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SYNOPSIS: This hilarious ten-minute play is an example of marketing at its finest! Mr. Blag's flea circus is the best in the world, and he wants Mr. Denning to book them for his talent agency. Even Ms. Steinmuller, the secretary, is impressed, and Mr. Denning, of course, agrees to sign the flea circus. Now, if only he could actually see the act! In showbiz, things are not always what they seem.

CAST OF CHARACTERS
(2 MEN, 1 WOMAN)

MR. DENNING (m) ....................... A businessman.
MISS STEINMULLER (f) .............. Denning's secretary.
MR. BLAG (m) ............................... Another businessman.
AT RISE:
MR. DENNING is sitting in his office, and MISS STEINMULLER is seated behind a partition. MR. DENNING pushes a button on the phone on his desk.

DENNING: Miss Steinmuller, has my two o'clock appointment arrived?

MR. BLAG walks into the outer office.

STEINMULLER: Mr. Blag?
BLAG: Yes.
STEINMULLER: (Pressing button on the phone on her desk.) He has just arrived.
DENNING: Please send him in.
STEINMULLER: Yes, sir. (To BLAG.) Please go on in.
BLAG: Thank you. (Enters MR. DENNING's office.) Hello, Mr. Denning. (Men shake hands.) I appreciate you giving me a few minutes of your time today.
DENNING: Well, I can only spare a few minutes, so keep it brief.
BLAG: Yes, sir. I'm sure you will be totally amazed by my act. I have personally trained each and every member of my circus. They have performed feats that most people find hard to believe. They have mastered flips and movements thought impossible until now.
DENNING: So, where are they? Did you bring a video?
BLAG: No, sir. They are here with me. (Puts briefcase on the desk and unsnaps the closures. Then turns the briefcase sideways and dumps invisible fleas—pepper—onto the desk.)
DENNING: What are you doing?
BLAG: I am about to introduce you to the most astounding flea circus in the entire world. Presenting the Fabulous Flying Faff Circus.
DENNING: Flea Circus?
BLAG: The Fabulous Flying Faff Circus.
DENNING: Faff?
BLAG: Named after the British guy I purchased it from just three years ago. Of course, I have been in the flea circus business for years, but I perfected the flea circus business by acquiring the Faff circus. I added additional acts and refined it to its present state.

DENNING: Is this some kind of joke?
BLAG: Oh, no, sir. It is entirely serious.
DENNING: You expect me to book a flea circus?
BLAG: Not just a flea circus. The best flea circus in the United States…probably the world.
DENNING: You must be kidding.

DENNING crouches down to look at desk.

DENNING: I don’t see anything.
BLAG: What do you mean? You don’t see anything?
DENNING: Just what I said. I don’t see anything.
BLAG: Do you wear glasses?
DENNING: Sometimes.
BLAG: Perhaps you should put on your glasses.
DENNING: Okay. That might help. (Gets up, gets glasses from a nearby table, and sits back down.)
BLAG: Now, isn’t that better?
DENNING: Actually, I still don’t see anything.
BLAG: But you must. Just watch this. Okay. One, two, three…Wasn’t that impressive?
DENNING: Impressive? I didn’t see anything.
BLAG: What do you mean?
DENNING: I don’t see a thing. (Looking around.) Am I on Candid Camera or Punk’d?
BLAG: Oh, no, sir. I assure you this is no joke. They are performing right in front of you.
DENNING: But I don’t see them.
BLAG: You must see them. They are right in front of you.
DENNING: If you are trying to pull an “Emperor’s New Clothes” scam, I am not amused.
BLAG: Oh, no, sir. I would never try to flim-flam you. I assure you the circus is right here, and performing at their utmost best.

DENNING: I don’t think I would be interested in promoting an act that I can’t even SEE.

BLAG: Try again. This act will make you rich. It is unique. It is innovative. It is astounding, awesome, unbelievable! It’s like a well-oiled machine.

DENNING: But I can’t see it.

BLAG: Well…sir, do you have a magnifying glass?

DENNING: I don’t know. One moment. *(Presses button on phone.)* Miss Steinmuller.

STEINMULLER: Yes, sir.

DENNING: Do we have a magnifying glass in the office?

STEINMULLER: Yes, sir, we do.

DENNING: Will you bring it in here, please?

STEINMULLER: Yes, sir. Right away. *(Light tap on door.)* This is the only one I could find. *(Hands it to her boss.)* Oh, how cute. A flea circus! You don’t see those much anymore.

DENNING: You see it?

STEINMULLER: Of course, I see it. I love those little leotards. Very stylish.

BLAG: I told you it was there.

STEINMULLER: Wow! Did you see that flip? And the pyramid. I’ve never seen a flea pyramid before. What a great act!

BLAG: I’m so glad you like them.

STEINMULLER: I love them. They are so adorable. And very talented. You are going to sign them, aren’t you, Mr. Denning?

DENNING: Sign them? I can’t even see them! *(He crouches down and squints as he looks through the magnifying glass.)* Wait. I think I do see something. Tiny black dots.

STEINMULLER: Aren’t they great? Such gymnastic prowess!

DENNING: Well, I am having some trouble making out their movements.

STEINMULLER: They are the most extraordinary act I have ever seen. Such talent. Just amazing.

BLAG: Well, thank you. I have worked for years to produce the best flea circus on earth.
STEINMULLER: Well, sir, I believe you have succeeded.

BLAG: Oh, thank you. I am so glad you like it. What do you think, Mr. Denning?

DENNING: I think I need to see an eye doctor. I must be having trouble with my eyesight. Try as I might, I just can’t focus on those fleas. I do see little black dots, but that is all I can make out.

STEINMULLER: Oh, Mr. Denning, that’s too bad. It is such a fabulous act. I’ve never seen anything like it. Such gracefulness. Such skill. It is simply amazing.

DENNING: Miss Steinmuller, would you please run down to the corner and buy a stronger magnifying glass? I am very anxious to see this act for myself.

STEINMULLER: Yes, sir. I will be right back. (She exits.)

DENNING: While Miss Steinmuller is away, I have some questions for you.

BLAG: Yes, sir. Fire away.

DENNING: If I am having trouble seeing your act, how will my audiences see it?

BLAG: Oh, that is easy. We have a magnifying curtain that we hang between the audience and the circus, so they will be able to see every act in minute detail.

DENNING: I have never heard of a magnifying curtain.

BLAG: That’s probably because it is my own invention. Only I have such a wonderful magnifying device. It will revolutionize the flea circus business.

DENNING: Okay. That sounds good. And what is your fee for the services of your circus?

BLAG: Well, I am sure you will be happy to hear that we perform for a very reasonable fee. Because my performers do not cost much to feed and they sleep in my briefcase, the majority of the fee is for training and management. And we are not union, so that will save you money too.

DENNING: So how much are we talking about?

BLAG: We could perform for only $1,000 per performance.

DENNING: That sounds fair. That is reasonable compared to some of the acts I handle.

BLAG: Of course, we would require a two-year contract.
DENNING: That could be arranged. But what if one of your performers becomes ill or is disabled?

BLAG: Oh, sir, if you are worried about workman’s comp claims, let me put your mind at ease. We would never do that. I have trained back-up performers for each and every member of my circus. You know, the show must go on.

DENNING: I like your spirit. *(Tap on door.)* Come in.

STEINMULLER: *(Entering with a paper bag.)* This is the largest magnifying glass they had. Perhaps we can get a larger one at the mall later.

DENNING: That’s okay. Mr. Blag tells me they have a magnifying curtain that is hung between the audience and performers so they can be seen by all.

STEINMULLER: Oh, that sounds wonderful. I wouldn’t want anyone to miss their fabulous act.

*DENNING takes the magnifying glass from its bag and crouches down looking through it.*

DENNING: Okay. Let’s see the act.

BLAG: Ready, guys? Okay. One, Two, Three.

STEINMULLER: Wow! That was great.

BLAG: This next one took years to perfect.

STEINMULLER: Impressive! I’ve never seen anything like it.

BLAG: Oh, watch this one.

STEINMULLER: Wonderful! How did they do that?

BLAG: If you liked that, look what’s next.

STEINMULLER: Wow. Two at a time. And so graceful. How did she do that? I didn’t know a flea could bend that way.

BLAG: It took lots of training.

STEINMULLER: I’m sure it did.

BLAG: Well, what do you think, Mr. Denning?

DENNING: It is great. I wish I could see it better. I see the dots and a little movement, but even with this stronger magnifying glass, I am having trouble seeing it. It must be a fabulous act if Miss Steinmuller is so impressed. I’ve never seen her so excited about an act.
STEINMULLER: It is truly great.
DENNING: I look forward to seeing it. Miss Steinmuller, please set up an appointment with my eye doctor. I can’t wait to get better glasses so I can see this act.
STEINMULLER: Yes, sir. Right away.
DENNING: And bring in a contract.
STEINMULLER: Yes, sir. (Exits.)
DENNING: Miss Steinmuller was sure excited about your circus. I’m sure you will be a big hit on the circuit.
BLAG: Well, thank you, sir. We will do our best.
DENNING: I’m sure you will. (MISS STEINMULLER knocks and comes in, handing MR. DENNING the contract. He puts it before MR. BLAG.) Here is the contract. (Pointing.) Just sign right here, and here, and here. (BLAG signs and hands back to MR. DENNING, who then gives it back to MISS STEINMULLER.) Please make copies of this, Miss Steinmuller.
STEINMULLER: Yes, sir. (Exits, then returns to her office.)
DENNING: Well, thank you for coming in and offering me your act.
BLAG: No, thank you. I’m sure this will be a profitable arrangement for us both.
DENNING: (Slaps hand on desk.) This is the best deal I have made all year.
BLAG: (Looks down, then crouches.) Oh, oh.
DENNING: What’s wrong?
BLAG: I think you just smashed Wilbur.
DENNING: Wilbur?
BLAG: Yes. My strong-man, Wilbur.
DENNING: Oh, I am so sorry. I didn’t see him.
BLAG: Well, thank you for your time. Come on, guys. (He picks up the few grains of pepper and puts them in his briefcase.) I hope you can get some better glasses. I need to get Wilbur home and nurse him back to health so he will be ready for our first performance.
DENNING: Yes, of course. I am so sorry. Miss Steinmuller will give you a copy of the contract, and I will be calling you with your debut performance date in about a week. I do hope Wilbur will be able to perform by then.
BLAG: We will be ready. Fleas regenerate rather quickly. Thanks again, Mr. Denning. I will be seeing you soon. (Goes into MISS STEINMULLER’s office.)

STEINMULLER: Here is the contract.

BLAG: (Sets briefcase down, opens it, and puts contracts inside.) Well played. As long as people see what they want to see, instead of what is there, I am sure to be a success.

STEINMULLER: Oh, Mr. Blag. You are so clever.

BLAG: You do have the video to project onto our “magnifying curtain,” don’t you?

STEINMULLER: It’s right here in my desk.

BLAG: Great. Oh, can you stop and buy more coarse ground pepper on your way home? Cousin Veronica has been working at the William Morris agency for two months now, and I have an appointment there in the morning.

STEINMULLER: No problem. What name will you using?

BLAG: Mr. Charles. I’m going to set up his bank account next.

STEINMULLER: Okay. I will see you later. Don’t forget my cut. And take good care of Wilbur.

They both laugh, and Mr. BLAG exits.

BLACKOUT.

THE END