

Men's Audition Pieces

Father

MOTHER. *(entering from kitchen with coffee cup)* You know, Mrs. Armstrong works very hard to give everyone a lovely experience.

BETH. Oh, Mom, Mrs. Armstrong just likes to run things.

(They exit.)

MOTHER. They're right, of course. She directs the pageant, she runs the potluck supper, she's chairman of the Bazaar... I think Helen Armstrong would preach the sermon if anyone would let her.

FATHER. Is that George Armstrong's wife?

MOTHER. Yes.

FATHER. Well, maybe she'll try to manage the hospital, because that's where she is. I saw George at the drug store and he told me his wife broke her leg this morning... She'll be in traction for two weeks and laid up till the first of the year.

MOTHER. The first of the year! ...Why, they'll have to cancel Christmas.

FATHER. She's in charge of Christmas?

MOTHER. Well, she's in charge of the pageant, and she's in charge of the bazaar... I feel sorry for Helen, but who's going to do all those things?

(Spins off all three ladies: Up on MOTHER and FATHER as they enter from the wings stage right. Each is carrying a grocery bag, and we can assume that some good friend in the supermarket has relayed MRS. ARMSTRONG's message.)

MOTHER. *(in high dudgeon, mimicking MRS. ARMSTRONG.)* ..."If I'd been up and around, this never would have happened!" Well, let me tell you...

FATHER. Don't tell me, I'm on your side... The car's over there.

MOTHER. Helen Armstrong is not the only woman alive who can run a Christmas pageant! I made up my mind just to do the best I could under the circumstances, but now I'm going to make this the best Christmas pageant ever, and I'm going to do it with the Herdmans! After all, they raised their hands and nobody else did, and I don't care...

FATHER. Good for you, Grace, *(trying to move her along)* the car's over there...

MOTHER. And you're going to help me!

FATHER. *(stopped by this)* Does that mean...

MOTHER. You have to go!

Reverend Hopkins

REVEREND HOPKINS. I've been on the telephone all day, and I can't make heads or tails of it. Some people say they set fire to the ladies' room. Some people say they set fire to the kitchen. Vera Wendleken says all they do is talk about sex and underwear.

MOTHER. That was Hobie Clark talking about underwear. And they didn't set fire to anything. The only fire was in the kitchen, where the applesauce cake burned up.

REV. HOPKINS. Well, the whole church is in an uproar. I don't know... Jesus said, "Suffer the little children to come unto me," but I'm not sure he meant the Herdmans... Grace, don't you think we should cancel the pageant?

MOTHER. I'll bet that was Helen Armstrong's idea.

REV. HOPKINS. We could blame it on the fire...makes a good excuse.

MOTHER. I'll bet that was Edna McCarthy's idea.

REV. HOPKINS. Every one seems to think it's going to be a...a...

MOTHER. Disaster? *(Obviously, that's the word he had in mind.)* Well, they're wrong! ...It's going to be the best Christmas pageant we ever had!

REV. HOPKINS. But, Grace... I don't think anyone will come to see it!

Fire Fighters

MRS. MCCARTHY. *(running on stage)* Fire! There's a fire!

(She is followed by children running in from both directions. Sound of fire siren. Two firemen hurry up center aisle, carrying fire extinguishers and coiled hoses, shouting. ["Take the big hose in the side," "The place is full of kids," "Get the kids out," "Get everybody out," "Somewhere on the first floor."] All the children, the firemen, MRS. MCCARTHY and MOTHER mill around the stage, herding children off stage right and left. The HERDMANS are square in the middle of all this, grabbing at hoses, jumping on a fireman's back, etc. Lights down on set: Spotlight on BETH, downstage right.)