

DAILY Actor

ALMOST DRAMATIC from 'Most Likely To: The Senior Superlative Musical' by Michael Tester

ROSIE: Will someone please show me where is it written that if you're not the typical "ingénue," then you're automatically cast as the Mayor's Wife? Hmm? I've been cast as the Mayor's Wife in musicals that don't even have a mayor. Or a town! Then last year the drama club stages *The Music Man*—where the Mayor's Wife is a leading role—and what does our older-than-the-bard director, slash, driver's-ed teacher, Mr. Gruella cast me as? "Townsperson Number 13." Double digits people! And don't get me started on the summer reduction of *Hairspray*. Instead of casting one curvy teenager as Tracy, my drama camp doubles the role ...with twins in padding! I was the prison matron. But this year? This year? There won't be stages big enough! There won't be lights bright enough! This year, the drama club is staging *Fiddler*, and I'm going to land the role of The Girl who gets The Boy! [Even if that boy is probably gay.] It's the day of the big tryouts; the auditorium is packed with the usual sycophants circling Gruella like he's the friggin' *Lion King*. (*Chants ala "Circle of Life"*) "Nants ingonyama bagithi Baba!" [Here comes a lion, Father] My name is called and I take to the stage as to the manner born! Breathing in that thespian aroma of a freshly shellacked stage, perfumed with the enduring mist of gray in a can. "Tell us a little about yourself."

Gruella booms over the God mic. "Myself?"

"Who is ... 'Cassie?'"

"Cassie? I have no idea"

It seems Gruella caught a local production of *A Chorus Line* and is now stuck in the 70s.

"What would you do if you could no longer be in the high-school musical?"

"I'd be in a *professional* musical." Is what I should have said, but all I could think of was: "There's always Color Guard?"

"In other words, you would throw crap up in the air and catch it?"

"Hopefully."

"... Let's just hear the song."

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I started to sweat. And think. Then think while sweating; I was multitasking: What if I don't get cast because I fail at being myself? Who am I anyway, am I my résumé? Hello! I'm a teenager; you're lucky I know who the Vice President is. By this point in the audition I am shvitzing like Old Deuteronomy and forget the words to my song. Who forgets the lyrics to "Memory?" (*sings*) All Alone In The" (*pause*) -Next day, I brave the hallway of shame, passed the faux hugging and chutzpah to catch the cast list just as it was posted ... "Rosie: Mother #12, and ... The Mayor's Wife."? Since when did Anatevka elect a mayor? I wanted to drop out then and there, rip that piece of paper off Gruella's door, tear it to shreds like Patti Lupone does her reviews, and sing "There's Gotta Be Something Better Than This!" (*Pause.*) But a better "Angel of Music" prevailed. I'm a pro. If I am going play a matron— (*Literally swallows her pride.*) again—I am going to play the mother of all mothers: "Here she is world! Here she is, Gruella! Here's Rosie!" (*Strikes an Evita diva pose and serves a royal wave*) My turn will come; for such is the magic of theatre that ingénues age into the chorus, while character actors grace into the leads. Yes, "Something is Changing; Something is Not The Same ...Let It Go, Let It Go! Take Me For What I Am 'Cause I ... Am ...Changing...And "You're Gonna Love ... Me!" (*Belts or wails the last notes of "Defying Gravity"*) "Oh, Oh! ...How do you like them eggrolls, Mr. Gruella?" (*Mimes a mic drop*)