

Love is a Four-Letter Word

Reader's Theatre Adaptation: Chapter 2, WAIT

Written and Adapted by Vikki VanSickle

Cast of Characters

MATTIE – vivacious, excitable
 CLARISSA – a bit sarcastic, strong-willed
 BENJI – nervous, sweet-tempered
 CAROL – friendly, theatrical, early 30s
 CHARITY – beautiful singer, confident, teenager
 CHORUS – (create atmosphere)

The chorus creates the atmosphere of a waiting room outside an audition space, doing tongue twisters, scales, and other vocal exercises.

MATTIE: This is so exciting! I've never been to an audition before. I can't imagine getting up and singing in front of strangers! I'm so proud of you guys! Look at all the people here. Are you nervous? Don't be nervous! Are you nervous?

CLARISSA: Mattie! You're supposed to be distracting us! Pointing out all the other people here doesn't make me feel any better.

MATTIE: Right! Sorry! They're probably not as good as you, anyway. I think it's smart to wear your hair in braids; it'll make it easier for the audition panel to imagine you as Dorothy. Oh, Clarissa you'd be a GREAT Dorothy!

MATTIE squeals and gives her a big hug.

CLARISSA: Okay, okay, calm down. People are staring. *(To BENJI)* Are you okay?

BENJI: I think I'm going to be sick.

MATTIE: It looks like we have to go sign up at that desk over there and then wait to be called. Come on, let's go. *(To CAROL)* Excuse me? Hi! My name is Mattie Cohen and my friends here would like to sign up for an audition.

CAROL: And will you be auditioning as well?

MATTIE: Oh, no. I'm just the fan club!

CAROL: I wish I had a fan club! I'm Carol and I'm on the board for the Gaslight Community Players. Have either of you auditioned for us before?

CLARISSA and BENJI shake their heads, no.

CAROL: Well then I'll need you to fill these forms out and bring them back to me. We have a bit of a backlog at the moment but I can fit you in at 7:10 and 7:20, how does that sound?

MATTIE: Perfect! Thank you, Carol.

CAROL: You're welcome. Good luck, or as we say in the theatre, break a leg!

CLARISSA: 7:10? That's ages from now. I can't wait that long.

BENJI: Maybe I'll just leave my sketches with Carol and sign up for costumes. I like costumes. You don't have to sing in front of people when you're designing costumes.

CLARISSA: No, Benji! We had a deal. You can do this!

BENJI: But look at all the people—

CAROL: Casey Templeton? Is there a Casey Templeton here? You're next!

MATTIE: Don't think about them. Let's fill out the forms.

CLARISSA: (*Reading*) Past shows? Dance experience? Vocal range?

BENJI: What does vocal range mean?

CLARISSA: I don't know. Maybe they want to know what kind of songs you can sing?

BENJI: That doesn't sound right.

CLARISSA: Put down average. You can't go wrong with average.

BENJI: What are you going to put for dance experience?

MATTIE: Have you ever taken dance classes?

CLARISSA: No. Except for that time Mrs. Gillespie made us do line dancing in gym class, but I don't think that counts.

MATTIE: Everything counts. Write it down! What about past shows?

BENJI: I was in a play in grade three. We both were, remember, Clarissa?

CLARISSA: Do you mean the one where we dressed up as pioneers? For history?

MATTIE: I remember that! Yonder Years!

CLARISSA: How do you remember this stuff?

CAROL: Josh Simmons? There you are! Right this way, please.

MATTIE: Oh. My. God! Josh Simmons is here! I knew I should have brought lip gloss. Do you think he saw us?

CLARISSA: Mattie! Focus!

MATTIE: Right, sorry, past shows . . . um. . . you could put down the radio show.

CLARISSA: I don't know. That's not the same thing as acting in a play. It's not like I had to play a character or memorize lines or anything.

MATTIE: At least you won't have to leave it blank.

CLARISSA: How about 'host of an exciting radio program.' That's not exactly a lie.

CHARITY can be heard singing a particularly beautiful vocalise.

MATTIE: Wow. Would you listen to that! Now *that* is a singer!

BENJI: I really don't feel well . . .

CLARISSA: Benji, why don't you show Mattie your sketches?

MATTIE: Oh, yes please! I'd love to see them!

BENJI and MATTIE busy themselves looking at BENJI's portfolio. Charity is now doing scales. CLARISSA tries to psych herself up.

CLARISSA: Okay. You can do this, Clarissa, just take it one step at a time. You always wanted to be an actress, now here's your chance to be in a real play. And not just any play, The Wizard of Oz! No one knows The Wizard of Oz like you do! It's fate! Just take a deep breath, walk in there, and show them that you, Clarissa Louise Delaney, were meant to play the part of Dorothy Gale. Nothing can get in your way.

CAROL: Charity Smith-Jones?

MATTIE gasps and the chorus starts to whisper in excitement

MATTIE: What did she just say?

CAROL: Charity Smith-Jones? Is Charity here?

CHARITY enters from the stairwell, still humming.

CHARITY: Sorry, Carol, I didn't hear you at first. I was practising.

CAROL: Don't worry, Charity, we're just happy to see you. We thought after all those commercials we'd lost you for good!

- CHARITY: Oh, Carol! You know I could never leave the theatre.
- MATTIE: *(letting out a big gust of air that she has been holding in)* Oh. My. God. Do you know who that was? Charity Smith-Jones!
- CLARISSA: Yes, I heard, Mattie. So what's the big deal?
- MATTIE: Don't you know who she is? That's Charity Smith-Jones! She's in grade ten at Sir John A and has been the lead in every single musical, even when she was in grade nine. Everybody knows the big parts usually go to seniors, but she's, like, a professional actress. She even does commercials. You know the Tim Horton's commercial, the Roll Up the Rim one?
- BENJI: I know the one you mean! The one with the girl in the pink earmuffs! She uses the last of her allowance to buy her mom a cup of coffee and it ends up being a million dollar cup!
- BENJI/MATTIE: SHE'S THE GIRL IN THE PINK EAR MUFFS!
- CLARISSA: Only you would remember her ear muffs, Benji.
- BENJI: Don't you remember it, Clarissa?
- CLARISSA: Of course I remember it! Everyone knows that commercial. It plays every single commercial break. Charity Smith-Jones must be a millionaire by now. Why can't she stick to her big-time commercials and leave something for us lowly amateur actors to do?
- MATTIE: Do you think she's going for Dorothy?
- CLARISSA: No way. Her hair is too distinctively red. Dorothy has brown hair.
- BENJI: But what if they have wigs?
- CLARISSA gives him a dirty look.*
- BENJI: On second thought, it's just a community production, they probably can't afford wigs.
- CLARISSA: Maybe she'll be Glinda. Glinda has red hair, remember?
- MATTIE: Totally! Plus Glinda's older than Dorothy, anyway. It would be weird to have Dorothy be played by someone older than Glinda.
- BENJI: She'd be the perfect Glinda. You know who else she could play? Not in this show, but in another one?
- BENJI/MATTIE: ANNE OF GREEN GABLES!

MATTIE: She'd be the perfect Anne. And Clarissa would be a divine Diana. Remember that song? The one they sing together?

MATTIE starts singing Kindred Spirits, from the musical ANNE OF GREEN GABLES interrupted by CLARISSA.

CLARISSA: Might I remind you that we're not auditioning for Anne of Green Gables, we're auditioning for The Wizard of Oz?

BENJI: Besides, Diana's hair is more black than brown.

CLARISSA: Maybe they have wigs.

CAROL: Clarissa Louise Delaney?

MATTIE: This is it! Are you nervous?

BENJI: I think I'm going to be sick *for* you.

CLARISSA: No. I can do this. And so can you! Pull yourself together, Benji. This is what we've been waiting for!

CHARITY exits. MATTIE gasps.

MATTIE: Look! There she is!

CHARITY passes by CLARISSA.

CHARITY: Hey! Break a leg in there!

CLARISSA: Thanks.

CAROL: Are you ready, Clarissa?

CLARISSA looks back at MATTIE and BENJI, who give her encouraging gestures.

CLARISSA: Ready.

End Scene.