

Ladies will **ACT** the part of Mrs. Peacock in this scene. She is described as “the wealthy wife of a senator. A bit batty, neurotic, and quick to hysteria.” Show us your interpretation of the character. Members of the casting team will read the other parts.

(As YVETTE serves soup to **PEACOCK**—)

PEACOCK. What is that smell? It’s something ... familiar.

YVETTE. Shark’s fin soup.

PEACOCK. (*Gleefully:*) My favorite!

COOK. (*Deliberately:*) I know.

(**COOK/PEACOCK** exchange a sinister glance.)

YVETTE. Bon appetit!

(YVETTE and COOK exit. The GUESTS sip their soup. **PEACOCK** slurps.)

PEACOCK. (*Slurping slightly – muttering:*) This is delicious.

(*Slurping louder now – under her breath:*)

Oooh, this is yum yum yummy yum yum yum.

(*Finally, she slurps so intensely it causes her to choke a bit as the GUESTS stare.*)

PEACOCK. (*Recovering—then, all in nearly one breath, as WADSWORTH pours wine:*) Well, I guess I’ll break the ice, I mean, I’ll be the one to get the ball rolling, I mean, I’m used to being a hostess; it’s an integral part of my life as the wife of a...

(*Declining wine with a gesture, carrying on talking without pause:*)

Oh, I forgot we’re not supposed to say who we really are. But, oh well, I mean, I have no idea what we’re doing here, but I’m very intrigued and oh, my, this soup is delicious isn’t it?

(*The GUESTS stare at her, bewildered.*)

GREEN. I know who you are.

PEACOCK. You do?

GREEN. I work in Washington.

PLUM. Washington?

(*To **PEACOCK**:*)

So you must be a politician’s wife, Mrs. Peacock?

PEACOCK. (*With renewed confidence:*) Yes, I am.

SCARLET. (*Cheekily:*) Who’s your husband? Maybe I know him?

PEACOCK. I... well, he’s...

(*Deflecting:*)

Mrs. White, you’ve been awfully quiet. What does your husband do?