

IRENE. At about the six-hour mark I was hoping I would die.

GRACE. Ever had a job before?

IRENE. Nope. I don't think I've ever stood up this long before.

GRACE. You get used to it. How does my hair look? I just had it done on Tuesday.

IRENE. Looks like hair.

GRACE. Be serious.

IRENE. It looks great. Real pretty.

GRACE. Probably looks like a bird's nest. I'm gonna have crows trying to land on my head. You sure it looks okay?

IRENE. You got a hot date or something?

GRACE. You never know who you're gonna meet.

IRENE. It's eight o'clock in the morning.

GRACE. Right, so every other gal looks like a million bucks and I look like I've been exhumed from the grave.

IRENE. I don't know how you have any energy. I'm hurting in places I didn't even know I could hurt. My butt hurts. I don't know how my butt hurts, but it hurts.

GRACE. I grew up on a farm. This ain't nothing.

IRENE. And the smell—

GRACE. I'd rather smell like ether than cow manure any day of the week. This way I just knock the men unconscious instead of sending them for the hills.

IRENE. I want to see!

GRACE. Hold your horses, I'm gonna read it.

ELEANOR. I don't know that you should read it out loud.

GRACE. Oh honey, I am reading this out loud. Okay...

IRENE. Hurry up!

GRACE. Don't rush me, I got a process! *(She reads in a breathlessly dramatic voice.)* "His taut skin, bronzed by the Martian sun and tanned by the rusty dust that carried across the winds, gleamed in the candlelight." Ooh. "The Barbarian Queen's eyes lingered over every line of his body, then narrowed. 'Earth Man...I do have one use for you,' she purred."

IRENE. *(crowding in)* WHAT?!

GRACE. Back off! "'And what would that be?' 'What would that be, My Queen. Address me properly.' *(the girls gasp.)* 'What would that be...My Queen?' 'Remove your tunic.'"

ROSE. WHAT ARE YOU WRITING?

IRENE. This is the best story I've ever heard.

BARBARA. When you had a man at war you were afraid of everything. The phone ringing. The mailbox. A strange car pulling up outside your house. A man with a look of purpose and regret walking towards you to tell you your world was ending. All day, every day, you were holding your breath. Just let me get through today. Let me hear nothing today. And then at work...you could tell—there'd be a new sorrow on a woman's face near you. She'd gotten a letter. She'd gotten a call. And maybe for a second you'd feel lucky that it wasn't you this time. But it was always there. Until you got news.

ROSE. So tell me: which one of the girls do you have your eye on? *(He laughs.)* You can tell me. Eleanor?

TIMOTHY. Who's Eleanor?

ROSE. She was standing next to me when you came over. Grace? I bet it's Grace.

TIMOTHY. *(Laughs again.)* No.

ROSE. Who is it then?

(A moment.)

TIMOTHY. She's uh...she's a married woman.

ROSE. *(Catching on)* Oh. That's...too bad.

TIMOTHY. Right. Probably impossible.

ROSE. Definitely. Definitely impossible.

(pause.)

TIMOTHY. You know, I'm the kinda person who's never had a lot of courage. Not just about going to war, but about...everything in life. I guess I'm just used to people pitying me—it's a pretty awful feeling when you notice strangers looking at you like you're a broken little puppy—but, I just wanted to say it's nice not to be pitied. By you.

ROSE. Me?

TIMOTHY. Yeah. You never looked at me like I was something pitiful, you looked at me like I was a full person. That's kinda rare. So I guess I thought maybe...I could be a full person to you.

ROSE. Timothy. You know I'm married.

TIMOTHY. I know. I'm sorry.

ROSE. You're very sweet and all.

TIMOTHY. Right. A fella's gotta dream, right?

ROSE. A girl's gotta dream too.

IRENE. Sir, with all due respect, all the men make more than me. All the men are making more than all the girls. Why is that?

CHESTER. Men have families to support—

IRENE. Women don't?! Half the girls that work here are mothers! And most of them have husbands overseas! And what does it matter anyway? If our work is the same we should get paid the same.

CHESTER. You're getting emotional about this.

IRENE. I'm not getting emotional, I'm asking you why I don't get paid the same as a man when I do the same work as a man!

CHESTER. If you calm down, I can explain it to you.

IRENE. Explain it then.

CHESTER. First of all, some of the work is not the same—

IRENE. We're doing the same work, you just give them a different title so you can pay them more—

CHESTER. I'm not going to talk to you when you're hysterical. If you don't like your job, you are free to quit and get a job somewhere else.

IRENE. I like my job fine, I just want respect—

CHESTER. You are respected.

BARBARA. You think you're fighting for your life? What about our boys fighting for theirs?

IRENE. I'm not talking about that right now.

BARBARA. Yes, but you are. Because we make the powder that helps them fight, and you're asking us to cut that supply off.

IRENE. Management will cave—

BARBARA. And what if they don't? What if we have to spend weeks on strike? Months? What if we can't get the powder out to our boys on the front line? What if there's some man out there that's fighting for his life and he needs what we're giving him?

IRENE. They will be all right—

BARBARA. You don't know that!

IRENE. There are other plants in this country producing ammunition—

BARBARA. But we're the biggest one and they count on us!

IRENE. Which is why they will cave quickly—

BARBARA. You are playing a game with people's lives! You're playing a game with my husband's life!