

**SIDES FOR *RUNNING WILDE* AUDITIONS:
OSCAR, GWEN AND DAVENPORT (ACT 2, SC. 2)
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(GWEN, a young woman reporter, sits interviewing OSCAR, the 27-year-old Oscar Wilde. They are well into the interview, munching muffins and sipping their tea and coffee. GWEN takes notes. DAVENPORT, OSCAR's Black valet from New York, sits by, drinking coffee and eating his share of the muffins. OSCAR fired him the night before, but DAVENPORT has offered to continue working through this day, for no wages. However, he is now behaving more like a business associate than a servant.)

OSCAR: My point is, none of us is limited by the accident of our births. As is further evidenced by my followers, from every social class and way of life. You must understand this, Gwendolen, wishing to marry a man of a different background. You do love him very much, do you not? Despite your class differences?

GWEN: Utterly.

OSCAR: Now tell me, what would you do if you were simply unable to marry him?

GWEN: We shall get married, no matter what obstacles are thrown in our path. Why do you ask?

DAVENPORT: Shall we tell you why? We call this "Part One."

OSCAR: Who's this "we," Mister Davenport?

GWEN: "*Mister Davenport*"?

OSCAR (to DAVENPORT): I am still assessing the situation!

DAVENPORT: Mister Wilde, I think this interview is coming to an end –

OSCAR: I shall decide that!

DAVENPORT (through): And we'll have to leave for City Hall soon, so it's time to stop trying to figure out how much Miss Gwen loves Alan –

OSCAR: How dare you, Mister Davenport!

DAVENPORT (through): And get the hell on with Part One!

GWEN: All right, now, what *is* going on here? (The MEN are silent.) Personally, it's the world I dream of, where servants can have muffins and coffee and speak their minds to their employers and be called "Mister," but – to put it bluntly, Mister Davenport, how are you getting away with this? Off the record, of course.

DAVENPORT: Mister Wilde sacked me last night.

GWEN: He – (To OSCAR:) You *fired* him? (To DAVENPORT:) But you're still working for him?

OSCAR: Just for today. He's hoping / to win me back.

DAVENPORT: I'm hoping to win him back. And if not, then home I go to New York. But in the meantime, since I'm no longer being paid, I get to be called "Mister" and speak my mind and eat muffins.

GWEN (to OSCAR): Why did you fire him?

OSCAR: He insulted your aunt, unforgivably, to her face.

GWEN (to DAVENPORT, delighted): Did you really? What did you say?

DAVENPORT: I compared her to a colored madam who ran a house of ill repute in Chicago.

GWEN (laughs): Oh, Mister Davenport! I'd hire you myself, if I could, just for that!

DAVENPORT: Thanks for the thought, Miss Gwen.

OSCAR: Easy for you to say. I cannot possibly keep him, after such an outburst.

DAVENPORT: So here we are.

GWEN: When did you say this? When did you see her?

OSCAR: Oh. Yesterday evening. She came by, for purposes I am –

DAVENPORT: Part One.

OSCAR: *Yes!* About to disclose!

GWEN: Well, perhaps that's another reason why she was in such a vile mood this morning.

OSCAR: See, Mister Davenport? Harsh words leave wounds.

GWEN: To be fair, I think it was mostly because she lost her fan yesterday.

OSCAR: Oh! That lovely Parisian piece?

GWEN: Yes. And just before their anniversary, worse luck.

OSCAR: Ah, yes, with the dance she has prepared for this evening. To raise his spirits, as it were. Shades of "Salomé," would you say?

GWEN: I expect so, yes, as I'm not allowed to watch. But she can't think where she misplaced it. She was shopping for gifts for him all over town, so she's having to spend all day today retracing her steps. I offered to help her search after I finish writing our interview, but she said

she has another plan for me this afternoon, and she refused to elaborate. She still treats me like a child. It is infuriating.

DAVENPORT (to OSCAR): So: Part One?

OSCAR: Yes, you're right, let's get on with it. Gwen, your aunt's other plan for you this afternoon is that – oh, dear – she wants us to get married.

GWEN: *What?* That's ridiculous!

OSCAR: I quite agree.

GWEN: You've only just met, she's so much older than you, and Uncle Basil's not even dead yet!

OSCAR: Oh. No, my dear, she wants me to marry *you*.

GWEN: *Me?*

OSCAR: She's got it into her head that you're infatuated with me, and that you and I shall be married this afternoon, by this Extremely Reverend Lyster. (Brief pause.) Take your time.
