

*(As she approaches, we hear:)*

**STAUNCHER.** *(Offstage:)* You're going to have to be louder.

**COLBY.** *(Offstage:)* I am louder!

**STAUNCHER.** *(Offstage:)* Don't get frustrated.

*(As GARBIELA walks in, LUCY STAUNCHER runs a rehearsal. She's tense, talking to COLBY, who has a black hole where his stage presence should be.)*

**COLBY.** Everybody hates this part of the play anyway.

**STAUNCHER.** Not if it's done correctly. Again.

**COLBY.** *(To an imaginary audience. Weak:)* "All right, everyone. Are we having a good time?"

**STAUNCHER.** No, big, Colby. I need you to be big. The play is called *The Turn of the Screw with Audience Participation*. You're providing the audience participation.

**COLBY.** *(The same:)* "Are we having a good time?"

**STAUNCHER.** "ARE WE HAVING A GOOD TIME?"

**COLBY.** "Are we having a good time?"

**STAUNCHER.** You're getting quieter!

**COLBY.** My throat closes up when I'm terrified.

**STAUNCHER.** How can you be terrified? There's nobody even here!

**COLBY.** I'm picturing them anyway. "I have an important job for you. When I say a word . . ."

**STAUNCHER.** "WHEN I SAY A WORD!"

**COLBY.** *(Still weak:)* "When I say a word, you're all going to shout out that word, and if you don't do it, the whole play will fail."

**STAUNCHER.** "THE WHOLE PLAY WILL FAIL!" Moving on! Let's get set up for Scene 21B.

*(The cast and crew get to work changing the set. GARBIELA's phone DINGS. It DINGS again.)*

**COLBY.** You better turn that off. My name's Colby. I'm a genius. I take MIT math online, physics at Sandia labs, and Chinese at UNM. I'm only here cause they're trying to socialize me.

**GARBIELA.** I'm Garbiela.

**COLBY.** Sorry I forgot to ask.

**STAUNCHER.** KELVIN, ARE YOU READY BACK THERE?

**KELVIN.** *(Offstage:)* YES!

**STAUNCHER.** All right! This is where I want the—

**KELVIN.** *(Offstage:)* Got it!

*(All the lights go out. A moment.)*

**STAUNCHER.** Kelvin, I know you want to be helpful, but if you say yes—

**KELVIN.** *(Offstage:)* Here you go!

*(A badly aimed spotlight.)*

**STAUNCHER.** No. If you say yes before I finish my sentence—

**KELVIN.** *(Offstage:)* OK!

**STAUNCHER.** No.

**KELVIN.** *(Offstage:)* I get what you're saying!

*(Back to blackout.)*

**STAUNCHER.** Stop! Don't agree with me and don't say anything!

*(The lights come up.)*

**STAUNCHER.** Can I help you?

**GARBIELA.** I want to join theatre.

**STAUNCHER.** We're all cast and we're all crewed.

*(They are plunged into darkness.)*

**GARBIELA.** I heard you're still squeezing people in.

**STAUNCHER.** Not anymore. You can observe this semester.

**GARBIELA.** Seems like you could use help with the lights.

**STAUNCHER.** Have you worked on lighting before?

*(Pop. A spotlight directly on GARBIELA.)*

**GARBIELA.** *(To the audience:)* This would be a good time to mention that I lie incessantly.

*(Lights to full.)*

**GARBIELA.** Yeah. Tons.

**STAUNCHER.** What shows?

**GARBIELA.** *(To the audience:)* Detail is more important than the right detail. *(To STAUNCHER:)* At my old high school, *The Little Mermaid* and *Waiting for Godot*.

**STAUNCHER.** Your high school did *Waiting for Godot*?