

Audition Materials For

MEDDA LARKIN



About the Character: Inspired by the African- American vaudeville performer, Aida Overton-Walker, A big-voiced singer and star of the Bowery. A proud supporter of the newsies, she offers her theater as a safe haven for their revolution. Looking for a performer who can portray this astute entertainer with great comic delivery, while standing firmly behind the newsies in their fight for justice.

Gender: Female

Grade: Rising 6th-9th

Vocal range top: G3-D5

Total Lines: 35 ; Solos: 1

Audition Song: Just A Pretty Face (up to page 30)

Pages: 24-28 (Scene 4)

SCENE FOUR: MEDDA'S THEATER

(JACK, CRUTCHIE, DAVEY, and LES enter backstage of Medda's theater, where a large, painted backdrop hangs.)

DAVEY

Hey, who was that?

JACK

That was Snyder the Spider. A real sweetie.

CRUTCHIE

Runs a jail for underage kids called The Refuge.

JACK

The more kids they lock up, the more money the city pays 'em.

CRUTCHIE

Problem is, all the money goes straight into Snyder's own pocket.

JACK

Do yourself a favor and stay clear of Snyder and The Refuge.

(MEDDA LARKIN, a vaudeville star, appears in costume, along with her supporting act, the BOWERY BRIGADE – ADA, ETHEL, and OLIVE – who begin to warm up. PAT, the stage manager, runs in.)

PAT

Miss Medda, the critic from the *New York Sun* just took her seat.

MEDDA

Thanks, Pat!

(PAT runs off.)

JACK

Hey, Miss Medda!

MEDDA

Jack Kelly! Get yourself over here and give me a hug.

(JACK runs to MEDDA. CRUTCHIE, DAVEY, and LES approach behind him.)

JACK

Davey, Les, may I present Miss Medda Larkin – greatest star on the Bowery today. She also owns the joint.

DAVEY

A pleasure.

(DAVEY bows gallantly.)

MEDDA

Nice to meet you, kids. And these amazing young ladies are the Bowery Brigade, hardest workin' *artistes* in the city. Say hello, girls.

BOWERY BRIGADE

(in perfect unison, striking a dramatic pose)

Hello!

DAVEY

(nervous and formal, he's never met a dancing girl before)

It's a pleasure to make your acquaintance. I'm Davey— Dave— David.

ADA

What are you, triplets?

(extends her hand)

Ada. Pleasure's mine, I'm quite sure.

OLIVE

I'm Olive, howdy-do. This here's Ethel.

(DAVEY nervously but politely shakes hands with the BOWERY BRIGADE performers.)

LES

(wide-eyed)

Wowee... real live troupers!

ETHEL

And who's this little cutie pie?

LES

I'm Les!

DAVEY

This is Les.

LES

(still captivated by the troupers)

I'm Les!

ETHEL

Hey, you know what they say, girls?



ADA, ETHEL, OLIVE

Les is more!!

(The BOWERY BRIGADE laughs and messes up LES's hair. LES enjoys the attention. PAT runs on.)

PAT

Places!

MEDDA, BOWERY BRIGADE

Thanks, Pat!

(PAT runs off. The BOWERY BRIGADE moves into place and prepares to go on.)

LES

(waving goodbye)

I'm Les!

MEDDA

Crutchie, how's the leg doing today?

CRUTCHIE

Sunny with zero percent chance of rain!

MEDDA

That's my Casey!

JACK

Miss Medda, I got a little situation out on the street. Mind if I hide out here a while?

MEDDA

Is Snyder the Spider after you again? Make yourself at home.

LES

Hey Jack, did you really escape jail on the back of Teddy Roosevelt's carriage?

CRUTCHIE

He sure did!

DAVEY

What would the Governor be doing at a juvenile jail?

JACK

So happens he was runnin' for office and wanted to show he cared about orphans and such. So while he got his mug in the paper, I got my butt in the back seat and off we rode together.

LES

You really know Governor Roosevelt?

MEDDA

He don't, but I do. Teddy's a regular patron of the arts, been a big fan of mine for years. By the way, Jack, can you paint me some more of these backdrops? Things have been going so well that I can actually pay you soon.

JACK

I couldn't take your money, Miss Medda.

LES

You pictured that?

DAVEY

It's really good!

MEDDA

Your friend is quite an artist.

JACK

Don't get carried away. It's a bunch of trees.

MEDDA

The boy's got natural aptitude.

LES

Geez. I never knew no one with a aptitude!

PAT

Miss Medda, you're on!

MEDDA

Kids, stay as long as you like. You're with Medda now!

(to the BOWERY BRIGADE)

Ready, ladies?

BOWERY BRIGADE

Break a leg, Miss Medda!

LES

Why did they tell her to break a leg? Don't they like her?

CRUTCHIE

It means "good luck" in theater lingo.



JACK

You can watch from backstage. I'm goin' out front.

(JACK goes into the house as PAT announces the act.)

PAT

Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome the magnificent Medda Larkin and her Bowery Brigade!

(DAVEY and LES watch from the wings while MEDDA and the BOWERY BRIGADE take the stage. JACK finds a seat in the house, right next to KATHERINE, who sits reviewing the show for the newspaper. He takes a pencil and paper from his pocket and starts drawing the dancers.)

MEDDA

Well, hi-dee-ho, everybody! Welcome to my theater. Yessiree, it's a brand new century with a brand new set of rules for women, and the Brigade and I are gonna tell you all about them. Maestro, if you please!

(# 8 – JUST A PRETTY FACE.)


JUST A PRETTY FACE


MEDDA:


“Dear Fa-ther,” said I, — “won’t you tell—

3 — me the won-ders my fu - ture may hold?” -

5 — Said he, “De-borah Sue, — what’s the

7

 mat-ter with you?! You're a dame and dames do— like they're

9

 told." He thought girls should be seen and not heard.—

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 — But I'm plan-ning to have the last word.——

15

 I'm more than just a pret - ty face.——

19

 Don't try to keep me in— my place.——

23

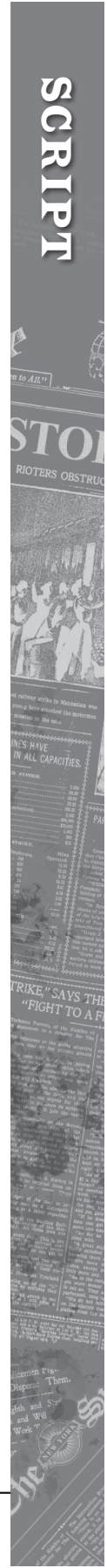
 You think there's all these big— things lad - ies can't do?

27

 — Or is it that you're scared we'd do 'em bet-ter than you?

31

 I'm gon-na take my turn— at bat.——





There's lots of ways to skin — a rat. —



George Wash-ing-ton found glo-ry from the arm-ies he led,



— but look what Bet-sy Ross did with a need-le and thread!



So don't be fooled by the pow-der and lace... —



I'm more than just a pret - ty face.

(MEDDA and the BOWERY BRIGADE dance. JACK notices KATHERINE.)

JACK: Well, hello again.

KATHERINE: Hi. So, where's the paper you promised me?

JACK: Sold out! Whatcha writin'?

KATHERINE: I'm a reporter. I'm reviewing the show for the *New York Sun*. And I'm not in the habit of talking to strangers.

JACK: Then you're gonna make a lousy reporter. Name's Jack Kelly.

KATHERINE: I'm Katherine. What is that you're drawing?

JACK: Miss Medda and the girls. Here, maybe you can use it for your review.

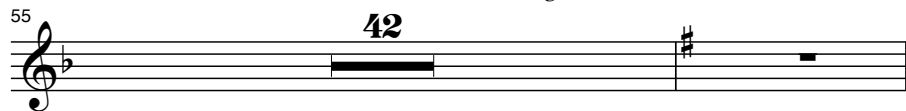
(JACK hands KATHERINE his drawing.)

KATHERINE: Wait, you just drew this? Right now? I'm impressed!

MEDDA: (hollering to JACK and KATHERINE) Hey, you two! You got in for free – at least pay attention!

JACK: Sorry, Medda.

(KATHERINE and JACK return to watching the show.)



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