEVER SURE, BUT YOU'LL CATCH ME IF I SHOULD FALL

113 EXT. BOOKSTORE, NEW YORK - DAY 113 *

In New York, Charity and the girls walk up the street, in *
good spirits. They stop in front of a bookstore, surprised. *

ANGLE -- Barnum's autobiography is on display under a sign: *
NUMBER ONE BEST SELLER NEXT TO THE BIBLE! It's bittersweet *
for Caroline and Helen, a reminder of their absent father.

114 INT. THEATER - NIGHT 114 *

Another theater, another city. Jenny, now in a fur stole,
basks in yet another ecstatic response. Barnum watches from
the wings. Then Jenny turns, extends a hand to him. Barnum,
self-conscious, walks out and joins her, taking her hand.

They bow together, as the entire theater applauds. FLASHBULBS
pop, lighting them up together in the spotlight of fame.

INT. HOUSE - MORNING

Charity, Caroline, and Helen eat breakfast. Charity opens the newspaper and stops. There is a picture of Barnum and Jenny together on stage -- bowing, holding hands. *

106 EXT. TRAIN - NIGHT

106

The train whips through the countryside.

INT. TRAIN - NIGHT

Barnum sits next to Jenny, who looks out the window. Then she turns and catches his eye, offering a vulnerable smile. He smiles back, reassuring. Jenny closes her eyes, leans her head against his shoulder. Barnum lets her.

CHARITY

AND IT'S ALL AN ADVENTURE THAT COMES WITH
A BREATHTAKING VIEW
WALKIN' A TIGHTROPE
WITH YOU-OO-OO-OO-OO
WITH YOU-OO-OO-OO-OO WITH YOU
WITH YOU-OO-OO-OO-OO WITH YOU
WITH YOU

*

115 INT. CINCINNATI HOTEL - SUITE - DAY

115

Jenny opens a door and lets Barnum into her hotel suite. He sweeps in as if walking on air -- high-spirited, elated.

BARNUM

Good afternoon, Miss Lind.

JENNY

Mr. Barnum. Don't be shy. Come in.

BARNUM

I don't know if you'd had a chance to see the review in today's paper.

He holds up a folded newspaper. She plucks it from him with a self-mocking smile, turns and leads him to the living room.

JENNY

Oh, I never read reviews.

BARNUM

Neither do I. And yet here we are.

JENNY

Here we are. Did they have anything kind to say?

(CONTINUED)

He plucks the paper back out of her hand, and reads from it as Jenny sits on the couch and pours two glasses of wine.

BARNUM

"Miss Lind is a virtuoso... The diva of her generation... Her beauty surpassed only by her talent..."

He smiles, offers her the paper. She takes it and scans it quickly. Finding something, she smiles, reading aloud.

JENNY

"In bringing Miss Lind to our shores, we owe Mr. Barnum our most humble gratitude. The erstwhile showman and one-time Prince of Humbug has transformed himself into a patron of the arts and a connoisseur of the highest order."

She looks up -- happy for him. He's a bit embarrassed by how much this anonymous praise means to him. He shrugs.

BARNUM

You dream and dream... And one day it comes true.

It's touching. He's almost like a little boy. She stands and hands him a glass of wine.

JENNY

It's what you do. Make dreams come true.

She clinks his glass, takes a sip. Suddenly, he sees where this is going. He wavers -- torn between staying with her and leaving. Then he takes a quick sip, checks his watch.

BARNUM

Well, two hours to curtain. I'm due at the box office to go through receipts.

JENNY

Stay for a moment? Please? I've been alone all day.

She sits on the sofa primly. He relents and sits beside her.

BARNUM

Of course.

She looks down, staring at her drink, and laughs to herself.

BARNUM (CONT'D)

What are you laughing at?

(CONTINUED)

She shakes her head, keeps her eyes on the wine glass.

JENNY

When I first met you? I didn't know what to think. You were so... Unrefined. Unembarrassed. So vital and unafraid.

BARNUM

And what do you think of me now?

She gazes down, unable to meet his eyes.

JENNY

You have surprised the world, Mr. Barnum. And you have surprised me.

She takes his hand. He lets her. Quietly, she confesses.

JENNY (CONT'D)

You have taken me in, stolen my heart. You have become everything to me.

She looks up at him -- she is his. She leans toward him. There is no denying her beauty, or the emotion in her eyes. All he has to do is lean forward. And for a moment, he is tempted. But then, just as it seems they will kiss...

BARNUM

I must go home.

He pulls away, gets to his feet. Jenny is stunned, mortified.

JENNY

Phineas --

BARNUM

I have stayed too long. I can't be away from my family anymore. I am wasting my time here.

He immediately knows that came out wrong. Jenny turns away, stung. Barnum backtracks quickly and nervously. *

BARNUM (CONT'D)

What I mean to say is: Mr. Bennett has the itinerary well in hand. I'm not serving any real purpose here. I'm going home tomorrow. Please, tell me you'll go on without me. You must finish the tour.

She looks at him as if seeing him for the first time.

(CONTINUED)

115 CONTINUED: (3)

115

JENNY

Is that all? Do I mean nothing to you?

He can't answer. Jenny turns away, hiding her hurt.

JENNY (CONT'D)

Of course. Go home to your wife.

BARNUM

Thank you, Jenny. Thank you so much.

He starts to leave, then looks at her. Kindly, with regret.

BARNUM (CONT'D)

If I have misrepresented my intentions
toward you in any way, I am very sorry.

She nods and turns toward him, putting on a brave face.

JENNY

You'll come tonight, yes? One last show?

BARNUM

(smiles)

I wouldn't miss it.

Barnum leaves. Jenny watches the door, wiping away a single
tear. Her expression hardens as she looks in to the mirror.

116 INT. CINCINNATI THEATER - STAGE - NIGHT (LATER)

116

Yet another audience is on its feet. Jenny takes her bow.

PEOPLE IN AUDIENCE

Encore!!!

Jenny finds Barnum in the wings and summons him out. He
resists but she is insistent. Finally he steps out and bows
with her. She takes his hand and raises it with hers.

A number of camera FLASHES go off from the photographers
positioned in front of the stage. Jenny takes note of the
photographers and then, suddenly grabs Barnum and kisses him
full on the lips. In the darkness, the FLASHES continue.

Barnum pulls back in shock. She smiles at him sadly.

BARNUM

What was that?!

JENNY

Goodbye.

*

117 OMITTED

117

INT. BARNUM'S MUSEUM - NIGHT

The musical finale features most of the Oddities, including Tom, Lettie, Chang and Eng, and the Lord of Leeds. They are joined by Anne and some ACROBATS. They slowly become aware of a disturbance in the audience.

PROTESTER #1
Shut it down! Shut it down!

In the back of the hall, a group of the PROTESTERS we've seen outside earlier are causing a disturbance.

The Oddities begin to falter, unsure of themselves. They look to the wings, where Phillip stands in Barnum's place. He nods, gives them a reassuring signal. The show must go on.

PROTESTER #2
You're all freaks!

PROTESTER #3
We don't want your freak show here!

PROTESTER #4
Go back where you belong!

On stage, the troupe stops. Protesters SHOUT in unison:

PROTESTERS
Shut it down! Shut it down!

The whole show has been disrupted. Phillip leaves the wings and waves protectively to the Performers.

PHILLIP
Stand back! Stand back!

They retreat. He steps forward, addresses the Protesters.

PHILLIP (CONT'D)
Gentleman, please -- either quiet down or I'll have to ask you to leave.

PROTESTER #1
Yeah, *boy*? You gonna make us?

W.D. (O.C.)
No. I will.

Phillip turns to see W.D., pissed, come out and join him. ON ANNE, clocking her brother's defense of Phillip.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Protester #1, challenged, looks to his confederates. In unison, they charge into the ring, attacking W.D. He flattens the first Protester with a right hook. The others jump him. W.D. takes them all on, but he's outnumbered.

Phillip throws himself into the fight, pulling the Protestors off W.D. A melee breaks out, W.D. and Phillip putting up a good fight, but clearly outmatched. The AUDIENCE cries out and retreats from the ring, clutching children protectively.

The show is a shambles. The Protesters have succeeded -- they shut the Circus down. Feeling triumphant, they pump their fists and head to the exit, leaving Phillip and W.D. battered but unbroken. They all retreat into --

THE LOBBY AREA

Where the gang of Protesters suddenly stop, STARTLED to see:

A platoon of CIRCUS PERFORMERS -- twenty strong at least, not just Oddities, but jugglers, acrobats. Standing at the front, glaring, are Lettie, Tom Thumb, O'Clancy, etc. *

LETTIE

You boys don't like the circus?

(deep voice)

We don't like you either.

The Performers ATTACK. They outnumber the Protesters and, being circus performers, some of them are freakishly strong. In no time the gang is left in a pile on the floor.

TOM THUMB

(brandishes his fists)

You want more of this, fellas? I got plenty to go around!

The Protesters scramble and quickly retreat. At the door, a beaten Protester sees an oil lantern hanging on the wall.

He picks it up, turns, and throws it spitefully onto a bed of feeding hay. The lantern breaks and the hay catches fire. It spreads to curtains. Suddenly, there are fires spreading everywhere. The Performers rush to try to put them out.

The Protesters share a wicked grin, retreat into the night.

118 INT. TRAIN PLATFORM - NIGHT

118

Barnum steps off the train, carrying suitcases. He looks around. No one greets him. Then the crowd parts, he sees...

(CONTINUED)

118 CONTINUED:

118

Charity standing there. Caroline and Helen are with her. They look at him, tentative -- he's almost a stranger. He put down his suitcase, goes quickly to them and embraces her. The girls hug him too. He kisses her. She is surprised.

CHARITY

So what made you come rushing home all of a sudden?

*
*
*

BARNUM

I missed you.

She smiles slyly -- affectionate, exasperated, suspicious.

CHARITY

That sounds an awful lot like humbug.

119-20 OMITTED

119-20

121 EXT. TRAIN STATION - NIGHT

121

Barnum, Charity, Caroline and Helen step outside. Caroline, a teen, is reserved. Barnum hugs her anyway, and smiles.

BARNUM

...And how is your ballet going?

CAROLINE

We're practicing every day now. The recital is next month.

Suddenly, a FIRE WAGON races by. Another soon follows. Barnum turns, sees a young POLICEMAN running up the street.

BARNUM

What's going on?

POLICEMAN

Your place, Mr. Barnum... It's burning down!

Barnum turns to Charity and the Girls. He drops his suitcase and they all start to run.

122 EXT. BARNUM'S MUSEUM - NIGHT

122

The building is on fire. Flames and smoke pour from the windows. Barnum and Charity and the Girls arrive as just Anne and W.D. emerge from the building, helping usher out Lettie, Tom Thumb, Chang, Eng and the rest of the Oddities.

BARNUM

Where's Phillip?

(CONTINUED)

122 CONTINUED:

122

ANNE

Inside! The animals are still in cages!

Barnum hears the panicked ROAR of an elephant. He turns and runs into the building. W.D. and Anne follow him in.

123 INT. BARNUM'S MUSEUM - NIGHT

123

The place is filled with smoke. Barnum passes WAX FIGURES of Napoleon, Marie Antoinette, George Washington, all melting.

Barnum finds Phillip at the elephant cage, struggling with a ring of skeleton keys. He looks up, sees Barnum approach.

BARNUM

Thanks for looking after things...!

PHILLIP

I can't find the key!

Barnum grabs an ax and smashes the padlock. It busts open. Barnum swings the cage door open and...

124 EXT. BARNUM'S MUSEUM - BACK ALLEY - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

124

Eunice thunders into the alley, to safety.

125 INT. BARNUM'S MUSEUM - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

125

Barnum, Phillip, and W.D. hurry to throw open the doors to the horse stables. One by one, the horses bolt to safety.

Anne opens the Lion's cage. It ROARS at her fearsomely. She glares at it, raises a finger. The lion bows its head meekly. Anne waves her finger -- let's go. They leave together. *

126 EXT. BARNUM'S MUSEUM - NIGHT

126

Barnum, Phillip, and W.D. watch as the last horses exit the building. Phillip looks, doesn't see Anne. Turns to Barnum.

PHILLIP

I'm going to find Anne!

He runs back into the building before Barnum can stop him. The Oddities take refuge at a distance. Caroline glances over, notices Lettie nursing a cut on her wrist.

CAROLINE

Lettie, you're hurt...

She takes out a lace handkerchief, wraps it like a bandage.

(CONTINUED)

126

CONTINUED:

126

LETTIE

No, don't ruin your...

But it's too late. Caroline ties off the handkerchief.

LETTIE (CONT'D)

You're a true beauty, kid.

CAROLINE

So are you.

They share a smile.

A fire truck arrives. FIREMEN jump from the truck. Just then a section of the roof falls, sending embers into the sky. The entire building is now ENGULFED IN FLAMES.

Anne comes out with the lion. An animal TRAINER quickly steps up and leads the lion away. Barnum rushes up. *

ANNE

Where's Phillip?

BARNUM

You didn't see him?

Anne looks back in panic. She starts to run toward the building but Barnum grabs her. He hands her off to W.D.

BARNUM (CONT'D)

Keep her here!

Anne struggles in W.D.'s arms, then collapses into his chest. Charity, Caroline, and Helen watch in horror and disbelief as Barnum turns and runs back toward the burning building. *

FIREMAN

Hey! You can't go in there!

CAROLINE

Daddy!!!

She watches, terrified, as Barnum runs into the building.

127

INT. BARNUM'S MUSEUM - CONTINUOUS

127

Barnum holds his shirt over his mouth, calling out for Phillip as he moves through the intense heat. A BEAM, engulfed in flames, comes crashing down behind him.

128 EXT. BARNUM'S MUSEUM - CONTINUOUS 128

Charity, Caroline, Helen, Anne, W.D., and all of the Oddities watch the building in silence, as the flames devour it.

Then, through the smoke, a figure...

Barnum emerges carrying Phillip, unconscious, in his arms.

As soon as they are clear, Barnum collapses to his knees, lays Phillip on the ground. Anne runs to Phillip. Charity, Caroline, and Helen descend on Barnum, hugging him.

BARNUM

I'm okay... I'm okay...

He stands up, turns. His family gathers around him, sombre. *

The Performers -- Oddities; Acrobats; Trainers -- Barnum's whole work family, gather around him as well. Together, they stand and watch as the building, his life's work, burns up. *

Barnum turns to Charity. *

BARNUM (CONT'D)

Take the girls home. It's going to be a long night.

Charity nods. Barnum turns to see a team of FIREFIGHTERS lift Phillip's limp body, carry him toward a fire truck...

129 INT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT (LATER) 129

Phillip is laid into a hospital bed by two DOCTORS. He is unconscious, dressed in bandages. The room is large, with rows of beds. As the Doctors turn to leave, Anne steps forward, at his side, looks down, eyes full of tears.

A NURSE (white) takes her arm, trying to usher her away.

NURSE

Miss? You don't belong in here.

Anne turns on her, knocking her hand away. The Nurse recoils. She sees the hurt and anger in Anne's eyes. Prim and disapproving, she turns -- Hhhhh! -- and bustles away.

Anne turns back, sits down next to Phillip. His hand lies open, as if reaching out. She looks around, self-conscious, then reaches forward and takes his hand. *

130 OMITTED 130 *

131 EXT. BARNUM'S MUSEUM - DAWN

131 *

Burnt debris blankets the property. Barnum surveys the smoking shell of his building. Barnum falls into a sitting position, spent, gazes at the damage around him, devastated. *

Behind him, a lone figure approaches down the empty street -- Roth. Roth arrives to find Barnum, dirty with soot, gazing at the ruins of his museum. Barnum glances up, darkly. *

BARNUM

If you're here to gloat, I'd reconsider.

Roth takes out a handkerchief and wipes down a charred wooden chair before sitting down beside Barnum.

ROTH

Police caught the folks who started the fire. Just thought you'd like to know. *

Roth pulls out a flask, offers it. Barnum looks at him, wary.

ROTH (CONT'D)

Come on. You look like you could use it.

Barnum relents, takes a swig. Hands it back. Roth smiles, takes another quick nip before he pockets the flask.

ROTH (CONT'D)

You'll rebuild, I hope.

Barnum looks at him, surprised.

BARNUM

You hate the circus.

ROTH

I did, at first. It's everything a critic is supposed to hate -- big, obvious, enjoyable, fun... But when they started protesting? I had to reconsider. *

(points to ruins) *

What was going on inside those four walls...? Was democracy at its finest. A celebration of humanity in every form -- big, small, bearded, whatever. And that scares people. That's why they burned you down. It may not be art, and it's definitely lowbrow. But it ain't humbug. *

Barnum smiles, this is something he never expected to hear. *

(CONTINUED)

131 CONTINUED:

131

BARNUM

Thank God for Jenny's tour. I can borrow off those profits and rebuild --

ROTH

The tour? My God, you don't know...? *

Roth reaches into his bag and hands Barnum a morning paper.

ROTH (CONT'D)

I'm sorry. I thought you knew...!

On the front page, a PHOTO of the kiss is framed by a heart, as lurid as any modern tabloid. The headline reads, "BARNUM SCANDAL! Jenny Lind Quits U.S. Tour! Sails Today for Sweden!"

Barnum's face falls -- it's his worst nightmare.

132 EXT. NEW YORK HARBOR - DOCK - DAY

132

A CROWD of FANS and PRESS have gathered to see Jenny Lind depart. A line of PORTERS ascend the gangplank onto an OCEAN LINER. Jenny signs a last autograph, smiles for pictures. Then she steps onto the gangplank, follows the Porters up. A NOISE. She turns. It is Barnum, running up the dock. *

BARNUM

Stop! Stop! Stop right there!

He runs up the gangplank to her. He is breathing hard, red-faced, furious. She is cool as ice. *

BARNUM (CONT'D)

You cannot leave. There are forty cities left in your tour. If you break our contract, I will sue you. I will sue you for everything you are worth! *

JENNY

You've seen the papers this morning?

BARNUM

That has nothing to do with our contract!

JENNY

Indeed, it does, Mr. Barnum. Our contract has a morals clause, which you have broken with your reckless display. My reputation has suffered irreparable harm. You should be glad I am not suing you.

On Barnum, as he absorbs the full extent of her calculations. The wind goes out of him. He looks up at her, going quiet.

(CONTINUED)

132 CONTINUED:

132

BARNUM

Jenny, please. You can't leave. I risked everything on this tour.

JENNY

As did I, Phineas. It seems we both lost.

There is terrible sadness in her eyes. She turns to go.

BARNUM

Jenny. Don't. I'll lose the circus. I'll lose my home. You will ruin me.

*
*

JENNY

Maybe that's what I want.

*
*

He is stunned by her cruelty. She sees this and softens -- looking at him with hurt, regret, longing, anger, spite.

*
*

JENNY (CONT'D)

When you are careless with other people, Mr. Barnum, you bring ruin on yourself.

Then she turns, walks up the gang plank. He can't stop her.

*

133 INT. NEW YORK BANK - DAY

133

Barnum bursts in -- desperate, wild-eyed. The Banker looks up calmly, unsurprised. Barnum walks urgently toward him.

BANK PRESIDENT

Mr. Barnum. We have been expecting you.

BARNUM

My house... Please. Just give me a chance to raise the money elsewhere.

BANK PRESIDENT

You are too late. We foreclosed this morning.

Barnum is speechless. The Banker is sad, sympathetic.

BANKER

If you gamble enough times, sir, you are fated one day to lose.

134 EXT. HALLET'S HOUSE - DAY

134

Barnum's carriage pulls up in front of the house. He gets out, sees Charity carrying a last suitcase into the house. He runs after her, following her up onto the front porch.

*

(CONTINUED)

BARNUM

Charity...

CHARITY

I don't want to talk to you.

BARNUM

Come on, Charity. Nothing happened.

As he gets close, she throws the afternoon paper at him.

CHARITY

Oh, something happened. It's on the front page of every paper in New York.

BARNUM

She orchestrated the photo so she could quit the tour. I'm not in love with her.

CHARITY

Of course you're not! Not with her! Not with me! Not with anyone! Just you and your show.

*

Barnum is stung. She turns, eyes brimming with hurt. She gestures to the trunks and suitcases strewn on the lawn.

CHARITY (CONT'D)

They evicted us this morning. Just showed up and said our home was no longer ours.

BARNUM

I know. I just came from the bank.

She starts to cry. Barnum is stricken to see her so hurt.

CHARITY

Why didn't you tell me? Why didn't you talk to me? Before risking everything?

BARNUM

Charity, I will get the house back--...

CHARITY

No! Please...! No more promises...!
(shakes her head)

I married you. Not the house. Not the money. You. You saw the magic in the world. I wanted to live in that world with you...

*

*

She looks at him. Her eyes search his.

134 CONTINUED: (2)

134

CHARITY (CONT'D)

You used to think you weren't enough for me. Remember? Now we're not enough for you. Nothing is.

She turns and enters the house, slams the door. Barnum stares, for once he has nothing to say. MUSIC starts under.

135 EXT. STREET - BETHEL, CT. - DUSK

135

Barnum trudges up the road. He stops and looks up at the family mansion, dark and desolate now, with a FOR SALE.

BARNUM

I CLOSE MY EYES
AND I CAN SEE
A GIRL WAS WAITING HERE FOR ME
NOW I'M ALL ALONE

136 INT. BARNUM MANSION - NIGHT

136

Barnum stands in the vast empty house. He gazes around trying to conjure a better reality. But his imagination is gone.

BARNUM

THROUGH THE DARK
THROUGH THE DOOR
TRY TO GO BACK TO BEFORE
WHERE IT FELT LIKE HOME
NOW I KNOW
THAT I'VE BEEN CRAZY
NOW I KNOW
I'VE LOST MY MIND
ALL THESE MILLIONS OF DREAMS I CHASED WERE CRAZY
YOU WERE MORE THAN A MILLION DREAMS COMBINED

Barnum breaks down, starts to sob. MUSIC ends, and we...

*

FADE OUT

137 INT. THE "BARNUM ARMS" - NIGHT

137

Barnum sits alone at the bar, his hat in front of him beside his drink. He stares at mementoes on the wall, reminders of everything he's lost. The door opens and we see Tom Thumb.

TOM THUMB

I figured you'd end up here.

He climbs straight onto the bar and walks down it toward Barnum, carrying the "Prince of Humbug" crown in his hand.

(CONTINUED)

BARNUM

If you've come to get paid, I'm sorry.
The money's gone. All of it.

TOM THUMB

How 'bout you buy me a drink, and we'll
call it even?

He puts the crown on Barnum's head and sits on Barnum's hat.
Barnum takes off the crown, puts it on the bar, gazes at it.

TOM THUMB (CONT'D)

Lost your kingdom, huh?

BARNUM

Someone once said love your enemies --
because they will tell you the truth.

TOM THUMB

And what's the truth?

Barnum unfolds a Tribune with the Barnum scandal headline.

BARNUM

That I'm a fraud. A charlatan. Coarse.
Vulgar. Borderline criminal.

TOM THUMB

Jeez. You say that like it's a bad thing.

BARNUM

That's the good part. Underneath that?
I'm nothing. Barely human. A freak.

Hearing that word, Tom smiles, amused. He leans in.

TOM THUMB

Ya know? A very unwise man once said to
me, "Be proud of who you are".

Barnum has to smile. Tom looks up, waves, and calls out.

TOM THUMB (CONT'D)

Hey, I found him! Tolja he'd be here!

Barnum looks down the bar and sees Lettie, Chang and Eng,
Lord of Leeds, and other performers filing in. They are
smiling and relieved, happy to see Barnum. Tom turns back.

TOM THUMB (CONT'D)

That's right, Barnum. You're a freak.
A weirdo. You don't fit in. Welcome to
the human race.

(CONTINUED)

The Oddities crowd around Barnum in a show of support and gratitude. Tom leans in, heated. All joking ceases.

TOM

My mother kept me locked in a back room
for years 'cause she was ashamed of me.
It was like that for all of us. But you
pushed us in the spotlight. You told the
world stories that made them love us.
You made us into a family.

(beat)

Your humbug gave us a home, Barnum. And
we want it back.

Barnum is deeply moved. MUSIC plays UNDER as he looks at Tom, determination spreading across his face. You'd better believe he will rebuild his circus. Barnum begins to sing.

BARNUM

I SAW THE SUN BEGIN TO DIM
AND FELT THAT WINTER WIND BLOW COLD
A MAN LEARNS WHO IS THERE FOR HIM WHEN
THE GLITTER FADES AND THE BIG TOP FOLDS
'CAUSE FROM THAT RUBBLE WHAT REMAINS
CAN ONLY BE WHAT'S TRUE

IF ALL WAS LOST
THERE'S MORE I GAINED
'CAUSE IT LED ME BACK TO YOU
FROM NOW ON
THESE EYES WILL NOT BE BLINDED BY THE LIGHTS
FROM NOW ON
WHAT'S WAITED 'TIL TOMORROW STARTS TONIGHT
AND LET THIS PROMISE IN ME START
LIKE AN ANTHEM IN MY HEART
FROM NOW ON
FROM NOW ON

Barnum rides north out of Manhattan in a carriage.

BARNUM

I DRANK CHAMPAGNE WITH KINGS AND QUEENS
THE POLITICIANS PRAISED MY NAME
BUT THOSE WERE SOMEONE ELSE'S DREAMS
THE PITFALLS OF THE MAN I BECAME
FOR YEARS AND YEARS I CHASED THEIR CHEERS
A CRAZY SPEED OF ALWAYS NEEDING MORE

139 EXT. HALLET'S HOUSE - BETHEL, CT - DAY

139

Barnum stands at a distance from the house, watching as Charity and their daughters head into her childhood home.

BARNUM

BUT WHEN I STOP AND SEE YOU HERE
I REMEMBER WHO ALL OF THIS WAS FOR AND
FROM NOW ON
THESE EYES WILL NOT BE BLINDED BY THE LIGHTS
FROM NOW ON
WHAT'S WAITED 'TIL TOMORROW STARTS TONIGHT
AND LET THIS PROMISE IN ME START
LIKE AN ANTHEM IN MY HEART
FROM NOW ON
FROM NOW ON

*

The MUSIC quiets but continues UNDER...

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

The dim, quiet hospital room. Curtains drawn. Phillip lies in bed, still unconscious. Anne sits next to him, bent over with exhaustion, head bowed. But still holding his hand. In the background, Doctors and Nurses quietly do their rounds.

CLOSE ON -- His hand. Gently, it twitches, grasping hers. She raises her head, disbelieving. She clutches his hand, squeezing... He stirs. Then his eyes open. He sees her.

PHILLIP

You're here.

A tear falls down her cheek.

ANNE

"Here" is where I belong.

They share a tearful smile. A passing NURSE notices he is awake and waves to others. A handful of Doctors and Nurses gather at the foot of the bed.

She leans in and kisses him on the lips, unafraid and unashamed. He wraps his arms around her, kissing her back.

*

*

140 INT. CHARITY'S HOUSE - BETHEL, CT. - DAY

140

The MUSIC rises briefly, but continues UNDER as...

Barnum strides up the front walk, in a mirror of the elopement scene. As he steps onto the porch, Mr. Hallett opens the front door, looks at Barnum with withering disdain.

(CONTINUED)

BARNUM

Mr. Hallet, it seems I am the penniless bum you always said I was. But I am in love with your daughter, and if you don't mind, I like to see my wife.

MR. HALLETT

She's not here.

Mr. Hallet moves to close the door, but Barnum stops him. *

BARNUM

Where is she?

MR. HALLETT

She doesn't want to see you!

BARNUM

Where is she?!

Hallett moves again to shut the door. Barnum blocks him.

CAROLINE (O.C.)

She's at the beach!

They turn. Caroline and Helen are at the top of the stairs. He smiles. They smile back. He nods -- thank you! -- turns... *

Silence. Charity gazes out at the wintry surf. She looks sad, lost, lonely. The beach is familiar, it's where they played as kids. Then something catches her eye. She turns.

In the distance, Barnum walks towards her.

His stride is purposeful, but he is a man stripped bare. No cockiness or pride. No dazzle or glitz. He is a man at the end of a very long journey, whose prize is finally in sight.

She's taken aback -- she's never seen him like this. As he draws closer, she can see the pain and sorrow in his eyes. *

As they meet, he stops short -- not wanting to say the wrong thing. But his eyes betray how desperately he wants her back.

BARNUM

Caroline was kind enough to tell me where you were.

She nods but says nothing, watching him warily. Barnum looks away, vulnerable. He falters, searching for the right words.

BARNUM (CONT'D)

I have brought hardship on myself, and
visited pain upon those I cherish most
dearly. You warned me of my folly, and I
would not listen.

*
*

MUSIC starts under. He keeps his eyes averted, downcast.

*

BARNUM (CONT'D)

If you have no warmth in your heart for
me, say the word and I will never trouble
you again. But if the case is otherwise,
then you should know...

(looks at her)

...That I am yours, body and soul. It is
your smile, your laughter, that has been
my guiding star. Without it, the rest is
dust and ashes... I know that now.

Her eyes fill with tears. He looks at her with yearning.

BARNUM (CONT'D)

FOR YEARS AND YEARS I CHASED THEIR CHEERS
A CRAZY SPEED OF ALWAYS NEEDING MORE

He takes her hand. She draws close to him.

BARNUM (CONT'D)

BUT WHEN I STOP AND SEE YOU HERE
I REMEMBER WHO ALL OF THIS WAS FOR
FROM NOW ON, FROM NOW ON

Charity hugs him, touching her forehead to his. A quiet
moment. They are intimate again. He confesses in a whisper.

BARNUM (CONT'D)

I wanted to be better than who I was.
And I lost my way...

*
*

Charity reaches for his face and lifts it to face hers.

CHARITY

I never wanted anything but you. The man
I fell in love with.

*
*

Barnum's eyes fill with tears. He's got her back.

BARNUM

That is the man I will be. From now on.
(beat)
Charity...

*
*

(CONTINUED)

141 CONTINUED: (2)

141

CHARITY

Stop selling already and kiss me.

They kiss.

142 EXT. BANK - MANHATTAN - DAY

142

Barnum steps out of the bank, loosening his tie.

PHILLIP (O.C.)

Did they say no?

Barnum looks up to see Phillip, now fully recovered, joining him. Barnum offers a small smile, glad to see him.

BARNUM

Emphatically. Repeatedly.

(shakes his head)

I used to thrive on rejection -- educated men sitting behind desks telling me what I can't do. But after twenty or thirty times, it starts to wear a fellow down.

He sits on the bank steps -- worn out, losing hope.

BARNUM (CONT'D)

I don't think there's a single sucker in this country that I can fool into giving me money anymore.

Phillip sits next to him -- calm and philosophical.

PHILLIP

You know, Barnum? When I first met you, I had an inheritance. I had acclaim. I had invitations to every party in town. And now, thanks to you, that's gone.

Barnum looks at him -- where's this going?

PHILLIP (CONT'D)

All that's left now is friendship, my love with Anne, and work I adore. So thanks a lot, Barnum.

(turning serious)

You brought joy into my life, where there was none before. It's the one thing you're good at.

BARNUM

Yes, unfortunately, banks don't accept joy as collateral.

(CONTINUED)

PHILLIP

Still, there's a few suckers out there.

Barnum looks at him -- what does that mean? Phillip grins.

PHILLIP (CONT'D)

I own ten percent of the show, remember?
I've been taking my cut every week. If
it helps, I've got about twelve thousand
stashed away.

Barnum looks at Phillip, surprised. He grins.

BARNUM

But I can't let you gamble it all on me.

PHILLIP

Come on. Has there ever been a man in
this country who's created so much out of
sheer imagination? It's not a gamble.

Barnum smiles. Phillip puts out his hand.

BARNUM

Partners?

Beat. Barnum takes his hand, and they shake. They stand up.

PHILLIP

You know it's not enough to buy a new
building...

*
*

BARNUM

Oh, we don't need a building! I can get
land down by the docks for nothing! What
we really need is a tent! A big one!
Colorful and festive! That will make you
stop and want to see what's inside...!

*
*
*
*
*

Phillip grins. As they walk off, Barnum puts his arm around
him, spinning his latest vision.

BARNUM (CONT'D)

...The great thing about a tent is when
you're done with it, you take it down,
pack it up, take it on the road! Don't
you see? With a tent we can go anywhere!
Why, the world itself becomes our home!

*

PHILLIP

It's good to have you back, PT.

PRELAP: Music.

143 EXT. BROOKLYN RIVERBANK - DAY

143

A SLEDGEHAMMER hits a metal stake, driving it deep into the ground. We WIDEN to find DOZENS OF WORKERS across the field. Barnum pitches in, sleeves rolled, honest sweat on his brow. Phillip picks up a sledgehammer and joins the others.

ODDITIES & WORKERS
FROM NOW ON

BARNUM
THESE EYES WILL NOT BE BLINDED BY THE LIGHTS

ODDITIES & WORKERS
FROM NOW ON

BARNUM
WHAT'S WAITED 'TIL TOMORROW STARTS TONIGHT

BARNUM (CONT'D) FREAKS
AND LET THE PROMISE IN ME AH *

START
LIKE AN ANTHEM IN MY HEART AH

ODDITIES & BARNUM
FROM NOW ON, FROM NOW ON

BARNUM FREAKS
FROM NOW ON AND WE WILL COME BACK HOME *

FROM NOW ON AGAIN

FROM NOW ON AND WE WILL COME BACK HOME
AGAIN

BARNUM
AND WE WILL COME BACK HOME AGAIN

MUSIC ends.

144 EXT. BROOKLYN RIVERBANK - DAY

144

Phillip and Anne are married on a Sunday morning. Except for *
W.D., both families have boycotted the ceremony. *

But the bride and groom are surrounded by their adopted family of circus performers, with Caroline and Helen as flower girls, and Barnum and Charity bearing witness.

145 EXT. BROOKLYN RIVERBANK - DUSK 145

The glorious tent, the first, is pitched and ready to go. The attractions are all here, as well as dozens of animals and TRAINERS, and other CREW. The anticipation is palpable.

The sun sets and dozens of CARBON ARC LAMPS blast on, bathing the circus in a warm glow. We CUT TO:

146 EXT. BROOKLYN RIVERBANK - DUSK (LATER) 146

Barnum stands watching as, in the distance, CROWDS stream into the tent. Phillip walks up, joins him. Barnum turns.

BARNUM
I have a job for you.

PHILLIP
I thought I had a job.

BARNUM
The circus has three rings now. There's a lot happening. We need a master of ceremonies to guide the audience.

He takes off his Top Hat, hands it over. A DRUM begins UNDER. *

BARNUM (CONT'D)
Congratulations. You're the Ringmaster.

PHILLIP
But I'm not a performer.

BARNUM
Everyone's got an act, Mr. Carlyle.

Phillip smiles, recalling the first words Anne said to him.

BARNUM (CONT'D)
I'd do it myself, but I plan to be busy.

PHILLIP
Doing what?

BARNUM
Watching my girls grow up.

147 INT. CIRCUS TENT - DUSK 147

We return to Barnum's reverie from the opening of the movie: Barnum gazes at the crowd, taking in the joy and excitement all around him. SOUND FADES. In a wistful moment, he sings to himself about the long road it took to get here. *

(CONTINUED)

BARNUM
IF IT WEREN'T FOR THE DARKNESS
THAT FALLS EVERY NIGHT
HOW WOULD WE KNOW
THAT THE SUN GIVES US LIGHT

Barnum watches proudly as Phillip puts on his top hat, then steps into the rings -- the new Ringmaster. SOUND returns. *

Barnum checks his pocket watch, then turns. Eunice, the elephant, is held by a Trainer at the edge of the tent.

EXT. FIFTH AVENUE - DUSK

Barnum rides Eunice down Fifth Avenue, drawing stares and Gawkers. KIDS run along side, thrilled to see an elephant.

EXT. METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART - DUSK

Charity, Caroline, and Helen wait on the steps of the Met. Caroline wears a tutu under her coat. Around them, Parents and young Ballerinas climb the stairs and stream into the museum entrance. A small banner reads, "Metropolitan Annual Ballet Recital". Charity checks a distant tower clock. Helen sees something, points. They all react with disbelief. *

ANGLE -- Barnum rides Eunice up towards the Met steps.

BARNUM
WE'D NEVER LOSE OUR WAY
IF WE DIDN'T DARE TO ROAM
TO WANDER FROM THE PATH
IS HOW YOU KNOW YOU'RE HOME *

Helen giggles. Charity smiles, shakes her head. Caroline hides her face in her hands, but she is laughing -- she has accepted Barnum for who he is, grand gestures and all.

INT. CIRCUS TENT - DUSK *

Phillip stands in the center ring and gazes in wonder as the circus goes full throttle all around him. He turns to Anne and sings. She smiles affectionately at her new husband. *

PHILLIP
YOU MAKE ME REAL
MAKE ME FEEL I'M ALIVE *

ANNE
LOVE CAN REVEAL
EVERY REASON TO SURVIVE *

He puts an arm around her. She wraps her arms around him. *

EXT. METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART - DUSK *

Barnum slides down Eunice's trunk, hands a leash to a startled young VALET. He strides up to his family. *

BARNUM *
WITHOUT YOU ALL THE RICHES *
IN THE WORLD ADD UP TO NONE *
WITHOUT YOU ALL THE THINGS *
WE LOVE TO DO *
AREN'T HALF AS FUN *

They hug him, then turn and sing together.

ALL
ALL THE WONDERS IN THE WORLD
AND THE ONES WE'VE YET TO VIEW
WOULDN'T BE SO WONDERFUL
IF IT WEREN'T FOR YOU

Barnum, his arms around his wife and daughters, turn and walk up the Museum steps together.

148 EXT. CIRCUS TENT - NIGHT (2015) 148

The Big Top, lit within, stands on the Brooklyn shore. MUSIC plays UNDER as we hear the CROWD APPLAUD inside the tent.

We CRANE UP, rising high, as FIREWORKS explode across sky, we CIRCLE AROUND to SEE the across the river is the contemporary skyline of Manhattan. Barnum's legacy still stands -- more than a century later -- as The Greatest Show On Earth.

FADE TO BLACK

TITLE CARD:

"The noblest art is that of making others happy"
-- P. T. Barnum