

"Dr. Frears"**5/22/22**

GEORGIA

Pity an iceberg like you will never know what a good bed is for! Even a volcano like Wallace couldn't thaw *that!*

ELLA

For the last time, it stops now!

GEORGIA

Or what?! What are you going to do, controlling bitc--

ELLA

Goodbye, Georgia.

The singers gasp. Georgia flushes with humiliation, but defiantly clutches Loudin.

GEORGIA

Let's go, babe. We said we don't need this.

But Loudin has no intention of leaving. He drops her hand.

ELLA

Surprise, surprise. Your ticket home will be waiting at the hotel.

Georgia turns pale, but before she can say anything --

MINNIE

BENNIE!!

Minnie SHRIEKS. Everyone looks to the floor. BENNIE HAS COLLAPSED.

INT. HOSPITAL LOBBY - NEXT MORNING

Tension is thick as the choir awaits news. Bloodless and bone-weary, they look ghastly, none worse than the sickly, emaciated White. He wears a hospital robe, already admitted.

Despite her condition, Ella relentlessly works, slogging through mountains of TOUR MAIL at a makeshift desk.

They rush DR. FREARS as he enters.

WHITE

Can we see him?

Scene 1

START →

DR. FREARS

I'm afraid we're still running tests.
How many concerts yesterday?

IKE
 (glowers at Ella)
 Three. Plus speeches, receptions,
 travel, and of course rehearsals.

DR. FREARS

Good God. About this tour --

Just then, an amiable telegram man enters.

CHOIR

Hey, Sean.

SEAN

Morning! Telegram for Miss Sheppard
 from New York.

White jealously snatches it. Awkward.

SEAN

Godspeed Mr. Holmes' recovery. I
 say it all the time, but Ireland's
 thankful for you.

He exits. White reads the cable. The news is bad.

WHITE

They need us to raise more money;
 they've booked us a litany of new
 tours. We leave tonight for Wales.
 After that, Switzerland, the
 Netherlands, then Scotland.

AMERICA

What about our vacations?? Our
 vacations start tomorrow.

WHITE

Canceled. We work straight through to
 December.

(his face turns pale)

They're *doubling* the daily schedule.

The room erupts in panic.

DR. FREARS

What do they want from you, *blood*?

ELLA

Let's calm down...

DR. FREARS

Calm down?! This hospital is *already*
 your second home!

ELLA

No one is forced to work when sick; I tell them not to.

WHITE

But they *do*, to keep up with you.

DR. FREARS

Miss Sheppard, do you have any idea how serious Ben's condition is?! If it's what we suspect --

END

ELLA

~~I didn't send myself that telegram!~~
I trust Bennie's in good hands. Now you'll do your job, Doctor, and leave me to do mine.

(to the choir)

We've got Wicklow in half an hour. We make our day then leave for Wales.

LOUDIN

Send us a postcard; we'll be tanning in Nice. Vacations are in our contracts!

ELLA

(whips out their contract)

So's cancellation. "*The AMA may suspend vacations as it deems necessary.*" Paragraph Six.

Loudin and Ike trade looks; apparently they'd forgotten that.

LOUDIN

Screw the fine print; we'll get this arbitrated.

ELLA

Paragraph Nine: "*The AMA shall arbitrate all disputes, and its decisions shall be permanently binding.*" You signed it, and per your demand it's "*ironclad.*"
Don't cross my lawyers.

IKE

You're full of it!

ELLA

Know where Maggie is? Singing in Nashville, for pigeons and stray dogs. She can't get work doing funerals.

LOUDIN

You killed her career.