

PAULINE

It's you. Penelope. The word is "Bird." Not "Boid".

PENELOPE

(Thick Brooklyn accent.) Miss Rackham, you are fortunate that I do not give you the boid for the way you are treating me. I have been, I will have you know, a celebrated variety "artiste" and you should treat me as such like.

PAULINE

And what did you do?

PENELOPE

A boid act. With parrots. But they got mites and molted.

PAULINE

(She turns and sees Josie standing there.)

And who might you be?

YOUNG JOSIE

(Crossing directly to PAULINE, all bravado)

How do you do, Miss Rackham! I am Josephine Sarah Marcus--and I'm an actress!

PAULINE

Oh, really? Where exactly have you acted?

YOUNG JOSIE

Well... umm, you know the producer, David Belasco? He's seen me many times!

PAULINE

I have all the actresses I need.

YOUNG JOSIE

Actually, I'm more of a singer. Not opera. More the popular sort.

PAULINE

I've already cast my company.

YOUNG JOSIE

Please let me sing for you. I'm quite good. Everyone says so.

PAULINE

(Turning back to the actresses.)

All of you--go out to the alley and make sure your bags are loaded on the coach. We leave promptly at six.

(The ACTRESSES exit, grumbling. Pauline eyes Young Josie suspiciously:)

YOUNG JOSIE

Now, I understand that your company is going out to the Arizona territory, Tombstone, in particular...

(PENELOPE comes back onstage in a fury. CORA and MAUDE trail behind.)

PENELOPE

Miss Rackham, have you seen the coach that is to convey we "artistes" to the terracotta of Arizona? If you think I'm going to ride in that torture device for six months, you have got chopped liver for brains.

PAULINE

Vastly preferable to parrot feathers, Madam.

PENELOPE

Look, Miss "Theatrical Impresario," you can take your cockamamie Little Buttercup and....

PAULINE

That will be quite enough, Miss Penelope. You are dismissed.

PENELOPE

You can't dismiss me, I'm fired! *(Exit.)*

YOUNG JOSIE

Whatever she could do, I can definitely do!

PAULINE

Miss Maude, you are now playing the role of Little Buttercup instead of the Cabin Boy. *(To YOUNG JOSIE.)* You say you're a singer...

PAULINE and JOSIE

Sing!

YOUNG JOSIE

All right. There is this Bergerette Chanson I can sing if you want... *(Pauline gives her the fish-eye.)* So... ummm, there's this other song, "Kleine Svartse Shepsele"

JOSIE

(To ALLIE.) That's Yiddish for "Little Black Sheep".