

CELESTE. Pardon?

MAGGIE. Modern dress.

CELESTE. Wigs?

MAGGIE. No wigs, no hose.

CELESTE. (*Ridiculous.*) That's -! (*Or is it?*) Bold, bold. And how are their strides coming along?

MAGGIE. Manfully.

CELESTE. The cods are helping?

MAGGIE. The cods my dear, were a stroke of brilliance.

CELESTE. I'm glad, I'm glad.

(*They sit for a moment.*)

MAGGIE. ...Come back.

CELESTE. I can't.

MAGGIE. Why not? You'd be playing a wonderful role.

CELESTE. And setting a dangerous precedent. I shall have the taint of age about me, Maggie, and when our men return to the company, and I go back to my given sex? There aren't enough crones in the canon to cobble together a career.

MAGGIE. You're not at crone stage yet, Celeste. There's Titania, Cleopatra -

CELESTE. But not Juliet.

MAGGIE. Perhaps not.

CELESTE. I would miss her.

MAGGIE. And she you. There will never be another to do her such justice. But it's time to move on. Bring that insight to someone new. Bring it to Henry.

CELESTE. The wrong Henry -

MAGGIE. You'll never know.

CELESTE. Oh, but I'm so far behind you all. You open in two days, I'd never be able to learn the lines in -

MAGGIE. Celeste. I heard you rehearsing.

CELESTE. (*Playing dumb.*) Heard what?

MAGGIE. You can hit the back wall of the theater without breaking a sweat; one front door isn't going to stop you.

CELESTE. My gifts have undone me. In truth, it's not a bad part. As you said, great death scene.

MAGGIE. One of the best.

CELESTE. And he's a thinker, isn't he? A brooder.

MAGGIE. Not everyone gets that, yes.

CELESTE. Almost a minor Hamlet at times - like his sleep soliloquy?

MAGGIE. I think Andrew cut that.

CELESTE. I think it's back in.

MAGGIE. All right.

CELESTE. Although I understand the impulse. Always dangerous to bring up sleep in a theater. Next thing you know half your audience has nodded off.

MAGGIE. That was the thinking.

CELESTE. A deal: if I get so much as a yawn, it's out again.

MAGGIE. Deal.

(*CELESTE recites in a beautiful, simple fashion.*

*MAGGIE sits to listen on the couch, getting more and more comfortable as the soliloquy goes along.*)

CELESTE AS HENRY IV. How many thousand of my poorest subjects

Are at this hour asleep! O sleep, O gentle sleep,

Nature's soft nurse, how have I frighted thee,

That thou no more wilt weigh my eyelids down

And steep my senses in forgetfulness?

Canst thou, O partial sleep, give thy repose

To the wet sea-boy in an hour so rude,

And, in the calmest and most stillest night,

Deny it to a king? Then happy low, lie down!

Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown.

(*MAGGIE is out, sleeping like the dead.*)

CELESTE. Poor thing. This hasn't been easy, has it? I imagine you've had a sleepless night or two, yourself.

(*She tucks MAGGIE in.*)