

# THE MAIDEN & THE DRAGON

RADIO DRAMA IN 6 x 30 MINUTE EPISODES

## FAMILY GROUP AUDITION

**Please note that you must be an actual family, as you will have some shared accommodation at the recording venue.**

### Characters in audition scenes

**Marian:** She lost her mother when she was just two years old. She has had to develop a sense of independence, to get by. Life is hard working on a farm in the Middle Ages. She has a combination of hesitancy, but also is quite free speaking in her dealings with people.

**Charlotte:** She is the local herbalist and 'Wise Woman' as she would have been known at the time. She is kind and very considered in what she says. She lives in a hut in the woods, away from the main village.

**Ranulf:** He is Marian's father. Life is always tough in a medieval farming village, but he just has himself, an 18yr old son, an 11yr old son, and Marian (13yrs old) to help him with all the work that needs to be done.

**King Richard:** He has just come to the throne, at 10yrs old. He did have some preparation, but the death of his father shortly before his grandfather died, meant that he became monarch much sooner than planned. He has a southern English accent with a hint of French – all the Kings from 1066 till this point had French as their native tongue, but more recently spoke English well too.

**John of Gaunt:** Richard's Uncle and one of the wealthiest and most powerful men in England. At the beginning of Richard's reign, John was very much guiding Richard, but he was ultimately very self-serving. He has a southern English accent.

**AUDITION PIECE 1 – Marian and Charlotte**

In this scene, Marian and Robert (they like each other, but are not, at this stage, betrothed) visit Charlotte to ask her about the strange creature that Marian just found down the village well.

INT. WISE-WOMAN CHARLOTTE'S HOUSE - LATER

MARIAN Charlotte? It is I, Marian, and Blacksmith Robert, come to seek your counsel. Hello?

CHARLOTTE Ah, good day young ones. Come in, come in. Please, take a seat. Don't you make a lovely couple. May I offer you both a barley tea, with a little honey?

ROBERT Well, actually, we were-

MARIAN Yes please, Charlotte. We would love some tea. Thank you.

FX. PREPARING THE TEA. THERE IS A CLINK OF GLASS JARS.

MARIAN Oh, Charlotte, I love seeing all your glass jars. They are beautiful.

CHARLOTTE Aye, 'tis a benefit of the merchants who visit me, sometimes from far off lands. They bring them to me. This clear glass is from Venice, where the finest glasshouses can be found. The forest glass of England is too green with impurities, but with these, I can easily see all my herbs and powders. It does not do to be giving the wrong herbs for my customers' ailments! Now, for what purpose is your visit today?

MARIAN Well, I –

ROBERT What Marian wishes to ask is, what is this poor creature that she found by chance just this morning at the village well? Here, in this bag, out you come...

FX. THE CREATURE MAKES A WARBLING SOUND.

CHARLOTTE Down the well?

MARIAN Aye. At first, I heard some strange noises but thought nothing of it. Then, I must have brought him up in the bucket because when I poured the water into my own pail, I found this little fellow. And just as I was inspecting him, Reeve Eustace approached so I stuffed the creature under my cape, and when he had departed, in my haste, I decided I should take it home, just to have time to think on what course of action I should take. But then... then, when I sat by our hearth, the creature sneezed and so extinguished our fire. But then... and I swear Charlotte, by all that is holy, that I saw this with my own eyes, this fish-bird breathed flames and relit the hearth! There. What say you?

CHARLOTTE Here, let me see. Yes, the jaws that bite. The claws that catch. And those eyes. You say that the creature breathed flames?

MARIAN Aye, he did. Just as I was thinking how am I going to get this fire relit?

CHARLOTTE She did. *She* relit the fire for you.

MARIAN I do not understand. How can you know whether this creature is male or female?

## **AUDITION PIECE 2 – Ranulf and Marian**

In this scene, Marian is in the family home, doing all her household duties.

INT. MARIAN'S FAMILY HOME – EARLY EVENING

MARIAN IS IN THE FAMILY HOME, SWEEPING THE FLOOR.

MARIAN By my faith, I fear my family see me as no more than a useful chattel! Someone to do the chores that they cannot, or better to say, will not, till they marry me off, to man or the church, to do their bidding instead. The older women in the village say that when the Great Pestilence carried off half of all our people, including my mother, how grateful then were our lord and masters for women stepping in to do the trades that dead men could not? That seems long forgotten now.

RANULF ENTERS THE HOUSE.

RANULF Daughter. Who was it you were talking to just now? Not Edgar again? Where is Edgar? Should he and Bertram not be inside by now?

MARIAN Oh, Edgar! Sorry, father, I forgot.

MARIAN SHOUTS OUTSIDE.

(OFF) Edgar! Eeeeeed-gar! Bertram! Oh, where are you?

FX. OINKING AND SNUFFLING.

There you are. Come on, in you come, you two. Can't have you staying out there at night. We love you both too much to let you get stolen by some passing rogues.

RANULF Two years rearing Edgar from a piglet and he'll be off to market in five months' time! Damn right we can't have him stolen! In you come.

MARIAN Oh Father, Edgar can understand everything you say. Cover your ears, Edgar. At least *you* are well regarded in this family.

RANULF That nonsense again, dear Marian? What has upset you?

MARIAN (SIGHING) I do not know. Perhaps it was the sight of John Lambton able to spend his morning at his leisure, fishing, with no care for his duties and ignorant of all the work we do - I do. The work that supports his father's estate and will, in time, support him too. My life is owned by his family. And my own family, since I could hold a broom, see me simply as replacement for the mother that God saw fit to take from us.

RANULF God has a plan for all of us, daughter, and we cannot know his mind.

MARIAN And that's another thing. I sit in church every Sunday to try and discover what the Lord has planned for me. But I do not speak Latin! I heard that lay preacher who visited last harvest saying that the priests should speak the bible in English, in our own tongue, and that seems to me common sense. But not to our priest. No. And then he tells us the news that our new king is a ten year old boy! And this boy will, no doubt, be controlled by

the same coxcombs in Parliament in the south who think they have any right to tell the people of Northumbria how to live! It makes no sense. Pass me some more wood for the fire, Father. I have supper to cook.

RANULF You are truly unusual Marian, though I do see much of your mother in you. But, be at peace now daughter.

MARIAN How can I be at peace!?

RANULF Be at peace I say. I hear your brothers returning.

### **AUDITION PIECE 3 – King Richard and John of Gaunt**

In this scene, the recently crowned King Richard II is visiting his Uncle, the powerful John of Gaunt. Richard has been catching up with his late grandfather's final Parliament and what was agreed there. Richard is only 10yrs old, but is smart and aware that he needs to establish his position as King, with Parliament, the country *and* his Uncle.

**John of Gaunt should be played by the same actor as Ranulf.**

INT. SAVOY PALACE, LONDON

KING RICHARD II IS VISITING HIS UNCLE, JOHN OF GAUNT'S,  
LAVISH PALACE.

GAUNT Your majesty, an unexpected and immeasurable honour to have you visit my humble home.

RICHARD Humble indeed Uncle. Why I do not believe I have seen a palace so extensive and lavish in all my travels.

GAUNT Ah well sire, you are young and I'm sure you shall see and own many palaces much greater than this. Is there a matter on which I may help you sire?

RICHARD There is, Uncle John, I have just now come from my first meeting with the Council. To aid my understanding, I asked them to inform me of the matters which were agreed at the final Parliament of my late grandfather, this February past.

GAUNT I see, my lord, and I trust you have been fully informed of the most pressing matters of state, not least our progress in the war with Charles the fifth and indeed

my own recent incursion through the Kingdom of France.

RICHARD I have Uncle. Indeed, the exploits of the famous John of Gaunt seem more celebrated than the king himself. My understanding is that you personally pressed Parliament to make a tax on all my subjects for the financing of our war efforts?

GAUNT I did my part, Lord.

RICHARD War is expensive I have learnt.

GAUNT It is, my Lord.

RICHARD And, though not briefed by my Council on this, I did read in the records of that Parliament that you were personally awarded some six thousand pounds in salary owing but seemingly not paid till now. Is that right Uncle?

GAUNT (NERVOUSLY) Yes, my Lord. As you were saying, I have led many campaigns into France these past years and, well, we are agreed, war is expensive.

RICHARD I am of course grateful that you and your fellow nobles governed so... wisely, during my grandfather's ill health. I have much to learn, Uncle, I can see. War seems to make some people poorer and others richer.