

(But WINIFRED interrupts, a miraculous, perfect Groucho.)

WINIFRED AS GROUCHO. What, will you make a younker of me? Shall I not take mine ease in mine inn but I shall have my pocket picked? I have lost a seal ring of my grandfather's worth forty mark.

(ALL are stunned.)

MAGGIE. ...Stuart?

STUART. Right!

STUART AS QUICKLY. O Jesu, I have heard the Prince tell him, I know not how oft, that that ring was copper!

WINIFRED AS FALSTAFF. How? The Prince is a Jack, a sneak-up. 'Sblood, an he were here, I would cudgel him like a dog if he would say so.

WINIFRED. Was that -?

(Amazement. Then cheers, gushing hugs all around.)

MAGGIE. Ida, if this woman was that good with a mustache, who knows how funny she'll be with a beard!

IDA. Noted!

MAGGIE. In fact, no more half-measures! Costumes for us all!

(IDA breaks into a sly grin.)

IDA. On their way.

(She exits with the rest of the CAST.)

MAGGIE. Hurry, Ida! Our world, our little world beckons!

(She notices GRACE is hanging back.)

Grace? Lickety-split, dear. I'll bet your outfit is the best of all. Grace?

GRACE. Can I - can I make a confession?

MAGGIE. Dear, of course, what is it?

GRACE. You ask every day about Paul -

MAGGIE. I can stop if it's -

GRACE. No, I just need to come clean. It's not that I haven't heard from him, exactly. I got a letter last week.

MAGGIE. But I thought Paul hadn't -

GRACE. It was my own.

MAGGIE. Yours?

GRACE. Stamped Returned to Sender: Paul's Missing in Action.

MAGGIE. Oh God, no, Grace, I -

GRACE. Then it came back to me - I read in the paper two weeks ago, the Allies made a big air raid over France: we sent fifty planes and lost only three. Only three. Paul must have been one of the "only."

MAGGIE. You don't know that.

GRACE. No. But I do know he's missing. Which means one of two things, so...so I have to hope, pray that he's been captured. A funny thing to pray for, huh? That he's being tortured by some Nazi son of a bitch, or -!

MAGGIE. Grace, I'm sure he's safe somewhere -

GRACE. I've written to the War Department, the Red Cross, families of his crew members, even the French Resistance. Nothing. No one knows where he is.

MAGGIE. Grace, that doesn't -

GRACE. Postman won't look me in the eye anymore, walks up to our box like he's marching to a grave. Every day I don't know if he's going to deliver good news or a gold star for me to hang in the window like all the other war widows on the block.

MAGGIE. Honey, this talk isn't going to -

GRACE. I'm being punished.

MAGGIE. Sweetheart -

GRACE. No, listen. I've...I've been really enjoying myself this past month with you all and one day it crossed my mind that none of this happiness would've happened without Paul gone. And then this, it's like someone read my mind, the betrayal there, and I'm punished with this.

MAGGIE. That's not how it works, dear.

GRACE. I didn't think so. Now I'm not so sure.

MAGGIE. Do you want to go home? Take the afternoon off?
Or even – take the whole play off?

GRACE. No. It's horrible, but, even if I am being punished,
I feel alive for the first time and I – I can't walk away.

MAGGIE. And we're so very lucky to have you. Now hurry
up and get dressed, my Henry. We have a war to win.

(GRACE nods and exits. MAGGIE is alone.)

AMAPOLA, THE PRETTY LITTLE POPPY

MUST COPY ITS ENDEARING CHARMS FROM YOU.

AMAPOLA, AMAPOLA,

HOW I LONG TO HEAR YOU SAY "I LOVE YOU."

Stay safe, Andrew.

*(The door to the costume shop opens a crack,
and STUART pokes his head in.)*

STUART. Are you ready?

MAGGIE. Are you kidding? I can't wait!

STUART. Well, promise me you'll keep breathing.

MAGGIE. Really? Are they that –?

STUART. They sure are. Ready, Ida?

IDA. *(Offstage.)* Ready!

*(STUART flips the radio on to a patriotic tune.**

*IDA and WINIFRED enter from the dressing
room, in modern forties military attire, with
"V for Victory" patches. They look fabulous.*

*STUART's drag outfit has become more modern
as well, and JUNE is in a chic French princess
dress.)*

MAGGIE. Oh, my. But Ida, these aren't – these aren't from
our stock.

*A license to produce *Into the Breeches!* does not include a performance license for any third-party or copyrighted music. Licensees should create an original composition or use music in the public domain. For further information, please see Music Use Note on page 3.

IDA. Made them myself.

MAGGIE. But they aren't Elizabethan at all.

IDA. Nope. They're nowadays dress. Those doublets and
hose had to go.

MAGGIE. What do you –?

IDA. Your first-day speech, the way you spoke of why we're
doing this, it got me – it's not about putting on some
old-timey play, it's about making it immediate, bringing
the war home. This'll make it more like watching a
newsreel, but one with sword fights, and, and –

WINIFRED. Poetry.

IDA. Exactly. Well?

MAGGIE. Well...well, they're...

(Doubt disappears, with resolve.) They're perfect.
You must've been working on them every night after
rehearsal.

IDA. And I've got the bloody thumbs to prove it.

MAGGIE. God! Can we all stand in formation and just –

(They do.)

– just look at each other.

(GRACE joins them, looking sharp.)

And Grace! Ida, you've outdone yourself. Right down
to "V for Victory" patches. Now, do I get any kind of –?

IDA. It's ready for you backstage.

MAGGIE. I can't wait. And – as long as the costumes are
current – *(Grabbing the overcoat.)* I'm dearly fond of
this overcoat of Andrew's. Is it all right if I wear it as
well? So he can – so at least part of him can be here,
bear witness to what we've done?

IDA. Of course.

JUNE. You all look so – Grace? *(Correcting herself.)* Henry?

GRACE. Yes?

JUNE. *(Looking at GRACE.)* You may think I'm off the beam,
but – you look like – in all that, you kind of look like
him. Max.