Audition Extract **3**. ELIZABETH & LIONEL

WAITING ROOM, LIONEL'S CHAMBERS, NEW DAY

ELIZABETH enters, waits, coughs, and loosing her patience, coughs again. Still no response.

ELIZABETH (*calls imperiously*) Anyone here?

LIONEL (off) In the lav.

(*The Royal Princess is not used to that sort of thing. She's further appalled by the loud gurgling of a toilet being flushed, then: the entrance of LIONEL LOGUE. His demeanour is friendly, but professional. The accent, although Australian, is very light, he is after all a speech therapist.*)

LIONEL 'How poor are they that have not patients! What wound did ever heal but by degrees?'

ELIZABETH I beg your pardon?

LIONEL Iago. World's greatest villain. Sorry, no receptionist. Waste of money.

ELIZABETH (*with sang-froid*) I'd be more comfortable in your office.

LIONEL That's for clients. Where's Mister J?

ELIZABETH Doesn't know I'm here.

LIONEL Not a promising start.

ELIZABETH You were recommended as a last resort. My husband's seen everyone. They were useless. He's given up hope.

LIONEL He hasn't seen me.

ELIZABETH You're rather sure of yourself.

LIONEL I'm sure of anyone who wants to be cured.

ELIZABETH Of course my husband wants to be cured! His position requires public speaking. A torment for both speaker and audience.

LIONEL He should change jobs.

ELIZABETH That's not permitted.

LIONEL Indentured servitude?

ELIZABETH In a manner of speaking.

LIONEL I thought that was banned.

ELIZABETH Not in his case.

LIONEL Alright, Mrs Johnson, have your hubby pop in and give his personal history. I'll make a frank appraisal.

ELIZABETH I do not have a 'hubby'. We never talk about our private lives. Nor do we 'pop'. You must come to us.

LIONEL Sorry, as we say in Oz, my game, my turf, my rules.

(*ELIZABETH is taken aback to hear his Australian accent for the first time, used deliberately for effect.*)

ELIZABETH You're from . . . ?

LIONEL The wonder down under.

(*She decides to put that to use.*)

ELIZABETH Then perhaps, as a member of the commonwealth . . . (Lifts her veil) . . . perhaps you'll make an exception?

(*LIONEL recognises the Dutchess of York, but refuses to show he's impressed or intimidated.*)

LIONEL I thought the appointment was for 'Johnson'?

ELIZABETH Used during the Great War when the Navy didn't want the enemy to know 'he' was aboard.

LIONEL I'm considered the enemy?

ELIZABETH You will be, should you continue to be disobliging.

LIONEL Sorry, no exceptions.

ELIZABETH In which case . . . (*Re-lowering her veil.*) I've wasted your time. And mine.

(*She exits, closing the door firmly behind her. LIONEL takes a step forward thinking to catch up with her and perhaps save the day, but then realising the futility tells himself:*)

LIONEL Bloody hell, I buggered that.