

BARNUM

Month after month of standing right there beside me, then just when we're right on the threshold....

(Calming their fears)

....Now I don't want you boys to worry, 'cause during this campaign I'm gonna be stronger than ever! I've worked a long time for the Senatorial nomination and it's an election I don't plan to lose.

TEMPLETON

Mr. Barnum, I'm afraid that there's been a slight postponement on your nomination.

BARNUM

What are you talking about?

MORRISSEY

What Mr. Templeton's trying to say is that the Party's position has changed. We're giving the nomination to Alexander Whittaker.

BARNUM

What are you talking about? I've been barnstorming for the past six months on the strength of your promise that I'd have that nomination.

TEMPLETON

The decision's out of our hands, Mr. Barnum! But in four years you'll be a prime candidate.

BARNUM

(A shout)

I don't want the nomination in four years! I promised somebody I'd be in Washington next January and if I can't be there then, I don't want to be there at all. Good day.

TEMPLETON

But, Mr. Barnum....

BARNUM

Get out!

(THEY exit leaving BARNUM alone on the stage)

....They took me Chairy. Six months of making speeches and they take the nomination away from me with a lie worse than any humbug I ever pulled in thirty-five years of fooling people! I thought I'd got it out of my life, but I was wrong 'cause it looks like if I don't humbug them, they're gonna do worse to me. And, Chairy, tell the truth, is humbug so bad after all? Look at that shipload of reubens come over on the Mayflower; they were humbugged with a dream of findin' some kind of utopia, and it turned out pretty good. And Tom Jefferson and Ben Franklin back in '76 humbugged with a vision of makin' a whole society of free and equal people and that dream of theirs was strong enough

BARNUM (Cont'd)

to win a war! Course I'm not comparin' live mermaids and four headed frogs to the Declaration of Independence, but somewhere way down deep there's a connection....

(Realizing what HE's said)

....How do you like that? I haven't lost my touch after all! Up here on a soap box for two minutes and I convinced myself I'm first cousins with Thomas Jefferon. Well, darn it Chairy, don't that prove it? At humbuggin' I'm the best there is!

(BARNUM puts his soap box down on the stage with a bang. He sings)

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THE PRINCE OF HUMBUG

THE PRINCE OF HUMBUG!  
BALDERDASH  
FIDDLE-FADDLE  
DRIVEL, TOSH  
TWIDDLE-TWADDLE  
BLATHER, BOSH  
BILGE AND DODGE AND DOUBLE DUTCH  
AND FLIM-FLAM  
I AM!

THE KING OF HOGWASH  
TOMMYROT  
GIBBER, JABBER  
BLABBER BLUFF  
HOCUS-POCUS  
GABBLE, GUFF  
SCAM AND SHAM AND JUST A TOUCH  
OF WHITE LIE  
AM I!

DUKE OF TRIPE AND IDLE CHAT  
EARL OF OIL  
LORD OF BLAT  
EMPEROR OF RIGMAROLE  
THAT I AM!  
BLESS MY SOUL!

THE PRINCE OF HUMBUG!  
POPPYCOCK  
PIFFLE, WAFFLE  
PATTER, JUNK  
HOKUM, HOOEY  
CHATTER, BUNK  
WILE AND GUILLE  
AND TRUMPERY...  
THAT'S ME!

BARNUM

All right, Stratton, what's this about 'moral qualms'?

STRATTON

(As MRS. STRATTON joins him and we  
find ourselves in the SITTING ROOM OF  
STRATTON HOME. MUSIC out)

Let me begin by telling you that my wife and I have the  
highest regard for you.

BARNUM

(To us)

I smell a humbug.

MRS. STRATTON

But as God is our witness....

BARNUM

(Still to us)

A holy humbug, the worst kind.

MRS. STRATTON

But to permit you to exploit our son Charles' oddities for  
such a small sum of money is an offense to a Christian  
conscience.

BARNUM

(To us)

Now the key word in that speech isn't Christian, it's small.  
As in sum of money.

(To STRATTONS)

....Now exactly what do you mean when you refer to oddities?

STRATTON

Any boy only twenty-five inches tall from head to toe is a  
freak of nature....

BARNUM

Hold on, Mr. Stratton. Joice Heth is a hundred and sixty  
years of age, Madame Josepha has a ten-inch beard, Ann Swann  
is eight-and-a-half feet tall -- but that doesn't make them  
freaks, it makes them special!

(STRATTONS start to interrupt)

....What you call an aberration of nature, I call a gift  
from God to lift him above the crowd!

(Overriding THEM again)

Tell you what, since he's old enough to make up his own  
mind, why don't we leave it up to the boy.

(Crossing to tiny armchair)

....Charley, I want you to come with me and join my show but  
I'm not gonna fool you. Tens, thousands, maybe millions of  
people are gonna come to see you -- some to stare, maybe  
even a few to laugh -- but most'll cheer and tell their  
children and grandchildren for generations to come that they

## BARNUM (Cont'd)

saw the smallest man in the world. We'll even find you a special name -- something to go with the miracle of your size -- Thumb! Tom Thumb! Course, you also gotta keep in mind the princely salary to you and your dear family of fifteen dollars a week! Well, Charley, I've put it as fairly as I can....Now it's up to you.

(A moment, then a tiny hand pops up from behind the chair and signals "O.K.")

## BARNUM

(Continued, to us, as STRATTONS EXIT Left)

What'd I say that name was? Thumb. Tom Thumb. Sounds a little skimpy to me. What we need is a handle to go with it....Sir Thomas Thumb!

(Dismissing it)

....The Right Honorable Tom Thumb!

(Rejecting that too)

Something with a touch of the military....Captain Tom Thumb. Oh, what the deuce, in for a penny, in for a pound.... General Tom Thumb!

(MUSIC starts for next number. STRATTONS and BARNUM have gone off through this as set begins to change. Before our eyes the armchair begins to grow in size until it is enormous. As this happens, we hear ANNOUNCER'S VOICE boom out)

## RINGMASTER'S VOICE

....Ladies and gentlemen of the great city of Philadelphia! For the first time anywhere....The world's smallest man.... General Tom Thumb!

(And TOM THUMB, in General's uniform, steps out from behind chair. NOTE: THIS IS THE FIRST TIME WE SEE TOM THUMB. HE IS PLAYED BY A NORMAL SIZED PERSON WITH EVERYTHING ON THE SET GIANT-SIZED TO CREATE THE ILLUSION THAT HE IS ONLY TWENTY-FIVE INCHES TALL)

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BIGGER ISN'T BETTER

## TOM THUMB

(Sings)

I'M GEN'RAL THUMB JUST COME TO TOWN  
A YANKEE DOODLE DANDY  
I'VE ET YOUR SCRAPPLE, WASHED IT DOWN  
WITH JUST A NIP OF BRANDY

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OVERTUREACT ONE

CURTAIN is up as audience comes into theatre revealing a tent-like structure soaring high above a single circus ring extending out over the orchestra pit. Before house lights start down, MAN WITH SNARE DRUM, MUSICIANS WITH CONCERTINA AND PENNYWHISTLE come on and play tiny fanfare.

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STAGE MUSIC

as MAN IN SHIRTSLEEVES strides out on stage. MUSIC out when BARNUM enters.

MAN IN SHIRTSLEEVES (BARNUM)

....Barnum's the name, P.T. Barnum, and I want to tell you that tonight, on this stage, you are going to see -- bar none -- every sight, wonder, and miracle that name stands for!

(Continuing excitedly as COMPANY starts quietly out Right and Left)

Including Jumbo, the Largest Elephant in the World; the Amazing Great White Whale from Labrador; General Tom Thumb, only twenty-five inches from toe to crown; Joice Heth, the Oldest Woman Alive; the Rarest and Most Beautiful Bird in Captivity, the Swedish Nightingale; plus a Company of Hundreds -- no Thousands -- including Marching Bands, Standing Bands, Tumbling Bands, Flying Bands, Bands of Every Size, Shape, and Description....and here they are!

(Sour chord from STAGE MUSICIANS, as COMPANY bows)

....Oh, I know what you're thinking, you don't see any Nightingales or Flying Bands or Twenty-Five Inch Men -- but like I told you Barnum's my name and miracles are my game -- and they're all up there, mark my word!