

MAGGIE  
STUART  
Winifred  
#11

INTO THE BREECHES!

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*(IDA raises her hand.)*

MAGGIE. Yes, Ida?

IDA. Got a letter from Joshua. His unit's been requested by General Patton. But he's lonely, too.

MAGGIE. And Grace? Anything from...?

*(GRACE shakes her head.)*

Me either, dear.

Mrs. Snow? Any news?

*(WINIFRED tears up.)*

WINIFRED. No.

MAGGIE. Winifred, what's wrong?

WINIFRED. Oh, I feel bad. Guilty.

MAGGIE. Guilty? About what?

WINIFRED. You all. I've got my Ellsworth with me every night. Lying next to me. Snoring.

IDA. Just don't take it for granted.

WINIFRED. I don't. Stayed up all night listening to it.

MAGGIE. I do miss the snoring.

IDA.

JUNE.

Me too.

Yeah.

WINIFRED. Maybe I can sneak you all into our room, hide you in the closet.

MAGGIE. Another month and we may take you up on it. Anyone else? Stuart?

STUART. Oh, just, thank you all. For this. I'm having the time of my life.

~~IDA. Me too.~~

WINIFRED. Me three. Oh! And I learned most of my words by heart.

MAGGIE. Your lines, you mean? Good, Winifred, good! That's as good a cue as any to - how about the Quickly/Falstaff scene?

*(ALL prepare.)*

START

**STUART.** (*Aside to MAGGIE.*) Don't worry, Maggie – I'll be funny for us both.

(*They proceed, WINIFRED still unfunny, STUART hamming it up.*)

**WINIFRED AS FALSTAFF.** I'll be sworn my pocket was picked. Go to, you are a woman, go.

**STUART AS QUICKLY.** Who, I? A woman? No, I defy thee! God's light, I was never called so in mine own house before.

**WINIFRED AS FALSTAFF.** Go to, I know you well enough.

**STUART AS QUICKLY.** No, Sir John, you do not know me, Sir John. I know you, Sir John. You owe me money, Sir John, and now you pick a quarrel to beguile me of it. I bought you a dozen of shirts –

(**MAGGIE** pulls the plug.)

**MAGGIE.** Okay, that's enough.

**STUART.** (*As stage manager.*) Hold, please!

(*As actor, expecting praise.*) Yes?

**MAGGIE.** Stuart? A little less.

**STUART.** Less? But I –

**MAGGIE.** We ladies aren't camping it up, you shouldn't either.

**STUART.** Roger Wilco.

**MAGGIE.** And Winifred.

**WINIFRED.** Yes?

**MAGGIE.** Good, good work on remembering your words.

(**WINIFRED** raises her hand.)

**WINIFRED.** But was it funny?

**MAGGIE.** You don't have to raise your hand, Winifred, we're having a conversation.

(**STUART** can't suppress a laugh.)

Although, that was funny.

**WINIFRED.** What was?

**MAGGIE.** Raising your – in a Margaret Dumont kind of – um...who do you think is funny?

**WINIFRED.** Did you say Margaret Dumont?

**MAGGIE.** Yes, but she's not really the right role model for –

**WINIFRED.** I don't think so either. No, Groucho Marx. He's my favorite.

**MAGGIE.** Perfect! So, how about this. Let's continue with the lines, but think of how Groucho Marx might say them.

**WINIFRED.** Oh! Well, I'll try.

**MAGGIE.** From "How poor?"

*(WINIFRED gives it a shot, but it's no better, a sad impersonation.)*

**WINIFRED AS FALSTAFF.** How, poor? Look upon his face. What call you rich? Let them coin his nose, let them coin his cheeks.

**MAGGIE.** Okay, let's stop there.

**STUART.** Hold!

**WINIFRED.** Was that –?

**MAGGIE.** Margaret Dumont.

**WINIFRED.** Oh.

~~IDA. I wonder if –?~~

*(She gets up, approaches WINIFRED.)*

~~May I –?~~

*(She paints or places a mustache on WINIFRED's face.)*

~~Sometimes a little accessory makes all the –~~

**WINIFRED.** Oh! How fun!

~~IDA. There.~~

*(WINIFRED turns around, revealing her Groucho mustache.)*

**WINIFRED.** Well?

**MAGGIE.** I don't know Ida, maybe Groucho was the wrong example, that looks a little too...

**STUART.** Sieg Heil?

**MAGGIE.** Exactly. I think we want something a bit more –

*(But WINIFRED interrupts, a miraculous, perfect Groucho.)*

**WINIFRED AS GROUCHO.** What, will you make a younker of me? Shall I not take mine ease in mine inn but I shall have my pocket picked? I have lost a seal ring of my grandfather's worth forty mark.

*(ALL are stunned.)*

**MAGGIE.** ...Stuart?

**STUART.** Right!

**STUART AS QUICKLY.** O Jesu, I have heard the Prince tell him, I know not how oft, that that ring was copper!

**WINIFRED AS FALSTAFF.** How? The Prince is a Jack, a sneak-up. 'Sblood, an he were here, I would cudgel him like a dog if he would say so.

**WINIFRED.** Was that -?

*(Amazement. Then cheers, gushing hugs all around.)*

**MAGGIE.** Ida, if this woman was that good with a mustache, who knows how funny she'll be with a beard!

**IDA.** Noted!

**MAGGIE.** In fact, no more half-measures! Costumes for us all!

*(IDA breaks into a sly grin.)*

**IDA.** On their way.

*(She exits with the rest of the CAST.)*

**MAGGIE.** Hurry, Ida! Our world, our little world beckons!

*(She notices GRACE is hanging back.)*

Grace? Lickety-split, dear. I'll bet your outfit is the best of all. Grace?

**GRACE.** Can I - can I make a confession?

**MAGGIE.** Dear, of course, what is it?

**GRACE.** You ask every day about Paul -

**MAGGIE.** I can stop if it's -

**END**