

# **SIDESHOW ALLEY**

**2-Act play By**

**Ray Mooney 1992**

## **SETTING**

The show is set in an imaginary showground in the early sixties and requires the façade of three sideshow alley tents: a music tent, a boxing tent and a tent that represents an eclectic combination of various sideshow alley tents.

## **CHARACTERS**

At a pinch the play can be performed with 3 males, 3 females.

Alternatively, you may use any number to play up to 20 characters, though some of the double-up must be played by the same actor, e.g. Pee Wee and Lamppost Jack – and Cassie Clay and Cathy, Wayne and Elvis Impersonator.

Ideally 3 males and 4 females are required.

Here's a suggestion how 7 actors can share the roles:

### **MALE 1**

Bowyang: Sideshow Alley promoter/spruiker

### **MALE 2**

Ginger: Bowyang's 1<sup>st</sup> assistant

Pee Wee: World's tallest midget

Lamppost Jack: World's smallest giant

Fighter: Boxing tent fighter

Promoter: (flashback)

### **MALE 3**

Wayne: Bowyang's 2<sup>nd</sup> assistant, ticket seller, Elvis impersonator Man Eating Shark

Promoter's assistant: (flashback)

Fighter: Boxing tent fighter

Velvet Green: ` Boxing tent fighter (female impersonator)

### **FEMALE 1**

Cindy: Promoter/Spruiker, rock'n'roll singer and dancer

### **FEMALE 2**

Lost girl

Showgirl: Bowyang's 3<sup>rd</sup> assistant

Singer: Singer in Cindy's band

Management

Committee: One half on committee (Siamese twins)  
Fighter: Josephine- female boxer  
Bella: A fortune teller  
The world's funniest woman  
Bearded Nun  
Wild woman from the Congo

#### FEMALE 3

Showgirl: Bowyang's 4<sup>th</sup> assistant  
Singer: Singer in Cindy's band Management  
Committee: One half of Committee (Siamese twins)  
Fighter: Cassie Clay – female boxer  
Cathy: Impersonator  
The giraffe woman from Burma

#### FEMALE 4

Candy: Traditional candy girl/souvenir salesperson for Bowyang  
Pig-faced lady  
X-ray vision lady

If considering only using 6 actors, then females 3 and 4 can be combined.

The play is dedicated to my old man, Jack Mooney, 1929-1999, an original Bowyang.

(The play can begin in the 'foyer' as the audience assemble by having cast and F/X create showground atmosphere. The cast might banter, juggle, hand out advertising, etc. *Alternatively, the play can begin in the theatre. BOWYANG appears in checkered coat, boater hat and holding a cane.*)

#### BOWYANG

Step right up Ladies and Gentlemen. Hurry, hurry, hurry. Step right up for the thrill of a lifetime. My what a lovely crowd we have this evening. Isn't it great to be among friends? Tonight's show, Ladies and Gentlemen, I can promise you, will be bigger and better than ever. You will witness sights never seen before in this country. Have you ever seen Wild Women from the Congo? No? Then come in and see a Wild Woman from the Congo, a sight so awesome even I shudder each time her cage is wheeled out. That's right Ladies and Gentlemen, she's so dangerous we have to keep her in a cage.

#### GINGER

(Pretending to be an audience member) Where's she from?

#### BOWYANG

The Congo. I just said that.

GINGER

Where's that?

BOWYANG

Come in and find out.

*(GINGER attempts to enter, moving 'Congo' style. BOWYANG stops him.)*

BOWYANG

You'll need a ticket, Lad.

GINGER

You said I could come in.

BOWYANG

And so you can, Lad. Just hop over there and get yourself a ticket.

*(GINGER buys a ticket from WAYNE who's 'selling' tickets among the audience.)*

BOWYANG

Think of it as an investment in your future, Lad. Yes, Ladies and Gentlemen step right up because we promise to send you home laughing. Marvel at PeeWee Small Bone and Lamppost Jack defying anatomical logic with their human disproportions. Who wants to know their future? (pointing to a FEMALE AUDIENCE MEMBER) Would you like to know if that tall dark handsome stranger is just around the corner? (pointing to another AUDIENCE MEMBER) Whether or not you're going to be rich? Then get yourself a ticket to see Bella the Fortune Teller.

GINGER

Who's gonna win the Melbourne Cup? (This could be anything relevant, Grand Final, Election, etc.)

BOWYANG

Come in and find out.

GINGER

They can tell you who's gonna win the Melbourne Cup?

BOWYANG

Son, they can tell you what the horse even had for breakfast.

WAYNE

*(aside to audience)* Corn Flakes.

GINGER

Before it happens?

BOWYANG

That's what fortune telling's all about, Son. So, get your tickets, Ladies and Gentlemen.

GINGER

What else d'you see?

BOWYANG

You ever seen a real live Mermaid?

GINGER

Course I have.

BOWYANG

Oh! And where did you see this live Mermaid, Son?

GINGER

At the Fitzroy Baths.

BOWYANG

Hah!

GINGER

Through a hole in the sheila's changing rooms. And if you wanta buy a ticket off me I'll give *you* a look.

BOWYANG

That's very good, Son, but can she sing under water, this Mermaid of yours?

GINGER

Come down and have a look.

BOWYANG

Have they got a live Man-Eating Shark?

GINGER

The water's that dirty they could have anything.

BOWYANG

We don't have those problems in here. So, step right up, Ladies and Gentlemen, and see the world's largest Man-Eating Shark.

GINGER

Who, you?

BOWYANG

Very funny, Son. But let's see how funny he is when he comes face to face with the most ferocious species on the face of this earth.

*(CINDY and CATHY enter. They hand out flyers for their show. WAYNE, immediately captivated by CATHY'S beauty, drops to his knees.)*

CINDY

(to the audience) Hallo, h'you going?

BOWYANG

Eh, excuse me, Miss, what're you doing?

CINDY

Handing these out.

BOWYANG

No, no, you can't do that here.

CINDY

Says who?

BOWYANG

Look, Luv, speak to the Management Committee. They make the rules, not me.

CINDY

I've paid my license fee.

BOWYANG

Not for this area you haven't, Luv. This is my area. You can't just waltz in here and set up anywhere you like you know. Try the cattle pavilion.

CINDY

Well I'm sorry. I thought it was a free country.

BOWYANG

So it is, Luv, (aside to audience) after you've paid your dues.

CINDY

I told you I already have.

BOWYANG

Look, Luv, did you fight in the last war? No of course not. Now you'll have to move on.

*(BOWYANG motions for WAYNE to evict CATHY which he does, then attempts to usher CINDY out but CINDY avoids him)*

CINDY

If you people want to see a fairdinkum show come and see The Wild Animals.

BOWYANG

Have you got a Spruiker's Licence?

CINDY

A what?

BOWYANG

I thought not. If you don't leave immediately, I'll get the management Committee!

*(WAYNE enters blowing kisses to CATHY)*

CINDY

*(leaving)* Tell them Cindy sent you and you'll be guaranteed a seat in the front row.

BOWYANG

Wayne, collect those pamphlets, will you?

*(WAYNE collects the flyers from the audience)*

BOWYANG

I'm sorry about this, Ladies and Gentlemen, but I'm just like the rest of you round here, just a number. *(aside to WAYNE)* Only difference is I'm number one. Where were we? Ah yes, the most ferocious species on the earth.

*(A YOUNG GIRL, 'lost' exits from the theatre, or the entrance to the Sideshow Tent.)*

YOUNG GIRL

Ah, excuse me...

BOWYANG

What now?

YOUNG GIRL

Where's the bloody exit?

GINGER

She doesn't look scared to me.

BOWYANG

She probably took the wrong turn.

GINGER

What was the shark like?

BOWYANG

It's the other door, Luv. You're supposed to use the other door.

YOUNG GIRL

Why don't you put a sign up?

BOWYANG

Speak to the Management Committee, Luv.

YOUNG GIRL

I will, don't you worry about that, Pop!

BOWYANG

And while you're at it get them to teach you some manners. In my day children respected their elders.

YOUNG GIRL

In your day, Pop, people didn't need manners. They were still living in caves. Where's the dunny?

BOWYANG

(pushing her with his cane) Out!

YOUNG GIRL

Get your grub hooks off or I'll bop you one!

GINGER

What was the shark like?

YOUNG GIRL

I've seen worse sharks in a used car yard.

GINGER

Is it dangerous?

YOUNG GIRL

Dangerous? The shark? It's a bloody photograph, you Drongo.

GINGER

(to the audience) Forget it. It's a bloody con!

BOWYANG

Don't take any notice of her.

GINGER

She said it was a photo.

BOWYANG

She did not! You come inside, Ladies and Gentlemen and I'll guarantee you'll see a real live Man-Eating Shark in person.

GINGER

You're a charlatan.

BOWYANG

And to show you old Bowyang holds no grudges I'll refund this lad his money because he's obviously too young to appreciate the mystical wonders of the world.

*(WAYNE goes to refund GINGER his money.)*

GINGER

I don't want a refund. I want to see a real live Man-Eating Shark, or I'll tell my old man who happens to be an Inspector of Police.

BOWYANG

I guarantee you on the lives of my thirteen children. That's right, thirteen. I had a hard life. Mum threw me out to work when I was only six.

WAYNE

(aside) Twenty-eight.

BOWYANG

I guarantee you'll see a real live Man-Eating Shark.

GINGER

And if we don't? Give us double our money back?

BOWYANG

(contemplating) Alright, I promise them double their money back.





Well muck around on your own time.

WAYNE

(leaving and clicking his fingers at the UNRESPONSIVE PERSON.)  
You'll keep!

BOWYANG

On with the show, Ladies and Gentlemen. (BOWYANG notices the music tent for the first time.) Wayne?

WAYNE

Yes, Boss?

BOWYANG

What in the blazes is that?

WAYNE

Dunno, boss. Want me to find out?

BOWYANG

Course I bloody do! (WAYNE eagerly runs behind the music tent) The Management Committee promised me no one would be using that space.

*(Suddenly loud rock'n'roll testing music comes from the tent. BOWYANG holds his ears. WAYNE puts his head around the side of the tent to indicate he doesn't know what's happening. He disappears and seconds later the music stops. BOWYANG forces a smile)*

BOWYANG

While you're recovering, Ladies and Gentlemen, let me introduce you to the lovely Candy who will cater to your every need.

*(BOWYANG indicates for a reluctant CANDY to come centre stage. WAYNE appears, pleased with himself for having stopped the music and smiles to an appreciative BOWYANG. CINDY briefly appears from inside her tent and watches BOWYANG.)*

BOWYANG

Meet the lovely people, Candy. (An embarrassed CANDY slightly curtsies.) Now tell the lovely people what you have for them.

CANDY

(stage frightened) Ah, ah--

BOWYANG

In the packets, Luv. What's the pink stuff you have in the packets?

CANDY

Ah yes, hee, hee, Momma's Home-Made Fairy Floss.

BOWYANG

(indicating for CANDY to hold up a packet) That's right, Ladies and Gentlemen, Momma's Home-Made Fairy Floss guaranteed to turn your horse-piddle bright red.

*(CANDY giggles and feigns embarrassment. BOWYANG points to a MALE AUDIENCE MEMBER)*

BOWYANG

I can tell from the colour of your face, Sir, you'd better not have any more. And what else can you tell the lovely people, Candy?

CANDY

Um--? (BOWYANG encourages her to think) "Whether it be cold or whether it be hot, there shall be weather whether or not."

BOWYANG

Hah ha, very good, Candy. Everyone wants to be in on the act. What did I tell you before the show?

CANDY

Oh that, "Do, do, do. Be always on the do. If you don't do them, they'll do you."

BOWYANG

In the tray, nincompoop! In the tray!

CANDY

Pardon?

BOWYANG

The souvenirs!

CANDY

Oh, hee, hee, yes of course. Uncle Ben's, that's you, tea towels. (she holds a tea towel up) And a special tea spoon, (holds a tea spoon up) to ah--

*(BOWYANG mouths the words and prods her with his cane. She jumps as if receiving an electric shock)*

CANDY

--Oh, yes, to remember the occasion by.

*(CINDY sits among the audience)*

BOWYANG

That's right, Ladies and Gentlemen, only five bob for a once in a life time opportunity to own a genuine piece of Australiana.

CINDY

Five bob!

BOWYANG

(not recognising CINDY) I know, I'm giving them away, but what the heck? Money isn't everything.

CINDY

Five bob's bloody highway robbery!

BOWYANG

You look like a clean potato, Luv, so I can let you into a little secret. We were a poor family. A Baker's dozen. The only book we could afford was the good Bible. I never owned a toy.

CINDY

So, you're making up for it now?

BOWYANG

(indicating WAYNE to check her out) Have you got a ticket?

CINDY

Course I have! Have you?

*(She gives WAYNE a filthy look. WAYNE Zzzzzzzzzst's her behind her back before leaving)*

BOWYANG

But when I was eleven, I was the best dishwasher in the business. And at twelve I could sell you Monday's Herald on Sunday and still get a tip.

CINDY

What about the shark? Show us the shark.

BOWYANG

(realising who she is) Oh it's not you again. look, we normally keep that for the last show, Luv.

CINDY

I want to see it now. You promised us double our money back. You haven't even got one, have you?

BOWYANG

I have so?

CINDY

I had a look out the back and there's nothing there.

BOWYANG

(motioning to WAYNE who hurries behind the tent) Rubbish!

CINDY

Then why can't we see it now?

BOWYANG

It's just that... You see he hasn't been fed yet. The bullocks we ordered from the abattoirs haven't arrived.

CINDY

Just show us the shark!

BOWYANG

It's too dangerous before he's fed.

CINDY

Show us the shark or I'll report you to the Management Committee.

BOWYANG

Management Committee, hah ha. We went to school together, Luv.

CINDY

Show us the shark or give us double our money back now.

BOWYANG

Hold your horses.

CINDY

Give us double our money back or I'm getting the cops.

BOWYANG

If that's your attitude. Don't say you weren't warned. Grab hold of your kids, Ladies and Gentlemen. I take no responsibility if anyone from the audience gets eaten. Ginger, have you got the ambulance on standby?

GINGER

(off stage) Sure, Boss.

*(There is a drum roll and two SHOWGIRLS bring on the 'Man-Eating Shark', which they obscure from the audience's view with a curtain.)*

BOWYANG

There, Ladies and Gentlemen, is the world's most ferocious Man-eating Shark, live on stage. That's something you'll be able to tell your grandchildren. Alright take the shark away.

CINDY

We can't see the bloody thing!

BOWYANG

There's no need for that language.

CINDY

(walking on stage) I'm having a look.

BOWYANG

(attempting to prevent her) I can't let you. I have a responsibility for the safety of the public.

*(CINDY evades BOWYANG and goes behind the curtain. She screams)*

BOWYANG

I told you how dangerous it was.

*(CINDY pulls the curtain from away from the SHOWGIRLS to reveal WAYNE sitting on a stool and eating a piece of fish.)*

CINDY

(returning to the audience) I knew there was something fishy about this!

BOWYANG

Never let it be said that Honest Bowyang doesn't keep his word. That piece of fish that young Wayne is eating is genuine shark caught this morning in our very own bay. Take it away.

*(The SHOWGIRLS and WAYNE exit.)*

CINDY

I'm putting in a complaint about you.

BOWYANG

That's right, strangle a man's livelihood into impotence.

CINDY

You call ripping people off a livelihood?

BOWYANG

I didn't rip anybody off!

CINDY

What did they get for their money then?

BOWYANG

I made them laugh, didn't I?

CINDY

You didn't make me laugh.

BOWYANG

Because you're a graduate of the goody-two shoes brigade, the wowsers.

CINDY

That's a laugh.

BOWYANG

The 'We Only Want Social Evils Remedied', brigade.

CINDY

It's not being a wowser to complain about being ripped off, Pop.

BOWYANG

I've never ripped anybody off in my life. And don't call me Pop!

CANDY

Get your souvenirs, Ladies and Gentlemen. Genuine Man-Eating Shark teeth. (holds up a large plastic shark tooth) One of these, girls and you can make a lovely necklace to hang round his neck. Only five shillings for a genuine shark tooth.

CINDY

Five shillings!

CANDY

How many would you like, Dear?

CINDY

Beat it!

*(Loud rock'n'roll music can be heard from the Music Tent. CINDY dances to the music.)*

BOWYANG

What in the blazes!

CINDY

Now that's what I call entertainment. Anyone want to dance?

BOWYANG

(screaming) Wayne! Wayne!

*(The music stops. WAYNE enters smiling and holding an electric lead. BOWYANG smiles. CATHY pops her head out of the Music Tent)*

CINDY

Hey!

*(CINDY angrily storms off.)*

BOWYANG

The best way to forget your problems, Luv, is to help someone else.

*(WAYNE runs to the back of the Music Tent)*

WAYNE

I'll help.

BOWYANG

And now, Ladies and Gentlemen, the show you've all paid to see. The world's minutest anatomical wonder, PeeWee Small Bone in person, a pigmy of ancient mythology, a direct descendant of the one and only Tom Thumb. PeeWee Small Bone is the least man you'll ever see, Ladies and Gentlemen. So diminutive is he that he once imagined the water-filled footprint of a cow to be a lake and nearly drowned. Without any further ado, let me proudly introduce you to--

*(A nose appears at the bottom of BOWYANG'S tent. It belongs to GINGER.)*

PEEWEE

I'm not ready yet, Mr Bowyang.

BOWYANG

Hah ha, Ladies and Gentlemen, just a small hitch. You know what it can be like living with a mad assortment of people.



WAYNE

(rushing on stage) I can fill in boss.

BOWYANG

Not now. Go and help Ginger. I mean PeeWee.

*(As WAYNE despondently leaves, he zzzzzzzzzst's the unresponsive AUDIENCE MEMBER. BOWYANG checks the tent.)*

BOWYANG

He's just making his bed. Actually, I have a replica of his first bed somewhere. (taking a matchbox from his pocket) Yes, here it is. Candy. (CANDY hurries over) Remind me to add this to our souvenir memorabilia. PeeWee's first bed, only five and six. What else do we have on special, Candy?

CANDY

(holding a toy soldier) We have a life-sized replica of Uncle HeeHee (holding a miniature tooth brush) and a tooth brush owned by PeeWee. Isn't it tiny? (holding a miniature pot) And a pottie used by Nana WeeWee.

BOWYANG

To do poo poos.

CANDY

And you can buy any of these at our specially discounted price of two and six each.

BOWYANG

Did I tell you that at birth PeeWee's mouth was so small he had to be weaned on a chihuahua dog?

PEEWEE

I'm ready, Mr Bowyang.

BOWYANG

He's ready, Ladies and Gentlemen

*(CINDY sits in the audience. She glares at BOWYANG)*

BOWYANG

However, let me caution you that if you so much as upset him with silly questions or doubting looks then he can turn any gold coins you may have on you into bronze. On the other hand, if you placate him with gifts, and

please, Ladies and Gentlemen, no small silver, he takes that as a personal insult about his size, then he can make your wildest dreams come true. (directly at CINDY) Even give your obnoxious children in-grown toe nails.

*(There is a drum roll as the two SHOWGIRLS appear holding a curtain. At the end of the drum roll they reveal PEEWEE, who is GINGER kneeling on small shoes and dressed in oversized clothes. The SHOWGIRLS assist PEEWEE with giggles, smiles and 'boom' 'booms' at the end of his jokes. WAYNE walks around the audience attempting to solicit donations.)*

PEEWEE

I may not be able to reach the top shelf, but I can certainly touch the floor faster than you can.

*(PEEWEE touches the floor faster than the SHOWGIRLS.)*

BOWYANG

And did you know, Ladies and Gentlemen, Attila the Hun was a dwarf?

CINDY

He was not!

BOWYANG

It's true! And Julius Caesar.

CINDY

This is ridiculous!

BOWYANG

Julius Caesar was raised in a parrot's cage for most of his childhood.

CINDY

Absolute rubbish!

BOWYANG

Brutus was only trying to stab him in the ankle to slow him down.

PEEWEE

Alas poor Brutus, I knew him well. Romeo, Romeo, where for art thou?

BOWYANG

He can quote Shakespeare verbatim. Tell the people what your motto is, PeeWee.

PEEWEE

Think big.

BOWYANG

And what advice have you got for the people, PeeWee?

PEEWEE

Remember that pygmies placed on the shoulders of giants see more than the giants themselves.

BOWYANG

Yes, Ladies and Gentlemen, we must all learn to appreciate the smaller qualities of life. Did you know that PeeWee once escaped certain execution from the Nazis by hiding in the pint-sized hole of a Swiss cheese? Have you anything further to tell these lovely people, PeeWee?

PEEWEE

When I walk into a bar there's always trouble.

BOWYANG

Trouble? Why's that, PeeWee?

PEEWEE

Because I can't reach the bar.

CINDY

He's not a midget. I'm a midget compared to him and I have no trouble reaching the bar.

BOWYANG

Didn't anyone ever tell you short visits make for long friends? Yes, Ladies and Gentlemen PeeWee's only small in size. And for his finale PeeWee Small Bone will sing a little number he devised himself.

*(BOWYANG gives the SHOWGIRLS flutes. Taped opera is played. PeeWee mimes as BOWYANG conducts. CINDY leaves the audience and passes between tents. At the conclusion of the opera BOWYANG and PEEWEE bow. Suddenly the tape restarts. Caught off guard they all attempt to mime. CINDY, smiling, appears at her tent. WAYNE hurries between tents.)*

BOWYANG

Turn the bloody thing off! (the opera stops) Hah ha, he's also the world's smallest ventriloquist, Ladies and Gentlemen. And for a small fee you can take him home and watch him climb up your bonsai. A big hand for the little man, Ladies and Gentlemen.

*(The SHOWGIRLS cover PEEWEE with the curtain, and they exit)*

BOWYANG

And for the souvenir connoisseurs among you we have the bargain of a lifetime. Tell the good people what you have for them, Candy.

CANDY

(hurrying centre stage and holding up doll's shoes) We have our miniature booties on special. These were the actual shoes PeeWee wore on his twenty-first birthday (holding up a tennis ball) And here we have an autographed basketball PeeWee played with. (holding up a pencil) And here we have PeeWee's extended walking stick.

BOWYANG

Give them the special discount, Candy.

CANDY

And you can purchase any of these fabulous items at our special discounted price of four and eleven pence.

*(CINDY returns to the audience.)*

BOWYANG

Generously discounted down from five shillings.

CINDY

One penny?

CANDY

That's right, Madam, how many would you like?

CINDY

Scram!

BOWYANG

Blessed are they who expect nothing, for they shall not be disappointed. And now, Ladies and Gentlemen, something completely different, a sight that will take you on an anatomical roller coaster and leave you revelling in disbelief. For you are about to meet Lamppost Jack, the gentle giant. He dwarfs all ordinary men. His hands are wider than ping pong bats. They span two octaves on a piano, hold four and a half dozen eggs each. And did you know we had to cut the roof out of a double decker bus just to get him here for the show? Ladies and Gentlemen, I give you....

*(GINGER'S nose appears at the top of the tent.)*

LAMPPOST JACK

I'm not ready yet, Mr Bowyang. (BOWYANG quickly checks inside the tent) Somebody's nicked my bloody stilts!

*(CINDY smiles and loudly yawns.)*

BOWYANG

Hah ha, Ladies and Gentlemen, you'll have to excuse Jack. You see his feet are so big normally he has to leave the tent just to turn around.

CINDY

I bet this is another tall tale.

BOWYANG

Before you meet Jack, Ladies and Gentlemen, I must warn you to be very careful because if he can trick you into taking your eyes off him for even a second, he may vanish. That's right, poof, gone right before your very eyes.

CINDY

You haven't even got a giant.

BOWYANG

We have so!

CINDY

Then, where is he?

*(WAYNE runs between tents with stilts. BOWYANG checks the tent, smiles.)*

BOWYANG

Ladies and Gentlemen, the original giant from Jack and the Bean Stalk, Lamppost Jack, the world's smallest giant.

*(There is a drum roll as the SHOWGIRLS appear with a curtain. They lower it to reveal GINGER dressed in under sized clothes and standing on a chair hidden by the curtain.)*

JACK

Hallo, Shorty.

CINDY

It's the same person.

BOWYANG

It is not.

JACK

How's the weather down there, Mr Bowyang?

BOWYANG

Tell the people something about yourself, Lamppost.

JACK

(rhyming) I am Jackie Large Bone. I live in a great big shoe. If you extend your thighbone you can live here too.

CINDY

(attempting to go on stage) This is silly. It's the same person we saw before and I'm going to prove it.

*(BOWYANG motions to CANDY who lets out a piercing scream and jumps in the air. She turns on a male AUDIENCE MEMBER.)*

CANDY

That gentlemen just pinched me on the behind.

*(BOWYANG and the SHOWGIRLS point at the AUDIENCE MEMBER.)*

CANDY

You naughty man. You're not getting any more lollies just for that!

*(CANDY leaves. CINDY pulls the curtain down, but LAMPPOST and his chair have disappeared.)*

BOWYANG

I warned you not to be distracted. You've allowed him to escape.

CANDY

Something's got to be done about you!

BOWYANG

Isn't it great to be alive in this day and age, Ladies and Gentlemen? You've just witnessed live, the fairy tale of your dreams in three-dimension.

CANDY

I'm putting a stop to this nonsense and I don't care if you do know the Management Committee. I bet they don't know how you've been defrauding the public.

BOWYANG

Smile, Luv, it adds to your face value. (CINDY storms off) Hey?

*(CINDY turns. BOWYANG flips her an imaginary two-bob)*

BOWYANG

Here's two-bob. Put yourself through finishing school.

CANDY

(exiting) You'll be finished when I'm through with you, Pop.

BOWYANG

And don't call me Pop, you widgie.

*(BOWYANG laughs and does a soft shoe shuffle. WAYNE comes on stage with the ticket bag. Without BOWYANG noticing WAYNE pockets some of the takings)*

BOWYANG

What were the takings like, Son?

WAYNE

Not too good, Boss. That widgie must've been out the front telling people not to come in.

*(BOWYANG takes the money from WAYNE and checks it.)*

BOWYANG

If she turns up again don't let her in.

WAYNE

Things are tough, Boss.

BOWYANG

It's the times, Son. That plug-in-drug everyone's watching. Not as easy to shock the people as it used to be. We've got to keep coming up with new ideas.

WAYNE

I've got this really good idea for an act, Boss.

*(CINDY, carrying a lead, crosses between tents)*

WAYNE

I'll show you. Have you got two-bob on you, Boss? I'm broke, haven't got a zac.

BOWYANG

(throwing him two-bob) For you, Son, anything.

WAYNE

I've been working on it myself. See I take your two-bob and I put it in this hanky, see.

*(As he pulls his hanky from his back pocket the money he took from the takings falls on the floor. BOWYANG picks it up without WAYNE noticing)*

WAYNE

Then I show it to the audience, and I say the magic words, abracadabra, was your money, now mine, then, hey presto, gone. And just when you're getting ready to call the cops, hey presto again and there it is.

*(Having palmed the two-bob WAYNE produces it from behind BOWYANG'S ear.)*

WAYNE

What d'you reckon about that, Boss?

BOWYANG

(checking the takings) I'm not interested in magicians, Son. Not after one of them disappeared with all my money.

WAYNE

But it gets better.

BOWYANG

These tickets don't seem to tally, Son.

WAYNE

It's all there, Boss.

BOWYANG

(motioning WAYNE over) You haven't been searching for Captain Aldock's bovine have you, Son?

WAYNE

For what, Boss?

BOWYANG

She's a special cow, Son. She'll give you more milk than any other cow's ever given. Milk so rich in cream your spoon'll stand up in it.



WAYNE

Where is she?

BOWYANG

Some people spend their whole life searching for her, Son. Did I ever tell you what my first big job was?

WAYNE

No, Boss.

BOWYANG

Step right up, Ladies and Gentlemen. Sixpence to sit on the scales. If I can't guess your correct weight within five pounds you win a giant box of chocolates. (He pats WAYNE down who looks guilty) Twelve stone one.

WAYNE

How'd you know my weight, Boss?

BOWYANG

That's a secret. It was the women who were tricky. In those days they used to wear whalebone stays which would disguise their figures. They'd sit on the scales and you'd see their bottoms spread right out and you knew you were gone. But I'd get them right two times out of three. And I'd buy my chocolates wholesale for sixpence a box, so I didn't lose anything when I made a mistake. Get my drift, Son?

WAYNE

Not exactly, Boss.

BOWYANG

I reckon I'm a pretty good judge of character--

WAYNE

See I thought you were talking about a cow, Boss.

BOWYANG

--two times out of three that is.

*(BOWYANG leaves. WAYNE contemplates before calling him.)*

WAYNE

Ah, Boss?

*(WAYNE feels in his back pocket as BOWYANG returns.)*

BOWYANG

Yes, Son?

WAYNE

I've got something for you, Boss.

*(WAYNE can't find the money and clicks his fingers.)*

WAYNE

Ah yeah, ah, here's your two-bob back, Boss.

BOWYANG

*(catching the two-bob)* You keep working on that act, Son.

*(BOWYANG leaves. Suddenly GINGER rushes onstage, looking for a Leprechaun. WAYNE is excited at the realisation his hypnosis has worked. GINGER rushes off.)*

WAYNE

Hah ha. (To the unresponsive AUDIENCE MEMBER) See I told you you'd keep. *Zzzzzzzzzzzsssstttttt.....* You are beginning to feel sleepy. Okay if that's the way you want to play it. (to all the AUDIENCE) You are all beginning to feel sleepy. And you can blame this bloke. Sleepy, sleepy, sleepy. You are going to fall asleep. (nearly falling asleep himself) You are starting to feel like whale blubber. (GINGER appears between the tents and falls asleep) It works. (excitedly jumping around) You beauty. Alright. Gimme me all your money. Hey, I'm serious, mate. Okay if that's your attitude, from now on all your problems will be doubled.

*(The COMMITTEE, who are Siamese twins joined at the waist and wearing the one dress, enter. A startled WAYNE hurriedly exits, clicking his fingers at GINGER who wakes and hurriedly exits. The COMMITTEE bee-bop everywhere like a fastidious cleaner with a feather duster. They talk simultaneously.)*

THE COMMITTEE

Where is he? Where is he?

CANDY

Who're you looking for?

THE COMMITTEE

We have an official complaint so don't you try and protect him because if you do, you'll be considered an accomplice. That's right, considered an accomplice.

CANDY

Oh, that sounds nice. Who'd you say you were?

THE COMMITTEE

We are the newly appointed Management Committee, newly appointed.

CANDY

What happened to good old Mr Smith?

THE COMMITTEE

Gone, just like that. (They click their fingers) Just like that.

*(GINGER races on searching for a Leprechaun and nearly skittling the COMMITTEE before racing off)*

THE COMMITTEE

We have been employed by the good people of these show grounds to set new standards of efficiency and morality and judging from the number of complaints we've already received about a certain villain, yes villain, we will need to introduce new procedures. New procedures. So, if you'll be good enough to reveal the whereabouts of Mr Bowyang, Mr Bowyang.

CANDY

Ah, I think he's taken the day off.

*(BOWYANG, whistling "When You're Smiling", enters with WAYNE. CANDY unsuccessfully attempts to warn him.)*

BOWYANG

(referring to the Siamese Twins) Not bad. Not bad. We used to do the same routine with this sister and brother team.

THE COMMITTEE

Mr Bowyang? Mr Bowyang?

BOWYANG

(telling WAYNE) I'd strap them together and I had this little joke I'd introduce them with. Point to someone in the front row and say, "I bet you she likes you. I bet you he doesn't". The audience would cackinate themselves. It was a great act, Wayne.

THE COMMITTEE

We have an important act to perform ourselves. Yes, very important.

BOWYANG

I'm sorry, Ladies, but I've already got enough acts.

THE COMMITTEE

That's what we want to talk to you about. It's our duty, our duty, to--

BOWYANG

But let me give you a word of advice, Ladies. If you're going to do an act, you need a presentation. Now don't take this wrong, Ladies but I do know what I'm talking about. I've seen all the scams, (aside to WAYNE) plus a few I've introduced myself, and the one thing I've learned is you've got to be a step ahead of the suckers. Am I getting through to you, Ladies? If you want to get a leg up in this business tart yourselves up a little, (the COMMITTEE are horrified) show a little cleavage and if you really want to make it to the top give them the old come-on. Tell you what I'll do, you look as if you've got your heads screwed on right....

WAYNE

Would've been funny if they had of been born back to back, Boss.

BOWYANG

Have you got one of those bikini things? Now that would be something. (to WAYNE who agrees) What about that double-headed mermaid? Can you swim? It'd be a licence to print money.

WAYNE

We could do the brother and sister thing again, Boss. One head disguised as Ned Kelly and the other--

*(CINDY enters)*

THE COMMITTEE

We've heard quite enough, Mr Bowyang, quite enough!

CINDY

I told you they were false pretenders.

BOWYANG

How'd you get in here? Get her out, Wayne!

CINDY

(to WAYNE who backs off) Just try it, Buster!

BOWYANG

Now hang on there a minute.

THE COMMITTEE

No, you hang on, Mr Bowyang. Our duty as the new Management Committee--

BOWYANG

New Management Committee!

CINDY

Didn't you know, Pop?

BOWYANG

My gawd! You mean to tell me I've been deceived?

THE COMMITTEE

From what we've observed, Mr Bowyang, it's the patrons who're being deceived. It's our duty to put a stop to any fraudulent acts.

BOWYANG

Me, fraudulent?

CINDY

Your shark was a fake and those two clowns were one and the same person.

THE COMMITTEE

Is that right, Mr Bowyang?

BOWYANG

PeeWee and Lamppost one and the same person?

CINDY

Any idiot could see that.

BOWYANG

I'll be darned. After all I've done for them. Just goes to show you can't trust anyone these days.

THE COMMITTEE

You can't go around defrauding the public, Mr Bowyang.

*(CANDY returns)*

BOWYANG

Let me share a little secret with you good Ladies. Wayne, make certain PeeWee doesn't hear this.

*(WAYNE stands at the entrance to the tent.)*

BOWYANG

You may not know this but a popular pastime of the English, god love their souls, was to pop miniature people into pies. (CINDY rolls her eyes) It's true. Now there was a time when PeeWee was the ideal size for that sort of thing and for a very small fee, very small, (CANDY indicates it was very small) we'd hire him out to kiddies' birthdays so he could jump out of their pies. One day, thinking we were doing the right thing, we loaned him out to this group of handicapped kiddies and well, this always hurts me when I tell this, but he came back twenty-one inches taller.

THE COMMITTEE

(convinced) Oooooooooohhhhhhhh.

*(CINDY rolls her eyes.)*

BOWYANG

Now I could've fired him. Heavens above P.T. Barnum sacked Tom Thumb because he grew half an inch in five years. But I couldn't do that, good Ladies, Instead I was prepared to give him another chance. What does the good book say? How many times must I forgive my brother?

CANDY

Seven times seven, Mr Bowyang.

BOWYANG

Thank you, Candy. And now I'm accused of fraudulence. I am deeply hurt you would think I would do anything to jeopardise the wellbeing of those I love.

THE COMMITTEE

Hmmmmmm. Perhaps we could give you another chance.

CANDY

Get your giant memorabilia. (holding up a large pair of gloves) These gloves were worn by Lamppost Jack when he was only five hours old.

BOWYANG

Ah, Candy...

CANDY

Only five shillings. (holding a tennis ball) And this is a marble, Baby Jack played with. (holding up a pencil) And miniature Lamppost Jack toothpicks.

BOWYANG

Take a smoko, Candy.

CANDY

Smoko?

BOWYANG

Yes, a break. Take a break.

CANDY

But I've never had a break before, Mr Bowyang.

BOWYANG

Isn't she cute? Everyone wants to get in on the act. Go and see if the next show's ready, Candy.

CINDY

Are you going to let him get away with this?

THE COMMITTEE

We do have to do something about these complaints, Mr Bowyang.

BOWYANG

What complaints?

CINDY

People being deceived by your advertising.

BOWYANG

Oh, is that all?

THE COMMITTEE

People don't like to be deceived, Mr Bowyang, especially when they've paid good money. They expect to get value for their money, value for their money.

BOWYANG

That so, is it, Ladies?

THE COMMITTEE

It's our job to see they get value for their money. Value.

CINDY

Revoke his licence!

BOWYANG

I'll let you into another secret, Ladies.

THE COMMITTEE

Yes, Mr Bowyang?

BOWYANG

The public like to be fooled. They do. They wouldn't be here if they didn't. Why it even happened to me once early on in my career.

*(L/X change and melodramatic music creates an eerie atmosphere.)*

BOWYANG

Hurry, hurry, hurry. Step right up, Ladies and Gentlemen. It was depression time, Ladies. Things were looking bad. Even stockbrokers were begging on the streets. There had been a dreadful murder and a robbery, so bad, I can't begin to tell you the awesome details.

*(GINGER slowly enters and hands a noose to WAYNE.)*

GINGER

(pointing to someone in the audience) The man they're looking for is... (describes the physical description of BOWYANG) and is wearing... (describes BOWYANG'S clothes)

WAYNE

(pointing to BOWYANG) It's him. He's the thief! He's the murderer!

GINGER

Where were you last night at the hour of midnight?

BOWYANG

Why, I was...I was...I can't remember.

WAYNE

He's the killer.

CANDY

String him up!

*(WAYNE places the noose around BOWYANG'S neck.)*

GINGER

Have you any last words?

BOWYANG

I'm a good bloke...I'm resourceful...I love the outdoors. I'm innocent!

WAYNE

Hang him!



BOWYANG

You wouldn't deny a man the last chance to prove his innocence, would you?

GINGER

Get on with it. Prove you're innocent.

BOWYANG

My good Grand Pappy once told me. Billy, he said--

CINDY

I thought your name was Ben?

BOWYANG

He always used to call me Billy.

GINGER

Hurry up!

BOWYANG

Billy, he said, in this country all you have to do to prove you're an honest Australian is develop an inordinate love of sport, top it off with a decided disinclination to recognise authority--

GINGER

We've heard enough!

BOWYANG

--and (to the COMMITTEE) you'll understand this. Show a grievous dislike for mental effort.

THE COMMITTEE

Hang him!

*(WAYNE pulls the noose tight round BOWYANG'S neck.)*

BOWYANG

I was only joking. Can't you take a joke? I'm innocent. I'm only guilty of telling a joke. Where's your sense of humour? Arrrrrrrrgh.

*(CANDY runs in)*

CANDY

I did it. I'm the murderer.

GINGER

Beat it, Luv, before we hang you instead. Get on with it.

THE COMMITTEE

Stop. You've found the real killer.

*(WAYNE lets the noose go. BOWYANG falls gasping to the floor.)*

BOWYANG

You knew I was innocent all along, didn't you?

GINGER

Once the story of how we nearly hanged the wrong man does the rounds our pavilion will be crammed for tomorrow night's show.

*(GINGER takes the noose and exits. L/X return to normal)*

BOWYANG

There were queues that long we had to feed them to stop them starving to death. That's a lesson I never forgot, Ladies, that while the public can't take a joke they definitely like to be fooled.

CINDY

You're not going to be fooled by that are you?

THE COMMITTEE

Mr Bowyang, that may have been your experience, but our task is to ensure these Show Grounds present honest acts. Honest acts, Mr Bowyang.

BOWYANG

I'm so glad you brought that matter to my attention, Ladies. You can rest assured that Honest Ben Bowyang will uphold the moral fortitude this good city so richly deserves.

THE COMMITTEE

If we receive any more complaints (to CINDY) of substance (to BOWYANG) we'll have to revoke your licence.

BOWYANG

Might I interest you in a souvenir tea towel or something before you go?

THE COMMITTEE

*(shaking their heads and exiting)* We'll be taking a look out the back of your tent, Mr Bowyang.

BOWYANG

(shouting) Ginger, give the good Ladies a guided tour. And, Ladies, any time you want a free pass just mention my name.

CINDY

You're nothing more than a cheap villain.

BOWYANG

Look, Luv, let me give you some free advice. (to WAYNE) The cure for villains, Luv, is not the electric chair. It's the high chair. So, on your way.

*(CINDY storms off.)*

WAYNE

Hey, Boss, I've got this really great act.

BOWYANG

Not now, Son.

WAYNE

Boss, it's a beauty. Watch. (WAYNE sings 'Heartbreak Hotel' and impersonates ELVIS.) "Since my baby left me," Click your fingers, Boss.

*(WAYNE clicks his fingers at BOWYANG. The MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE run between the tents quickly followed by GINGER chasing them.)*

WAYNE

"I've found a new place to roam."

*(WAYNE clicks his fingers and the MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE and GINGER run the other way.)*

WAYNE

"It's down the end of Lonely Street. It's Heartbreak Hotel." (WAYNE finishes by juggling three balls) It's a juggling Elvis Impersonator, Boss.

BOWYANG

A who?

WAYNE

Elvis, you know him?

*(BOWYANG shakes his head. WAYNE sings and shakes through the first verse of 'Hound Dog Man'. BOWYANG is unmoved)*

WAYNE

What d'you reckon, Boss?

BOWYANG

You ever sold cars, Son?

WAYNE

Na, Boss.

BOWYANG

That act reminds me of a car I once bought.

WAYNE

Real good was it?

BOWYANG

It was a lemon, Son.

WAYNE

I thought it was good, Boss.

BOWYANG

Forget it. It's just a Yankee fad. Same as those plank things on water.

WAYNE

Those what?

BOWYANG

Surfing they call it. Don't waste your time. Here one year, gone the next.

WAYNE

You're out of touch, Boss.

BOWYANG

Take my word for it. This time next year everyone'll be back to singing fairdinkum music.

WAYNE

Like what?

BOWYANG

(singing, over the top) "Start spreading the news...I'm leaving today...I want to be a part of it...New York, New York"

*(WAYNE is unresponsive. BOWYANG sings, 'Show Me the Way to Go Home'. CANDY dances with him)*

BOWYANG

"Show me the way to go home...I'm tired and I want to go to bed...I had a little drink about an hour ago and it's gone right to my head...Where ever I may go...Where ever I may be..."

*(the WILD ANIMALS (CINDY and the SHOWGIRLS) appear at the front of their tent. CINDY sings 'Shout' into a loud microphone. They are provocative and disrupt BOWYANG. They stop at the end of the first verse.)*

CINDY

(speaking into the mike) Gather round, Guys and Gals. We have the musical show that will rock your socks off and it's genuine value for money. Step in and see the craze that is sweeping the world, rock'n'roll.

*(The WILD ANIMALS sing 'Rock Around the Clock. BOWYANG is dumbstruck. Ginger enters and Rock'n'roll with Wayne. BOWYANG angrily kicks them out. He does the same to CANDY who is moving to the beat, then jumps on his rostrum and interrupts the song.)*

BOWYANG

Hurry, hurry, hurry, Ladies and Gentlemen, step this way and see the only live orang-utan in captivity. This remarkable creature, Pongo Pygaeus, was captured in deepest Africa. Come in and see Pongo Pygaeus perform remarkable feats.

CINDY

Come in and we'll teach you the latest dance steps, jitterbugging.

*(The SHOWGIRLS jitterbug. An enthusiastic WAYNE appears between the tents and watches.)*

CINDY

Grab hold of someone you fancy, come in and watch The Wild Animals do their thing...an hour of entertainment that will blow your mind.

*(They sing the first verse of 'Great Balls of Fire.)*

CINDY

See you all inside Guys and Gals.

*(The Back-up SINGERS hurry inside their tent.)*

BOWYANG

What's that racket supposed to be?

CINDY

That racket, mate, is what the people want to see.

BOWYANG

People won't pay to be insulted. They want to be entertained.

*(WAYNE and GINGER sneak into the Music Tent.)*

CINDY

By your dancing turkeys on hot metal plates?

BOWYANG

Those turkeys were genuine dodos. I've got the invoice from Chief Boudulucie to prove it. You're the one guilty of fraud trying to make out that racket's music.

CINDY

Scared of genuine competition, are we, Pop?

BOWYANG

The only thing I'm scared of is you're going to frighten my customers to death.

CANDY

I like it, Mr Bowyang.

BOWYANG

Shut-up!

CINDY

You're nothing more than a cheap villain and the sooner they lock you up the better!

BOWYANG

It might interest you to know the world needs villains.

CINDY

Poppycock, the world needs heroines, not villains.

*(The MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE hurriedly enter.)*

BOWYANG

Gawd, I'm beginning to feel like the businessman who started a pig farm in Israel. What now?

THE COMMITTEE

What's that small creature you have out the back in a cage, Mr Bowyang?  
HMMMMM? HMMMMM?

BOWYANG

Pongo Pygaeus, Ladies, from deepest Africa.

THE COMMITTEE

He seems dead, quite dead.

BOWYANG

Pongo Pygaeus dead? (screaming) Candy?

CANDY

Yes, Mr Bowyang?

CINDY

You're probably too mean to feed him, you villain!

BOWYANG

Without us villains you wouldn't have your so-called heroes.

CINDY

Heroines!

BOWYANG

(screaming) Candy?

CANDY

Yes, Mr Bowyang?

BOWYANG

Where have you been? Never mind. Has the orang-utan been fed?

CANDY

Ah, not yet.

BOWYANG

Do I have to do everything on my own?

CANDY

I'm sorry, Mr Bowyang, but my mother's really sick. They think she might die.

BOWYANG

Get back to work. And feed the bloody orang-utan!

THE COMMITTEE

That wasn't a nice thing to say, Mr Bowyang, not nice.

BOWYANG

As I was going to say, if you don't have villains people like you create them.

CINDY

Rubbish. We're not responsible for the things you do.

THE COMMITTEE

Yes, what you said doesn't seem right to us either, Mr Bowyang.

BOWYANG

Course you create them.

CINDY

We create people like you? I like to see you prove that.

THE COMMITTEE

Yes, prove it, Mr Bowyang, prove it.

CANDY

Mr Bowyang?

BOWYANG

What now?

CANDY

I have to make another call.

BOWYANG

Do it on your own time. Not mine. (to CINDY) See what that bloody racket of yours does to my people.

CINDY

You're a sideshow alley all by yourself.

BOWYANG

Why don't you make someone happy and disappear?

CINDY

(to the MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE) When men get too old to set bad examples, they sit around dishing out good advice. (to BOWYANG) If you're such an expert promoter, promote the idea that we create villains, in



one of your shows, and prove it. See how much money you make out of that!

BOWYANG

You don't have to prove something everyone knows.

CINDY

Prove it.

THE COMMITTEE

Yes, prove it, Mr Bowyang, prove it.

BOWYANG

You can't just prove a universal law like that.

CINDY

Why not?

BOWYANG

Something that is doesn't need to be proven.

CINDY

Hah, you can't.

CANDY

Mr Bowyang?

BOWYANG

What is it now?

CANDY

I have to ring my mother. She might die.

CINDY

You don't have to get his permission.

BOWYANG

Oh yes, she does. How many souvenirs have you sold?

CINDY

They're not genuine souvenirs and you know it.

CANDY

Ah, not many.

BOWYANG

How many?

CANDY

I think they're too expensive.

BOWYANG

How many?

CANDY

None.

BOWYANG

None! None! And here you are asking for time off. If that's your attitude you can pack your bags and scudaddle. I'm sick of being the good guy. I'm going inside for five minutes and when I return if you haven't sold all those tea towels then you're fired. And don't worry about the wages you think I owe you. You can put them down to educational expenses. (to the MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE) And if you Ladies have anything further to add you can write me a letter.

*(BOWYANG hastily exits.)*

CANDY

Well bugger him. He's not going to treat me like that and get away with it.

CINDY

Good for you.

CANDY

If he reckons I have to sell these then...You can have them for...What's he selling them for? Five shillings each? You can have them for two shillings each. No, let's teach him a real lesson, one shilling. Bowyang's famous tea towels, the bargain of a lifetime, only one shilling each.

THE COMMITTEE

Oh, I'll have some of those.

CINDY

Give me half a dozen and if he sacks you, I'll hire you.

*(They buy all the tea towels. A smiling BOWYANG enters. CINDY smirks.)*

BOWYANG

How'd we do, Luv?

CANDY

Got rid of all our back stock, Mr Bowyang.

BOWYANG

They cost me nine pence each. Now you tell me the world doesn't need villains and that we don't create them. If you Ladies will excuse me, I have a show to do.

*(CINDY angrily throws the tea towels in CANDY'S tray)*

BOWYANG

Sorry, no refunds. (CANDY exits) Step right up, Ladies and Gentlemen, hurry, hurry, hurry. Come in and see a real-life orang-utan from deepest Africa perform his remarkable tricks with Tam the Leopard Man. Pongo and Tam.

*(GINGER, dressed in leopard costume, appears at the entrance to the tent.)*

BOWYANG

This amazing beast known to jungle cognoscenti's as Pongo Pygaeus is the cunningest beast ever captured by man. That's right, Ladies and Gentlemen, this remarkable orang-utan from deepest Africa is the only one in captivity and possesses the strength of twenty men.

*(CINDY studies the painting of the orang-utan on BOWYANG'S tent. She runs her fingers along the tail.)*

GINGER

(whispering) Psssst, Boss. Something's wrong with the monkey.

BOWYANG

(whispering) Whip down to the pet shop and get another one.

THE COMMITTEE

There are no tricks are there, Mr Bowyang? It is alive, is it?

BOWYANG

(removing a certificate from his pocket) Is it alive? Here's a veterinary certificate from the Mozambique Zoo.

THE COMMITTEE

He didn't seem alive to us, Mr Bowyang. Not alive at all.

BOWYANG

(yelling) Is the orang-utan still alive, Wayne?

*(Loud monkey screeches can be heard from back stage.)*

THE COMMITTEE

That seems to be in order. (returning the certificate) Where's he from?

BOWYANG

I was personally there when he was captured in Deepest Africa.

CINDY

(checking a dictionary) Would it surprise you to know orang-utans only come from Borneo and Sumatra?

THE COMMITTEE

Is that true?

BOWYANG

(To CINDY) How would you know. You've only got the brains of a dodo bird?

CINDY

(pointing to the drawing on the tent) And they don't have tails.

THE COMMITTEE

They don't have tails? We'll have to look into this, Mr Bowyang. We will. If you're telling tall tales your licence will be revoked. It most certainly will.

*(The COMMITTEE exits. CINDY laughs. WAYNE pops his head out the tent.)*

WAYNE

Boss, the monkey's breathing again. Want me to send it back to the pet shop? (BOWYANG shakes his head) But we'll lose our licence.

CINDY

That's right, Pop.

BOWYANG

If it's a fight you want, it's a fight you've got. Old Bowyang didn't battle on the beaches of Normandy so he could be put out of business by the likes of a delinquent potato peeler. Step right up, Ladies and Gentlemen, come in and see the world's only orang-utan with a tail. That's right, Ladies and Gentlemen, this unique creature is the only one of its kind ever to be discovered in Deepest Africa.

*(BOWYANG smiles at CINDY who storms over to him.)*

CINDY

I'm not a delinquent. I don't peel potatoes and I don't like being told I've got the brains of a dodo bird.

BOWYANG

Yes, you're right, Luv. I apologise. (CINDY smiles) You haven't got the brains of a dodo. (CINDY is shocked) Don't act cute with me, Luv. People like to be shocked. That's why they're here. That's why they stand around gawking at the aftermath of them there automobile catastrophes. We all want to be shocked whether it be by Bobby Kork the half-man, half-woman, or Unzie the Albino Aboriginal. (to the audience) You want to be shocked, don't you? (CINDY storms off.) You come back in fifteen minutes and I promise you the shock of a lifetime. That's right, folks, take a fifteen-minute smoko and when you return the gentlemen will have the opportunity to step into the square circle and receive some genuine shock treatment. See you all in fifteen minutes.

*(As BOWYANG leaves 'Great Balls of Fire ' can be heard coming from the Music Tent.)*

**(INTERVAL)**

*( Towards the end of interval rock'n'roll music slides into Country and Western. This gives way to a brass drum as BOWYANG enters with a pair of boxing gloves and money bag around his neck.)*

BOWYANG.

Who'll take a glove? Who'll take a glove? Come into Bowyang's Boxing Tent, Ladies and Gentlemen and watch our lads take on all comers. Introducing the one and only--

*(GINGER, dressed only in boxing shorts, enters and stands on the rostrum. He dispassionately looks straight ahead.)*

BOWYANG.

--Ginger Rook, the boy from Donnybrook. Who'll take a glove? (aside to GINGER) Where's Kid Gloves?

GINGER

(unemotional) I dunno.

BOWYANG

What d'you mean you don't know?

GINGER

Said something about looking for someone's cow, Mr Bowyang.

BOWYANG

(handing GINGER the money bag) Hold the fort a minute.

*(BOWYANG exits. GINGER quickly takes money from the bag and shoves it down his shorts. WAYNE and CATHY, one of the WILD ANIMALS, enter arm in arm.)*

WAYNE

I can do all the Elvis bits and you can do all the rest.

CATHY

Are you sure he'll like us?

WAYNE

Course he will. He's always looking for good acts.

CATHY

Well I thought he was very rude.

WAYNE

Look, around here I'm really the boss. Anything I say goes.

GINGER

The old man's looking for you.

WAYNE

Geeze, what's the time?

GINGER

We're already on.

WAYNE

I've gotta go.

CATHY

(preventing him from leaving) Where?

WAYNE

To my adoring public.

CATHY

You won't get hurt?

WAYNE

Course not.

CATHY

I don't like the thought of you fighting.

WAYNE

Don't you?

CATHY

No.

WAYNE

I'll be alright.

CATHY

You won't forget what we were talking about will you?

WAYNE

Would I?

*(He bends her backwards across his knee and kisses her.)*

WAYNE

You just keep practising.

CATHY

*(exiting)* But whatever you do don't ask me to do someone silly like Chad Morgan.

WAYNE

*(exiting)* Who's he?

*(BOWYANG hurriedly enters and grabs the money bag from GINGER.)*

BOWYANG

Hurry, hurry, hurry, Ladies and Gentlemen. Step right up. Who'll take a glove? *(aside to GINGER)* If he's not here in one minute you'll have to fight everyone.

GINGER

You're kidding, Mr Bowyang.

BOWYANG

Do I look as if I'm kidding?

*(WAYNE, pulling his boxing shorts up, races onto the rostrum.)*

BOWYANG

Where've you been?

WAYNE

I've been working on this great act, Boss. It's gonna make us a fortune.

BOWYANG

Just worry about not losing me a fortune in the ring.

WAYNE

This is a real goer, Boss. It's a two-headed impersonator, Boss, like that act you were talking about. You know, one head's a sheila, the other's a bloke. We give the people two for the price of one. (putting his head behind GINGER to demonstrate) But it's more than that, Boss. See the other head, she does all these impersonations. What d'you reckon, Boss?

BOWYANG

I reckon if you don't get your act together, I'll knock both your blocks off.

WAYNE

Ah, Boss, this fighting game's not my caper.

BOWYANG

Course it is. You're a born killer. Now look mean and remember to pick the biggest bloke in the crowd and give his sheila the eye.

WAYNE

I don't wanta punch people up no more.

BOWYANG

(to GINGER) You know anything about this?

*(GINGER shrugs his shoulders.)*

WAYNE

What about getting another fighter and letting me do some spruiking, like you, Boss? See how I go?

BOWYANG

(feeling WAYNE'S forehead) You look a bit sick, Son.

*(BOWYANG pops a pill in WAYNE'S mouth)*

BOWYANG



Here.

WAYNE

Yuk! What is it?

BOWYANG

Something to calm your nerves, Son?

WAYNE

Good one. This new act, Boss, this is how I'll do it if I was spruiking. (to audience) Step right up, Ladies and Gentlemen. Come in and see the double-headed romantic impersonator. One head will impersonate the singer of your choice, the other will--

*(The pill takes effect as WAYNE shakes violently.)*

WAYNE

--knock your bloody block off.

*(Suddenly WAYNE is a ferocious fighter wanting to fight everyone. He gives the RELUCTANT AUDIENCE MEMBER a hard time. BOWYANG is pleased. WAYNE dances round jumping high in the air and shadow boxing the wall by throwing wild punches. He races out the back of the tent.)*

BOWYANG

Who'll take a glove? Five pounds for three rounds. Yes, Gentlemen, you heard correct, five pounds. All you have to do is go three rounds and you get to take five pounds home to the little lady. Who'll take a glove? Who'll pit themselves in a gladiatorial contest in the sawdust amphitheatre?

WAYNE

(rushing back and confronting the audience) Hey, Face-ache, you and me, one out.

*(WAYNE throws wild punches.)*

BOWYANG

(to an AUDIENCE MEMBER) What about you, Son? You look like a big strapping lad. From the country, are you? Why not impress the little lady? Come on, Ladies, tell that handsome man next to you--

WAYNE

That he's got a face like a bag full of busted arseholes.

BOWYANG

--you want him to win you a deposit on your first home.

WAYNE

Come on, Pickle, you and me, one out.

BOWYANG

Whisper in his ear, Darling, that anyone who has the courage to hop into the ring and put survival into their own hands deserves your respect.

WAYNE

(to GINGER) Who're you looking at Carrot Top? What about it?

*(WAYNE shapes up to GINGER and throws a flurry of punches. Suddenly GINGER jabs WAYNE in the abdomen sending WAYNE to the floor.)*

BOWYANG

Who'll take a glove? A fiver for anyone who stays three rounds with Ginger Rook from Tullarook.

GINGER

Donnybrook, Boss.

BOWYANG

Right.

CINDY

(from the audience) I will. I accept the challenge.

BOWYANG

Accepted. That's the spirit. Step right up here young man. (CINDY runs on stage.) What've we got here, the Fitzroy Bunyip? Look, Luv haven't you better go back to your music lessons?

CINDY

You accepted my challenge and you said anyone who goes three rounds gets a fiver.

BOWYANG

And so, they do, Luv.

CINDY

I'm gonna take your money because I don't want your thugs hanging round my girls.

BOWYANG

Not good enough for them, are they?

CINDY

No.

BOWYANG

I don't want my boys being led astray by your ockerinas.

CINDY

Good, so let's sort it out in the ring. That is if you've got the guts.

BOWYANG

Look, Luv, buzz off, you're mucking up the show.

CINDY

I'm entitled to fight and I'm going to.

GINGER

I'm not fighting no Charlie Wheelers, Mr Bowyang.

BOWYANG

(to CINDY) As much as I'd like to, I'm sorry. You've got to be a bloke.

CINDY

Says who?

BOWYANG

Ah--

CINDY

You didn't say anything about having to be a bloke. You want everyone to think you're a liar?

BOWYANG

Life has taught me, Luv, there's little room for the truth, least not in public.

GINGER

Mr Bowyang, if word gets around we're fighting two-wheelers we'll be run out of town.

*(CINDY smiles.)*

BOWYANG

You have to have a mouth guard. Sorry I can't let you fight without a mouth guard.

CINDY

They haven't got mouth guards.

BOWYANG

They don't need them. Contestants do. It's a condition of our insurance policy. Sorry.

CINDY

(showing a mouth guard) Just so happens I have a mouth guard.

BOWYANG

You also need a doctor's certificate.

CINDY

I have one of those too.

BOWYANG

You must be in the union. Have you got your union card?

CINDY

What union?

BOWYANG

Sorry, I never talk politics. I can't let you fight without a union card. I'd get black listed.

GINGER

(whispering) I'm not in the union, Mr Bowyang.

BOWYANG

No one's more disappointed than me but it's out of my hands.

*(WAYNE, still out of it, attempts to rise by grabbing hold of GINGER'S legs.)*

CINDY

You're scared because I might just prove too much for your boys to handle.

WAYNE

(woozy) I'll handle her, Boss.

BOWYANG

This is a man's game. There's no place for women in the square circle. They only cause trouble. No one wants to see a pug-ugly get hurt.

CINDY

The customers would prefer to watch us than your punch-drunk left-overs.

WAYNE

(shadow-boxing the wall) Who'd she call punch-drunk?

BOWYANG

You're not fighting and that's that.

CINDY

(storming off) We'll see what the lawyers say about that.

BOWYANG

Spank your children every day, Ladies and Gentlemen. If you don't know what for, they will.

WAYNE

Who said I was punch-drunk, eh? (to someone in the AUDIENCE) Did you say I was punch-drunk? I'll bash anyone who thinks I'm punch-drunk! (to GINGER) Did you say I was punch-drunk, ferret-face?

*(GINGER flicks WAYNE in the abdomen with his finger sending WAYNE crashing to the floor again. F/X brass drum.)*

BOWYANG

It's all Marquis of Queensberry in here, Ladies and Gentlemen. Real competition, one to one in the ancient Greek style. What about it, Lads? Treat yourself to a memory you can dine out on forever. You'll go home with dignity. Take a look at Ginger here, Ladies and Gentlemen. There's hardly anything of him. What d'you do for a crust during the off-season, Ginger?

GINGER

I work as a brickie's labourer, Mr Bowyang.

BOWYANG

You couldn't get a more faint-hearted trade. Rub him down with a brick and he's as meek as a lamb. Look how out of condition he is. You know what he calls himself? His Ugliness. How're the piano lessons going, Darling?

GINGER

Hey, I don't like that, Mr Bowyang!

BOWYANG

Don't you now? And I suppose that's why you wear your hair like a girl?

GINGER

I'm warning you! Don't call me a girl!

BOWYANG

Wouldn't you just like to punch him in the nose?

*(CINDY, dressed as a Boxing Promoter, appears.)*

CINDY

Step right up, Ladies and Gentlemen, to the event of the century, a pugilistic cyclorama reserved for the ladies only.

*(CATHY enters. She is dressed as a fighter and all her movements are over the top feminine.)*

CINDY

Sorry, boys, union rules.

BOWYANG

This is bloody ridiculous!

CINDY

But stick around and you might get to take home the winner. (pointing to a FEMALE AUDIENCE MEMBER) What about you, Darling? Would you like to earn yourself six quid? That's right *six* quid. All you have to do is stay three rounds with Little Cassie Clay.

*(CATHY prances round the stage.)*

BOWYANG

I'm not standing for this!

CINDY

(flicking an imaginary coin) Here's threepence, Pop. Call all your friends and complain.

*(BOWYANG is furious. WAYNE staggers up throwing punches. BOWYANG ducks, grabs WAYNE and whispers in his ear. WAYNE races off.)*

CINDY

Who'll fight Little Cassie Clay? No one is too big for Little Cassie.

CASSIE

(dancing around) "I punch them in the mouth, and I knock them out."

CINDY

Come on, Ladies, who'll put on the gloves with Josephine?

*(JOSEPHINE, the other WILD ANIMAL, enters doing her make-up.)*

CINDY

Come in, boys and watch Josephine deliver her Napoleon knockout. Though I must warn you, boys, there's no foul play below the belt in Cindy's tent. These little girls practice for hours in front of the mirror and they know every move in the book.

CASSIE

"I punch them in the head, and I send them to bed."

BOWYANG

You're wasting your time. No one's going to get in the ring with your girls.

CINDY

We'll see about that. Who'll take a glove?

*(WAYNE, dressed as a girl in long velvet green dress and wig, rushes in.)*

WAYNE

I will.

CINDY

(smiling victoriously at BOWYANG) That's the spirit, Darling. My you are a big one, aren't you? And what's your name, Darling?

WAYNE

(checking with BOWYANG who mouths a name) Ah, Velvet. Velvet Green, Mam.

CINDY

That's a nice name. Who'd you like to fight?

*(WAYNE checks with BOWYANG who points out CINDY.)*

WAYNE

Let me see.

*(Points to JOSEPHINE and CASSIE before nominating CINDY and smiling at BOWYANG.)*

WAYNE

I'll have that one.

CINDY

Sorry, Darling, but you have to choose one of the fighters.

BOWYANG

Why?

CINDY

Union rules.

WAYNE

*(pointing to CASSIE whom he does not recognize as CATHY)* Gimme that one.

CASSIE

*(not recognizing WAYNE)* "I punch them below and I lay them low."

CINDY

So, get your tickets, Ladies and Gentlemen, for the fight of the century. Come in and see history being created.

*(EVERYONE circles to indicate they have entered the square circle. F/X brass drum. BOWYANG and GINGER act as WAYNE'S seconds while JOSEPHINE touches up CASSIE'S make-up. CANDY displays round numbers.)*

CINDY

Ladies and Gentlemen, the first fight is a three-round contest between the darling of the boxing circuit, weighing in at six and a half stone, Little Cassie Clay.

CASSIE

"Float like a butterfly, sting like a bee. I'll come out a smoking and I won't be a joking. Miss Velvet Green, vilest witch I've ever seen. Watch me fight and I'll turn out your light. This'll be your very last day, because I'm the famous Little Cassie Clay"

*(CINDY, who's been having a closer look at VELVET is becoming suspicious.)*



CINDY

And in the other corner, weighing in at fifteen stone, Melvin Green.

WAYNE

Velvet, mate. Velvet.

*(WAYNE strikes body building poses for the audience.)*

BOWYANG

What was that prize money again, Luv?

CINDY

Six quid.

*(WAYNE throws a flurry of practice punches, terrifying JOSEPHINE and CASSIE.)*

BOWYANG

To anyone who stays three rounds?

CINDY

Any female that is.

BOWYANG

You're not doubting the validity of this here fine-looking young lady, are you?

CINDY

I was considering asking for a medical certificate.

BOWYANG

We all know the difference between a girl and a boy. If you want to enter a public challenge, I'm sure this lovely lady would be only too happy to demonstrate her validity to the audience--

WAYNE

Boss!

BOWYANG

--after your Lassie demonstrates hers.

CASSIE

(to CINDY) I'm not taking my clothes off!

CINDY

There's more than one way to skin a cat. Let's have the gloves.

*(JOSEPHINE hands a small pair of gloves to CINDY who puts them on CASSIE. She then removes a gigantic pair of gloves from a sugar bag and puts them on WAYNE who can now hardly lift his hands.)*

WAYNE

These are bloody chaff bags, Boss.

BOWYANG

That's unfair!

CINDY

Sorry, Pop, union rules.

BOWYANG

What bloody union?

CINDY

The union of the Fitzroy Bunyips.

BOWYANG

Bloody unfair!

CINDY

There's no need for that language. Let's get this show on the road.

*(CINDY indicates for both boxers to meet her in the centre. CASSIE springs in. WAYNE drags himself in.)*

CINDY

I want a clean fight. No hitting below the belt. No pulling hair or scratching. Shake hands and may the best, ah, fighter win.

*(CASSIE holds her hand out to shake. WAYNE can't raise his hand. The bell rings and CASSIE hits WAYNE with a right cross sending him to the canvas. She squeals with delight and dances around excited.)*

CINDY

Velvet is down and she looks like she's out for the count. One...two...

BOWYANG

Get up. (WAYNE can't move.) Get up or you're fired!

CINDY

Three...four...

BOWYANG

It was an unfair blow. She should be disqualified!

CINDY

Five...six...

*(BOWYANG whispers in GINGER'S ear. GINGER races off. CASSIE puts her foot on WAYNE.)*

CASSIE

"I punch them to the floor, and they beg for more."

CINDY

Seven...eight...nine...

*(The bell rings.)*

BOWYANG

End of round one. It's the end of round one.

CINDY

Who rang the bell?

*(JOSEPHINE shrugs her shoulders. CASSIE is furious and disappointed. A smiling GINGER returns.)*

CINDY

Keep an eye on it from now on.

*(BOWYANG and GINGER drag WAYNE to his corner.)*

WAYNE

(semi-conscious and singing) "Show me the way to go home...I'm tired and I want to go to bed..."

*(BOWYANG puts smelling salts under WAYNE'S nose. Suddenly WAYNE is in a mad frenzy.)*

CINDY

He's unfit to fight!

BOWYANG

Count to eight.

WAYNE

Eight.

BOWYANG

You're okay. Get in there and kill.

*(The bell rings and a frenzied WAYNE rushes at a terrified CASSIE who freezes but is saved at the last moment by JOSEPHINE who pulls her away from a wild haymaker. WAYNE turns and CASSIE backs towards BOWYANG and GINGER. WAYNE rushes her and swings a wild punch, but she ducks and the blow knocks GINGER unconscious. The money falls from GINGER'S pants. CINDY indicates for JOSEPHINE to ring the bell. Just as WAYNE corners CASSIE the bell rings. WAYNE throws one last haymaker which misses by a country mile. CASSIE runs off. BOWYANG pockets the money.)*

CINDY

(to WAYNE) You're disqualified.

BOWYANG

Why?

CINDY

Hitting after the bell.

BOWYANG

But he never touched her.

CINDY

Then for impersonating a fighter.

BOWYANG

This is highway robbery.

WAYNE

(returning) Where's my money?

CINDY

Button up, you imposter.

*(WAYNE raises his glove to hit CINDY, but she kicks him in the shins and as he doubles over, she hits him under the chin with the butt of her hand, knocking him unconscious. As WAYNE hits the deck his wig falls off.)*

CINDY

It's called the Fitzroy knockout, mate.

BOWYANG

That was unfair!

CINDY

(picking up the wig) Dressing a man up as a girl is fair play?

BOWYANG

Pretending girls are fighters makes a mockery of Sideshow Alley.

CINDY

Sideshow Alley doesn't belong to you.

BOWYANG

Who does it belong to?

CINDY

To the world.

BOWYANG

Exactly.

CINDY

And that gives me the right to do anything I want to do and anywhere I want to do it. If I want a rock'n'roll show I can. Slim Dusty has a music tent. I bet you don't steal his leads.

BOWYANG

Because he sings real music.

CINDY

Who gives you the right to judge?

BOWYANG

Stay out of the wheat field, Luv. You're going against the grain.

CINDY

I should be doing three card tricks, should I?

BOWYANG

At least people want to see three card tricks.

CINDY

And they want to see rock'n'roll. If everyone had your bigoted approach--

BOWYANG

Bigoted!

CINDY

--there'd be moral chaos. No one would know what to believe.

BOWYANG

Prove it.

CINDY

You don't need to prove what everyone knows.

BOWYANG

You sound just like someone I used to know. (CINDY laughs) That was some punch you threw back there. What'd you call it?

CINDY

The Fitzroy knockout.

BOWYANG

Impressive. Where'd you learn it?

CINDY

My mum.

BOWYANG

She must've been some lady.

CINDY

She was the original Fitzroy knockabout. Queen of Penny Land they called her.

BOWYANG

(sitting) You weren't born in Queensland, were you?

CINDY

(sitting) In a tent during an agricultural show. Mum was running the coconut shies. She was the greatest. She could show you how to serve a feast fit for a Queen with no more than bread and dripping and--

BOWYANG

A bottle of beer wrapped in newspaper?

CINDY

--a jug of water.

BOWYANG

You know I never saw a toffee till I was fourteen? (They look at each other and laugh.) Those were the good old days when men were men.

CINDY

And women were women.

BOWYANG

A time when you knew who your mates were. You quarrelled with one of my mates, you quarrelled with me. Mums and Dads stood in the rain with cut sandwiches for hours. Step right up, Ladies and Gentlemen. Come in and see the Pin-Headed Chinaman. Remember him?

CINDY

I was terrified of him.

BOWYANG

I brought him out from Deepest Mongolia.

CINDY

Is that where he came from?

BOWYANG

Actually, I plucked him out of the Sarah Sands Hotel in Brunswick.

CINDY

That'd be right.

BOWYANG

Yeah, I knew your mum. "Come in and see the living breathing curiosities. They did not ask to be brought into this world but into this world they came--"

CINDY

Don't!

BOWYANG

Why?

CINDY

Because you're not doing that now. Your acts don't use real, ah--

BOWYANG

People like your Mum?

CINDY

My mother wasn't a freak!

BOWYANG

None of them were. They were my friends. You hurt one of them you hurt me. The joy of one was the joy of all.

CINDY

You know what I mean. You dress ordinary people up.

BOWYANG

That's right, I don't use the real McCoy. Times have changed, Luv.

CINDY

You're ridiculing their legacy.

BOWYANG

By pandering to people's voyeurism?

CINDY

You're conning people into a world of deception.

BOWYANG

I should tell them the truth? "Step into Bowyang's Tent, Ladies and Gentlemen, because never again will you enjoy the delights of yesterday's human curiosities, those marvels of matinee nature." I can just imagine what your Mum would've made of that.

CINDY

You're not giving them the truth. That's just as bad.

BOWYANG

When they see my shows, I guarantee they discover the truth. (CINDY shakes her head.) Have you ever fished off the end of a pier?

CINDY

No, but I've sang on the end of some.

BOWYANG

You know I could tie you a worm on the end of a safety pin, like you'd tie a parcel at the GPO, and catch enough fish in half an hour to feed a grand final crowd. Now most people, they don't know how to tie a proper knot. They tie a bow, flop it in, jerk, goodbye fish. They'd rather be led by the nose into the fish shop. They've forgotten how to discover for themselves. For a couple of moments in their lives I take them onto the pier of make believe and set up their tackle for them. We can all catch a fish in the big pond if we want to.

CANDY



(entering) Is that like the human sea, Mr Bowyang?

CINDY

How about I give away my Boxing Tent and you don't interfere with my Music Show? We got a deal?

BOWYANG

(standing) You're just like your Mum, aren't you? (to CANDY) You'd better get some more stock. And get an extra dozen tea towels.

CANDY

(winking at BOWYANG as she leaves) As soon as I get a priest for my Mum. She won't last the night.

CINDY

You really are a villain.

*(The MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE hurriedly enter.)*

BOWYANG

Uh oh, Tweedledee and Tweedledum.

THE COMMITTEE

We've had nothing but complaints. Queues and queues of people complaining, queues and queues.

BOTH

Complaints? About what?

THE COMMITTEE

The Boxing Tents!

BOTH

Our Boxing Tents?

THE COMMITTEE

They have to go.

BOTH

Why?

*(GINGER indicates for WAYNE to listen.)*

THE COMMITTEE

They discourage disorderly conduct. They do.

BOTH

Boxing builds character, gives the kids something to do.

CINDY

Keeps them off the streets.

THE COMMITTEE

But people get hurt.

BOTH

I don't teach my fighters how to throw a punch. I teach them how to avoid one.

GINGER

That's right, he does.

BOWYANG

You do that, I tell them, and you'll be able to remember your name at the end of the day.

WAYNE

Bloody oath. (to GINGER) Tell them, Ferret.

GINGER

Who're you talking to, Kactus?

THE COMMITTEE

We have to consider complaints from ordinary people. Many complaints.

BOWYANG

The average bloke, he doesn't appreciate the finer arts of pugilistic science.

THE COMMITTEE

What does he appreciate, Mr Bowyang?

WAYNE

A good wack in the gob.

BOWYANG

And we don't let the drunks or no hopers in the ring.

GINGER

That's right. Any trouble makers and I take them out the back and punch their lights out, isn't that right, Mr Bowyang?

*(CINDY rolls her eyes. BOWYANG indicates for WAYNE and GINGER to be quiet.)*

BOWYANG

It's just entertainment, giving the punters what they want.

GINGER

And if a mug gets under our guard, we carry him for three rounds.

WAYNE

Before we hammer the crap outa him.

*(The MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE are horrified.)*

BOWYANG

Isn't that what life's about, Ladies? Carrying a mug for as long as you can? We're all going to ultimately meet our knockout punch.

THE COMMITTEE

There's been far too many complaints from respectable people.

BOWYANG

The cattle brigade?

THE COMMITTEE

There's no need for that, Mr Bowyang. We've made our decision and it's final. Final. No more Boxing Tents.

BOWYANG

What?

THE COMMITTEE

We're not going to repeat ourselves. Good Day, Mr Bowyang. Good Day.

*(They exit. WAYNE and GINGER join hands and mimic the MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE as they exit.)*

BOWYANG

Do you think their mother loves them?

CINDY

I don't think that's funny.

BOWYANG

You knew about this, didn't you? "I'll let you run your Boxing Tent if you let me run my Music Tent." Hah!

CINDY

I didn't, honest.

BOWYANG

"If everyone had my approach there'd be moral chaos." Hah! I should've known. The only place for women in this business is behind the counter.

CINDY

Why you cantankerous old sausage!

BOWYANG

What else do you think you're good for?

CINDY

If I wanted to be as dishonest as you, I could buy and sell you.

BOWYANG

Could you now?

CINDY

And show you a trick or two into the bargain.

BOWYANG

How would you propose to do that? Smashing the customers across the head with that gie-taar of yours and dragging them into the tent?

CINDY

You think you're smart because you fool people. You're nothing more than a talking balloon with false sleeves and mirrors.

BOWYANG

You're just like your mother.

CINDY

And don't you forget it.

BOWYANG

If you're so smart you have a go at fooling people and see how easy it is.

CINDY

I might just do that.

BOWYANG

Forget it. Nobody's interested in watching a woman make a fool of herself.

CINDY

(storming off) My mother told me the key to the fool is to take her seriously.

BOWYANG

Next, they'll be expecting equal pay. (yelling) Wayne, where's the next act?

WAYNE

The Fortune Teller rang up and said she can't make it, Boss.

BOWYANG

Why not?

WAYNE

Went out last night and can't remember where she parked her car.

BOWYANG

Who else have we got out the back?

WAYNE

The new sheila with the snakes.

BOWYANG

They're only carpet snakes and they're all full of vodka. Who else?

WAYNE

There's no one, Boss.

GINGER

(entering) Someone wheeled Tommy the Legless Wonder in but he's got his hands full.

*(GINGER breaks up laughing and runs off, but BOWYANG fails to see the humour.)*

BOWYANG

All my life I'm surrounded by idiots and when I want a fairdinkum idiot where are they?

CANDY

(entering) Did you call, Boss?

*(She also breaks up laughing.)*

BOWYANG

Get out!

WAYNE

What about this great act we've been working on, Boss?

BOWYANG

Some other time, Kid.

WAYNE

It's a ripper, Boss, dead set. Me and Cathy's been working on it. She's just out the back. I'll get her. (yelling) Cathy.

BOWYANG

Who?

WAYNE

Ah, she's just someone I met. You probably don't know her. (CATHY hurries in.) We'll show you, Boss.

BOWYANG

Haven't I seen you before?

CATHY

(shaking her head) Uh uh.

WAYNE

She's the world's greatest impersonator, Boss. Ask her to do someone.

CATHY

Who would you like me to impersonate, Mr Bowyang?

BOWYANG

Try Houdini for a couple of hours.

WAYNE

Good one, Boss. Hah ha. She can do anyone, Boss. Ask her to do anyone. G'on. You like Frank Sinatra. She'll do Frank Sinatra.

GINGER

(popping his head out of the tent) Do Chad Morgan.

WAYNE

She'll do Frank Sinatra, Boss.

*(CATHY sings an over-the-top version of New York, New York.)*

BOWYANG

Stop! I like that song too much.

WAYNE

Isn't she something? Give her another one, Boss.

GINGER

(popping his head out of the tent) Do Chad Morgan.

WAYNE

There's no such person, Boss.

BOWYANG

I've had enough.

WAYNE

Chad Morgan. She'll do Chad Morgan, Boss. (CATHY pleads with WAYNE.) He'll love it. She'll do Chad Morgan, Boss.

CATHY

Oh alright, I'll do Chad Morgan.

WAYNE

She'll do it, Boss.

*(CATHY sings a wacky version of The Sheik from Shabby Creek. When it comes to the dog howls WAYNE joins in and they both jump up and down on the howls. BOWYANG is totally unimpressed.)*

BOWYANG

I'm sorry, Luv, we don't use freaks anymore. (CATHY, upset, runs away.) I was only joking. Can't people take a joke anymore?

WAYNE

She was only trying to impress you, Boss.

*(Mystical music plays, and CINDY appears.)*

CINDY

Step right up, Ladies and Gentlemen to witness one of the highlights of the show. Come inside our tent and have your fortune told by Princess Isabella.

*(PRINCESS ISABELLA, dressed in Middle Eastern clothes, appears on the rostrum. She eats a souvlaki and dances. CINDY angrily takes the souvlaki. PRINCESS ISABELLA stares daggers at CINDY.)*

CINDY

Princess Isabella has been chosen by the Gods as their personal medium.

BOWYANG

Princess Isabella, my foot!

WAYNE

Doesn't she look like...?

BOWYANG

That's Bella our Fortune Teller!

CINDY

There is nothing this Lady does not know. She can even tell you what you are thinking.

*(Just as PRINCESS ISABELLA is about to grab the souvlaki CINDY moves it to her other hand. ISABELLA doesn't speak but intensifies her dancing to demonstrate emotion.)*

BOWYANG

What's your real name? How come she can't speak?

CINDY

It is the wish of the Gods. She has chosen me as her medium.

BOWYANG

This is weasel craft. If she knows everything ask her where her car is.

CINDY

Princess, the Old One wishes to know where your car is.

*(PRINCESS ISABELLA intensifies her dancing. She burps.)*

PRINCESS  
ISABELLA

Excuse me.

BOWYANG

What'd she say?

CINDY

She said, 'Excuse me'.

BOWYANG



You know what I mean.

CINDY

The Great Oracle says that at this moment in time she does not have a car.

BOWYANG

You're a sly boots! If that's the way you want to play it!

*(BOWYANG whispers to WAYNE. BOWYANG hurriedly exits)*

CINDY

Hurry, hurry, hurry. Get your tickets--

WAYNE

Hey, Issy?

CINDY

--to see the world's only surviving Oracle.

WAYNE

Who's gonna win the Melbourne Cup? (or the same question GINGER asked in the opening scene)

CINDY

Come in and find out.

WAYNE

She's a fraud!

CINDY

She is not.

WAYNE

Then tell us who's gonna win the Melbourne Cup.

CINDY

She hasn't got a form guide on her, mate.

WAYNE

She shouldn't need one.

*(ISABELLA'S dancing suggests she's agitated.)*

WAYNE

What's wrong with her now?

CINDY

She feels you doubt her powers. Princess Isabella is a very sensitive lady.

WAYNE

If she can't tell us who's gonna win the Melbourne Cup, she should be run outa town!

CINDY

I'll ask her.

*(ISABELLA refuses to move until CINDY gives her the souvlaki, which she reluctantly does. PRINCESS ISABELLA takes a large bite and nearly chokes as she dances.)*

WAYNE

Well?

CINDY

She says....

WAYNE

Yes?

CINDY

That a great horse will win the Melbourne Cup and that just proves what a remarkable Oracle she is. So, Ladies and Gentlemen, come in and see the phenomenal talents of Princess Isabella.

*(CINDY indicates for PRINCESS ISABELLA to exit. They both leave as BOWYANG hurriedly enters)*

BOWYANG

Quick, Wayne, give Candy a hand. We'll show her what Sideshow Alley's all about. (WAYNE leaves) Gather round, Ladies and Gentlemen, for the Greatest Show on Earth. That's right, for a small fee, a very small fee indeed, Ladies and Gentlemen, you will marvel at the wonders of the world's ethnological groups. Chang, that famous elastic Chinaman, better known as the Chinese Rubber Man--

*(WAYNE and GINGER can be seen between the tents fighting over a wet suit. They fall backwards in opposite directions.)*

BOWYANG

--will astonish you with his contortionist tricks and perform for you his famous inside out trick where he vanishes right before your very eyes.

WAYNE

(popping his head through the tent) He already has vanished, Boss.

BOWYANG

Hah ha, as I was saying, Ladies and Gentlemen, Little Damayanti, the three-legged Hottentot--

*(CANDY angrily pops her head through the tent but is pulled back.)*

BOWYANG

--will dance the Egg Dance of Sahmakin, one of the most difficult feats ever achieved by modern three-legged terpsichoreans and around her live cannibals, from a hitherto undiscovered Pacific Island, will devour real flesh.

*(There are screams and commotion from BOWYANG'S tents. A false leg flies between tents. BOWYANG checks one of the tents and emerges somewhat embarrassed. CANDY can be heard complaining.)*

BOWYANG

Ah, a slight problem, Ladies and Gentlemen. It seems one of the cannibals hadn't eaten for a month and devoured poor Little Damayanti. That's showbiz for you, Ladies and Gentlemen. (yelling into the tent) Quick, get Miss Piglet.

*(CINDY hurriedly returns.)*

CINDY

Step this way, Ladies and Gentlemen. And peek through the windows of mystery, wonder and fun. For today we present for your entertainment the funniest woman in the world--

BOWYANG

We have the most amazing, the most unbelievable, the most awesome sight you'll ever see. That's right, Ladies and Gentlemen, a sight never before witnessed in this country. We give you the one and only Hog-Faced Woman. (There is an angry pig-grunt from the tent.) Hah ha, I mean Pig-Faced Lady.

CINDY

Ladies and Gentlemen, from the heart of Fitzroy, the funniest woman in the world.

*(A very serious WOMAN, dressed in black and looking the most unfunniest, enters. She holds a mike and slowly walks to the end of the*

*rostrum and faces the audience. She reads from autocues concealed by CINDY.)*

BOWYANG

She's supposed to be funny?

FUNNY WOMAN

(deadpan) I was in the taxi the other day and this driver was going on about how Fitzroy people were into this weird violence. I really wanted to knife the bastard. (CINDY reacts to the word, bastard.) Sorry, the bugger.

BOWYANG

Oh, please! The public don't want to watch a woman telling stupid jokes.

CINDY

(smiling) No?

BOWYANG

Course not! They want something to look at, not laugh at.

FUNNY WOMAN

My mother asked me what I said to my husband on my wedding night. 'Geeze, that's a hard one,' I said.

BOWYANG

It won't work.

CINDY

Why not?

BOWYANG

Because you've got to be prepared to make yourself look ridiculous. Woman find that too difficult to do.

CINDY

Looking ridiculous is a man's domain is it?

*(WAYNE grabs the autocues and runs off.)*

CINDY

Hey!

GINGER

(popping his head through the tent) We want tits.

FUNNY WOMAN

You'd look real funny with tits, Luv.

*(GINGER quickly disappears. CINDY nods approval.)*

BOWYANG

You can't mention sex. Women can't mention sex.

FUNNY WOMAN

I had this situation with this bloke the other day and he said, "If I'd known you were a virgin, I'd of taken more time." (CINDY indicates for her to stop) and I said, "If I'd known you had more time, I'd of taken my tights off."

BOWYANG

That's disgusting. You can't say things like that.

FUNNY WOMAN

I asked him to make love to me in the kitchen. He said, "What for?" I said, "I wanta time an egg."

BOWYANG

The Committee'll hear about this. It's degrading. I apologise for this, Ladies and Gentlemen.

CINDY

*(standing in front of the FUNNY WOMAN)* Get your ticket for the funniest show on earth, Ladies and Gentlemen.

FUNNY WOMAN

Did you hear the one about the priest and the six choir boys?

*(CINDY ushers the FUNNY WOMAN off stage.)*

BOWYANG

Some people have no standards. Step into Bowyang's Tent, Ladies and Gentlemen, and see the amazing animal aberration, this prodigy of nature delicately moulded from the bastion of the animal kingdom. *(checking inside his tent)* Is she ready yet?

*(The FUNNY WOMAN reappears.)*

FUNNY WOMAN

Stick around, folks, to the end and you might get to see a little pussy.

*(CINDY quickly pulls her off stage.)*

BOWYANG

What can I say? Except I apologise on behalf of Sideshow Alley and you can rest assured that the Management Committee will receive an official complaint on your behalf. But before I do that get your tickets to see the Pig-faced Lady. Although her manners may be a little disagreeable, she does come from a superior family of pigs.

*(No one appears. BOWYANG enters his tent and attempts to pull CANDY, who holds a pig-mask, on stage.)*

CANDY

I'm not going out there to make a bloody fool of myself. (throwing the pig's head at BOWYANG) You put the pig's head on. You've already got the chauvinist bit right. Better still, just pretend. Oink! Oink!

BOWYANG

(embarrassed) Hah ha, just a slight hitch, Ladies and Gentlemen. Ah, it seems that the Pig-Faced Lady has ah, embraced the Jewish faith. Hah ha that's show biz for you.

FUNNY WOMAN

(reappearing) I promised you a little pussy so here it is.

*(She slowly lifts her dress to reveal a tattoo of a cat high on her thigh.)*

FUNNY WOMAN

I call her Tabby.

*(CINDY pushes her into the Music Tent.)*

CINDY

Hah ha I told you she was the funniest woman in the world. But don't go away because we've got more.

BOWYANG

And so have we. Step right up and see Fee Jee the Mermaid in all her splendour, sing underwater, while a mango tree flowers and fruits in a matter of seconds before your very eyes.

*(WAYNE carries a fish tail and a pot plant between tents. A pot smashing and loud exclamation are heard in BOWYANG'S tent. BOWYANG checks the commotion.)*

CINDY

Meet Sister Teresa, the famous Bearded Nun.

*(A BEARDED NUN appears.)*

CINDY

That's right, Ladies and Gentlemen, this mystical Lady was once a clean-shaven maiden until one frightful day when she was pursued by an outback mugger. She prayed for divine intervention and hallelujah, grew an instant beard. Her would-be-assailant was so frightened by the apparition that he fled, declaring forever to lead a life of reform.

*(BOWYANG, in somewhat of a frenzy, appears with a bunch of flowers.)*

BOWYANG

Meet Eve Flanagan, the only woman on this earth who can actually live on the smell of flowers.

*(BOWYANG indicates for someone to appear, but they don't.)*

BOWYANG

Well send her bloody husband out!

CINDY

We have a real live alien. That's right, Ladies and Gentlemen, a genuine out of space experience--

BOWYANG

Don't be sucked in by that, Ladies and Gentlemen, over here we have the one and only radiation show. (looking daggers at his tent) We call it the Three Phases of Eve. Watch the bare flesh of a female figure disintegrate before your very eyes.

*(He shakes his fist at his tent.)*

CINDY

Don't miss the X-Ray Vision Lady. She can see through brick walls.

BOWYANG

Rubbish! There's no such thing.

CINDY

Isn't there just?

*(The X-RAY VISION LADY appears wearing special glasses. She stumbles around the stage before CINDY points her in the direction of BOWYANG.)*

X-RAY LADY

(laughing) Long underwear.

*(BOWYANG attempts to cover himself. CINDY points her towards the exit, and she stumbles off, not before crashing into everything.)*

CINDY

And for only ten shillings you can get your own x-ray vision glasses--

BOWYANG

Ten shillings! No one'll buy those.

CINDY

--that allow you to see through everything.

*(WAYNE races on stage followed by GINGER.)*

WAYNE

I'll have half a dozen.

GINGER

Gimme the lot.

*(BOWYANG angrily ushers them into his tent.)*

BOWYANG

We're just starting. Bring on the Wild Women from the Congo.

CINDY

So are we, Pop. Send out George Washington's Nanny. She's two hundred and twenty-two years old and still doing a paper round each morning.

*(The MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE enter.)*

THE COMMITTEE

Stop, stop, stop. You're both making a mockery of the good name of these Show Grounds.

BOTH

Me?

THE COMMITTEE

It's obvious your type of shows have become quaint relics. This whole area and concept needs to be redesigned.

BOWYANG

You've been out looking for Captain Aldock's bovine, haven't you?



THE COMMITTEE

We were talking to the cattle people, yes, yes.

CINDY

You're not going to replace Sideshow Alley?

BOWYANG

What they're really saying, and this comes from the cattle brigade, is that while people are being entertained in our tents, they're not looking at cows or goats.

*(WAYNE enters.)*

CINDY

Or buying showbags.

THE COMMITTEE

(to CINDY) I expected better from you, since you were one of the first to complain about people being ripped off. Showbags and cattle have got nothing to do with our decision, nothing. The Show Grounds need more artistic pursuits.

WAYNE

Bloody flower arranging?

THE COMMITTEE

Pursuits that give people value for their money. Value for money.

BOWYANG

You're the ones being two-faced now. What you really want is to get rid of Sideshow Alley.

CINDY

You can't do that! Why, Sideshow Alley's where entertainment all started. It goes back to ah, Julius Caesar.

BOWYANG

Right.

CINDY

Julius Caesar was really a Sideshow Alley freak until he was discovered by Brutus.

BOWYANG

You just want to replace us with your bitumen and fast rides. Devices which hurl you which way and that way and stretch your mouth till it

covers your ears. Take away the kid's youthful dreams and replace them with instant thrills. And while you're at it you can replace me with a tape recorder.

*(BOWYANG goes to leave but is stopped by CINDY.)*

CINDY

Pop's right. Who wants to be bored to the back teeth watching fluffy gambolling lambs? I don't mean they shouldn't be there, but little Johnny's not interested in Granny Smith's arranged to represent the map of Tasmania. He wants to see ah--

BOWYANG

Zimmy--

CINDY

Zimmy the Legless Wonder bounding along on her--

BOWYANG

His!

CINDY

--hands and smoking a cigar under water.

THE COMMITTEE

But...But...

CINDY

Even if it is a trick.

BOWYANG

Look at that little kid over there--

THE COMMITTEE

Where?

BOWYANG

--being dragged away by Farmer Joe to the tractor display or whatnot. Why's he crying?

THE COMMITTEE

I don't see any little child crying.

BOWYANG

(shouting) You come back after the tapestry parade, kid and Old Bowyang'll give you a free ticket to the tent of your choice.

CINDY

And bring your friends.

BOWYANG

I'll give them all free tickets. (aside to WAYNE) Make certain their parents pay.

CINDY

To every kid with a glint in his eye, to every Mum with a pram load of showbags, the show *is* Sideshow Alley. That bogus riot of flim flam presided over by 'step-right-up-Ladies-and-Gentlemen' spruikers that delighted a nation--

BOWYANG

We give them a ticket to the real world, to see life through far-away eyes on a magic carpet of make believe.

CINDY

What harm is there in that?

BOWYANG

Wouldn't you all like to be Chief Little Wolf for a day, be sat upon by Lottie the Fat Lady--?

CINDY

All fifty-two stone of her.

BOWYANG

It's only fun. Life should be fun. A bit of humbug never hurt anyone.

CINDY

They make them laugh. That's what they do send them home laughing.

THE COMMITTEE

We've heard quite enough for one day. Our decision is final. Your licences are revoked. Revoked. You no longer have the right to charge people admission to Boxing Tents or human or animal curiosity shows. So there.

CINDY

You can't do that!

THE COMMITTEE

Oh yes, we can. And the same goes for that screeching you call music.

WAYNE

You two are nothing more than showbags yourself.

THE COMMITTEE

And why's that, young man?

WAYNE

Because you both full of shit!

*(The MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE scuttle off.)*

CINDY

It would've been nice if they allowed us to finish our show. I was getting to enjoy this deception game.

BOWYANG

You're just like your mother.

WAYNE

Might be a good time to have a fairdinkum look for that cow, Boss.

CINDY

What're we going to do?

BOWYANG

What we've always done. We give them the show of a lifetime.

CINDY

But we can't charge people admission without a licence.

BOWYANG

Who said anything about charging?

CINDY

You know, Pop, I had you figured wrong.

BOWYANG

Then again, we can ask for a donation. (CINDY shakes her fist.) Only kidding.

CINDY

Let's give them a show they'll never forget.

WAYNE

Hey, Boss, we've got this really great idea. See, we take these copper rings--

BOWYANG

Kid, you've always wanted to do some spruiking. Now's your chance.

WAYNE

Me?

BOWYANG

You run the show.

CINDY

That's a great idea.

*(CATHY enters.)*

BOWYANG

It'll leave me free to pass the hat around.

CATHY

You can do it, Wayne. You can do it.

WAYNE

Are you sure, Boss?

GINGER

*(entering)* Course you can, Kactus.

BOWYANG

But no more two-headed tricks.

*(BOWYANG removes his hat and coat and puts them on Wayne.)*

BOWYANG

I've had enough two-headed tricks to last a lifetime.

WAYNE

Me and Cathy have this great idea. We reckon we can do it at the Town Hall.

BOWYANG

Son, that cow I was talking about, well it's been under your nose all the time. It's Sideshow Alley and the milk's the enjoyment it gives, *(aside)* not to mention the money it used to make. Now you get up there and you show them what Sideshow Alley's all about.

WAYNE

It'll be a cinch, Boss.

CINDY

You can introduce the World's Oldest Woman--

BOWYANG

Give them some patter about how she's the reason George Washington never told a lie.

CINDY

(handing him cards) It's all written on these cards.

WAYNE

Yeah, yeah, and how she still swims the Mississippi before breakfast.

BOWYANG

That's the spirit. Then it's the Wild Women from the Congo. Use the cattle prod. (gives WAYNE his cane) Use it on yourself first so everyone knows it's real. Then you turn the switch off here.

*(WAYNE accidentally touches CATHY'S foot with the prod. She screams and hops around. WAYNE turns hitting GINGER. BOWYANG grabs it and shows him how to turn it off.)*

BOWYANG

Turn the switch off, you dummy. Now, tell them she was--

WAYNE

Captured by a Pirate King. Trust me, Boss. I'm a natural.

*(CINDY and BOWYANG go to their rostrum. WAYNE practices with CATHY.)*

WAYNE

Step this way, Ladies and Gentlemen. Come and see the world's youngest--

CINDY

And most handsome.

WAYNE

--showman launch himself as the greatest ever Sideshow Alley Spruiker.

*(WAYNE whispers to CATHY who excitedly races off. He throws the cards away, pivots and faces the audience.)*

WAYNE

Music, Maestro.

*(There is a brief music intro. WAYNE smiles but is overcome with stage fright.)*

WAYNE

Ah...ah...re...hah ha...

*(WAYNE backs hurriedly and picks up the cards.)*

BOWYANG

*(covering for WAYNE)* Step this way, Ladies and Gentlemen. Peek through the windows of mystery--

CINDY

Hitch hike through the land of Xanadu.

GINGER

*(from the audience)* What's if gunna cost us?

BOWYANG

Nothing, Lad. This one's on the house. Take it away, Kid.

WAYNE

Yeah, hah ha...ah introducing ah, George Washington's Mother...ah...

*(He pulls a rope from the tent but it's the WILD WOMAN FROM THE CONGO who's in chains.)*

WAYNE

She's, ah two years old, no three hundred--

WILD WOMAN

Not me, you idiot. I'm the Wild Woman from the Congo.

*(The WILD WOMAN hurries off.)*

WAYNE

Sorry ah, the most ferocious person in captivity...

*(HE puts a hand in the tent and pulls out the WORLD'S OLDEST WOMAN who is barely alive.)*

WAYNE

...who's ah, permanently kept in chains. Ah, since we've had her in captivity, we've taught her some juggling tricks.

OLDEST WOMAN

(loud whisper) I don't know any juggling tricks, you idiot!

WAYNE

(whispering) Stop trying to make me look stupid. Juggle.

*(But the OLDEST WOMAN can't even raise her arm. WAYNE prods her and she nearly hits the roof before racing off.)*

WAYNE

Hah ha, everyone wants in on the act. And now, Ladies and Gentlemen, the coup de grace, the remarkable Giraffe Women from Burma.

CINDY

Giraffe Women?

BOWYANG

I haven't got any Giraffe Women!

WAYNE

You have now, Boss.

*(CATHY slowly enters dressed in sarong and silver foil round her neck.)*

WAYNE

These amazing Women have been able to triple the length of their necks, with their permanently fitted copper rings...

*(The silver foil falls from CATHY'S neck. She quickly replaces it.)*

WAYNE

...which, if removed, would result in instant death.

BOWYANG

(hurrying to WAYNE) Hah ha, Ladies and Gentlemen, just a brief comic interlude, hah ha, from my assistant, hah ha, who's just become my ex-assistant. He was merely pulling your leg.

CINDY

Stretching your neck more like it.

WAYNE

Boss, you're the one who said people liked to be fooled.

BOWYANG



Course they do, but not by a fool.

WAYNE

But we made them laugh, Boss.

CATHY

We did.

WAYNE

And that's something they'll never forget.

BOWYANG

You're right, Kids, we did, didn't we?

*(BOWYANG nods and slowly leaves.)*

CINDY

Where're you going, Pop?

BOWYANG

There's this little merry-go-round I've had my eye on...

*(They all gather round BOWYANG.)*

BOWYANG

...one of those steam driven things, with a donkey engine and painted horses and carriages and white angels. I might just get an old wooden trailer and find myself a long pier. Kid, there's some advice I want you to remember.

WAYNE

What's that, Boss?

BOWYANG

*(leaving)* Laugh a little faster, time is short.

CINDY

Pop. *(BOWYANG stops)* Here's a little something I want you to remember. I wrote it for you and my Mum.

*(She sings and is backed by the cast with WAYNE and CATHY dancing in the centre.)*

CINDY

"When I was a little kid....I'd spend my time at the show...I never had the thought...That maybe one day it would go...As I grew older I watched the

alley disappear...The tents aren't there anymore...But the feeling's always there...Sideshow Alley's gone...But the memory still lives on...The Fee Jee Mermaid and the Man-Eating Shark...Siamese Twins and Giants...Aren't in amusement parks...It's sad but true these days...They're just not in the race...Cause you know technology has taken over the place...Sideshow Alley's Gone...But the memory still lives on."

**(AND THE FAT LADY HAS SUNG)**