

Fable

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A Fable About A Musical Fable

by  
Doug DeVita

Doug DeVita  
410 Central Park West, 16B  
New York, NY 10025  
917.584.2907  
doug.devita@gmail.com  
www.dougdevitaplays.com

CHARACTER NAME	BRIEF DESCRIPTION	AGE	GENDER
Older June	Retired former actress, bedridden	90+	F
Middle Aged June	Working actress, former child star	40+	F
Baby June*	Child star	7	F
Gypsy/Nurse	Burlesque Star / Older June's Nurse	40+	F
Ethel/Rose	Broadway STAR / June's Mother	40+	F
Arthur/Emcee	A writer. / A Marathon bandleader	40+	M
Jerry/Floor Manager	A director. / A Marathon employee	40+	M
Dorothy Kilgallen/Dinah Shore	A columnist / A talk show host	40+	F

#### SYNOPSIS:

Who has the right to tell your story? Especially when it's the same story told from the differing memories of two legendary show business siblings? And one sister's version is about to become a big, Broadway musical that is also destined to become legendary? June Havoc was famously ambivalent about the show about her sister Gypsy Rose Lee, the show Gypsy referred to as her legacy. And in *Fable*, which is itself a fable about the creation of that musical fable, the sisters' loyalty to each other is tested in a mounting battle that takes place in rehearsal rooms, dressing rooms, onstage, backstage, and in the memory of the aging Ms. Havoc as she faces her imminent death, still battling to keep her own legacy alive.

LOG LINE: A Fable. About A Musical Fable.

SET REQUIREMENTS: A bare stage, a red velour traveler curtain, a ghostlight, some chairs and a hospital bed.

#### BIO:

Doug's play *Phillie's Trilogy* was named a Semi-Finalist for Barrington Stage Company's Burman New Play Award and was produced as part of the 2017 Fresh Fruit Festival where it received a Fresh Fruit Award of Distinction for Outstanding Production. Other work includes *The Fierce Urgency Of Now* (Fresh Fruit Awards for Outstanding Play and Production); and *Just A Rumor* (co-written with Gary Lyons) which was a Semi-Finalist at the O'Neill.

Doug has also been an Art Director/Copywriter/Marketing Director/Adjunct Associate Professor, all of which, along with a Catholic school education and his mother, gave him an unbelievable amount of material. It was as Director of Marketing for Abingdon Theatre Company where Doug first encountered June Havoc, and while he never met her in person, during the course of several phone conversations began to fully understand her deep desire to make her true story known.

For June,  
with whom I once had an impassioned, but charming,  
conversation which I will never forget.

A crumbling Proscenium Arch frames the stage, Vaudeville-style placards on either side. A red traveller hangs between upstage and downstage, the panels able to cross in front and/or behind each other to reveal a new setup as they open and close. A few lighting instruments in full view, as well as a strip of footlights. Ropes, sand bags, and a ghost light populate the otherwise bare stage. At present, the travelers are closed, the ghost light is on, and the illuminated placards read:

**FABLE. A FABLE ABOUT A MUSICAL FABLE.**

The placards remain illuminated as the houselights dim and the ghost light flickers out. In the dark, the ghostly figure of a tiny little girl – the 7-year old Dainty Baby June Hovick – peeps out from behind one of the curtains. A moment, then her mother, Rose Hovick, appears behind her, whispering in her ear. Throughout the play, she is always in a light that drains her of as much color as possible, since she is a ghost constantly haunting the Older June. (Rose later plays Ethel, in different, more colorful light.)

Although Older June does address Dainty Baby June directly, the child is always a memory and never responds directly to her.

The Emcee (he later plays Arthur) bursts onto the stage.

EMCEE

Hey, hey, hey, Ladies and Gents, Gents and Ladies!

(Peering at someone in the first few rows.)

And whatever you are!

(Directing the next few questions to various other audience members.)

– Ya’ll have a good dinner [or lunch]? Satiated, huh?

– Ya’ll enjoy that final smoke before comin’ in here? Ya’ll relaxed now?

– Ya’ll are anxious to get started, ain’t ya? Yeah, I can tell yer a real go-getter! Especially after... how many bourbons did yer wife have to pour into ya to get ya here?

(Addressing the entire house.)

Y’all feel refreshed and ready? Good, good, goodie! ‘Cause here at the [NAME OF THEATRE] we hope y’all are ready to let us entertain you for an all night [or all afternoon] marathon of memories:

(Gesturing to the placards.)

FABLE! A FABLE ABOUT A MUSICAL FABLE. With THREE! COUNT 'EM!  
THREE Miss June Havocs! Watch as she thrills and chills and spills her guts sharing her stories with y'all in a marathon to end all marathons!

The placards change to read:

**PLACARD STAGE RIGHT: 802,200 HOURS.**

**PLACARD STAGE LEFT: (THAT'S 95 YEARS, FOLKS!)**

EMCEE

Here we are at hour 802,200 – that's 95 years, folks – of June's life, an endurance test of greasepaint, grit, and grandeur. So sit back, settle in, and LET THE FABLE BEGIN!

Rose, who has been brushing Dainty Baby June's hair until it wings out wildly from either side of her head now pinches her cheeks until she whimpers.

ROSE

Ssh, darling. Bite your lips! Bite your lips! And smile, baby!

EMCEE

(Pulling a conductor's baton from a pocket, he starts a vaudeville style fanfare.)

Here she is boys! Here she is girls! THE POCKET SIZED PAVLOVA! THE DARLING OF VAUDEVILLE! DAINTY BABY JUNE HOVICK!

Dainty Baby June expertly bites her lips to make them redder, then smiles brightly. Rose then pulls the curtains open with one hand and shoves Dainty Baby June out onto the stage with the other. She dances en pointe to the footlights, does a split, smiles and raises her arms. She sings in a high, pure, strong voice. (Every time she performs a song or dance, it should be obvious that this kid has presence and talent; her material is sharp and polished, and there is nothing even remotely amateurish or "kiddie show" about her performance.)

DAINTY BABY JUNE

NOBODY KNOWS ME NUMBER  
NOBODY KNOWS ME NAME  
NOBODY KNOWS  
WHERE I GET ME CLOTHES  
BUT I GETS THEM JUST THE SAME  
SEE?\*

She does a little dance, then bows as Rose beams. The Emcee leads the applause as Dainty Baby June goes to sit by the ghost light. (\*Song TBD)

EMCEE

TADA!

ROSE

That's my little trouper. No one would ever guess looking at you that you have a temperature of 103.

Making sure Dainty Baby June is settled comfortably, Rose goes to the traveler curtains as the placards change.

**PLACARD STAGE RIGHT: ON THE FARM WITH MISS JUNE HAVOC.**

**PLACARD STAGE LEFT: WILTON, CONNECTICUT. MARCH, 2008.**

EMCEE

(Gesturing to the placards.)

On the farm with Miss June Havoc. Wilton, Connecticut. March, 2008.

The Emcee disappears. Rose pulls the curtains open to reveal the 95 year-old June in bed, a food tray on her lap. Rose hovers in the background as the bed moves downstage; we see that June is asleep. Throughout the play – whether seated, standing, or in bed (even when she is asleep) – Older June is always moving at least one foot, if not both. A nurse (she later plays Gypsy) is opening the blinds, and a blast of bright sunlight hits June, waking her. (This can be a light and sound effect – there is no need for practical blinds.) Both Older June and Dainty Baby June react to the light the same way, as if they were both hit with an unexpectedly bright spot light.

OLDER JUNE

Oh, that spotlight is bright tonight! Dear God, that can't possibly have been eleven minutes already!

NURSE

I only opened the blinds, June. The afternoon sun woke you. You've been asleep for two hours.

OLDER JUNE

(Still slightly groggy.)

That's all we get for rest during these marathons, you know. Eleven minutes. I must keep moving. I have to stay awake...

NURSE

(Fluffing the pillows. She's heard this all before, many times.)

You haven't finished your lunch, June dear. Arthur Laurents called again.

June pushes the food tray away. She's now fully awake and angry.

OLDER JUNE

I am not going to that opening night. I don't want to see everyone staring at the ancient baby with the walker... Oh, that musical again. Must they keep reviving it? And with *that* woman, this time? She may be talented, she may even be a *star*,

(To the ghost of Rose.)

But she is not you. She's even less you than Ethel was, mother. She brays.

Rose floats forward.

ROSE

*I never* brayed.

NURSE

That wasn't why he called this time, dear.

OLDER JUNE

(To the Nurse.)

I adapted my book into a show too.

NURSE

Yes, dear. I know. *Marathon '33*.

OLDER JUNE

Now why don't they revive that?

ROSE

Because no one cares, baby.

OLDER JUNE

(To Dainty Baby June.)

You're too young to know about this, darling, but they made a musical out of us. A big Broadway musical about mother, our sister Louise, and us. And that show was all a bunch of lies. Big, fat, Broadway musical lies.

Throughout the play, whenever Older June talks to Dainty Baby June, the child does not respond. None of Older June's memories respond. Only Rose and the Nurse respond to her.

NURSE

(Shaking her head and smiling; she's been here before.)

I know all about it, June.

OLDER JUNE

(Pointing to Rose and Dainty Baby June.)

Shhhh. I'm talking to them.

NURSE

June, you're still half-asleep.

OLDER JUNE

(To the Nurse.)

I am completely awake.

(To Rose.)

Lies about you, mother, lies about Louise...

(To Dainty Baby June.)

And especially, lies about you. About me. Us. Everything was a lie. She called it her legacy, our sister did. *Gypsy, A Musical Fable*. And I get thrown under the bus every 15 years so they can trot it out for a big enough star desperate enough to play mother.

ROSE

I've never thought any of those women were right.

OLDER JUNE

(To Rose.)

This isn't about you, mother.

ROSE

Of course it's about me. It's always been about me, baby. It hasn't been about you since you ran away, and that still drives you crazy.

OLDER JUNE

(To Dainty Baby June.)

You're too young to care about what I'm telling you, aren't you? It's all so far off in your future. And so far back in my past...

ROSE

(To Older June.)

I don't know why you keep talking to her, June dear. She can't hear you. She's only what's left of your memory of you.

OLDER JUNE

But she hears you.

Rose makes a sweeping gesture to indicate both Older June and Dainty Baby June.

We hear the strains of '30s style music from a small band, and shadows of sluggishly moving bodies are projected.

ROSE

Of course she does. She's you. And I'm your mother. I may be dead, but I'm still your mother.

OLDER JUNE

I'm so tired.

Older June stops moving a foot. The Floor manager appears. (He later plays Jerry.) He snaps the air with a heavy wooden ruler.

FLOOR MANAGER

Keep moving, girly, or you'll be disqualified. Done. Finished. Out on your ass. Forgotten like all of yesterday's losers.

Older June jumps as if she'd been hit, and immediately starts moving her feet again. The Floor Manager and the shadows disappear as the music fades.

OLDER JUNE

(To the Nurse.)

So tired. But I must keep moving. Or I'm out.

NURSE

June, you haven't danced in a marathon in over 75 years.

ROSE

Baby, you haven't danced in a marathon in over 75 years.

OLDER JUNE

What do you think my whole life has been if not a marathon?

NURSE

June dear, there's something we need to discuss. It's about this revival.

OLDER JUNE

I told Arthur. I am not going.

NURSE

Yes, dear. Arthur told me they want you to renegotiate your royalty.

Rose starts to laugh, softly.

OLDER JUNE

Every single time, they want to renegotiate my royalty. I never should have signed that release. I asked my sister about future productions, she told me not to worry. I asked my lawyer about adding a provision for future productions, he told me not to worry.

NURSE

Well, dear, at the time no one thought / it would have

OLDER JUNE

/ They lied too. My whole life, everyone has lied to me. My sister. My lawyers. Everyone.

(To Rose.)

Even you, mother. Especially you.

Rose's voice takes on a ghostly sound, and her color may brighten a bit as she's now in Older June's memory.

ROSE

(To Dainty Baby June.)

June, darling? Baby, I'm sorry, but your little dog Nee-Nee was killed this morning. He was hit by a car on Hollywood Boulevard.

Offstage, we hear a male voice yell "ACTION!" Dainty Baby June cries on cue. During the following, Rose crosses over to Dainty Baby June, fixes her costume, and pulls her thumb out of her mouth.

OLDER JUNE

(To Rose, pointing at Dainty Baby June.)

Look at me. Five years old and in every movie I made, I'd cry my eyes out. Every take. After the first couple of times, of course, I knew you were making it all up and Nee-Nee was back in our hotel room, perfectly fine.

Rose and Dainty Baby June repeat the lie about the dog.

ROSE

(To Dainty Baby June.)

June, baby, I'm afraid your little Nee-Nee is dead. Run over. Dead.

Dainty Baby June again bursts into tears.

OLDER JUNE

(To Rose.)

That's what you wanted. That's what I was paid to do. That's what I gave them. Every single time.

ROSE

(To Older June.)

You were a pro.

OLDER JUNE

(To Dainty Baby June.)

How old are we? 95? 98? 102? Who cares? Most people, if they remember us at all, think we kicked the bucket a long time ago...

(To the Nurse.)

I danced in seven marathons during the depression, you know?

The music starts and the dancing shadows appear again as the Marathon Emcee enters.

EMCEE

Welcome back, everyone. I hope y'all enjoyed your eleven minute sleep break, also known as The Exposition Eleven! Now let's start hour 802,201 of Miss June Havoc's life with an old favorite and get y'all jumpin' again!

He raises his baton and “Hold That Tiger” blasts through Older June’s memory. The dancing shadows pick up the pace and dance frantically. Perhaps one or two fall.

NURSE

Yes, dear, I know. Let me brush your hair.

(As she brushes June’s wispy white hair.)

I told Arthur to talk to your lawyer about the royalty, but he wants to talk to you personally.

OLDER JUNE

So he can try to charm me out of my money. I know Arthur. I know Arthur very well.

NURSE

(Finishing her brushing.)

There. Don’t you look pretty?

OLDER JUNE

Seven marathons. Thousands of hours on my feet, just to have a roof over my head and food to eat. I built up so much endurance, I was what they called a horse.

NURSE

Yes, dear.

OLDER JUNE

It was a badge of honor to be called a horse. It’s probably why I’m still alive.

(The Nurse takes her pulse.)

And my sister, the “star?” She was nothing more than a cheap, vulgar burlesque dancer. Some star. Did she ever do Shakespeare? I did.

A phone rings. The nurse answers it. The third June appears. She is in her 40s, also on a phone and visibly upset. Both conversations take place in the present (the Nurse) and in the past (June.)

NURSE

No, I’m afraid she can’t come to the phone right now. She’s taking a nap.

JUNE

Your book, Gyps? They’re making *your* book into a musical? What about my book?

NURSE

Her signature? ... I’m afraid that’s something her lawyer will have to discuss with her.

JUNE

I am not signing anything until I've read a script!

June slams down her phone and stands, quietly fuming.  
The nurse hangs up her phone a bit more delicately.

During the following, the bed moves upstage as Dainty Baby June, en pointe, and Rose draw the travelers closed just enough to frame Older June. We see her watching everything from the shadows. Rose moves to the side, also watching from the shadows. Meanwhile the music has segued to a burlesque style bump and grind, and the nurse begins a striptease, taking off her uniform to reveal the stylishly-dressed 48 year-old Gypsy Rose Lee.

NURSE

(Taking off her nurse's cap.)

You're getting excited again, dear.

OLDER JUNE

Everyone thinks I'm rich as Croesus from that musical.

GYPSY

(Taking off her nurse's shoes and stockings.)

She's a famous actress, my sister.

OLDER JUNE

They got around me by calling it a "Fable," you know, and they all deluded themselves that everything was true, but in the end it was all lies.

GYPSY

(Taking off her nurse's uniform to reveal a  
stylish suit underneath.)

She prides herself on telling the truth, because...

OLDER JUNE

I told them everything was a lie, but they didn't care, there were all making so much money. "Fable." I hate that word... I was the star in the family.

GYPSY

(She puts on a chic pair of stockings.)

As she is fond of saying, "you must know your truth. Only that is what will make the work respectable. "The work." How very Actors Studio of her. And me, well...

OLDER JUNE

She called herself an ecdysiast, but that was just one of her fancy excuses for dancing naked five times a day.

GYPSY

I was never naked. I was completely covered by a blue spotlight.

OLDER JUNE

Oh, she tried to disguise it with witty, pseudo-intellectual banter, but she was nothing more than a cheap, vulgar burlesque dancer.

GYPSY

(She steps into an elegant pair of shoes.)

I may not have been a Shakespearean actress, but I was *never* a cheap, vulgar burlesque dancer.

(She drapes a mink stole over her shoulders.)

I was an ecdysiast.

Gypsy and June face each other. June looks at Gypsy's mink. She holds out her hand. Gypsy reluctantly takes off her mink and gives it to her.

**PLACARD STAGE RIGHT: SISTERS, SISTERS, WERE THERE EVER SUCH DEVOTED SISTERS?**

**PLACARD STAGE LEFT: GYPSY'S TOWNHOUSE ON MANHATTAN'S SMART EAST SIDE. JANUARY, 1959.**

GYPSY

(Indicating the SR placard.)

Sisters,

JUNE

(Indicating the SR placard)

Sisters,

BOTH

(Indicating the SR placard.)

Were there ever such devoted sisters?

GYPSY

(Indicating SL placard.)

My townhouse on Manhattan's smart east side.

BOTH  
(Indicating SL placard.)

January, 1959.

Gypsy lights a cigarette and stares intently at June, the mink now draped over her shoulder, reading a document. Dainty Baby June sits cross legged under the dimly glowing ghost light, Rose behind her. As we head into deeper memories, Older June mouths every word June says from this point on.

JUNE

I wish you wouldn't smoke. It will kill you, you know.

Gypsy reluctantly stubs out her cigarette as June goes back to reading the document. Gypsy pours herself a scotch. June looks up at her.

GYPSY

What?

JUNE

Another scotch, Gyps? Didn't your physician tell you / not

GYPSY

/ Please, June, I have so few vices left to enjoy.

JUNE

(Handing Gypsy the document.)

I am not signing this until I've seen and approved a script.

GYPSY

Why are you doing this, June?

JUNE

This is a lousy deal for me and you know it. You've sold your story, but you can't sell mine. And I am not selling myself so cheaply.

GYPSY

If I can get you an extra 20 grand...

JUNE

And script / approval

GYPSY

/ And script approval, will you sign the release?

JUNE

We'll see. Arthur Laurents and Jerome Robbins are coming to see my show tonight. They're going to have to kiss my ass big time if they want me to sign anything.

GYPSY

Arthur and Jerry are only the writer and director, June. It's the producer, David Merrick, you need to convince.

JUNE

Arthur and Jerry are two of the biggest names on Broadway right now. Mr. Merrick won't listen to me. But he will listen to them, and if their job isn't made easy, he's not going to want to listen to them complaining.

GYPSY

Don't underestimate Merrick; he's a slippery one. I'm meeting Arthur for lunch tomorrow at Sardi's. I'll see what I can do, at least about letting you see the script.

JUNE

I want to be there too.

GYPSY

You have a matinee tomorrow, and you know you can't eat right before a show.

JUNE

Then I shall arrange to have tea with Arthur after my show. I'll be voracious by then.

GYPSY

Go ahead, dear. Be my guest. Take him to the Plaza. Put it on my tab.

JUNE

You're being awfully generous.

GYPSY

I'm trying awfully hard.

The placards change to read:

**PLACARD STAGE RIGHT: GYPSY. HERSELF. HAVING "LUNCH" AT SARDI'S WITH ARTHUR THE AUTHOR. JANUARY, 1959.**

**PLACARD STAGE LEFT: JUNE. HERSELF. HAVING TEA AT THE PLAZA HOTEL WITH ARTHUR THE AUTHOR. JANUARY, 1959.**

A large caricature of Gypsy flies in stage right, as a potted palm or two roll on stage left.

GYPSY

(Gesturing to the SR placard.)

Me. Having "Lunch" at Sardi's with Arthur the author.

(Gesturing to the caricature.)

And that's my caricature. Fun, isn't it?

JUNE

(Gesturing to the SL placard.)

Me. Having tea at the Plaza Hotel with Arthur the author.

BOTH

January, 1959.

June in the Plaza Hotel Palm Court, seated at a table set with tea things and pastries. Gypsy in Sardi's, seated in front of her caricature, with a bottle of Scotch and packet or two of cigarettes. She has at least two, sometimes three going at the same time. Scotch and cigarettes. Arthur is seated in between, like the ball in an out of control tennis match, taking notes, barely able to keep up as the sisters each talk to him, separately.

JUNE

You were both late last night. I could see you and Jerry slinking into your seats. But then you weren't really there to see my performance, were you? You just came to get my name on a piece of paper.

ARTHUR

(As he lights a cigarette.)

That's not entirely true, June. You know I want to hear your story, too.

JUNE

I do wish you wouldn't smoke, Arthur.

ARTHUR

(To Gypsy, cigarette in hand.)

So tell me, Gyps, how did you really get into stripping?

GYPSY

Oh, darling, I've given so many versions of that story, why don't you make up your own? Just call the show *Gypsy*, and I won't care about the rest. If you're after the "truth," and I use that term as loosely as I make my costumes, talk to June.

JUNE

(Stubbing out Arthur's cigarette.)

You're supposed to be a playwright, Arthur, aren't you? How could you lend yourself to adapting my sister's book? It's vulgar. She's vulgar.

(June takes a tiny dog from her large purse  
and sits it on her lap.)

This is Qui Qui\*.

(\*pronounced *Kee Kee*.)

Say "Hello" to Arthur, Qui Qui.

(She feeds the dog a pastry or two, watching  
as Arthur takes notes.)

Qui Qui just loves her pastry, don't you Qui Qui wee-kee?

ARTHUR

Well, the focus is really going to be on your mother, Rose.

JUNE

I know my mother's name, Arthur.

ARTHUR

Ethel Merman, after all, doesn't play second fiddle to anyone.

JUNE

Ethel Merman? As mother? I replaced her in *Sadie Thompson* years ago. She just couldn't handle the acting, you know. It was a serious part.

ARTHUR

She'll be swell, June. Relax.

GYPSY

My baby sister always forgets I replaced Ethel in a Broadway show first. *DuBarry Was A Lady*. That show was a hit. It kills her.

JUNE

Mother was a psychopath. Can Ethel *play* a psychopath?

GYPSY

You know, Arthur, June used to bang her head on the dressing room table when she didn't get what she wanted, and we'd all have to give in to her every whim because, as mother said, "The Baby can't be upset before going on, it will affect her performance." And with 5 or 6 performances a day, day in, day out, week after week, year after year, let me tell you, darling, there was a *lot* of head-banging.

JUNE

Are you planning to mention all the dance marathons I did?

ARTHUR

The dance marathons?

JUNE

Didn't you read *my* book? I had my lawyer send you the manuscript *weeks* ago.

ARTHUR

Well, actually...

JUNE

Of course you didn't. I survived seven of them. Hour after hour, 500, 600, 2,000, 4,000, it all became about survival, that fierce determination to be the last one standing. Meanwhile, that no-talent sister

JUNE (cont'd)

of mine became a runaway success

GYPSY

And, of course, darling, I became the runaway success.

GYPSY (cont'd)

And then after leaving us flat broke in Kansas City to marry that queer hooper, she had the nerve to come back from years of dancing in those marathons, unmarried *and* pregnant, expecting mother and me to help her get back on her feet...

They now begin speaking so fast, Arthur barely has time to take notes or get a word in.

JUNE

Standing and moving, in a circus tent or community hall, always standing and moving after months and months of never knowing whether it was day or night or in-between

ARTHUR

Yes, well that's all very interesting, June

GYPSY

And everyone, June especially, looking down their noses at me because my runaway success came from successfully navigating a runway.

JUNE

Spending four or five months on blistered, bleeding feet in a circus tent was grueling, but at least it was honest.

JUNE (cont'd)

Gypsy always worked dirty...

GYPSY

Gypsy always worked dirty...

GYPSY (cont'd)

...my high-minded actress sister likes to say, but my dirty money paid her rent, fed her, clothed her, and took care of her bastard daughter.

JUNE

She's so cheap, Arthur! She eats dog food right out of the can!

Putting Qui Qui down, June daintily moves the teapot and with one deft move sweeps the remaining pastries – plates, silverware and all – into that rather large purse.

ARTHUR

(Holding up his hand to stop them.)

WAIT!

(To himself as he writes a note.)

Oh, that's just too perfect! Rose... steals... table... settings... in... restaurant... scene...

(Gesturing to them to continue.)

Okay, go on.

GYPSY

Of course, darling, *I* was supporting all of them: Mother. June. Her daughter. My Aunt Belle. My Grandmama.

JUNE

And I danced in seven of them. "7 Marathons 7!" I won 6 of them, too! I did. I hold the record for the most hours danced, ever. Did you know that?

GYPSY

And as long as they all got what they wanted, everyone was all much too happy to take my dirty money. I paid then, and I'm paying now. Just remember that later today when you see that mink my little sister is sporting. She wanted it, she got it.

JUNE

And would I trade it all for her “20 Girls 20?” Not on your life. Those marathons made me a survivor. A very strong survivor. I get what I want, Arthur.

The sisters finally stop to draw breath.

ARTHUR

(To June.)

Yes, well, that’s all fascinating. I’m not sure how much I can use, of course...

JUNE

Don’t underestimate me, Mr. Laurents. Without my approval, you don’t get my signature.

JUNE (cont'd)

And without my signature, you don’t have a show.

GYPSY

And without her signature, we don’t have a show.

JUNE

So how much of it you can or can’t use really doesn’t matter until I see a script and sign that precious release, now does it?

GYPSY

I’ll do what I can, but she is headstrong, you know. All that banging on the dressing room tables, darling.

ARTHUR

(To both of them.)

Can we start rehearsals, at least?

GYPSY

Possibly. If you let her see the script.

JUNE

Possibly. If you let me see the script.

ARTHUR

(To June. Exhausted.)

Okay June, you win this round. I’ll have a copy sent to you tomorrow.

(To Gypsy. Firmly.)

There’s no way in hell I’m giving her script approval, Gyps.

GYPSY

That will be for Mr. Merrick to decide, now won’t it, Arthur?

Arthur exits.

ROSE

(To Older June.)

That was fascinating, June dear. Now just how the hell do you remember what Louise and Arthur talked about if you weren't there?

JUNE

Why can't you stay dead?

ROSE

I'm your mother, dear. You'll never get away from me.

The placards change.

**PLACARD STAGE RIGHT READS: GYPSY'S TOWNHOUSE, STILL ON  
MANHATTAN'S SMART EAST SIDE.**

**PLACARD STAGE LEFT READS: STILL JANUARY, 1959.**

June, Gypsy, with Rose in the background, Older and Dainty Baby June watching from the shadows. Older June continues mouthing June's words.

GYPSY

My townhouse, still on Manhattan's smart east side.

JUNE

Still January, 1959.

(To Gypsy.)

Arthur sent me the script this morning.

GYPSY

And?

JUNE

My lawyer advised me to allow the show to start rehearsals.

GYPSY

I suppose I should thank you for that.

JUNE

BUT... my lawyer sees no reason to have my childhood exploited by strangers for someone else's gain.

GYPSY

Bottom line, June.

JUNE

Bottom line? I will not allow myself to be portrayed on stage unless Arthur makes changes to the script. And David Merrick gives me a royalty.

GYPSY

On top of the twenty grand?

JUNE

Yes.

GYPSY

And if Merrick refuses?

JUNE

How can he? Without me, there is no first act. Without me, Gypsy Rose Lee would never have even existed.

GYPSY

Look, darling, can we please not have this argument again? I wrote a book. You've written a book. They're turning mine into a musical. Isn't that what this is all about?

ROSE

(Chuckling.)

Yes, isn't that what it was all about?

OLDER JUNE

Shut up, mother.

(To Dainty Baby June.)

Mother never really died, you know. She was always with us, one way or another, always ready to give us both that kick in the pants she promised us on her deathbed.

GYPSY

Thank God mother is dead. We couldn't have written our books if she were still alive, she'd have sued us for everything we've got, which isn't much. I do believe she'd be rather thrilled with all of this, though.

JUNE

Mother? Thrilled with Ethel Merman?

GYPSY

You know, June, sometimes I do wonder about you. You're not terribly bright, are you?

JUNE

I'm bright enough to realize you need my signature if you want your, what do you call it?

GYPSY

My legacy.

JUNE

Your legacy to open in New York.

ROSE

(To Older June.)

Oh, those teeth. Louise never did get them properly fixed, did she? All that money, just swirling down the dentist's drain. And you were right. I wasn't terribly thrilled with Ethel at first. I'd rather it had been someone softer. June Allyson, perhaps? No! Judy Garland! Oh, yes, she'd have been a marvelous me!

GYPSY

Ethel Merman is the most bankable star on Broadway. Her name alone guarantees a hit.

JUNE

She has been in a flop, you know.

GYPSY

Only the one she quit in rehearsals, dear. You remember, you took over for her? I replaced her in a hit.

JUNE

Which closed promptly after you took over for her.

GYPSY

June, please? I need this show. I need the money.

JUNE

It's always about the money with you.

GYPSY

When you don't have it...

JUNE

When you spend it the way you do...

GYPSY

I don't have a rich advertising executive husband, like you, dear.

JUNE

When we were kids, did you ever feel like you didn't have a sister?

GYPSY

Sometimes, I still do.

JUNE

That's mother's doing. She kept us apart. She's still trying to keep us apart.

GYPSY

Look, darling, why don't you go through the script, mark up what you want changed, and then we can all meet to discuss how to proceed to everyone's satisfaction.

JUNE

We'll see.

GYPSY

Don't you trust me?

JUNE

Not any further than you can toss a glove.

GYPSY

I can toss a glove pretty far, June.

In the background, Rose laughs and mimes kicking them both in the pants. Arthur and Jerry enter as the placards change.

**PLACARD STAGE RIGHT: ARTHUR, THE ASSHOLE AUTHOR, AND JERRY, THE JERK DIRECTOR.**

**PLACARD STAGE LEFT: GYPSY REHEARSALS. NEW AMSTERDAM THEATRE, NEW YORK. FEBRUARY, 1959.**

JERRY

(Gesturing to the SR placard, and chuckling.)

Arthur, the asshole author.

ARTHUR

(Also gesturing to the SR placard, and chuckling louder.)

And Jerry, the jerk director.

JERRY

(Gesturing to the SL placard.)

Gypsy rehearsals.

ARTHUR

(Gesturing to the SL placard.)

New Amsterdam Theatre, New York.

BOTH

February, 1959.

Jerry and Arthur move into the scene with Gypsy and June. June, with Qui Qui firmly nestled under one arm, is holding a heavily dog-eared, marked script.

JUNE

(To Arthur.)

I never stole my sister's boyfriend, Arthur. You must change that!

GYPSY

That's true, Arthur, I couldn't have cared less for any of the boys in the act.

JUNE

(Back to Arthur.)

And, you know, Mother did try to shoot the boy with whom I eloped.

GYPSY

Also true, Arthur.

(Winking at June.)

We both remember that.

JUNE

Wouldn't that be a thrilling way to end the first act? Ethel pointing a gun at him?

ARTHUR

A gun? You actually want the first act curtain to come down on Ethel pointing a gun? At a chorus boy?

JUNE

That's what really happened.

GYPSY

In a police station in Kansas City.

ARTHUR

Really, Gyps? You're siding with her on this?

GYPSY

(Shrugging.)

She's my sister, Arthur.

JERRY

Have you heard that song? Jule\* wrote it in a four beat triplet!

(\*pronounced *Julie*.)

JUNE

So?

JERRY

I'm going to have a hard enough time getting Ethel to sing the damn thing without snapping out the rhythm. And you want me to stage her waving a gun around at the same time, too?

JUNE

Jule can write a new song, you know. Isn't that why you're going out of town?

We hear a familiar, strident voice.

ETHEL (O.S.)

Hey Robbins! They're driving me crazy in there.

JERRY

(To Arthur.)

Good God, what is it now?

The lights on Rose brighten as she becomes Ethel Merman and enters the scene, full of boisterous indignation. (Every time Rose becomes Ethel, the lights will brighten and add more color to her. Also, she never looks anyone in the eye, only at their foreheads.)

ETHEL

Whaddya want me to do with this number at the end of the show?

JERRY

Ethel...

ETHEL

I can't get a straight answer from that Sondheim kid, he keeps talking fucking mumbo jumbo about Blanche DuBois.

JERRY

ETHEL!

ETHEL

Who the hell is Blanche DuBois WHAT!?!

Jerry takes two fingers and points towards his eyes.

JERRY

Ethel, look at me, not my forehead. Look me in the eyes.

ETHEL

(Somewhat disconcerted. She's not used to connecting like this.)

Oh.

JERRY

(Putting his arm around her.)

Now, tell me. Are you talking about the song? Or the scene after it with, what's her name, that "actress" playing Gypsy?

ETHEL

(Back to normal.)

I am talking about that fucking "aria!"

JERRY

Eyes, Ethel, eyes!

ETHEL

(Staring directly at Jerry, defiantly.)

All I want to know is if I come in on the upbeat or the downbeat, and he keeps telling me to "connect" with my memories! WHAT THE HELL DOES THAT EVEN MEAN?

JUNE

"Connect" is a term serious actors use, Ethel. I could work with you.

ETHEL

Who the hell is that? Oh, yeah, the sister. She replaced me in that piece of crap flopola.

(To June. Looking at her forehead.)

Listen, are you gonna sign that damn release form or not?

(To Jerry and Arthur.)

Why the hell should I be busting my hump over fucking Blanche DuBois if we're not even gonna have a Goddam show?

GYPSY

She'll sign, Ethel dear. She just wants a few changes made first.

ETHEL

CHANGES? Who the hell is she to demand changes?

ARTHUR

Nothing major, Ethel. Nothing to do with your character.

Gypsy takes June aside.

ETHEL

(To Jerry.)

And what about this Goddam “M... M... M... Momma” shit? Do I come in on the upbeat, or the downbeat?

JERRY

What does Jule say? He wrote the damn song.

(To Arthur.)

Didn't he?

ETHEL

He's too busy staring at those strippers' tits! You're the director, you tell me! This M... M... Momma shit: what the hell does it mean?

JERRY

The song is a nervous breakdown, right?

ETHEL

Yeah.

JERRY

And she's reliving her life, right?

ETHEL

Yeah.

JERRY

And she's remembering that her own mother abandoned her, right?

ETHEL

Yeah.

JERRY

So she's calling out for her own mother, wondering where she is, like a lost child.

ETHEL

Oh... That makes sense. And do I come in on an upbeat? Or a downbeat?

JERRY

Downbeat.

ETHEL

(As she heads off.)

HEY, SONDHEIM, YA HEAR THAT? IT'S ON THE DOWNBEAT! JEEZ, WAS THAT SO FUCKING HARD TO SAY?

She returns to her position next to Dainty Baby June, and her demeanor (and colorless light) as Rose.

ARTHUR

What's she going to do when she realizes there is no downbeat?

JERRY

She'll never even notice.

June and Gypsy begin quarreling.

GYPSY

But June, mother had so many birth certificates for both of us, we don't know for certain how old you were when you ran away with Bobby.

JUNE

Well I certainly wasn't 19, as Arthur is implying.

ARTHUR

Where? Where? Where am I implying you were 19!

JUNE

(Turning to a tabbed page in the script.)

Right here: you have the secretary asking her old I am, and when I say "nine," she asks "nine what?"

ARTHUR

It's just a joke, June.

JUNE

I am not a joke, Arthur. And that actress you have playing me certainly looks 19. Mr. Merrick assured me I wouldn't be presented as any older than nine.

ARTHUR

He never told me.

JERRY

You're fucking kiddin me!

JUNE

That was one of my stipulations allowing you to begin rehearsals.

ARTHUR

Do you know how much re-writing I'll have to do to accommodate a change like that?

JERRY

And re-staging? We'd lose that whole passage of time thing with the strobe lights. No fucking way am I cutting that. It's some of my best work.

June thinks a moment, then smiles.

JUNE

Alright. I'll allow you to make her thirteen.

ARTHUR

You'll "allow?" Who the hell are you to / "allow"

GYPSY

/ ARTHUR! Please!

JERRY

The audience would be horrified by any mother who doesn't follow her thirteen-year old daughter after she elopes.

JUNE

I know. So make Ethel follow her. With the gun.

ARTHUR

Over my dead body.

JUNE

And replace that 19 year old with someone who looks thirteen.

JERRY

Over my dead body. She's one of my best dancers.

GYPSY

Perhaps if you worked with her, June? Let her get to know you a bit? Would that help? Would you like to meet her?

JUNE

I would not. I want her replaced. And if she's not replaced, I will sue all of you for everything you've got.

JERRY

Go ahead. You won't win.

JUNE

Maybe not, but it will stop the show from continuing.

(She flings the script to the floor, putting Qui  
Qui on it. The dog squats.)

Good Girl!

(To all of them.)

That dog's a trouper. She knows what to do.

Arthur makes a quick note.

ARTHUR

(Again to himself.)

Oh, that's good. Have... dog... pee... on... sign... in... dressing... room... scene...

GYPSY

June, if they agree to make your character thirteen...

JUNE

And bring in a younger looking actress...

GYPSY

And bring in a younger looking actress, will you sign the release?

June smiles sweetly at everyone as they lean in to her.  
She pauses for dramatic effect.

JUNE

No.

GYPSY

June!

JERRY

Oh for fuck's sake!

Now they overlap arguments.

GYPSY

All these demands you're making. I told you I'd do what I could to help you, but now you're just being ridiculous, June.

JUNE

I'm being made to look ridiculous, and I resent it. And I will not have it.

JERRY

Great. You want Ethel pointing a gun at a chorus boy. What do you think this is? *Rosie Get Your Gun*? Like I've got time to stage a new number.

I'm still trying get that damn nightmare "Rose's Turn" ballet on its feet without Ethel knowing what's going on behind her, and she wants me to replace my best dancer in a key role?

ARTHUR

Cut the ballet. It stinks anyway.

JERRY

One more disparaging remark about that ballet and I'll shove this goddam script right up your goddamn / fairy ass.

ARTHUR

/ PLEASE! There are children present.

JUNE

I will shut this show down if I don't get a fair representation of who I was on that stage.

JERRY

Go ahead. I hate this show.

ARTHUR

You hate every show. You should see a shrink.

JERRY

Asshole.

ARTHUR

Jerk.

They storm off in opposite directions.

GYPSY

This is *my* turn, June. And I'll be damned if you try to take it away from me.

JUNE

(As she storms off.)

Mother's kick, Gyps. Mother's kick.

GYPSY

(Shouting after her.)

That's right, June, run away like you always do.

June turns, looks at Gypsy a moment, then continues off. Gypsy stands looking after her, furious but heartbroken. Rose steps out of the shadows, and speaks to Older June.

ROSE

My God, you were unpleasant.

OLDER JUNE

I was fighting for my life.

ROSE

You should've stayed with me, baby. Then *none* of this would've happened.

The Emcee races on.

EMCEE

And now Ladies and Gentlemen, as we fast forward back to hour 802,201, let's goose up these tired dancers with a SPRINT!

He raises his baton, and "Hold That Tiger" blares. The dancing shadows reappear and join everyone on stage as they dance with crazy, but tired abandon, racing toward the audience and jumping (Think of Jerome Robbins' "Cool" choreography). The lights strobe, then blackout. The music stops just as abruptly. Dainty Baby June peeks her head out from behind one of the curtains, and then opens them fully. When the lights come back up to full, we see that everyone else has disappeared, and Older June is standing with her walker, her feet moving wildly. She addresses her younger self, who of course, pays absolutely no attention.

OLDER JUNE

Where is your truth, darling? That, and only that, is what is going to make your work respectable. That, and only that, is what is going to inform your performance and let your audience go with you on your journey. How can your audience trust you, how can they want what you want, how can they root for you against all odds, if they sense you don't believe your own truth? And they can sense it, darling. Dig deeper. Work harder. Find it. Find your truth and build your own personal story upon that. If mother was a psychopath, don't bury it under layers of charm: use it. If your sister was ruthless, don't pretend she was polished and professional: use it. The charm, the polish, the professionalism will be the icing, darling. You want the cake. And the cake is truth.

During the above, Rose has appeared behind Dainty Baby June, and stands, listening to Older June. The placards change to read:

**PLACARD STAGE RIGHT: M... M... MOTHER?**

**PLACARD STAGE LEFT: M... M... MOTHER?**

ROSE

(Gesturing to the placards.)

M... M... Mother? M... M... Mother?

(To Dainty Baby June.)

Excuse me, darling, but mother needs to talk to your older self. Go rest, you need to save your energy for the next show. That's my good little lamb.

(To Older June, as Dainty Baby June sits on the floor next to the ghost light.)

Well, if you're after the truth, dear, stop telling everyone I promised you a kick in the pants on my deathbed.

OLDER JUNE

But you did, mother. I was there.

Cold, colorless light suddenly finds Gypsy and June, holding hands and facing a dying Rose.

ROSE

(To Gypsy and June.)

I know about you.

(To Gypsy.)

Greedy. Selfish.

(To June.)

You want me to die.

(To both of them.)

I'm the only one who knows all about you.

(Grabbing them both close to her.)

You'll never forget how I'm holding on to you, holding on as strongly as I can, wishing with all my heart I could take you all the way down with me – all the way down. This isn't the end. Wherever you go, together or separately, as long as either of you lives, I'll be right there. So go on, tell all your classy friends how funny I was, how much smarter you were than me. When you get your own private kicks in your asses, just remember it's a present from me to you.

The light on Rose becomes colorless again, and she fades into the background.

GYPSY

We're free, June. We're finally free.

JUNE

That's what you think. She'll always haunt us, Gyps.

GYPSY

Only if you let her, June. Only if you let her.

Gypsy and June disappear, and Rose bursts out laughing.

ROSE

(To Older June.)

Oh, baby! Baby, baby, baby! You want to talk about lies? Start with that whopper you just "remembered." You know as well as I do I died in an ambulance on the way to the hospital, and you were a thousand miles away. Playing stock.

OLDER JUNE

That's your story.

ROSE

No, dear, you've made that *your* story. Your sister told a different story.

OLDER JUNE

She was a liar.

ROSE

All three of us are accomplished liars. You wanna know why the only person interested in writing a show about you was you?

OLDER JUNE

No.

Rose magically pulls an old, yellowed copy of the New York Times out of the air and shows it to Older June.

ROSE

Remember this, dear? The New York Times, December 1963?

(She reads from the paper.)

"June Havoc has fashioned 'Marathon '33', her stage memoir / from her"

OLDER JUNE

/ See, they called it a memoir, not a "Fable!"

ROSE

Don't interrupt me, darling. "June Havoc has fashioned 'Marathon '33', her stage memoir, from her own autobiography of a few years ago..."

(Scanning the page.)

Let me see, let me see... Oh yes, here it is: "One is not deeply involved in Miss Havoc's story... Thin in dramatic content, 'Marathon '33' can only be recommended as a tour de force of theatricality."

(To Older June.)

Your show barely lasted 6 weeks, June. *Gypsy* ran two years, has been made into two movies, and been revived four times on Broadway. So far. And you wanna know why?

OLDER JUNE

No.

ROSE

Your sister was a better story teller. She knew the truth gets in the way of a good story. And she let Arthur put me front and center because she knew I'm the most interesting of the three of us.

OLDER JUNE

You mean you're the biggest liar.

ROSE

Exactly, darling. You have your version of the truth. Your sister had hers. And I had mine. And that's the truth.

We hear the marathon band, quietly and ghostly at first, slowly building in speed, volume, and intensity as the scene progresses.

OLDER JUNE

I came home. No money, no husband, and pregnant. You slammed the door in my face!

ROSE

You ran away and left us flat broke.

OLDER JUNE

What did you do with all that money I earned? \$1,500 a week. In the 1920s!

ROSE

You broke my heart.

OLDER JUNE

You took away my childhood.

ROSE

I made you a star! How could that not be a wonderful childhood? And then you left. And then I made your sister a bigger star. So what's your problem, June? Isn't that *our* truth?

OLDER JUNE

I'm going squirrely.

ROSE

You're not going squirrely, baby. You're simply running away from the truth again.

This stops Older June. The music has gotten perceptibly louder, and the Floor Manager enters with his ruler. He again snaps the air with the ruler, and Older June jumps as if she's been whacked.

FLOOR MANAGER

Keep it moving, sweetheart. Keep it moving. Can't be disqualified. Don't want to be forgotten. Last one standing wins.

He exits.

OLDER JUNE

Keep moving. Keep moving. I can't be disqualified, I must keep moving. I can't be forgotten.

The dancing shadows reappear. They're tired. Rose starts to move along with Older June. (As this nightmare – 'cause that's what it's turning into – progresses, this actress will alternate between her Rose and Ethel personas. Primarily by using her voice, and fast lighting changes. Be swell, honey!)

ROSE

Of course you won't be forgotten! All three of us – you, your sister, ME – we've all been immortalized in song! And dance!

OLDER JUNE

I've been fighting that pack of lies for almost 50 years.

ROSE

You had a choice, darling.

OLDER JUNE

What choice? I had no choice.

ROSE

Oh, but you did, baby, you did.

**PLACARD STAGE RIGHT: OLDER JUNE GOES “SQUIRRELY.”**

**PLACARD STAGE LEFT: AND REMEMBERS A SORT OF TRUTH.**

Gypsy enters and starts to dance in place. (Throughout this scene, she will only be playing Gypsy.)

GYPSY

(Gesturing to the SR placard.)

Older June goes “Squirrely.”

ROSE

(Gesturing to the SL placard.)

And remembers a sort of truth.

Older June moves upstage and stands looking up at one of the lights, still moving as the curtains close just enough to frame her. June and Arthur enter simultaneously, and start to dance in place. (Throughout the following nightmare, she will only be playing June, and he will alternate back and forth from being Arthur to being the Emcee. Primarily with body language. Have fun.) The pace quickens, and they all try to match it.

ARTHUR

They’re replacing her with someone who looks 13, June.

JUNE

I don’t care. I’m not signing.

GYPSY

Merrick’s given you the 20 grand and a 1.5% stake in the royalties.

JUNE

I don’t care. I’m not signing.

The pace gets even faster as Jerry enters. (Throughout the rest of the nightmare, this actor will alternate between Jerry and The Marathon Floor Manager. It’s up to the actor to differentiate between the two by deciding which character is the more sadistic, and then play it to the hilt.)

JERRY

We're booked to open out of town next week.

JUNE

I don't care, I'm not signing.

EMCEE

We're hitting the 802,203 hour mark, folks! Let's pick up the pace!

The music pumps up and they all, except Ethel, start racing breathlessly.

ETHEL

Hey, I'm a singer, not a dancer, and the FUCKING STAR of this show. Call me Miss Birdseye. I am frozen!

The Floor Manager whacks Ethel with the ruler.

FLOOR MANAGER

Hey, Miss Birdseye: FUCKING STAR or not, keep it moving, momma!

Ethel reluctantly starts moving faster.

ARTHUR

(To Gypsy.)

Are you gonna tell her?

GYPSY

I can't, Arthur, I just can't.

JUNE

Tell me what?

JERRY

I'll tell.

GYPSY

Jerry, please don't. Not yet.

JUNE

What? Tell me!

JERRY

(To June, with obviously malicious glee.)

Arthur is changing your character's name.

ARTHUR

(To Jerry.)

Don't you throw me under the bus, you prick.

(To June.)

David Merrick is making me do it, June.

JUNE

Changing my name?

JERRY

(Enjoying this a little too much, perhaps.)

And since there's no *June* in the show now, there go your royalty points. You'll be lucky if Merrick doesn't ask for his 20 thousand clams back.

JUNE

He can't do that.

JERRY

Oh, yes, he can.

ARTHUR

David Merrick is a lawyer. He isn't above much.

JUNE

He's bluffing. He's just trying to force me to sign that release.

GYPSY

I warned you, June, you were playing with fire.

The dancing becomes quite frantic now.

ETHEL

Wait, they're changing her name? To what?

ARTHUR

Claire.

ETHEL

Claire?

JUNE

CLAIRE?

Everybody shouts CLAIRE at June and the dance becomes wild, almost out of control. The following lines are said one on top of the other, and reverb to an uncomfortable pitch.

ARTHUR

Hello, Everybody! My name is Clair! What's yours?

JERRY

Hello, Everybody! My name is Clair! What's yours?

GYPSY

Hello, Everybody! My name is Clair! What's yours?

They stop, then Ethel chimes in.

ETHEL

Hello, Everybody! My name is ROSE! What's yours?

June is now center stage, and she stops moving. The company all spread out, and then race toward June doing the "Cool" sprint again, only this time jumping in on her instead of out to the audience. Sudden stillness and silence, and the lights black to just a spot on June's face. In the darkness we hear Rose.

ROSE

What's yours indeed, baby?

The spot on June fades as we hear Rose laughing softly.

A pink spot picks out Dainty Baby June as she pirouettes across the stage in the silent stillness. She stops, dances en pointe to center, and sings. Older June, using a walker, steps forward as the curtains close behind her, and performs the number from memory, with identical moves and facial gestures, although she doesn't sing out loud.

DAINTY BABY JUNE

HE'S ME PAL  
HE'S ME PAL  
HE'S THE BEST EVER WAS  
AND I LOVES HIM BECAUSE  
HE'S ME PAL  
HE'S ME PAL\*

\*Song TBD. Dainty Baby June begins to dance, Older June repeating the steps as best she can. When the number is over, Dainty Baby June bows, as Older June reaches to touch her face. The child is oblivious, standing center stage and smiling at the waves of applause. As the applause grows, the curtains part to reveal June seated in a theater chair, a program for *Gypsy* in her hand. She does not look happy. Arthur, Jerry and Gypsy are behind her, nervously watching. Rose remains in the shadows, a small smile on her face.

OLDER JUNE

(To Dainty Baby June.)

I went to the out of town opening in Philadelphia, baby. I couldn't help myself. I still hadn't signed anything, but I just had to see how bad it was. I was appalled. Not because it was bad. It wasn't. It was stunning.

ROSE

(To Older June.)

And you were appalled because you knew you had banged your head once too many times and they'd all backed you into a corner. That show was going to be hit, with your signature or without. With a Dainty June or a Dainty Claire, it was going to be a hit.

OLDER JUNE

(To Dainty Baby June.)

Even though there wasn't anything even remotely truthful on that stage. Even though they painted us in the worst possible light.

The placards change.

**PLACARD STAGE RIGHT: SHUBERT THEATRE, PHILADELPHIA.**

**PLACARD STAGE LEFT: APRIL, 1959.**

JERRY

(Gesturing to the SR placard.)

Shubert Theatre, Philadelphia.

ARTHUR

(Gesturing to the SR placard.)

April, 1959.

Dainty Baby June's costume does an instant "William Ivey Long" kind of transformation into an over-the-top-with-sequins nightmare, and she turns upstage to face June, Gypsy, Arthur, and Jerry (aka "the audience"). A brighter, garish spot hits her as Jerry tosses two batons in her direction. She catches them and begins to twirl and tap to "Stars And Stripes Forever." There is something very different about her performance style now; it's far less polished, far more showy and far more shrill. We see both June and Older June growing angrier as they watch.

Arthur and Gypsy move with Jerry as he pushes the seated June downstage. Jerry and June move slightly to the right of center, Gypsy and Arthur slightly to the left, leaving a wide enough space to allow Dainty Baby June to be seen as she continues the number, turning to face downstage and perform for the "real" audience as the curtains close behind her.

Dainty Baby June ends the number in a split, still twirling the batons. She gets up, and smiling like a maniacal moppet, bows to a wildly cheering "audience."

OLDER JUNE

Stop it! Stop it! I can't bear this! This was not me!

JUNE

Stop it! Stop it! I can't bear this! This was not me!

OLDER JUNE

This was not us!

ROSE

I have to agree with you there, Baby. That act belongs on the layoff circuit.

Dainty Baby June runs off stage. Jerry moves the still seated June to center stage, turning the seat to face forward. Gypsy and Arthur join them. June is practically breathing fire as we hear Ethel belting out the last bars of "Everything's Coming Up Roses."

ETHEL (OFF)

EVERYTHING'S GONNA BE  
BRIGHT LIGHTS AND LOLLIPOPS!  
EVERYTHING'S COMING UP  
ROSES FOR ME AND FOR YOU!\*

(\*Pending permission.) Thunderous applause. Rose has an enormous smile on her face. A light change indicates a curtain coming down and houselights coming up. June stands and shouts at Arthur, Jerry, and Gypsy:

JUNE

LIES! LIES! IT'S ALL LIES! This is worse than I ever thought it could be.

ARTHUR

(Nervously.)

Did you at least like the new Dainty June?

JUNE

You mean Dainty Claire, don't you?

ARTHUR

She's a terrific actress, singer *and* dancer.

JERRY

The jury's still out on that last one.

ARTHUR

You're not helping, Jerry!

JERRY

(To Arthur.)

What's so fucking hard about twirling batons and doing a time step!?!

June turns on Jerry.

JUNE

Batons, Jerry? BATONS!?! I have never twirled a baton in my life. No self-respecting vaudevillian would *ever* twirl a baton! Only white trash and drum majorettes twirl batons!

(Turning on Gypsy.)

How could you let them do this, Gyps, how could you?

ARTHUR

I told you to cut that baton shit. It stinks on ice!

JERRY

That's supposed to be the fucking point!

They're all struck speechless as they realize Jerry has just admitted they're deliberately trying to make June look bad. A moment, then:

ARTHUR

Great work, genius.

June storms out.

GYPSY

June, darling, wait!

Gypsy follows her.

OLDER JUNE

(To Dainty Baby June.)

And that was the point. To make us look like an awful kiddie act. Whether they called her June or Claire, it didn't matter. They were doing everything they could to make me look awful, and my sister look better by comparison.

(To Rose.)

And you all wondered why I was "unpleasant." I was hurting.

The placards change:

**PLACARD STAGE RIGHT: THE LOBBY OF THE SHUBERT THEATRE,  
PHILADELPHIA**

**PLACARD STAGE LEFT: IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING.**

OLDER JUNE

(Gesturing to the placards.)

The lobby of the Shubert Theatre, Philadelphia. Immediately following.

A huge, neatly hand-lettered sign reading "At This Performance, the role of CLAIRE will be played by LANE BRADBURY" descends from the flies, and June and Gypsy play the scene in front of it. Rose, Older and Dainty Baby June watch from the shadows.

GYPSY

June, darling, wait!

JUNE

You just heard Jerry admit everything I've been telling you for months! THIS SHOW IS A DELIBERATE HATCHET JOB ON ME!

GYPSY

Calm down, June. Everyone is watching you.

(Pointing back to Arthur and Jerry.)

And you're proving *their* point.

June bursts into tears. Gypsy holds her, partly embarrassed by the emotional display, but mostly out of genuine concern for her sister.

JUNE

It doesn't matter now. You've got your show. And a sister named Claire. The biggest lie of all.

GYPSY

There, there, June. I know, darling, I know how frustrating this must be for you.

June pulls away from Gypsy.

JUNE

You know, but you're not doing anything to stop it.

GYPSY

Neither are you, June. Or should I say Claire?

A moment of frosty silence. Arthur enters, but keeps his distance.

JUNE

I'm going.

GYPSY

You're not coming back for the second act?

JUNE

Why should I?

GYPSY

Ethel saw you.

JUNE

I don't care. This is how you want people to remember you? Fine. That's your business. But what about how I'm remembered?

GYPSY

Think about this: Ethel's already forgotten your real name is June.

JUNE

Ethel has never been the smartest dame in the room.

GYPSY

She was smart enough to get out of *Sadie Thompson*. I told you that show was going to bomb.

JUNE

You did not.

GYPSY

Did too.

JUNE

Did not.

GYPSY

What does that matter now, anyway? Look, June, if Ethel has forgotten your name, what makes you think audiences will remember? Or care? Do you really want to spend the next few decades having to correct interviewers, maitre d's and producers every time they call you Claire Hovick? Especially with *your* book coming out in a few weeks?

June looks like she's been hit with a ton of bricks.

JUNE

You really think this show is going to be that big a hit, don't you?

GYPSY

And when it succeeds, you will never again be remembered as *June* Havoc except perhaps by a few fading fags who obsess over theatrical footnotes. But if Merrick is forced to close the show here in Philadelphia, you *will* be remembered as the actress who killed her own sister's legacy.

JUNE

And because of this show I'm going to be remembered as a shrieking, tap dancing brat who stole her own sister's boyfriend.

GYPSY

Are you coming back for the second act, or not?

JUNE

No. I will “pay my respects” to Ethel after the show, but I am not sitting through any more of that garbage.

GYPSY

Once, when we were stranded, New Mexico? Arizona? I don’t remember. You were long gone, it was right before that awful agent booked us into that burlesque house in Wichita. I was wandering about the town, looking for a bookstore or a library, and somehow I found myself inside a charming little church. And for the first time in my life, June, I prayed. I really prayed. I prayed for you. I prayed for your happiness. I prayed for your success. I prayed you’d stay away and never return. Because I knew that if you did, it wouldn’t be long before you betrayed me again. I wrote a book. You wrote a book. They’re turning mine into a musical. And once again, you’re running away.

JUNE

I am not. I’m trying to take care of my own damn truth!

The entr’acte music starts. June starts to exit, brushing past Arthur.

ARTHUR

You know, June, for someone who’s always claiming to be a “serious actress,” you’re not convincing me you were never a brat.

She sweeps out, but stops just before disappearing into the wings, listening to the following exchange:

GYPSY

(Looking at Arthur, with something akin to genuine heartbreak.)

I’m trying to get her to see reason, Arthur. But she is my sister. And even more than mother, I owe my career to her. If she hadn’t left...

ARTHUR

But she did, Gyps. She did leave. Not your problem.

GYPSY

Oh, but Arthur, it is. It’s all our problem. And she knows it.

June smiles to herself, and exits.

OLDER JUNE

Damn right, I knew it.

Gypsy and Arthur exit as the sign flies back up. The music changes to the final notes of the show, and we hear deafening applause. The placards change:

**PLACARD STAGE RIGHT: ETHEL'S DRESSING ROOM.**

**PLACARD STAGE LEFT: AFTER THE SHOW.**

June, Gypsy, and Ethel.

ETHEL

(Gesturing to the SR placard.)

My dressing room.

GYPSY

(Gesturing to the SL placard.)

After the show.

JUNE

You were magnificent. You weren't mother, but you were magnificent.

ETHEL

I never knew your mother. You didn't stay for the second act, Claire.

Gypsy looks at June and raises an eyebrow as if to say  
"See, I told you!"

JUNE

I'm not in the second act, Ethel. And my name is June.

ETHEL

(To Gypsy.)

I thought her name is Claire now?

GYPSY

Ethel, dear, we can't call her by her real name in the show, remember?

ETHEL

Why the fuck not? Your mother's real name *was* Rose, wasn't it? And your real name *is* Louise, right?

GYPSY

Yes, dear.

ETHEL

So then why the fuck aren't we calling your sister *June*?

GYPSY

She's having a little disagreement about how she's being portrayed, Ethel dear, remember? Mr. Merrick thinks it best we not use her real name until she signs the release. And when she does, Arthur will change it back.

ETHEL

(To June.)

Listen Claire / Clune / June, whatever the hell your name is, do me a favor, will ya, and make up your mind fast, 'cause I'm not gonna be battin' names back and forth like a fucking tennis ball every other performance.

JUNE

Ethel, would you like to read *my* book? I can get you an advance copy...

ETHEL

If I didn't read your sister's book, why the hell should I read yours?

JUNE

It might give you some insight into who mother really was.

ETHEL

Insight? Why the hell do I need insight? I need to know what your fucking name is!

GYPSY

June, I think we've taken up enough of Ethel's time.

ETHEL

Yeah, this is a hard show! Get outta here, I have to take a shower. I can smell myself.

Ethel heads to her bathroom, unselfconsciously dropping clothes along the way. The sound of water running.

JUNE

Does that dame ever look anyone in the eyes?

GYPSY

No.

JUNE

It's very disconcerting.

GYPSY

Look at that dame walk. She'd have made a damn good stripper. Oh! I must tell Arthur to use that somewhere.

JUNE

You were never the back end of a cow! I did not steal your boyfriend. And Mother *was* a psychopath.

GYPSY

You can't make a musical with a psychopath as the lead, darling. A psychopath can be the star, but not the lead!

Over the sound of running water, we hear Ethel:

ETHEL (OFF)

I heard that! Will you two get the hell out of here and go fight someplace else? I gotta go meet the Duke and Duchess of Windsor for drinks, they came all the way to Philadelphia from Europe, France to see me for Christ's sake!

(A moment, then Ethel pops her head out.)

Hey Gyps! Ya wanna meet the Duke and the Duchess? Bring what's her name. Claire.

JUNE

My name is June, Ethel.

(To herself.)

My name is June. My name is June. My name is June.

The placards change:

**PLACARD STAGE RIGHT: HELLO, EVERYBODY!**

**PLACARD STAGE LEFT: MY NAME IS JUNE!**

Older June appears, followed by Dainty Baby June.

OLDER JUNE

My name is June. My name is June. My name is June.

JUNE

My name is June. My name is June. My name is June.

OLDER JUNE

I was a talented child.

JUNE

I am a serious actress.

OLDER JUNE

I've done Shakespeare.

JUNE (cont'd)

I've done Shakespeare.

OLDER JUNE

Hippolyta.

JUNE

A Midsummer Night's Dream.

OLDER JUNE

But all the story of the night told over, and all their minds transfigured so together,

JUNE

More witnesseth than fancy's images,

OLDER JUNE

And grows to something of great constancy, but howsoever strange and admirable.

JUNE (cont'd)

And grows to something of great constancy, but howsoever strange and admirable.

The two bow to remembered applause. When they come up from the bow, we can see Older June has gotten lost in the memory, whilst June's eyes betray her frustration and anger.

OLDER JUNE

My name is June. I was a child star. I have survived 7 marathons. I am a serious actress. I have done Shakespeare. My name is June. I was a child star. I have survived 7 marathons.

JUNE (cont'd)

My name is June. I was a child star. I have survived 7 marathons. I am a serious actress. I have done Shakespeare. My name is June. I was a child star. I have survived 7 marathons.

June exits.

OLDER JUNE

Seven. And I know I've got to keep moving. I'll be disqualified if I stop moving. Even just a slight foot tap is enough to keep me in the game. Unless they make us sprint. They made us sprint more and more as the hours wore on. Easiest way to get us to give in to the fatigue. And once you gave in, it was over...

The placards change to read:

**PLACARD STAGE RIGHT: CLAIRE? WHO THE HELL IS CLAIRE?**

**PLACARD STAGE LEFT: A HOTEL BAR. AN HOUR LATER.**

JERRY

(Gesturing to the SR placard.)

Claire?

ARTHUR

(Gesturing to the SR placard.)

Who the hell is Claire?

BOTH

A hotel bar. An hour later.

Gypsy and June arguing at one end of the bar, Jerry and Arthur arguing at the other end.

GYPSY

(To the unseen bartender.)

Scotch rocks.

JUNE

(To Gypsy.)

Another Scotch, Gyps?

GYPSY

(To June.)

Yes, June. Another Scotch. And I'm going to smoke, so don't even try to stop me.

She defiantly lights up.

JERRY

(To Arthur.)

This new "actress" playing the sister. Just what I need: *another* girl from the Actors Studio. Now I have a Gypsy and a ... Jun... Clu... What the fuck are we calling her now?

ARTHUR

Claire.

JERRY

Claire? Really?

ARTHUR

Really.

JUNE

(To Gypsy.)

When we were kids, I often felt like I was alone. It was as if I were an only child. I was not allowed to play with you. I was not allowed to play with anybody.

We hear Rose's voice.

ROSE (V.O)

You mustn't exhaust yourself, baby.

JUNE

(To Gypsy.)

I was the meal ticket. I needed to be kept fresh at all costs. I was supporting *everyone* because I was a hard working kid with talent and a class act.

JERRY

(To Arthur.)

Now I've got to deal with TWO fucking "actresses" from that fucking Actors Studio wanting to know their fucking motivations and truth on every fucking line.

ARTHUR

(To Jerry.)

It's called verisimilitude.

JERRY

(To Arthur.)

It's called a fucking pain in my ass, that's what it's called.

JUNE

(To Gypsy.)

I was terribly hurt when you wrote your book. But you're my sister, and I know how hard you worked on it and I let it slide. But this! This is an entirely different matter.

(Now including Arthur and Jerry.)

You're all exploiting our childhoods for your own financial gain, and worse, making me look like an untalented, spoiled brat just to get a few laughs.

(To Gypsy.)

That's mother's kicking me in the pants .

GYPSY

She promised that kick in the pants to me, not you. To me. And now you've written your own book. A book your publisher has scheduled for release the same week we open in New York.

JUNE

That's her kicking you in the pants.

GYPSY

Really, June? Think about it, darling. What do you think sales will be like when the whole town is talking about Gypsy Rose Lee and her sister "Claire Hovick?"

JERRY

(To Arthur.)

That new one can't even remember to move a fucking teapot! Jesus! What's her name, again?

ARTHUR

(To Jerry.)

Lane.

JERRY

(To Arthur.)

Lane? Oh great. Claire / Clune / June / Jane / Lane! I hate her.

ARTHUR

(To Jerry.)

Christ, Jerry, she's only had three days to learn the role. Just drill her. Oh, that's right, you only like to drill the boys. Or is it the other way around? I can never get that straight.

JERRY

Ass.

ARTHUR

Hole.

Ethel strides on.

ETHEL

(To Jerry's forehead.)

Hey Robbins! Tell that new Clune to move that Goddamn teapot. She killed my laugh again.

JERRY

Eyes, Ethel, eyes!

ETHEL

(As she exits.)

Yeah, yeah, yeah. Hey Duchess! What'd ya think of me tonight?

JUNE

(Taking Gypsy's cigarette and stubbing it out, like she did earlier.)

These things are going to kill you.

GYPSY

I'm not going anywhere soon. Not with a hit.

Ethel pops back in.

ETHEL

Hey Robbins! Laurents! The Duke and Duchess want to see ya. You too, Gyps!

(Seeing June.)

Oh, look who's here. I thought you were going back to New York.

(Shouting off.)

Hey Duchess, the sister came too!

(To June.)

C'mon Claire, and meet the Duke and Duchess of Windsor.

Ethel pops back out. There's a tense moment as Gypsy, Arthur, and Jerry stare at June.

GYPSY

Well?

ETHEL (OFF)

HEY CLAIRE, THE DUCHESS SAYS SHE SAW YA PERFORM WHEN YOU WERE A KID. SHE REALLY WANTS TO MEET YA!

ARTHUR

There are so many moments of truth in the show, June, so many things I was able to take from *your* book.

JUNE

So you finally read the manuscript I sent you?

ARTHUR

(Lying through his teeth, but smoothly.)

Of course I did. It's a beautiful, eloquent memoir, so much heart. And your longing for a normal childhood comes through loud and clear. It gave me something truthful to give your character.

JUNE

You're so full of shit, Arthur. But I do appreciate the effort it takes to lie so smoothly.

ETHEL (OFF)

Let me see what the fuck is taking them so long.

Ethel bursts back in. Jerry makes a motion for her to be quiet. She stops with her mouth open.

ARTHUR

So what do you say? Let me tell your ultimate truth? Let me get rid of Claire? Let people remember your name is June, at least?

JUNE

It's all still a bunch of lies.

Ethel can't contain herself anymore.

ETHEL

THAT's what this is all about?

JUNE

I want to be remembered for who I really was. Who I really am.

ETHEL

Oh for fuck's sake, Claire!

(Now Ethel becomes surprisingly tender. For her, that is. AND she looks June squarely in the eyes.)

Does anyone think *you* brought down a fucking monarchy? Maybe that Duchess in there did, maybe she didn't, how the fuck would I know? I didn't know her back then. But do you think she ever lets what everyone says about her get up her ass? Does anyone care she was in love with that little Duke, and he was in love with her? And Jesus Christ, ain't that all that matters to them? 'Cause in the long run, none of us are gonna be remembered for who we really were, or who we thought we were. We'll be lucky to be remembered at all. So who the hell cares what anybody thinks?

JUNE

I do. At least while I'm alive.

ETHEL

(To June.)

Oh, honey. You really aren't all that bright, are you?

(To Gypsy and June.)

Ya think I don't know you both call me a psychopath? Ya think I care what you think?

(To the rest of 'em. Back to looking at their foreheads.)

And do ya think I care you all think I'm dumber than a fucking box of rocks? Yeah, I *know* you all think I'm not as "intellectual" as you. But the one thing I do know: I know who the hell I am, and I am the one who's gonna sell the tickets to this fucking shindig eight times a week. Not any of you. Me. ME. MEEEEEE!

(To June.)

You know what you've done in your life. You know your own story. So fuck everyone else. Whaddya say, Claire? ARE YA GONNA GET YOUR KEISTER BACK THERE AND TALK TO THE DUCHESS, OR ARE YA GONNA BE A PAIN IN THE ASS ABOUT THAT TOO?

She returns to being Rose, and stands next to Older June.

GYPSY

June?

Now everyone on stage freezes as Rose and Older June, repeat their earlier exchange, heard with a reverb to indicate it's both in the future and the past:

ROSE

All three of us – you, your sister, and me – we've all been immortalized in song! And dance!

OLDER JUNE

I did not want to be remembered by that pack of lies.

ROSE

You had a choice, darling.

OLDER JUNE

What choice? I had no choice.

ROSE

Oh but you did. They sprinted, you fell. It was either be forgotten as Claire, or remembered as June, no matter how the show painted you.

June, Gypsy, Arthur, and Jerry unfreeze. Rose stands behind Older June, her hands on her shoulders, as they watch the memory together:

GYPSY

June, please?

ETHEL (OFF)

CLAIRE! GET YOUR ASS IN HERE! IT'S BAD FORM TO KEEP A DUKE AND DUCHESS WAITING!

June hesitates, then makes a decision.

JUNE

Give the show a subtitle that makes it clear it's all bunch of hogwash, and I'll sign.

ARTHUR

What if we call it *Gypsy. A Musical Fable*?

JUNE

Promise me, in writing, right now, that you'll give it the subtitle "A Musical Fable."

Arthur grabs a cocktail napkin, takes a pen from his pocket, and scribbles something down.

ARTHUR

To David Merrick: I promised June Havoc we would subtitle the show "A Musical Fable," and she agreed to sign the release. Gypsy, Jerry and I approve. Make it happen. Arthur Laurents.

Gypsy and Jerry sign the napkin, too.

JUNE

Thank you, Arthur.

(Taking the release from her purse, she hesitates.)

There is nothing in here that mentions future productions. Or film versions.

JERRY

We should all be so fucking lucky.

GYPSY

Don't worry, June. Your lawyer can add all that in later. Please, let's just get this up and running now, and worry about another production if and when that happens. Please?

June takes Arthurs pen, but doesn't sign. Not yet.

One more thing...  
JUNE  
Everyone groans.

The batons stay.  
JERRY

My book.  
JUNE

What about it?  
JERRY

I want it on display for sale alongside Gypsy's in the lobby. For the entire run of the show.  
JUNE

I'm sorry I ever called you "un-bright."  
GYPSY

You underestimated me, Gyps. You always have.  
JUNE

I will talk to Merrick.  
GYPSY

I want that in writing.  
JUNE  
(Handing Gypsy another napkin.)

Sighing, Gypsy scribbles something on the napkin and signs with a flourish. Another tense moment as they all stare at June.

And that was where you made your choice, baby. Right there.  
ROSE

June suddenly takes Arthur's pen and signs the release.

June. Havoc. April 13, 1959.  
JUNE

A blast of music (perhaps “Stars And Stripes Forever”) as the lights bump up, confetti and glitter reign down, Dainty Baby June struts across the stage twirling batons, and there’s a burst of energy as the shadows appear, dancing in a frenzy. Everyone on stage, however, assumes the posture of exhausted marathon dancers. The music changes to something slow. Everyone on stage, including Dainty Baby June, continues to move, even if it’s just a foot.

Rose and June move to center stage. Older June stands between them. Rose takes the batons from Dainty Baby June and hands them to Older June, who hurls them off-stage. Dainty Baby June sits at Older June’s feet. The lights narrow to three separate spots on Older June, June, and Rose.

During the following, the placards slowly change to read:

**PLACARD STAGE RIGHT: ROSE THOMPSON HOVICK**

**PLACARD STAGE LEFT: R.I.P. JANUARY 29, 1954**

ROSE

(To all three Junes.)

So don’t ever say you did not have a choice, darlings. You had many choices, and you made them all. Good, bad, or indifferent. I’m not blaming you, darlings. My mother ran away from me to pursue her dreams for herself. I ran away from my husbands to pursue my dreams for you and your sister. And you ran away to pursue your own dreams. We all ran away because we couldn’t face our own, drab truths and wanted something more... exciting.

(Gesturing to the placards.)

Rose Thompson Hovick. January 29, 1954.

The spotlight on Rose begins to fade, while the spotlight on June gets pinker, and stronger.

JUNE

(As Titania.)

Out of this wood do not desire to go:  
Thou shalt remain here, whether thou wilt or no.  
I am a spirit of no common rate;  
The summer still doth tend upon my state;  
And I do love thee: therefore, go with me;

I'll give thee fairies to attend on thee,  
And they shall fetch thee jewels from the deep,  
And sing while thou on pressed flowers dost sleep;  
And I will purge thy mortal grossness so  
That thou shalt like an airy spirit go.

Rose fades into the background, but she is not quite gone.

ROSE

(Miming a not-so-gentle kick at all three  
Junes and at Gypsy, she chuckles softly.)

But remember: I died alone, on the way to a hospital, while you and your sister pursued  
the dreams I dreamed for you.

Dainty Baby June moves into Rose's place next to Older  
June. A spotlight picks up Gypsy. During the following,  
all three Junes continue to move in place. The placards  
slowly change to read:

**PLACARD STAGE RIGHT READS: ROSE LOUISE HOVICK**

**PLACARD STAGE LEFT READS: R.I.P. APRIL 26, 1970**

GYPSY

It's not what you do, it's the way you do it. Stripping, or writing, or talking... or just  
breathing. Do it with an air, and never admit you're scared.

(Gesturing to the placards.)

Rose Louise Hovick. Rest in peace. April 26, 1970.

Gypsy and all the Junes look at each other, smiling sadly,  
as her spotlight briefly turns blue, and then fades. She is  
gone. A spotlight picks up Rose as Ethel. During the  
following, the placards slowly change to read:

**PLACARD STAGE RIGHT READS: ETHEL AGNES ZIMMERMAN**

**PLACARD STAGE LEFT READS: R.I.P. FEBRUARY 15, 1984**

ETHEL

I was never presented better than I was in *Gypsy*. *Girl Crazy* made me a star. *Annie Get  
Your Gun* was my biggest hit. I won a Tony for *Call Me Madam*. I had the most fun in  
*Hello, Dolly!* But Madame Rose was my best role. I was brilliant... for ME!

(Gesturing to the placards.)

Ethel Agnes Zimmerman. Rest in peace. February 15, 1984.

Ethel's spotlight fades, and then she is gone, returning to Rose's position in the background. A spotlight picks up Jerry. During the following, the placards slowly change to read:

**PLACARD STAGE RIGHT READS: JEROME WILSON RABINOWITZ**

**PLACARD STAGE LEFT READS: R.I.P. JULY 29, 1998**

JERRY

There's no secret to working with kids. They either charm you and you can work with them, or they don't charm you and you feel you're stuck with them. There were a lot of fucking kids in *Gypsy*.

(Gesturing to the placards.)

Jerome Wilson Rabinowitz. Rest in peace. July 29, 1998.

Jerry's spotlight fades, and he is gone. A spotlight picks up Arthur. During the following, the placards slowly change to read:

**PLACARD STAGE RIGHT: ARTHUR LEVINE**

**PLACARD STAGE LEFT: R.I.P. MAY 5, 2011**

ARTHUR

Truthfully, I outlasted 'em all, but this is June's fantasy; her fable, so to speak, so let's let her have the last word.. That was all and it was enough for me: fantasies are better left fantasies.

(Gesturing to the placards.)

Arthur Levine. Rest in peace. May 5, 2011.

Arthur's spotlight fades, and he is gone. Older June is left alone on stage with June and Dainty Baby June, Rose barely visible in the background. A shift in the lights drain June and Dainty Baby June of as much color as possible, while Older June remains vibrant. All three remain moving as if their lives depended on it. The Emcee races on to another Vaudeville-style fanfare. The Placards change to read:

**PLACARD STAGE RIGHT: JUNE'S PERSONAL MARATHON RACES ON**

**PLACARD STAGE LEFT: ELLEN JUNE EVANGELINE HOVICK. MARCH  
2008, HOUR 832,204**

EMCEE

Hey, hey, hey, Ladies and Gents, Gents and Ladies!

(Peering at another someone in the first row.)

And whatever you are!

(Addressing the entire house.)

THREE! COUNT 'EM! THREE Miss Ellen June Evangeline Hovicks still left standing in this seemingly never-ending marathon of truth vs. fiction! How much longer will they hold out?

The placards start to scroll the mounting hours of June's life. 832,205, 832,206...

**BOTH PLACARDS: 832,205, 832,206...**

EMCEE

Hour 832,205, Hour 832,206...

He stands to the side silently mouthing the hours as they continue to scroll slowly upwards. The nurse enters, and takes Older June's temperature.

NURSE

Let me take your temperature, June. Hold still, please. Your lawyer called.

OLDER JUNE

Oh?

NURSE

You won, June. You get your royalty as originally stipulated. But they'd still like you to go to the opening.

OLDER JUNE

I have to keep moving. I have to keep moving.

(Looking at the nurse.)

Matinee today, you know.

NURSE

(Shaking her head.)

No, dear, there is no matinee today. Are you going to the opening?

OLDER JUNE

I'm so tired. But I must keep moving. Or I'm out... No matinee today?

The lights fade to just isolated spots on June, Dainty Baby June, and Older June (with her walker) moving with the music. The placards continue scrolling slowly:

832,217, 832,218, 832,219

We see Rose in the background as she is joined by the ghost of Gypsy. They stand watching the three Junes, as if waiting for them. The lights slowly fade on June and Dainty Baby June, and then on Older June, still dancing, a look of grim, yet hopeful determination in her eyes as we hear Rose chuckling softly. The lights fade completely on the placards as the hours keep mounting up.

832,220, 832,221, 832,222...

**END OF PLAY**