

MAGGIE. Easy, we need. But we also need at least twelve more -

GRACE. *(Quietly.)* Hello?

(A meek woman, GRACE, appears in the doorway. She is in her thirties, with long, simply-styled hair, dressed humbly.)

I'm here for the audition?

STUART. For the -?! Maggie, another one!

MAGGIE. I heard her, Stuart.

(She rises.)

I'm Maggie Dalton, I'm directing.

STUART. Stuart Lasker, stage managing.

IDA. Ida Green, costuming.

GRACE. Grace Richards. Auditioning.

MAGGIE. Do you need a moment to -?

GRACE. No, I'd rather get this over with before I forget it.

MAGGIE. Of course. And please, relax, we're not here to judge you, we're hoping you'll be wonderful.

STUART. *(Aside, to MAGGIE.)* Really really truly hoping -

MAGGIE. *(To STUART.)* Shh.

(To GRACE.) Go ahead, dear.

GRACE. *(Nervous.)* All right.

Um, so this is...this is where Prince Henry's just been made king and the Archbishop of Canterbury wants him to pick a fight with France, but Henry is not so sure that's a good idea.

MAGGIE. Thanks, dear. Whenever you're ready. Nice and loud.

GRACE. All right, here goes:

(She begins her soliloquy. She is instantly another person, confident and surprisingly fairly good, in a more modern, less declamatory, and more raw style. MAGGIE, STUART, and IDA exchange cautious, hopeful raised eyebrows.)

START

GRACE AS HENRY V. Therefore take heed how you impawn
 our person,
 How you awake our sleeping sword of war:
 We charge you, in the name of God, take heed;
 For never two such kingdoms did contend
 Without much fall of blood; whose guiltless drops
 Are every one a woe, a sore complaint
 'Gainst him whose wrong gives edge unto the swords
 That make such waste in brief –

(She is stuck on the line, flustered.)

In brief –

In brief –

MAGGIE. *(Gently, encouraging.)* Mortality –

GRACE. Mortality –

GRACE AS HENRY V. That make such waste in brief mortality.

(Overcome by embarrassment, she breaks character.)

GRACE. I'm sorry for wasting your time.

(She is on her way out. MAGGIE, STUART, and IDA leap up.)

MAGGIE, STUART & IDA. No, no, no!

GRACE. I ruined it.

MAGGIE. No, you were –

GRACE. I forgot the line.

MAGGIE. A word, you forgot a word, happens to everyone.

Now, are you new to town, you should've been with us
 seasons ago!

GRACE. *(Blushing.)* I am new, yes. Moved here when Paul –
 well, before he was deployed, he wanted me close, so I
 followed him around the country for about a year, base
 to base, but when he finally shipped out with the Air
 Corps, I was left alone in North Dakota with our boy,
 and the money ran out and I didn't know what to – I
 had to move in with...well, Paul's mother lives on Fed
 Hill.

MAGGIE. And have you ever acted before, dear?

GRACE. No.

MAGGIE. Whyever not?

GRACE. I wanted to, I did, I always wanted to try, but...

Paul... I brought it up a few times, but he was never too fond of the idea.

MAGGIE. Oh. And now he's...

GRACE. Over There, so, I...

MAGGIE. I understand, dear. Well. We'd be happy to have you if you're interested.

GRACE. Really?

MAGGIE. I'm not sure yet what part - or parts - or many, many parts - but come back on Wednesday at ten a.m. and we'll figure it out.

GRACE. Wednesday! I'll be better by then, I swear!

(She rushes out. MAGGIE, STUART, and IDA rejoice.)

END

IDA. Praise be!

MAGGIE. She shows promise, yes?

STUART. I'll say. Maybe Henry Four?

MAGGIE. Maybe. Or maybe even the Prince?

STUART. Isn't that Miss Turquoise Hose?

MAGGIE. Technically, yes, but the more I think about it... don't you two think Celeste is a little longish in the tooth?

IDA. She still plays Juliet every other year.

MAGGIE. Uh-huh. And last season, she was older than the Nurse.

STUART. *(A look at his timer.)* Five o'clock.

MAGGIE & IDA. Thank you, five o'clock.

STUART. And that leaves only...twenty-nine roles unspoken for.

MAGGIE. "Dear Andrew."

STUART. "Dear Andrew"?

MAGGIE. We're going to need a new chart.