

Theatre Ink Proudly Presents...

These Shining Lives

By Melanie Marnich

Directed by Mackenzie Drees and Steven Kelly

AUDITION PACKET

*Sign up for an Audition Slot on the Callboard outside Room 171
beginning August 28*

General Interest Meeting September 3 at 3:00PM in 171
Audition Workshop September 6 at 2:30PM in the Little Theater

Auditions: September 9, 10

Callbacks: September 12

**Show: October 31, November 1, & 2, 2013,
Performing Arts Center**

Questions?

E-mail the directors (dreesekelly2013@gmail.com) or
Mr. Brown (adam_brown@newton.k12.ma.us)

Hello everyone!

Thanks for your interest in auditioning for *These Shining Lives*. Please read this packet carefully, as it will help you to understand what we're looking for during your audition.

Before You Audition:

Read the Play- All actors are expected to have read *These Shining Lives* prior to auditioning. We cannot stress how useful this can be. Reading the play will be immeasurably helpful as it will allow you to make informed and interesting choices during auditions. Since we are not able to put *These Shining Lives* up online for you guys to read, if you would like a copy of the show over the summer, please send us an email so we can get one to you (dreeseekelly2013@gmail.com). We want to help you guys as much as we can before your auditions. If you have any questions about the show or the audition process in general, please don't hesitate to shoot us an email!

Practice your Audition- The more times you can get feedback on a monologue, the better prepared you will be. A great way to get feedback on monologues will be the audition workshop on Friday, September 6th. This will help acclimate you to an audition setting and provide you with valuable feedback on your audition. See Mr. Brown if you would like to work with him on your audition (adam_brown@newton.k12.ma.us).

Sign up for an Audition Slot- Before auditioning please sign up for an audition slot on the callboard outside room 171. Please fill out the required forms in this packet and give it to a stage manager at your audition.

What We're Looking For:

We're looking for actors with good fundamentals- vocal energy, diction, clear motivation (knowing what you want with each line) and confidence. We also look for actors who make and commit to bold physical, vocal and emotional choices. Don't be afraid to take risks and go outside of your comfort zone! Each character in *These Shining Lives* is complex and demonstrates an array of emotion and motivation; their monologues should reflect this complexity. This is an important note.

Auditions and Callbacks

Each auditioner is required to memorize one of the provided monologues, but be prepared to perform both. During your audition, you may be given some feedback and asked to perform the monologue again. Above all, relax and have fun in your audition. Callbacks will occur on September 12th, immediately after X-block. Actors will be reading sides (including dialogue and monologues) from *These Shining Lives*. It is suggested that any actors called back preview the sides, which will be made available the week of auditions, both outside 171 and online at theatreink.net. A cast list will be posted as soon as possible after callbacks, but no earlier than September 14th.

We look forward to all of your auditions!
-Mackenzie and Steven

Summary

These Shining Lives opens on a dark stage dusted with stars, a ticking clock audible in the background. Soft lights come up on Catherine, who introduces herself. Pearl, Charlotte, and Frances join her in introducing the setting of the play – Chicago, in the midst of the roaring 20's. The girls exit as Tom enters to meet Catherine onstage. The nervous Catherine and supportive Tom banter lovingly before Catherine leaves for her first day.

Catherine arrives at the Radium Dial factory, and is introduced by Mr. Reed, the overseer of the factory, to three other factory girls, Charlotte, Pearl and Francis. However begrudging her initial attitude is, Charlotte teaches Catherine the Radium Dial routine: Lip, Dip, Paint, Repeat. To the surprise of the other girls, Catherine is a natural. She has a delicacy and caution that makes her abnormally good at watch painting. When Catherine questions the usage of radium, Dr. Rowntree appears to boast confidently of the medicinal qualities that radium, the key ingredient of the powder painted on to the watch faces, possesses.

After work Catherine meets with Tom on a street corner outside the factory, he lovingly comments on how much she glows, and they embrace. Catherine tells Tom how much she likes her new job. The play skips forward. Catherine comes home late to an angry Tom, and the couple fight over Catherine's late arrival after work. Tom pressures her about her working, asking when she will quit. However, Catherine wins back Tom's affection when she presents him with one of the watches she painted herself at work.

Tom exits and Pearl, Charlotte, and Frances enter. The girls make lists of things that shine as Frances, Pearl, and Charlotte transform into a trio of Andrews Sisters. Light come up on a radio announcer standing at an old fashioned microphone. He brags about the positive effects of radium. Clock ticks fade up and out.

The play skips forward again, landing in Catherine and Tom's kitchen after the children have been put to bed. In a touching scene, Tom tells the story of how he met and fell in love with Catherine and the two exit to the bedroom. The scene changes to the shore of Lake Michigan, where the four girls are getting ready for a picnic. Catherine tells the others how much she loves Tom, but that it worries her that he still expects her to quit her job at the factory. They sing and drink together and talk about the time that has passed.

In the next scene Catherine and Tom are again talking in the kitchen. Catherine tries to explain that the job is wearing her down physically. When Tom dismisses her concerns she flicks out the lights. The stage goes pitch dark. The only light comes from the soft green glow of Catherine's hands. The other girls appear, their hands glowing as well. Tom tires to rub the powder off but Catherine explains that it doesn't come off, "This is my body Tom. It's in my skin." Something is wrong, and she's scared.

Catherine goes to visit the Company Doctor's office. The doctor brushes off her concerns about her health condition and tells her to take Aspirin. When she asks the girls back at the factory she finds that the Doctor had told them the same. Mr. Reed then enters and senses that something is bothering the girls. But they all deny their sickness in fear of losing their jobs.

That night Catherine can't sleep, because of the pain. She sits in her kitchen with Tom and he tries to comfort her. He tells her that they can go to other doctors or quit her job, but Catherine refuses. She wants to keep her job at the factory because the girls she works with feel like her family. But in the next scene when Catherine tries to tell her friends about the pain she is feeling, they pretend not to hear her until she forces them to stop painting and listen. They reveal that they too have been feeling sick and don't know what to do. Mr. Reed enters and reads a letter from the company president assuring the girls they are in no danger to their health. "Radium Dial" he promises, "uses material that contains pure radium only."

The next scene is a few weeks later. Mr. Reed calls Catherine into his office and explains the company is letting her go. She argues that it's not fair, but it's to no use. Mr. Reed hands her an envelope with two weeks' pay, along with some extra money from him, and shows her the door. Furious, Catherine and the girls travel to Chicago to find a doctor who will actually tell them what's wrong with them. In an emotional scene, Dr. Dalitsch reveals to the women that they are

suffering from severe radium poisoning, which is fatal. “What can you give us?” Catherine asks. “I’ll tell you the truth. Always. It’s the best I can do.”

That night, Catherine comes home to find her son and daughter awake and waiting for her. They question her, asking why she’s been acting different. In an emotional scene, Catherine lashes out at her children, sending them away so they won’t see her pain.

The next scene opens in Catherine’s kitchen with all four women playing poker. Charlotte suggests to the women put up a bit of a fight. While the women, especially Catherine, are resistant they are eventually convinced that they need to stand up for themselves. In a snap scene change, the women find themselves in the office of lawyer Leonard Grossman. He assesses their case and agrees to take it on, not because he will make money but because he sympathizes with their situation. He tells them he needs the woman in the worst condition to volunteer to be the focus of the suit. He warns them that the legal fight will be extremely taxing and that the press will vilify the women as greedy opportunists. Catherine offers herself up to Grossman to be the focus of the suit.

The next scene is loud and sensational, a stark contrast to the quiet of the previous scenes, a clash of light and sound. Reporters are talking loudly about Catherine, painting her exactly as Mr. Grossman predicted. After their broadcasts, the reporters exit and we find Catherine sitting at her kitchen table, looking frail and weak. Pearl, Francis and Charlotte enter; bringing groceries, nightgowns and other gifts because Catherine had become too sick to buy on her own. Pearl and Francis exit leaving Catherine and Charlotte alone in the kitchen. They speak about the difficulties of the trial and their illness, and hardboiled Charlotte breaks down to Catherine.

Catherine sits in her dark kitchen, alone with her thoughts. But this loneliness becomes too much for her and she cries out for Tom, who comes running. Though the last months have been tough for the two of them, this scene shows just how deeply they love each other. The lights then come up and Tom helps Catherine from her chair into the witness stand. After the trial, Tom confronts Mr. Reed, expressing his profound heartache over the sickness of his wife and threatens Dr. Reed’s life.

The show ends with Catherine standing center stage, once again strong and tall. She explains how she won her court case six times, all the way up to the Supreme Court. The other women appear and list the names of the other women who were killed by the factory. The clock ticks fade in during these lines, morphing into the rhythmic pounding of a heartbeat. Catherine looks out into the audience as the stage grows dark, illuminated only by the glowing numbers of a clock, and delivers the last lines of the show.

Cast in Order of Appearance

(Please note some roles will be combined)

CATHERINE DONOHUE (F) 19-29 - A young wife and mother of two. She works at the Radium Dial Factory. While she is quiet, sensitive and reflective at times, she is by no means weak. She is full of life and passion for her work, her friends, and her husband.

CHARLOTTE (F) 24-29 - A worker at the factory. She is outspoken and hard-boiled. She is competitive and has a biting sense of humor. Underneath this front, however, she is just as kind hearted as her friends.

FRANCES (F) 24-29 - A worker at the factory. She is the ‘moral backbone’ of the group, but is more flexible than she lets on. She acts as a mediator during the beginning of the show between Charlotte and Catherine.

PEARL (F) 24-29 - A worker alongside Catherine at the factory. Sweet and supportive she is the “joker of the group.” But Pearl has a hard time coming to terms with her developing illness.

SLIDEMAN (M/F) - Slideman is the overseer of Catherine’s world. He/she manipulates and narrates parts of the story. Partially the narrator and partially an outside observer, the slideman is a personification of time. *May be combined with another role.*

TOM DONOHUE (M) 27-32 - The husband of Catherine Donohue, a riveter on the skyscrapers of Chicago. He loves Catherine and is extremely devoted to her, but is somewhat unsettled when his wife starts making more money than he does.

MR. REED (M) 40-50 - The overseer of the factory. His heart is usually with the girls, but when put under pressure he is a pawn of the Radium Dial factory and has to follow orders.

DR. ROWNTREE (M) - He extols the benefits of radium to cure common illnesses. *Will be combined with another role.*

LEONARD GROSSMAN (M) - A brash lawyer who has enough courage to take the girls' case. He is disturbed by the company's treatment of Catherine and her friends.

COMPANY DOCTOR (M) 30-50 - Much like Mr. Reed, the Company doctor is a pawn of the Radium Dial Company. He denies that the girl's illnesses are related to their working conditions and the radium they are exposed to. *Will be combined with another role.*

RADIO ANNOUNCER (M/F) - Much like Dr. Rowntree, the radio announcer makes a performance out of selling radium to the public. Boasting of its benefits and popularity, he sells the product along with a trio of radio station singers. *Will be combined with another role.*

DAUGHTER (F) 5 - Catherine's young daughter. She is not childish, only innocent. She establishes the disconnect that has developed in Catherine's life. *Will be combined with another role.*

SON (M) 5 - Catherine's son. He is not childish, only innocent. Only appearing once with his sister, he establishes the disconnect that has developed in Catherine's life. *Will be combined with another role.*

DR. DALITSCH (M) 30-50 - An incredibly honest doctor. The girls go to him and receive their separate, gruesome diagnoses. He reappears in the trial scene to confirm their conditions before the jury. *May be combined with another role.*

JUDGE (M/F) - Appears in the courtroom scene of Catherine's trial versus the radium dial company. *Will be combined with another role.*

REPORTERS 1 & 2 (M/F) - Speaks outside of the courthouse during Catherine's lawsuit. They provide the opinion of the public. *Will be combined with other roles.*

Monologues

Please...

1. Memorize and thoroughly prepare one monologue.
2. Please be very familiar with the second monologue as you may be asked to perform that as well.

Male

TOM: In the war, I...I saw things that no human being should ever have to see. A guy comes back from something like that, and he can't believe in God. It's impossible. That's what anyone'll tell you. I was raised to believe in God and the saints and in miracles. But then there was this war and after it, I couldn't believe in anything good. But when I first saw Katie, the first thing, the only thing I thought when I saw her face was that there had to be a God, because he made her. That was the only explanation. And I was a praying man again. Talk about a miracle.

Do you know that they pulled bones out of her body while she was still alive. Lifted them right out.

I was going to grow old with that woman.

I was going to die with her.

Maybe I have.

Could you tell me how to live my life now?

Could you tell me what I'm going to do with all this goddamn time?

I have to go.

I have to go see my kids.

I have to get home before they go to bed.

I sing to them. They sing to me.

A lullaby.

Even though we're all too old for it.

It's our little routine.

It makes us feel better.

It's just something we do.

Sir? Just so you know...

Every morning I wake up and wonder if today's the day I'm going to kill Rufus Reed.

MR. GROSSMAN: This is disgusting. An absolute crying shame. Yes, I'll take your case. No, I won't make any money. You might not make any money either. But that's not the point, is it? We can't go to court with all of you all at the same time. We want impact. Clarity. Focus. And, quite frankly, we need the most egregious and flagrant example of the miscarriage of employer responsibility among you. Bluntly put, who's the biggest mess? I'm going to need specifics. We'll build our case on specifics. Specifics win a case. We can get those bastards I know we can. But they'll put you through the wringer Mrs. Donohue. Are you up to it? It's gonna get dirty. It's gonna get mean. It's gonna hit the papers and God knows what they do to a story, good, bad, and otherwise. You'll be the example of everything that's wrong with big business. You'll be the casualty of commerce. You'll be called a victim. You'll be called an opportunist. You'll be called a saint. You'll be called a liar. Your dirty laundry will be aired in public for the world to see. And you'll be standing there naked before the judge, jury, and a public hungry for blood and guts. That's how it works. You up for it? Or do you want to think about it? Take all the time you need.

* * *

Female

CHARLOTTE: Stop it Katie! Jesus Christ! Just shut up! You can't make it better, okay?! So stop trying with your silly optimism. It's ridiculous. God. Grow up. They did this to us! They did this and they knew it! They threw us away for a few watches! That's what we're worth! That's what you're worth! So spare me the "maybe this" and "maybe that," okay?! It does me no good. I'm—I'm so sorry. I just don't—I don't have anyone else to— Who's gonna take care of my mom, Katie? Who's gonna take care of her? Okay. That's that, then. I better get home. You, too. Big day today, huh? I'll see you later.

CATHERINE: There is a God. And he is made of time.
There is a devil, and he's made of time.
There are angels, miracles, and sins, and they're all made of hours.
On the shore of the lake with my friends that last time.
I watched the kids play and thought of my boy and girl.
I watched the husbands and wives and thought of the man I loved.
I walked to the water.
I walked in.
I stood there
Small waves and grace all around.
Faith at the edge of the world.
And I think, lucky me, that I still believe in it all.
After all of this.
And then a gift.
A million clocks stopped in the city.
Watches closed their eyes.
Their hands folded.
Their faces slept.
The earth stopped turning.
And time stood still for just a minute, just for us.
The moon came out.
The stars came out.
Time was kind, after all.
And I knew I was blessed to have held so much of it in my hands.
In the quiet, in the water, I could see my face.
Next to mine, the faces of everyone I love.
The faces of my friends.
And so many more.
All looking back at me.
For that moment, while time turned its face, we were all there.
And we were shining.

These Shining Lives
Audition Card

Please detach and bring this with you on the day of your audition.

Name _____ DOB: ____ / ____ / ____

Address _____ Zip Code _____

Grade _____ HR: _____

Home # _____ Cell # _____

Preferred E-mail Address _____

Parent/Guardian Info: Name _____

Phone # _____

Email _____

Please briefly list any past theater experience (onstage or offstage). Feel free to attach a résumé.

What special skills or talents do you have? (Please mention any vocal training/experience)

