

O'erleaping Ambition

by Matt Potter

"Practice makes perfect," I barked. "Now sing!"

I opened the suitcase on the bed, tossing tap shoes and Tovar-Tresses wiglets inside.

"Please, Francine," she whimpered, red-rimmed eyes sodden. "Not *again*."

I pulled her stage costumes from the wardrobe, wire hangers screaming against metal rod. "You've got God-given talents and you're gonna use them."

She moved to the window as I folded faux chinchilla and cerise velour into the suitcase.

"That's what I want," she said, looking outside.

I glanced too. Next-door neighbours were at their mid-afternoon carpool routine.

She sighed. "That high school carpool looks like heaven."

I grabbed her shoulders, shaking her from lacquer-laden hair-do to fishnetted-feet. "Listen, Mother — you're my ticket out of this burg and I'm not about to cash it in!"

"But vaudeville's dead, Francine!" she cried, head jerking. "It's been dead seventy years."

"But variety television's still alive. Don't let the dream die, Mother!"

I let her shoulders drop.

She stumbled, tapped her foot in awkward rhythm, then stopped. "This isn't the life your father dreamed for us before he died," she sniffed.

"I quit high school and worked three *Dairy Queens* to pay for these costumes," I snapped, slamming the suitcase shut. "I'm only doing this for you."

I dragged the suitcase down the stairs. Maybe Mother was right — maybe we needed a new act, something original, entirely *extra* original.

The suitcase clunked to the bottom of the stairs. A lightbulb flashed. The answer was obvious.

A double-act.

Mother ... and Grandmother.

