

Maggie

1

Celeste

Stuart

Ida

June

Grace

Winnie

Scene Four
Rehearsal Room
Days Later

(Commotion. The CAST enters and gathers around a long table, a large script and materials in front of each player. JUNE is knitting. IDA is sewing costumes.)

STUART. All right, everyone! Time! Time! We're ready to get our first day started! Everyone – may I present our director, Maggie Dalton!

(ALL applaud.)

CELESTE. Ahem.

STUART. *(Oh, boy.)* And our star, Celeste Fielding.

(CELESTE humbly revels in the applause.)

Maggie, the floor is yours.

MAGGIE. Thank you, Stuart.

(Revving up for opening day speech, consulting a note card.)

And welcome, girls. We gathered here are about to embark on a brave and necessary endeavor. My hope is that this production will honor those abroad and give some comfort to those who remain – that it will bond us all, in some small way, united against a common enemy, in a noble cause.

(ALL take it in, inspired, perhaps applaud.)

CELESTE. Lovely speech. Do I detect a whiff of Andrew?

MAGGIE. He – he – proofed it for me, yes. Now, what say we dive right –

(WINIFRED has flipped ahead in the schedule.)

WINIFRED. Ooo, I'm terribly sorry, but I can't make it next Tuesday. I'm hosting a luncheon.

GRACE. Oh, and as long as we're stopped, my mother-in-law can't watch Danny Thursdays between four and five –

IDA. Mrs. Richards, there's a war nursery for your kids right over on Chalkstone Avenue -

MAGGIE. All right, well, let's -

JUNE. Say, Mrs. Snow, why not make that luncheon of yours a scrap metal drive as well?

WINIFRED. Oh, but everyone will be all dressed up.

JUNE. Don't want to be a Mrs. Exception.

WINIFRED. A what?

JUNE. You know, you want to do your part.

WINIFRED. Oh, yes, of course. A Mrs. Exception? No, no.

MAGGIE. All right, girls, none of us are Mrs. Exceptions, let's -

JUNE. Oh, and also, Vaughn Monroe is going to be singing at a rally in Westerly on the twenty-fourth -

(General excited murmuring breaks out.)

MAGGIE. - You know, we're not, we're not actually stopped yet -

STUART. Hold, please! Hold!

(Murmuring ceases.)

MAGGIE. - But on our first break, we'll talk all about conflicts and luncheons and Vaughn Monroe. I promise. Now, for those of you who haven't been with us before - which is most of you - following Andrew's recipe, we are going to start our rehearsal with table work.

WINIFRED. Ahhhhh.

MAGGIE. Yes, which is, basically, sitting around a table, and, well, working.

(WINIFRED writes this down.)

WINIFRED. Mmmm.

MAGGIE. So, let's take it from the -

(She tries to continue, but is distracted by:)

- From the - ah, June? The knitting?

JUNE. Oh! Yes! Victory Socks! For Max!

(The WOMEN coo support.)

"Everyone's Got To Knit Their Bit!"

MAGGIE. Well, all right, then. So, we begin with the character of the Chorus, the narrator, if you will. If you'll consult your casting charts, we'll see who plays -?

(ALL rifle through their casting charts.)

STUART. *(It's her.)* Maggie?

MAGGIE. Oh! Right, that's me! Necessity has forced me into a role or two.

CELESTE. Minor ones, I hope.

MAGGIE. Mostly, mostly minor. And everyone, the purpose of table work is that we all get on the same page, so if there's any point you don't understand anything, just raise your hand.

(WINIFRED raises her hand.)

Oh! Yes?

WINIFRED. Left or right?

MAGGIE. What?

WINIFRED. Hand?

MAGGIE. Either one.

WINIFRED. *(Writing it down.)* Thank you.

MAGGIE. All right? Here we go.

MAGGIE AS CHORUS. O, for a Muse of Fire, that would ascend
The brightest heaven of invention!

(Hands from JUNE, GRACE, and WINIFRED.)

MAGGIE. Oh! All right, well, let's talk about it, then. Any idea what this means?

CELESTE. That you're in way over your head.

MAGGIE. What the script means. So -

MAGGIE AS CHORUS. O, for a Muse of Fire, that would ascend
The brightest heaven of invention!

MAGGIE. Any thoughts?