

CASTING JULIET

By Claudia Haas

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STORY OF THE PLAY

Things are seldom what they seem in the world of theatre. That is never truer than in “The Audition” (3 w). On the morning of a (maybe) life-altering audition, three (maybe) actresses come early to scope out the theatre and immerse themselves into the needs of the (maybe) director. As Phoebe, Celia and Rosalind vie for the chance of lifetime, secrets are revealed and plans unravel in this one-act that is never exactly as you think it to be. The play gives three actresses their own shining moments in the spotlight. Running time is about 20 minutes.

In the second play, “The Callback” (2 w), two high school friends who have gotten a callback feel the other should get the coveted part of Juliet ... in their minds, that is. They argue their points to their teacher, but in their hearts, each actress is a little more desperate than she first appears! Running time about 10 minutes.

Three actresses can perform both plays, if desired.

THE AUDITION

(3 w)

CELIA: Early 20 something; quintessential Southern beauty queen – maybe.

PHOEBE: 18-20. Dressed in a rough manner, could be homeless, could be a poor, college student, could be an actress, could be ...?

ROSALIND: Late 20s; actress on a mission.

SETTING

Ramshackle old factory in a big city. One room has hastily been set up as a dressing room. There may be a free-standing mirror and a counter and some chairs. Upstage there is a large mound of blankets or masking material or curtains. It's about 6:30 in the morning.

PROPS

Celia: Duffel bag, cup of coffee.

Phoebe: Prop dagger.

Rosalind: Large bag filled with healthy snacks, curling iron, make-up, a change of clothes, a hairbrush, her picture and resume and books. Optionally, she could have knitting supplies, a change of shoes, even a wig – any items to show this actress is ready for anything.)

THE AUDITION

(AT RISE: CELIA appears in the doorway. Impeccably dressed, she has a duffel bag and may carry a cup of coffee. CELIA peers into the room. She speaks in a warm, southern drawl. It is 6:30 a.m.)

CELIA: Hello? Anybody in there? I know I'm early. I hope you don't mind ... everything was open so I came in? Hello? *(SHE puts her bag down and looks around. A murmur or some movement is spied under the blanket but not by CELIA.)* Oh my, no one about. Hard to believe that this place could be the birth of my career. Spooky. An old sweatshop turned into a theatre. All those months of strange ads announcing these auditions. Why isn't anyone here? Lord! This could be a trap ... a place to lure unsuspecting actresses! *(Moves to the blankets and shouts to the walls.)* HELLO! ACTRESS ON PREMISES! IS THERE A SIGN-IN SHEET? *(SHE looks around. Suddenly, the blankets move and a dagger is slowly raised from the pile.)* Saints and honor preserve me!

(CELIA screams and runs for the door. PHOEBE stands amid the blankets.)

PHOEBE: Wonderful warm-up. I'm impressed. *(PHOEBE approaches CELIA with the dagger.)*

CELIA: Listen, please! I've only been in town for three days. I heard the Mayor cleaned up the city. I heard crime was down ... you don't want to add to the statistics, honey, do you? Now, I'm just going to slowly walk out the door ... please don't hurt me. I cry easily.

PHOEBE: *(Throwing the dagger away.)* Relax. The knife's a prop. What did you think?

CELIA: Why, you could get arrested for that!

PHOEBE: For what? Using a prop? I was just holding on to it to protect myself. You never know who is wandering these buildings. Especially at this hour.

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CELIA: Still – I could have died of fright – or worse – I could have fallen on the dagger. What a tragedy that would be! “Southern actress falls on a dagger and dies at an audition in her first week in the big city.” I would turn into a cautionary tale for the starry-eyed. My name would be whispered to young children who have aspirations of a life in the theatre. You would be the big bad wolf who murdered an innocent!

PHOEBE: An innocent? In the theatre? Who would buy that? I can just see me talking with the police, “Oh officer, I was merely practicing my Lady Macbeth for an upcoming audition when this young woman suddenly threw herself onto my dagger!”

(ROSALIND, who has been standing in the doorway for a moment, enters. She carries a large bag with everything in it. She seems to be a take-charge, no-nonsense young woman.)

ROSALIND: As I recall, Lady Macbeth had her husband do all the dirty work. *(Acting it out.)* And went mad from guilt. Doomed to be forever washing her hands. “Out, damn spot! Out, I say.” *(SHE suddenly transitions to a cheery greeter.)* Hello! I’m Rosalind. I’m here to audition.

CELIA: Thank goodness you’re here. That woman *(Indicating PHOEBE.)* is a bit scary, I don’t mind telling you.

ROSALIND: I am so happy you are all here. Isn’t this wonderful? You must be early birds like me. Auditioning for Gregory Ganymede’s “Love in Shakespeare.” In a few days, this place will be alive with enchantment. Juliet will pass through these rooms ... and Ophelia

PHOEBE: And a lot of confusing words in rhyme.

ROSALIND: Aren’t you here to audition?

PHOEBE: Me? An actress? Please. Where I come from an actress is one step from the street. One very small step.

CELIA: Oh, I bet you are a homeless person! I’ve been here for three whole days and you are my very first homeless person. I must make a note of that for my biography.

PHOEBE: I wouldn’t go cataloguing that fact right this very minute. I am, in fact, here to work.

ROSALIND: Here? That’s not possible.

End of Freeview

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