

**Scene Five**  
**The University Club**  
**The Next Day**

*(MAGGIE and ELLSWORTH in the hallway of the University Club. ELLSWORTH is in squash dress.)*

**ELLSWORTH.** No. No.

**MAGGIE.** But you must see the inequity –

**ELLSWORTH.** I see nothing but a deranged female barging into the University Club, talking nonsense about salaries for actresses. Where does this end with you? First you ambush me with my wife – who thanks to your gaggle has got us eating Spam and riding bicycles everywhere – something about a Mrs. Exception?

**MAGGIE.** Oh, that, I didn't –

**ELLSWORTH.** How is she doing by the way?

**MAGGIE.** Winifred? A natural.

**ELLSWORTH.** I must warn you, if you allow her to fail, to embarrass herself in front of her fellow women of note –

**MAGGIE.** I won't, but I ask you, is *this* not an embarrassment? This decades-long shameful practice of unpaid labor?

**ELLSWORTH.** Shameful? Shame? Shame is not concentrating on the war effort, my dear woman, shame is bringing up this frivolous question –

**MAGGIE.** Frivolous?

**ELLSWORTH.** – At a time when our men are fighting the greatest menace the world has ever seen. So you'll forgive me if I don't share your outrage at a practice that has served us fine and dandy for twenty-six seasons. If it was good enough for Andrew –

**MAGGIE.** Well, actually, I've given it much thought, and Andrew may have been...mistaken.

**ELLSWORTH.** Mistaken?

**MAGGIE.** In this one case, yes.

**ELLSWORTH.** I'm sure he'd be glad to hear it.

**MAGGIE.** He will. I've written him.

**ELLSWORTH.** You -? Are you mad, woman? *These* are the letters you send to comfort him in his time of greatest need?

**MAGGIE.** They are. The Oberon is *all* that comforts him. And while I haven't received a reply yet, I trust I know his answer. Andrew's is a just mind.

**ELLSWORTH.** Ah. Here we are. Now we come to it. The closed mind of a businessman!

**MAGGIE.** I don't mean to impugn your -

**ELLSWORTH.** No, impugn away Maggie, because this cold, calculating businessman is going to tell you to take a flying leap off a -

**MAGGIE.** Christmas!

**ELLSWORTH.** What?

**MAGGIE.** Christmas. Christmas present.

**ELLSWORTH.** What are you babbling about now?

**MAGGIE.** Winifred. She made me swear not to tell you this, but...

**ELLSWORTH.** Swear? You're not making sense.

**MAGGIE.** Oh, it's just, she was so proud. It'll be hard, hard to face the disappointment in her eyes when I tell her.

**ELLSWORTH.** Tell her what?

**MAGGIE.** The first thing she thought of - when this whole money thing came up - she said, tears in her eyes and she said, "Finally. I'll finally be able to buy him a Christmas present with my own, something of my own." And she laid her head down on the table and wept. And I'm not ashamed to tell you that she was not the only one in the room that did so.

**ELLSWORTH.** (*Moved.*) She...? My Peaches...?

(*Snapping to.*) No! No! No! I will not allow my heart to blind me again.

**MAGGIE.** Ahhhhhhhhh, your head then: Charlie Flager!

**ELLSWORTH.** Charlie Who?

**MAGGIE.** He's a company member. Fifteen years. Played Snout in *Midsummer*.

**ELLSWORTH.** Snout, who's Snout?

**MAGGIE.** Exactly. Charlie Flager was paid for his serviceable reading of his twelve lines, Mr. Snow. Do you know who was not?

**ELLSWORTH.** All right, I see where you're –

**MAGGIE.** For playing Helena in that very same production?

**ELLSWORTH.** Very well, but –

**MAGGIE.** Do you remember Celeste's performance, Mr. Snow?

**ELLSWORTH.** Well, yes, of course.

**MAGGIE.** Does it linger?

**ELLSWORTH.** Yes.

**MAGGIE.** And that is worth nothing?

**ELLSWORTH.** The – the men have families to support.

**MAGGIE.** And the women don't?

**ELLSWORTH.** But Celeste – I know for a fact she gets to keep her costumes.

**MAGGIE.** That's hardly payment – where else can she wear an Elizabethan dress from *Taming of the Shrew*?

**ELLSWORTH.** You would have me set a dangerous precedent.

**MAGGIE.** A fair one.

**ELLSWORTH.** (*Groaning.*) Damnation! Fine! Fine, I'll pay them...I don't know, half.

**MAGGIE.** Half?

**ELLSWORTH.** Of what the men were getting, half.

**MAGGIE.** Half? Is Celeste worth half a Charlie Flager?

**ELLSWORTH.** Of course not, but –

**MAGGIE.** She is worth more, far more –

**ELLSWORTH.** She'll get no more, that's for certain –

**MAGGIE.** Fine, then we'll settle for the same.

**ELLSWORTH.** Arg! You'll be the death of me.