

**ROSIE THE RIVETER**

**By Trey Clarkson**

*(Excerpts may be used royalty free for auditions.)*

**AUDITION -- for 5 m, 4 w and Ensemble.**

*In this scene, everyone responds to news about the war.*

*(It is now June. This scene takes place in the three different areas of the stage. ALL are listening to the same broadcast and dealing with their own stage business. Use isolation LIGHTING to create the effect of distance.)*

*(Isolation LIGHTS on Helen's parlor area. HENRY enters to find HELEN.)*

*(AUDIO clip.)*

*"June 4<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup>, 1942... The Battle of Midway has turned out to be the most important naval battle of the Pacific Campaign. Only six months after Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor, and one month after the Battle of the Coral Sea, the United States Navy has decisively and confidently defeated an Imperial Japanese Navy attacking Midway Atoll, inflicting irreparable damage on the Japanese fleet. Many are calling it 'the most stunning and decisive blow in the history of naval warfare.'"*

**HENRY:** Miss Henley?

**HELEN:** Yes?

**HENRY:** Sorry to disturb you. Your maid let me in. She said I should talk to you.

**HELEN:** Of course, how can I help you?

**HENRY:** I am looking for Private John Stanley. It looks like his orders just came through.

**HELEN:** Oh. Thank you. He will be in shortly. I will take them. *(Takes the telegraph.)*

**HENRY:** I will see myself out. Afternoon, ma'am.

*(Isolation LIGHTS on main stage. The WORKERS are gathered around the radio. TOMMY is futzing with the wiring. The RADIO is fuzzy and filled with static at first during the opening dialogue.)*

**TOMMY:** How 'bout now? Clearer?

**ENSEMBLE:** Right there. / You had it. / Don't move. / It's only clear when you pinch the wire.

**TOMMY:** So you just want me to sit here?

**ENSEMBLE:** Shhhhh! / I got a brother in the Pacific. / I got a husband...

**KATHERINE:** We all have an interest in hearing this, knock it off.

*(AUDIO clip.)*

*"The Japanese operation, like the earlier attack on Pearl Harbor, sought to eliminate the United States as a strategic power in the Pacific, thereby giving Japan a free hand in establishing its Greater East Asia Co– Prosperity Sphere. The Japanese hoped that another demoralizing defeat would force the U.S. to capitulate in the Pacific War and thus ensure Japanese dominance in the Pacific."*

**ROSIE:** *(Enters.)* Hey, what's all the fuss about?

**MARY JANE:** Hey, Rosie...

**ENSEMBLE:** *(ALL.)* Shhhhh!

**MARY JANE:** *(Whispering.)* Sorry! Eddie wants to see you in his office.

**ROSIE:** *(Mocking and whispering.)* Okay!

*(Beat. The RADIO goes to static again.)*

**ENSEMBLE:** *(ALL.)* Tommy!

*(Isolation LIGHTS on Eddie's office. EDDIE and the COLONEL, dressed in uniform, are listening to the RADIO. MARY accompanies the Colonel.)*

*(AUDIO clip.)*

*“The Japanese plan was to lure the United States’ aircraft carriers into a trap. The Japanese’s goal to occupy Midway was part of an overall plan to extend their defensive perimeter in response to the Doolittle Raid. This operation is also considered preparatory for further attacks against Fiji and Samoa.”*

**EDDIE:** *(Turns off radio.)* So this strategy is really workin’, huh?

**COLONEL:** Yes, sir. Never, in the history of the world, has a nation prepared so quickly and efficiently for deployment.

**EDDIE:** They thought we weren’t gonna be ready. Serves ‘em right messing with the old red, white, and blue. So are you here to give me an award or somethin’?

**MARY:** No, Mr. Kendrick...

**EDDIE:** Please call me Eddie.

**MARY:** Very well, Eddie. We are here to talk to you about how to duplicate your factory’s success.

**COLONEL:** This facility is one of the lead producers in the Northeast. Your output and quality has turned the heads of the brass. We want to market your strategy and see if others around the country can benefit from your success.

**EDDIE:** Success, benefit, marketing...I like the way this conversation is going.

**ROSIE:** *(Enters.)* Hey, Eddie. You wanted to see me?

**EDDIE:** Ah, speak of the devil and the devil shows. Colonel Cole, I would like to introduce you to the secret to my success and the key to yours.

*(Isolation LIGHTS on Helen’s parlor area. JOHN has entered the scene and is sitting with HELEN, reading his letter.)*

**HELEN:** What does it say, John?

**JOHN:** I am shipping out. I have been assigned to the 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Division.

**HELEN:** What does that mean?

**JOHN:** I am headed to England.

**HELEN:** How soon after the wedding?

**JOHN:** You don't understand. I'm with the 1<sup>st</sup> infantry, the Big Red One, the Bloody Fist.

**HELEN:** That's enough, John. I won't rush this. I won't be a war bride.

**JOHN:** Helen, you don't understand,

**HELEN:** I don't think you understand. There is too much planning left to do. I can't just rush through it all.

**JOHN:** Helen! I'm reporting tomorrow.

*(HELEN tries to hold her composure but she gives into her grief as the LIGHTS fade.)*

*(Isolation LIGHTS on main stage.)*

*(AUDIO clip.)*

*"American codebreakers were able to determine the date and location of the attack, enabling the forewarned U.S. Navy to set up an ambush of its own. Four Japanese aircraft carriers, all part of the six carrier force that launched the attack on Pearl Harbor, and a heavy cruiser were sunk at a cost of one American aircraft carrier and a single destroyer..."*

*(LUCY turns off the radio.)*

**ENSEMBLE:** Why don't they tell us the names of the two ships that sunk? / Maybe it is for safety reasons. / Protocol probably. / Don't worry, we will know something soon. / I hate the waiting. / It is the worst. I just keep playing out horrible scenarios in my mind. / I know it is scary, Martha. But the good news is we won, right? / We made an impact over there for sure.

**MARY JANE:** The Yorktown was part of that battle. Tom is on that ship, Lucy.

**ENSEMBLE:** Pray with me, Bonnie.

*(Isolation LIGHTS on Eddie's office.)*

**ROSIE:** What are you signing me up for, Eddie?

**COLONEL:** I will step outside and let you two talk.

**MARY:** Just let us know your decision.

*(MARY and COLONEL exit.)*

**ROSIE:** Decision? I'm not your personal propaganda machine, Eddie.

**EDDIE:** What is your beef, Rosie?

**ROSIE:** My beef. Eddie, I'm no hero. I'm not poster board material.

**EDDIE:** Sure you are. Just think, we will be mass communicating your cause.

**ROSIE:** My cause, Eddie? Don't you mean our cause? Or are you still just in this for yourself?

**EDDIE:** Hey, now. I have been right here with you...

**ROSIE:** Yeah, Eddie, you have. But you always have some angle. What is it this time? Fat government contracts for the next decade, or are you an honorary lieutenant now?

**EDDIE:** I'm doin' my part, why shouldn't I get something in return? Isn't that the American way? Working from nothin' to get somethin'? Just because I am not throwing myself at the war like your little Johnny-boy doesn't mean I don't care.

**ROSIE:** Johnny doesn't have anything to do with this.

**EDDIE:** Oh no?! They why are you here, Rosie. You don't have anyone over there. You got no horse in this race unless...

**ROSIE:** What do you care, Eddie? As long as I am making my quota and running your line, you don't really care about my life or my problems. *(Knocks on the door to summon the Colonel. To COLONEL.)* Come on in, I'll give you an answer.

*(The COLONEL and MARY enter.)*

**ROSIE:** *(Cont'd.)* What is it you want me to do?

**MARY:** We want you to become a symbol for women across the country.

**COLONEL:** Something that will inspire others to follow in Mr. Kendrick's footsteps and utilize the women of our nation in the war effort.

**MARY:** We will need to take your picture.

**COLONEL:** Show the women of the nation that working is approachable and necessary.

**MARY:** We will also need a catchy name or slogan.

**ROSIE:** Ask Eddie. I'm sure he is way ahead of you.

**EDDIE:** Colonel, you're looking at the woman who drilled 99 holes and placed a record 3,345 rivets in a torpedo bombing avenger aircraft and was recognized by a personal letter by President Roosevelt himself. We call her what she is. Rosie the Riveter, and if you join her, we can do it.

**MARY:** Do what, Mr. Kendrick?

*(LIGHTS up on Main stage.)*

**ENSEMBLE:** What more can we do?

*(LIGHTS up on Helen's parlor area.)*

**HELEN:** What is it you think you can do?

*(Beat.)*

**ROSIE / JOHN / KATHERINE:** Whatever needs done.

*(BLACKOUT.)*

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