

Death  
of a  
Salespersonage

(Enter Q42 onto an empty stage. Although the stage is empty, it has been painted in bright, earthy colors. After Q42 comes on stage, he faces front, stomps one foot, and puts on goggles as glitter becomes to fall. The glitter continues to fall until I say otherwise.)

Q42: Hark! (Sounds of angels singing.) Angels sing! The sing a tale of Old Nauvoo! (Sounds of angels singing "Old Nauvoo".) Yes folks, this is a tragedy. And although I am male, you are to think of me as genderless –

Offstage voice: SEXLESS!

Q42: Sexless! As sexless! You are to think of me as sexless. I am The Salespersonage!

(A spotlight shines directly to centerstage and the backdrop center. It is covered with a cutout that makes it a skyscrapered cityscape. From both sides of the stage, people in 1840s period dress begin walking back and forth. 5 start on one side, 4 on the other. When they exit one side, they immediately about-face and walk to the other side of the stage and so on. When one stops to speak, (s)he faces front and speaks loudly and boldly. Then continues to walk back and forth. Therefore, as time goes on, the original sets of 4 and 5 are chaotically walking back and forth, the pattern lost.)

Townsperson #1: Here we are in Old Nauvoo! The City Beautiful!

Q42: ♪ Oh who? Oh who? Oh who will buy my wares? Will you? Will you? Oh will you buy my wares? ♪

Townsperson #2: No, not by the hair of my chinnychinchin.

Q42: ♪ Then I'll huff! And I'll puff! And I'll blow  
Nauvoo down! ♪

(Enter Historian.)

Historian: Whoa! Hold, Nelly! Historical inaccuracy! This is preposterous! What are you saying? Who wrote this crap?

Q42: You mean, "Who's writing this crap?"

Historian: You mean this is a work-in-progress?

Q42: What is my art, but life? And is not life a work in progress?

Historian: Uuuhhh . . . .

(Enter Humanist.)

Humanist: Oo! Oo! I want in on this conversation! Oo! Yes! Yes! Of course! What's your name?

Q42: What name do you like?

Humanist: (All dreamylike.) Oh, I like Harvey!

Q42: Then my name's Harvey.

Historian: But I like James!

Townsperson #3: TAYLOR!

Q42: Then my name's Harvey James Taylor.

Historian: A fine name! May I take that down?

Q42: Ah shucks, I suppose so.

(Historian catches goggles dropped from the ceiling and all other characters [except Q42] pull goggles out of their pockets and put them on. Historian gestures to the sky and the name “Harvey James Taylor” comes down on ropes.)

Townsperson #4: That’s not for the temple!

Historian: Oh, that’s fine, fine. That’s mighty fine! Mighty fine indeed!

Q42: It looks stupid in print.

Humanist: I think so too. Hang on. (Gestures to the sky and the old “Harvey James Taylor” is replaced with a script telling. Both, by the way, are in sky blue unless you clearly saw a separate color when I first mentioned them. Also, I recommend three-dimensional letter blocks cut out.) There! Now that’s much better!

Q42: Mmm . . . I dunno. Maybe I’ll just go back to my old name.

Townsperson #3: What’s in a name?!

Townsperson #6: The stars, the heavens, a sense of belonging.

Humanist: Sigh . . .

Historian: (Suddenly intrigued.) What’s your old name?

Q42: Well, it’s NOT Rumpelstiltskin.

(The townspeople all lay down for a good laugh. The glitter stops falling)

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