

RiverStage Community Theatre
FOOLS by Neil Simon
Auditions Nov. 10-12, 2012

AUDITION PIECE #6: SOPHIA and LEON, PART II

(The first scene with SOPHIA and LEON was all about moonlight declarations of love at first sight. This scene is a little different. LEON and SOPHIA are alone once again, this time in the Doctor's house. LEON has only a limited amount of time to educate SOPHIA in order to break the town's curse so he is under enormous pressure. That said, he goes a little overboard and can be condescending towards SOPHIA at times. For her part, SOPHIA is very much under the foolishness curse—however she is smart enough to know when she's being insulted. It is important to remember that these two characters fell in love the previous night and are still smitten with each other, but this scene gives the audience a chance to see that LEON is not perfect and that SOPHIA isn't a puppy dog who will just go along with anything he says.)

LEON: Sophia... Last night I decided that the task before us is one step beyond impossible. I knew I would fail and that I had to leave Kulyenchikov, like all those who have failed before me. But today, looking into your eyes, I know there is no life for me without you. Therefore, we must not think of failure, we cannot afford to despair. Only a miracle can save us, Sophia, but with a majestic, supreme effort, we must try to make that miracle happen.

SOPHIA: What is a miracle?

LEON: A miracle is a wish that God makes. You are a miracle, Sophia.

SOPHIA: You mean God wished for me?

LEON: In one of his most sublime moments . . . We must hurry, Sophia. (He picks up a book) This is a primary book of mathematics. It's used to teach very small children very simple problems in arithmetic.

SOPHIA: Do you think it's too advanced for me?

LEON: I don't think so, Sophia. We can't go back any further than this book. Now, let us begin. *(He opens the book to the first page. A large number one fills up the page.)* One is the figure, the word, the symbol for a single item. One finger, one Sophia, one Leon, one book. Now then, I am holding up one finger, Sophia. Now I am holding up a second finger. One plus one is two. Would you repeat that for me, Sophia.

SOPHIA: Which part?

LEON: One-

SOPHIA: One.

LEON: Plus one—

SOPHIA: Plus one.

LEON: Is two!

SOPHIA: Is two!

LEON: Yes! Yes! Yes! Wonderful. We're making headway. Slow, invisible headway. . . . I'm very, very proud of you, Sophia. Are we ready to go on?

SOPHIA: Yes. History, please. I hope I can master it as well as I have mathematics.

LEON: Well, I honestly don't think we've conquered mathematics yet. There are problems that could come up. Let's continue. One plus two is three.

SOPHIA: Am I finished with one plus one?

LEON: You are if you remember the answer.

SOPHIA: I remembered it before. Is it necessary to remember it again?

LEON: Of course it's necessary to remember it again. It's necessary to remember it for always.

SOPHIA: You mean you will always be asking me what one plus one is?

LEON: No! Once you tell me, we can move on to other things. Like one plus two and one plus three, and so on. But if you can't remember what one plus one is, then the answer to one plus two is meaningless.

SOPHIA: Do you know how much one plus one is?

LEON: Certainly.

SOPHIA: Then why is it necessary for me to know? Certainly, if you have such esteem and affection for me, you will tell me the answer whenever I ask you.

LEON: But I won't always be around to tell you. You have to know for yourself. In case other people ask you.

SOPHIA: No one here ever asks questions like that. Even if I told them, they wouldn't know if it was the right answer.

LEON: Because they are cursed with ignorance. And we are trying to lift that debilitating affliction.

SOPHIA: You're getting angry with me. What's the point of being educated if you get angry? When you didn't ask me such questions, you always said the loveliest things to me. Is this what it's like to be intelligent?

LEON: No, Sophia. It is I who am not being intelligent. It's frustration and impatience that drives me to such crude behavior. Forgive me. We'll start from the beginning again. One plus one is two. Repeat.

SOPHIA: One plus one is two. Repeat.