

Audition Extract 5. MYRTLE & LIONEL

*MYRTLE and LIONEL look at each other in silence.*

LIONEL You're not talking?

MYRTLE You wish me to speak my mind? Fine. I arrive home to find a Royal Princess in my parlor.

LIONEL A Dutchess.

MYRTLE Lionel, don't quibble!

LIONEL What'd think of her?

MYRTLE Does it matter? She's a Princess, for God's sake! And he's the King's son!

LIONEL The late King's son.

MYRTLE Lionel! The King's brother! And I find them in my home!

LIONEL Better than burglars.

MYRTLE Lionel . . .

LIONEL They came for help.

MYRTLE Who's going to help us?! What role are you auditioning for now? Royal saviour? This'll bring you down, Lionel. You know it will.

LIONEL When that poor chap first walked into my office, he was a slim, quiet man with tired eyes and all the signs of having given up hope. You saw him today.

MYRTLE You're not listening to me!

*(She angrily starts carrying dishes in front of the kitchen. He follows her back and forth.)*

LIONEL Myrtle, I long you.

MYRTLE

You say that, but you don't listen when I say, in so many ways how desperately I want to go home. How I never, even, intended to stay and be treated as a second class citizen, a colonial. We're not accepted here, Lionel, never will be. You know that. Always jokes about our 'funny accent'. Well mine, not yours. This was to be a holiday trip to 'Mother England'. So exciting, a grand adventure, I loved it. But what happened, Lionel? We went to Wembley Stadium. Next thing . . . you cashed in our tickets home. *(She gasps as she realizes . . . )* He spoke that day!

LIONEL You turned to me and said . . .

MYRTLE 'Lionel, you could help that poor man.'

LIONEL 'He's too old for me to manage a complete cure, but I could very nearly do it, I'm sure.'

MYRTLE Is that why we stayed?!

LIONEL *(Self-deprecatingly)* No . . . I wanted to act. But when he walked through my door, how could I say no?

MYRTLE You couldn't tell your wife?

LIONEL I knew you'd fret.

MYRTLE For good reason. You kept it secret, Lionel, because if you were treating the Duke of York . . . I'd know you were never going home.

LIONEL

Imagine yourself as a child terrified of your own parents, because every time you speak you disappoint them. Teased. Unable to share a joke with friends. No friends actually. Unable to answer in class, so you're considered dim and ranked last.

Trapped in a body that refuses to obey your commands. Myrtle, let me do what I can. Then . . .

MYRTLE Then what, Lionel?

LIONEL Home.

MYRTLE (Sighs) Very well, Lionel. I will, as always, be supportive of your endeavours.

LIONEL I don't deserve a wonderful woman like you.

MYRTLE How right you are.