

MONOLOGUE PREP TIPS

Choosing your monologue is an important part of the audition preparation. A polished monologue gives you the opportunity to showcase your acting skills and demonstrate your connection to specific characters. Here are some suggestions to get you started.

- 1) Familiarize yourself with the show (Googling “Silent Sky” will give you some good info - articles, play study guides, interviews with the playwright). Read the script, watch YouTube clips, and read all of the audition information that is provided...including all monologues provided (this will give you a sense for the tone of the show and each character).
- 2) Think through it: Which role(s) do I see myself in? Which role(s) do I think the directors will see me in? Consider all the possibilities - and don't limit yourself! Be open to discovery and trying something new.
- 3) Choose monologues that capture the essence of the characters that you would like to be considered for, but understand that the audition team will consider you for all roles unless you state you are not interested in specific parts.
 - a) Preparing two contrasting monologues allows you to showcase your range and depth as a performer.
 - b) Make strong choices based on your understanding of the character. What do you know about them from the character descriptions? What is important in this specific monologue—who is the character speaking to and why are they saying this?
- 4) Rehearse, rehearse, and rehearse some more! Get comfortable with the character and your piece. Memorization is preferred, but not required. Bring your script if it will allow you to better show the character.

Silent Sky Audition Monologues

Please prepare **two** contrasting monologues from the options provided (six choices for the female-identifying characters; four options for the male-identifying character)

HENRIETTA (*listening to Margaret playing piano and the science clicks - the music, the pulsing stars!*)

If you think of the notes as the star's brightnesses. If *this* is the dimmest the star gets — (*Henrietta hits a low note*) and *this* is the brightest. (*Hits a high note.*) Then the time it takes to get from here — (*Low note, then every note in between until.*) to here — (*High note.*) could tell us *how bright it actually is*, which we could compare to how it *appears*, which could tell us how far away it is, which we could compare to other stars, (*She plays various chromatic scale — some short, some long.*) which could tell us how far away *they* are, and if we know *that* we can — We can skip star to star across the deepest space until we know ... exactly where we are.

MARGARET (*to Henrietta following Henrietta's return to help the family*)

I just wonder why you exceed expectation in everything except this family. Even so, Daddy is proud. You think he isn't. You think he resents your "great escape," and because you never wrote or came home, you wouldn't know. You also wouldn't know that I made you up for him. I wrote letters for you, "from you," brought them in the house every week — So happy — thrilled! — Read them to the whole family — "Look what we got from Henrietta today!" "Oh Daddy she says hello, she says she loves you, thank you." On and on. Such a comforting fiction.

WILLIAMINA (*speaking to Henrietta, soon after meeting at Harvard*)

You're fun. But here's some perspective. I was Pickering's housekeeper before he brought me here. So we're a lot of things, but at present we are cleaning the universe for the men. And making fun of them behind their backs. It's worked for centuries. The sky's the limit. And there's so damn much of it.

ANNIE (*explaining the work to Henrietta*)

Align the spanner with a star. The matching dot indicates how bright that star is. Record magnitude, position, date, and repeat until you fill up the logbook. We collect, report, and maintain the largest stellar archive in the world. And we resist the temptation to analyze it. Can you do this job, Miss Leavitt? I need the consistent, not the creative.

MARGARET (*responding to a despondent Henrietta who is ill and overwhelmed. Henrietta's line is "And what doe all the knowing of the not knowing do to a sane peson? What does that mean?"*)

It could mean that we're all helpless. And alone. And because you can't connect everything yourself that nothing's connected. Or. It could mean that you may not know how you might matter to people right now, and you cannot know how you will matter in the future. But you are *already* connected — and you *already* matter. Because what you do outlasts you. Sometimes. Am I helping or hurting?

HENRIETTA (*direct address to the audience - final monologue of the show*)

On top of a hill... Just blocks away... Across the courtyard from my old desk... where it stood off – limits... I see. The Great Refractor Telescope. To which we happily break in that night. And taking Margie's hand. I lean close. Hold my breath. And see... My heaven. Some time from now I gather myself. And sneak outside – and look up. In perfect silence. And I know – that distance is only space and time, and for some of us... life. I am out of time. But light has never let me down. And so. I shift. The next year... Annie gets a vote. The next year, a man named Hubble used my work to prove that our most unique galaxy is in fact one of billions... upon billions. Then a man from Sweden calls wondering if I might like... a Nobel Prize. It's too late for me, but I take the compliment. Another few years and Will dies in Boston, Annie by her side. Another year and another war takes over the world. Then Annie dies. Then Peter. Then my sister, kissed by twelve grandchildren, a symphony on the radio. Then we harness the atom, then orbit the Earth, then stand on the moon. Then a telescope named Hubble, with wings set for space, shows us how vast and beautiful it all is... Because wonder will always get us there... Those of us who insist there is much more beyond ourselves. And I do. And there's a reason we measure it all in light.

PETER (*speaking to Henrietta, offering a proposal*)

There's an ocean liner leaving tomorrow – You should be on it – I'll be on it – I'm saying come with me – to Europe – For a month – or two? You don't have to decide now – but close to now because the liner leaves tomorrow – I said that – Pack warmly – cold at night – We might stop in Spain – And there's dancing and lobster and water and moonlight and bobbing around and that's romantic – or sickening – Either way there'll be an eclipse. Which is fun.

PETER (*to Henrietta, finally expressing his interest*)

This is a rather large moment for me so I just want to be clear because it took me three years to get this far. So. Your mind and spirit...I quite adore...those things...about you. And I don't expect you to reciprocate immediately or at all, but I feared combusting if I didn't tell you that you've been the brightest object in my day since we met. And we work with the stars. And I know I haven't been the most emotive suitor but I have been a thoughtful one, and I hope that counts for something. And I also hope I do not offend you by expressing how very deeply I...admire you.

PETER (*giving a lecture at a university*)

Because we lack the measurements, we are left wondering; How big is everything? Which leads to the central question — Is everything contained within our Milky Way or not? Is all that we see the extent of the universe? Absolutely. It is my judgement that the universe is exactly the same thing as the Milky Way Galaxy. There is nothing greater and nowhere else. How could there be To even consider that would mean that these stars are thousands of light years away. And nothing is thousands of light years away. The universe is simply not that vast. Nor need it be to inspire the deepest human wonder. Thank you.

PETER (*reading Walt Whitman's poem "When I heard the Learn'd Astronomer"*)

When I heard the learn'd astronomer,
When the proofs, the figures, were ranged in columns before me,
When I was shown the charts and diagrams, to add, divide, and measure them,
When I sitting heard the astronomer where he lectured with much applause in the lecture-room,
How soon unaccountable I became tired and sick,
Till rising and gliding out I wander'd off by myself,
In the mystical moist night-air, and from time to time,
Look'd up in perfect silence at the stars.