

Pilgrims & Prophets: Return To The Museum

By Kirsten Wissink

AUDITION EXCERPT 1: BILLY

Character Description - Billy Griggs: Youngest child in the Griggs family, Billy is an introverted observer, yet surprisingly bold and adventurous. He is quiet and sensitive, but trusting even when he doesn't completely understand.

PROF. HENRY: Wait! You were here first. *(indicating the painting)* That's quite the rendering. *(when BILLY is quiet)* Do you know this painting?

BILLY: No.

PROF. HENRY: The woman is Hannah—her little boy is Samuel.

BILLY: Who's that man?

PROF. HENRY: Eli, the priest. Samuel is going to live with him. You see, Hannah prayed for a child and promised the Lord that if He gave her a son, the child would be given to the service of the Lord. Then Samuel was born.

BILLY: He's very young.

PROF. HENRY: Yes, he is. It must have been hard when his mother left.

BILLY: She knows she has to give him up.

PROF. HENRY: Why do you say that?

BILLY: Her hands are open. It looks like she's letting go.

AUDITION EXCERPT 2: MAGGIE

Character Description - Maggie Griggs: Oldest child in the Griggs family, Maggie is intuitive and courageous, and wants to show her independence. Her sadness about losing her mom makes her a little bitter, and she is afraid to show tenderness.

(MAGGIE folds her arms; ANNA watching, waiting)

MAGGIE: Dad can be a little—excessive.

ANNA: I've seen parents completely indifferent to their children. That is not your father.

MAGGIE: *(opening up a little more)* Moses, and the Plagues, and Egypt?—I've heard some of these stories before. Mom would tell them to us, and dad would listen. He didn't really believe the stories, but he liked to hear her tell them—because he loved her.

ANNA: Loved?

MAGGIE: She's been gone for two years. *(pause)* Now Dad's more skeptical than ever. *(smiles sadly)*

ANNA: He brought you here, you know.

MAGGIE: Because mom would have liked it. He won't admit it but it's true. *(remembering)* She always said she'd get the dark knocked out of her when she let the Bible inside her.

ANNA: *(enjoying that)* God is light. *(quotes)* He causes the dawn to know its place, so that light may take hold of the corners of the earth and shake the wickedness out of it.

MAGGIE: I like that.

AUDITION EXCERPT 3: BELLA

Character Description - Bella: An artist who enters her painting in the museum's community exhibit. She has been hurt by the world's standards of success and past rejection, but searches for truth and beauty nonetheless. While she has a knowledge of Biblical stories, her life experiences have caused her to question her dreams and her place in the world.

BELLA: When Anna alluded to exile, and great stories, I had no idea she'd go so far as to send me here.

BILLY: I don't think *she* sent you here.

BELLA: *(thoughtful)* Perhaps not. Well, I've never experienced Daniel's story quite like this before.

BILLY: But what will the king do?

BELLA: To his credit, he will try to rescue Daniel, because he respects him. But the laws of the Medes and Persians cannot be changed.

MAGGIE: What will happen to Daniel?

BELLA: He'll be thrown into a den of lions.

MAGGIE: Because he prays to God? Tell me he escapes; tell me this doesn't really happen.

BELLA: Oh, but it happens all the time. And sometimes the sentence is less obvious—a person’s reputation is slandered—perhaps their career is sabotaged. All because of a conviction that God is Lord of all, and He alone is to be worshiped. Sometimes we’re faced with a choice—and choosing life looks like choosing death.

AUDITION EXCERPT 4: ANNA

Character Description - Anna: Curator of Education and Interpretation at the Bible Museum, she is very astute in matters of character, and has a ready wit and wisdom. Though she is elderly and wheelchair-bound, she has a determined strength about her, and speaks with honesty and insight.

ANNA: May I tell you a story?

ALEX: No! I’m sick of stories—I should never have come! This museum isn’t real life, you know! In real life, things are all...topsy-turvy.

ANNA: I agree.

ALEX: Take this world. Take people these days. There are these stereotypes and prejudices that have haunted our culture for years. People have preconceived notions about what other people are.

ANNA: Of course they do.

ALEX: *(snorting, slightly accusing)* What!?! Don’t you see it?

ANNA: Me!, see it? I am a disabled old woman, so I am considered insignificant. Why? *(reasons of the world)* I am unreliable and slow!—slow moving, slow hearing, slow to understand. So...I am not to be taken seriously. What? Don’t you see it?

ALEX: I didn’t mean to suggest anything like that.

ANNA: Ah, but none of us are immune to judgment—to prejudice. Or are you embarrassed to recognize this is a tendency of your own heart? *(silence; quieter)* There are many warriors in this world. They do not all look as you imagine.

AUDITION EXCERPT 5: ALEX GRIGGS

Character Description - Matthew Griggs: A single dad who brings his kids, Maggie & Billy to the Bible Museum. He’s become hardened by the burdens of life, and doesn’t know what he thinks about the Bible. Ultimately, he is fiercely protective of his family and wants the best for them.

ALEX: Excuse me? The prophet Jeremiah, I believe? *(when JEREMIAH doesn’t speak or move)* I heard you’re the expert on the bewildering life. Honest in trouble, and not afraid to speak to God about it. *(trying a new tactic)* So, what did God tell you? Did he fight for you, like he did for

Moses? Silence. (*looking down at the plaque before JEREMIAH*) Jeremiah, son of Hilkiyah...sent to prophesy words against the city of Jerusalem—calling the people to obey the LORD their God so that he might relent concerning the disaster he had pronounced against them. Well, that sounds a bit harsh.

JEREMIAH: The Lord declares: Why do you bring a case against me?

ALEX: (*startled*) I don't think I'm accusing God.

JEREMIAH: Acknowledge your guilt—you have rebelled against the Lord your God.

ALEX: Me!?! And who gives you authority to speak about guilt?

JEREMIAH: I, the Lord, examine the mind, I test the heart to give to each according to his way, according to what his actions deserve.

ALEX: So, this is to be a room of accusation. I don't want anything to do with it. (*turning away*)

JEREMIAH: (*his hand outstretched, calling back*) I have loved you with an everlasting love;...I have continued to extend faithful love to you. I will be with you—to save you!...For I will forgive their iniquity and never again remember their sin.

ALEX: (*after a long silence*) I'm not entirely sure what all this means—but that?—is something good. Ok. (*folds his arms*) I'm listening. What's next?

JEREMIAH: (*stepping forward*) Peace.

ALEX: (*recoiling; emotional, against his will*) Peace?

JEREMIAH: (*quietly, intently*) A promised land. Home, where all is well.

ALEX: Really? What if?...What if your land is taken from you, and it seems like what...God promised is undone?

AUDITION EXCERPT 6: JEREMIAH/YOUNG BOYS

Character Description - Jeremiah: The Biblical character. Prophet of God who speaks about the coming exile of his people. Mentor and teacher to the younger generation, he recognizes the reality of judgment and yet sings of the promises of God.

JEREMIAH: Once there was a boy of small stature, yet fine appearance. He left his home and his father, to find his brothers, who were camped some distance away. This boy...who is he?

YOUNG BOY 1: Joseph?

JEREMIAH: Good guess...but no.

YOUNG BOY 2: *(loving this)* Go on!

JEREMIAH: Now, the brothers faced a great enemy. And when the boy arrived, he noticed his brothers and all the men—even their leaders—were full of fear, for they had been oppressed by the enemy for a long time.

YOUNG BOY 2: Is it Moses?

JEREMIAH: Good guess, but no...

YOUNG BOY 1: Awww...go on!

JEREMIAH: *(has an idea; waving BILLY over)* Billy! You will represent the boy. Well, this boy...had seen all he needed. Not only was the enemy keeping the camp captive through fear, they were also claiming what could only belong to God. It was time to do something about it. So...*(moving swiftly to gather some stones)*...the boy chose to fight, but in an unlikely way. He went to a stream and gathered these for his battle...

BILLY: *(looking at what has been placed in his hand)* Stones.

JEREMIAH: *(to BILLY)* Five of them. Smooth and even in the hand. Put them in your pouch.

YOUNG BOY 3: I know! I know who this is! *(stops when JEREMIAH puts a finger to his lips)*

BILLY: Are there only five enemies?

JEREMIAH: Only five that concern you now. *(to them all)* So, the boy takes these stones and what does he do? *(points to a YOUNG BOY)*

YOUNG BOY 4: Approaches the giant.

BILLY: The giant?!

JEREMIAH: Goliath. And what does the boy say? *(indicating another YOUNG BOY)*

YOUNG BOY 3: “You come to me with a sword, spear, and javelin, but I come to you in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied.”

JEREMIAH: *(to BILLY, holding the sling; explaining)* On this day the LORD delivers a giant into the hand of David, a shepherd boy. *(notably, louder, to all)*...that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel, and that all may know that the LORD saves not with sword and spear. *(fade out MUSIC CUE if needed)* Who is the boy?

YOUNG BOYS: David!

JEREMIAH: And now that we have remembered the Lord's victory, what shall we do?

YOUNG BOY 4: (*producing his own sling*) We shall practice our aim!

JEREMIAH: (*stopping him*) A tantalizing thought...but no. (*waving his hands for quiet*) But we shall have courage ourselves, when the giants are among us—for the Lord is a God of deliverance! And now, off with you to your homes, while you have the light!