

ROLE OF "MERI" - Scene 1

Note: Performers are not required to learn or memorize sides in advance.

FYI INT. SIDEKICK ACADEMY - MAIN OFFICE - DAY Working
in the office is ELLA (Meri's mother).

ELLA
How'd it go in there, Jennie?

JENNIE
Not a fan of the climbing, but
loves the enthusiasm.

ELLA
You got your father's charm
alright.

Meri enters the office.

START ELLA (CONT'D)
Nice to see some kids honoring what
they've been given... Oh, hello,
sweetheart.

MERI
Subtle, Mom.

As Ella glides out into the hallway, she taps her wand over
her shoulder and ZAP! Meri's fit changes to BLUE to match
her mother.

MOM! MERI (CONT'D)

She slips her wand out and spells her clothes back to normal.

MERI (CONT'D)
I hate when she does that.
(calling after her mom)
I'm not her clone!

Jennie can't help but laugh.

JENNIE
You have all the talent, Mer -- is
it so bad to follow in her
footsteps? She's kind of boss.

MERI
Exactly - and she never got her
due. Neither did your dad. All the
work he did, the work my mom, my
aunts did. People don't get it - I
don't want to play second fiddle my
whole life.

JENNIE

You're nobody's second fiddle.
You're THE fiddle. You're the whole
orchestra. You'll be up there any
day now.

She looks up longingly at AN ALUMNI WALL with portraits
of the #1 top graduates.

JENNIE (CONT'D)

Now, just to get ME up there, too.
Guess I gotta work a bit more on
the whole granting wishes thing.

MERI

(faux surprised, teasing)

Oh, your "flair" with Lou wasn't
intentional? Quelle surprise.

JENNIE

Think anyone else bought it?

STUDENT (O.S.)

Jennie, sick work today!
Unbelievable.

Jennie smiles and waves to the passing student. Catches
Meri's look.

JENNIE

What?

MERI

If you spent half as much time
studying as you do entertaining
everyone else around here, you'd be
up on that wall, too.

END

ROLE OF "MERI" - Scene 2

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INT. ARCHIVES - CONTINUOUS

-- to be greeted by a seemingly endless maze of towering shelves. They both stand in awe.

START

MERI
Where do we even start?

LOU
With a panic attack?

Meri shoots him a look.

LOU (CONT'D)
(CONT'D)
I'll take this side, you take that one?

LATER --

Meri rubs her temples, defeated. Lou looks over from the ladder.

LOU
We've checked every tome on magical artifacts, enchanted doors, ancient protocols... I've even skimmed a few cookbooks just in case.

MERI
Maybe the answer isn't in a book.

LOU
That's what scares me.

Lou hops down and hands Meri a cloth to wipe ink from her hands. A small, surprisingly thoughtful gesture.

MERI
Thanks.
(softening)
You know, you've been doing great tonight.

Lou freezes mid-step.

LOU
Me? No. I'm hanging on by a frayed thread of panic and denial.

MERI
But you've stayed in it with us.
That matters.

Lou swallows, touched – he didn't expect that.

LOU

Why are you so dead set on being the hero, anyway? You're the best sidekick at the academy – surely you'll get a great assignment and be off on adventures in no time.

Meri pauses, considers if she wants to answer this or not.

Finally --

MERI

Because I'm afraid being the best sidekick only means I'm trying to be my mom. I want something that's mine. Something she didn't already do first, that's really hard to do around here. We're all stuck.

(quietly)

I don't want to be someone else's carbon copy.

Lou sits with that.

LOU

For what it's worth, hero, sidekick – whatever you end up being, you're not gonna do it like anyone else. So it'll be your own. No matter what.

Meri looks up at him. A flicker of something real passes between them.

Suddenly – Lou frowns, staring over Meri's shoulder.

LOU (CONT'D)

Hey, was that bookcase always tilted like that?

Meri turns. One enormous shelf is angled ever so slightly. None of the books sit flush.

MERI

It's crooked.

Lou reaches out, presses the end of the shelf.

A DEEP, METALLIC GROAN reverberates through the stacks. The entire bookcase PIVOTS with a grinding echo – revealing a narrow stone staircase descending into darkness.

Lou's jaw drops.

LOU

Oh good. A scary hidden staircase.
Because that always goes well.

Meri's eyes burn with determination.

MERI

The clue isn't IN the archives -
the archives ARE the clue.

She starts down the staircase. Lou hesitates.

MERI (CONT'D)

(from below in the dark)

We just had a moment - don't ruin
it by chickening out now.

END