

DIRECTOR

(Points to Marie) You. Maiden #3. C'mere.

(Marie obliges. Now that she can be seen closer up, we see that she has a black eye and other visible bruises.)

MARIE

Yes, sir?

DIRECTOR

You're not half bad. You rescued that scene from disaster.

MARIE

Thank you! And that's nothing compared to—

DIRECTOR

What's your name?

MARIE

Leila Koerber.

DIRECTOR

Age?

MARIE

18.

DIRECTOR

(Assessing Marie) If you're 18, I'll eat my shoe, and I'm not very partial to fake suede.

MARIE

Okay, I'm not 18. I'm 16. (Beat) Okay. I'm 15. Well, 14. With a lotta talent packed into a few short years.

DIRECTOR

Yeah? (Points to her bruises) And I suppose you got those when you walked into a door?

MARIE

That's right.

DIRECTOR

Look, kid, I didn't go to Harvard but I'm not stupid. You're 14 and you walk in all beat up like that... You're a runaway, is what you are. I got no business talking to you. It's a shame, because like I said, you're not half bad.

(A dejected Marie turns to leave.)

DIRECTOR

Wait a minute! I guess you could pass for 16. No forget it. You're just too young.

MARIE

I'm not a kid. Not really. I mean... (SONG: BEFORE AND AFTER – MARIE)

(SKIP SONG)

DIRECTOR

You got yourself a nice little philosophy there. Wish I could forget some things in *my* past, like wife number two. (Beat) Okay. You're hired. Six bucks a week, one more than the other Maidens, and you'll travel with the troupe. But if your parents come lookin', I don't know you.

MARIE

Thank you! You won't be sorry. I'm very versatile. (Beat) I'd really like to play Ophelia.

DIRECTOR

Ophelia? I don't think so. We don't do Shakespeare and you wouldn't play Ophelia if we did.

MARIE

(Disappointed) Oh.

DIRECTOR

You're big, see, which means comic relief. Pratfalls. Pies in the face.

MARIE

But—

DIRECTOR

Take it or leave it.

MARIE

I'll... I'll take it.

DIRECTOR

Good. What was your name again?

MARIE

Leila Koerber.

DIRECTOR

No. No, no, no. Sounds like a librarian. Let me think... (Beat) Lottie... Mattie... Marie! Yeah. That'll do.

MARIE

I have an aunt Marie that I like very much.

DIRECTOR

I don't care if your aunt is an ax murderer. And your last name... (Beat) I got it!

MARIE

What?

DIRECTOR

Dressler.

MARIE

Isn't that the name on the awning of the haberdashery across the street?

DIRECTOR

Where do you think I got it? (Beat) So that's that. Be here tomorrow at 10 for the fitting.