

## Candlelight Tours 2024 audition monologues

*\*\*\*Please select 1 or 2 monologues from the following selections to audition with. Each monologue is noted where to begin and end the audition, but the full monologue is included for your comprehension of the piece.\*\*\**

### Character list

**Walter Steele** – white man, aeronaut and showman. Died parachuting from a hot air balloon.  
1860 – 1897

**Ann Kidd** – white woman, prostitute and thief, descendant of Pirate Captain Kidd. Died 1855

**Frankie Anderson** – black woman, teacher in Tinbridge Hill, invented an electric math board  
1904 – 1986

**Henry Crichton** – black man, barber, beloved by the city, well traveled and connected. His scene will be a song. 1830 – 1899

**Celia Hammilton** – white woman, poor, mother of 10 children, most of whom died young as factory workers. 1859 – 1930's.

**Arabella Dormile** – black woman, falsely accused and imprisoned for killing her newborn child.  
1867

**SPIRIT GUIDE** - each tour of the evening will be led by a different Spirit Guide. These characters are actual dead people as well, their biographies will be chosen after the roles are cast. They have an equal amount of dialogue, rehearsal time, and performance time as the scene characters. The only difference is the track: the scene characters repeat the same monologues 6-7 times per evening, while the Spirit Guides give one full 1.5 hour tour. The Spirit Guides are also written into many scenes and interact with the various scene characters throughout the tour.

### **WALTER STEELE**

white male

Aeronaut 1860 - 1897

### **(START AUDITION HERE)**

*Walter comes whizzing through the trees into a slightly rough landing. His parachute is seen dangling in the trees and he still has hold of a circular wooden ring grip which is attached to the parachute with long ropes.*

Whooooo-eeee! Another marvelous landing, in't that right? I had no doubts. As I leaped from my balloon, more than 2,000 feet closer to heaven, I fortified my grip on this ring (*indicating the wooden ring he's holding*) and reminded The Almighty that I am the "King of the Air", Professor Walter Steele, and I will undoubtedly make another successful jump. For I am the aeronaut with more hot air balloon jumps than anyone in the world, up until my death, that is, in June of 1897. Even after that, I held my record, until I died for the second time, two months later.

Ladies and gentlemen, I'm a man of my word, in't that right? And, as advertised, whichever of you fine folks locates the goose which I liberated from my balloon ahead of me, why, you get to keep it. Just so long as you return its parachute to me over at the fairgrounds. The same bargain does not extend to my dog, Silver, he stays with me. Man's best friend, in't that right?

I'll be traveling back up to Columbus, Ohio soon, to visit my other grave. I'm currently in need of a new assistant to journey with me. My former man, who went by the name Savage, was the only Negro aeronaut during my lifetime. He was an excellent airman, even better than my wife, Nellie, who had her fair share of ballooning accidents. She also died twice. We Steeles, when we do something spectacular, we always do it again, but grander, in't that right?

I bet you fine folks have come from all over this region to witness my unparalleled mastery of the skies. It is wonderful to see you eye to eye now, since only moments ago you appeared to me as tiny little fleas chasing me like a dandelion in the wind. The boldness of man to think he has the right to soar through the air like the birds is a rank reserved for just a few daring souls, like myself and Icarus. But poor Icarus didn't know my secrets. You'll never see wax holding my balloons together, in't that right?

I've been an aeronaut since I was 18 years old. I was born in Canada, but the United States held more exhilarating opportunities for me. I appeared with everyone from Cole's Circus to the Mexican Chick Show, then managed my own career and my wife, Nellie's, as solo performers. If you find yourself intrigued with the prospect of traveling around the country and dazzling audiences with death defying feats, then I am just the man to show you how. Thousands holding their breath as you go up, then cheering wildly as you safely return to earth. Magical, in't that right?

I don't give a hoot how old or young you are, so long as you're strong. Grip is the only thing that matters. You'd have some pretty important jobs if you work with me. First, you gotta dig a nice deep trench in the ground, you see. My balloon is 42 feet tall, the largest in the United States. It takes a mountain of hot air to fill her up good. In the trench, you'll get a nice fire going. Then, with the help of a few other strong lads, you'll inflate the balloon by holding the fabric folds over one end of the trench and the hot air will fill her up. You better hold on tight, as she gets bigger she likes to tug from side to side as if eager to be free. And you'd also better be careful not to catch the cloth on fire, I made all my balloons with my own two hands and I'd be mighty aggravated if I had to cancel an ascension to rebuild it.

My parachute hangs on the outside of the balloon. At two thousand five hundred feet in the air, I'll be ready to leap. I'll grab hold of this wood ring and jump out of the basket. Then I freefall 100 feet until air fills up the chute. It takes a little time, then suddenly, POW! The fabric is pulled taught and my fall of 1200 feet per minute is abruptly stopped and I get jerked back upwards. This is the most dangerous moment, if I'm not ready for that jerk back, the ring will be yanked out of my hands and I'll fall hundreds of feet to my demise. But I don't like to think about that, in't that right?

**(END AUDITION HERE)**

As legend would have it, the first time I died was here in Lynchburg, over at Riverfront Park, right behind the old pavilion in July, 1897. Everything was going splendidly, I had just crested the tops of some giant oak trees when a gust of wind hit my balloon so furiously that it flipped upside down and I barely grabbed hold of the parachute as I tumbled out of the basket. I

swung 30 feet below it as the wind whipped the balloon again, this time jetting me up above the trees. I felt like a nail in a hurricane, my direction at the mercy of Eurus, lashing me with his unlucky east winds. Then, with a sudden, swift blast, I was hurled into the top of the tallest oak that stood on the side of a ravine. As I crashed against the immense tree, the sound was horrendous. The breaking of body and branches as I fell over 100 feet through the tree into that ravine, landing on my face. A doctor in the crowd rushed over and immediately pronounced me dead. I don't think a medical opinion was necessary, in't that right?

News of my death was reported in papers all across the country, some articles more gory than others. Sensationalism sells, that's for certain, and I, most assuredly, had a sensational death. Mind you, my Nellie had died in her own fiery balloon crash a few years before me, in 1892. But at my death here, here five years later in 1897, the chief of police was surprised to receive correspondence from a Mrs. Walter Steele asking about my remains. What was even more surprising than my deceased wife contacting him, was that in the following weeks, another Mrs. Walter Steele plus one apparent fiancee both separately sent letters inquiring about my remains. I was quite the ladies man in life, but we'll just let that alone now, in't that right?

I was buried here in the paupers field for a time, until my brother came from Columbus, Ohio to see what had become of me. They had to exhume me so he could properly identify my remains. Upon recognition, my brother shipped me back to Ohio to rebury me there. And that location is a secret that I've taken with me to my grave.

I was such a fantastical aeronaut that death couldn't keep me down. In August, two months after my first death, another news report spread like wildfire across the country that I died along with a second aeronaut at the Tri-state Fair Grounds in Toledo, Ohio. On that particular jump, my parachute failed to entirely open and I plummeted 2,000 feet straight to the ground. The other poor fella, Leroy Northcott, was burned to death in his balloon when it caught fire as it was inflating. We had our thrilling expirations simultaneously. A show that crowd would never forget, in't that right?

These may seem like gruesome ways to go, but I'll give it to my wife Nellie, she takes the prize for the most atrocious of them all. In August of 1892 she was performing in Columbus, Ohio. At 300 feet up her balloon caught fire in four places and exploded. She fell smack dab into the corner of a barn, crushing her skull instantly, then bounced into the road. It was quite the spectacle and her death was also widely reported. Funny enough, she was reported to have made many more balloon jumps the following year all throughout Ohio and North Carolina. And those included more fires and tumbles to the ground, to boot. After her death in 1892, 1893 was her most notable year on record. Unlike Mr. P.T. Barnum, I do not believe in perpetrating hoaxes on the audience. When you have seen a Steele jump from a balloon, you have witnessed the real thing, no matter when it's happened, in't that right?

I'd better gather my chute and start the search for my balloon now. It would be an awful shame if it landed in the James River and has been floating downstream the whole time I've been chatting with you delightful spectators. I don't relish the thought of chasing my balloon for miles all through the night, so I'll start to get a move on now.

I hope I'm seeing the face of my next assistant in this crowd. I'll be looking for you at the fairgrounds tomorrow. The rest of you, do come back and see my marvelous jumps the next time I come through town. Always a spectacular performance, in't that right?

## ANN KIDD

white female

died 1855

### (START AUDITION HERE)

*Spirit Guide is leading the group between scenes when suddenly, a young, slight woman, a little disheveled, jumps out from the tree line.*

Ann: *(holding a dagger or some pirate-y weapon)* Alright folks, empty your pockets! Come one come on, we don't have all night, sooner or later the lantern-holder up there's gonna catch on and I'm gonna have to ski-dattle. This ain't my first rodeo, we do this every October. *(walking among the crowd, coaxing them to give her stuff)* I know you all just came from a nice dinner, maybe you're plannin' for some drinks after your little stroll here, you got a little jingle in your pockets. How about you? *(singles out audience member)* What do you have in that *(bag, coat pocket, etc)* let's see it. Now I'm not here to hurt nobody, just dump a little coin in my satchel here and I'll be on my way. That *(watch/necklace - something on audience member)* sure looks nice and shiny, why don't you go on ahead and hand that over. I promise to give it a good home.

SG: What's going on back there? Is everything okay? *(coming closer - holding up lantern to get a better look - see's Ann and becomes annoyed)*. Ann, is that you?

Ann: *(irritated, rolling eyes)* Well, who else would it be?

SG: Ann, these are our guests!

Ann: I didn't invite 'em.

SG: Don't be rude, Ann. Come on, give them back their stuff. What do you need with it anyway?

Ann: You lantern-holders are all the same, you know that? It's like the power goes straight to your head... besides, it ain't personal! A girl's gotta eat, ya know!

SG: Um... we're dead, Ann. Remember?

Ann: *(pause - suddenly forces laughter like this is all a big joke)* Right right, I was just foolin' with you fine folks *(hands them back stuff)*. It's just in my nature, I s'pose. Ya see, my theivin' propensities come to me honest - all the way from the 1600s, when bold, fierce privateers roamed the 7-seas. *(puppeteers sword fighting)*. Takin' what they could, given' nothin' back. I'm Ann Kidd, afterall. A di-rect descendant of the Pirate Captain himself. A chip right off the old block, you ask me.

Where I'm from, down on the river in the part of this city known as Buzzard Roost, a girl's gotta do what a girls gotta do to make a livin', you know what I mean? It's been written of my neighborhood that it's a place "thronged with the most rowdy and disreputable class of fallen women and tough men." Sure, there ain't no thundering cannons, no heavy seas or plundered treasure, but I do my fair share of swashbucklin'. I've been caught swipin' a little coin on

occasion. Got fined for snatchin' \$8 right out of a man's pocket in 1850. That's about \$304 in your time. Not sure what you folks have done to the dollar but... well, anyway. I done time for more than that, matter of fact.

Now, I don't mean to scare you. My momma's house is just about as fine an establishment as you'll find in these parts. She'll treat you real nice. We've got a cook, and a maid, even a piano! Come on a Friday or Saturday night and we've got folks dancin', playin' cards. You'd love it. Ask for Isabella Kidd and tell her Ann sent ya. She'll give you a nice deal on a room, if ya want it. *(pulls a paper flyer out of her pocket and hands it to audience member)*

You see, I am what the daily papers refer to so kindly as a "sprout." Meanin' I am the child of a, how do I put it and remain a lady... *woman of ill fame*. Aw, forget it, I ain't a lady anyway. Mama was a hooker. Isabella Kidd, specifically, the first person on record to have been running a Bawdy House here in Lynchburg way back in 1807. And I followed her into the family business, as most of us did back in the day. Are we proud of it? I don't believe pride has anything to do with it when you're lookin' after your own survival. There are lots of us down by the river. It's tough to be a woman. Especially a widowed women, a single mother with a hoard of little hungry things, or a free woman of color. Most of us ain't given the privilege of an education. Honest work, and honest wages, those things are reserved for men alone. So we do what we gotta.. And we look after each other. *(picks woman out of crowd - lowers voice and nudges her)* If you're lookin' for work, let me know Old Ann'll take care of ya. *(louder)* Decent pay for anyone in need, and you can bring your children along. Papers won't take too kindly to 'em but we'll make sure they got food in their bellies and shoes on their feet.

**(END AUDITION HERE)**

Men come to this city on the packet boats from miles around just to visit Buzzard. Did you know durin' the war between the states, we couldn't keep them boys away. The docks were full every night. And who can blame 'em. We've got taverns, gambling halls, and of course the bawdy houses. And it's different than you might imagine. Some come for exactly what you'd expect. They pay for the services of a lady then get on out of there - back to their wives and fancy houses on the higher streets. Others come for a good time, a drink, a game of cards, a dance with a beautiful lady. You know, creature comforts. I suspect it ain't easy being a man these days either.

We've got a little somethin' for everyone. If you're lookin' for a good time but your pockets are a little light, we've got rooms on the main floor of the house. You'll still have a nice place to sleep and a hook to hang your hat on. And the ladies will certainly take care of ya. But it'll run ya a fair bit less than the rooms upstairs. Well now, they're well appointed with the finest linens. And room service. We serve good food, the stuff men crave after a hard days work. And gin and whiskey, too.

Like I said, there's a good deal of fightin' in the streets between the men, usually a little deep in the drink, and us girls get right into the thick of it too, when a john stiffs us, or got rough with another girl. Sometimes just cause there wasn't much else to do. And though the papers complained daily about the crime and carryin' on down by the river, they sure didn't mind that we were keeping them in business. Some of the things they wrote. *(laughing)* I'll say this for my century, journalists knew how to weave a tale.

You know, folks say a lot of different things about my great great granddad Captain William Kidd, and there's a fine line between a privateer and a pirate. Fine line between an

upstanding lady and a “buzzard sprout,” too. But this world ain’t kindly to some and you got to make your own way.

Truth is, I’ve never seen the ocean. I’m told it’s just at the end of this river. I’ve heard the men on the packets talk of it. How it glistens in the sunlight, and turns on a dime. How it makes you feel small just to stand on the edge and look at it. I always hoped maybe one day I could get my hands on a batteaux. I could call it *Adventure Galley*, just like Captain Kidd’s ship and pole my way down there. Never did get enough coin to do it though. If any of you folks find that treasure of his, you’d better come and share it with me. I know, I don’t have much use for it now. But I sure would like to see it.

Alright, well I guess I better find the folks I swiped off of earlier before (*nods to SG*) gets her knickers in a wad. At least I keep things lively around here. (*She walks off singing ‘Heave Ho Thieves and Beggars, Never Shall we Die’*)

## FRANKIE ANDERSON

black female 1904 – 1986

### (START AUDITION HERE)

Come on in class. Don’t dilly dally. We’ve got a lot of information to cover and a short period of time to cover it. C’mon in everyone and find your seat. Good Day, Class. Aren’t you all looking rather acute today? Now that you’re settled in, let’s take attendance, please. When you hear your name say, “here” and if you aren’t here, no worries, your silence will be adequate proof of that fact.

(*Frankie goes down the list of students, scanning the class*)

Now wait a minute. Do my eyes deceive me or is this some type of ethereal Yoder class reunion? I see faces from 1926 when I first started teaching! I see those of you that I taught in 1949! Do you all remember when I first introduced the magic math board to the class? You all were so excited to try the board. The News and Advance did a story on it in a 1953 article.

And oh my, some of you were in the last classes I taught before retiring in 1969! Oh, how I cherish those times! Some of you look the same and some of you look a little older than I remember but the beauty of this place is that time and memories are fluid.

Speaking of fluidity, You mostly saw me here in the classroom but outside of here, I was involved in many community activities. I could shift just as easily from dedicated classroom educator to prominent socialite, hostess and party goer. Back in the day I was quite the social butterfly, indeed. I vividly recall hosting a lovely formal shower and dance for Ms. Alray Spencer. The house was decorated in pink rambling roses with a color scheme of purple and yellow larkspur while the strains of Mendelsohnnns wedding march wafted through the rooms and hallways at 1113 Hollins Street. That was my home. I literally spent my entire life there, from my birth until I arrived here.

A lot of living happened behind those walls. It was never boring. The card parties, the dances, the receptions and formal showers were the talk of the town...well, at least, that is, among our various social circles. I hosted or attended many social gatherings in my day. We were always celebrating someone or something and those events were a welcomed respite from very long and busy weeks.

It was important for me to live a balanced life. Not all one thing or another but a blend of a variety of passions. One of my passions was challenging my friends to a good game of Whist on a Saturday afternoon. Any of you know how to play Whist or Bridge? (*pointing at audience member*) You look more like a spades man. (*pointing at another audience member*) And you look like a very competitive UNO aficionado! Being well-rounded means you can strum a guitar, run track, solve math problems, bake gingerbread cookies, and still be too cool for school. Class, never allow yourself or any one else to relegate you to just one corner of the octagon of life.

Is that you Aubrey Barbour? I could never forget you if I tried. And I see you are sitting in the dunce row where you belong. Now class, Mr. Barbour is not sitting in the dunce row because of lack of ability, he is there because ...do you remember, Mr. Barbour? Well, let me remind you. On that fateful day when you earned your seat in the dunce row of the classroom, You were exploring the legs of the young lady sitting behind you as if you thought this was an anatomy class. I give it to you, you were slick ...for a minute there. But if you didn't learn anything else that year, you learned 2 things. One...math and the extent of my tolerance can both be finite. And two...you can't slick a can of oil, isn't that right, Mr. Barbour? But you know what, you were one of my favorites because I noticed that you always found ways to push the boundaries and no doubt, that served you well in later years. You made all of Tinbridge Hill, and Yoder, proud with your steadfast commitment to community building even through the most dismal of times. Despite the struggles, you never gave up on your community. And I like to think I had something to do with that.

**(END AUDITION HERE)**

(*Pointing in a particular direction*) And Ms. Grace Wilson. Charming as ever, I see. Class, I could ask Grace to do anything and trust it would get done exactly the way I instructed or better. As you all know, I lived just up the street. On occasion, around lunch time or just before, I would give Grace the key and send her to my house to get the gingerbread. And to her credit, she brought it back to school fully intact. Not one piece missing. I can still smell and taste those homemade gingerbread treats. You all remember that song we used to sing about the gingerbread man? (*Starts singing the gingerbread man song*)

That gingerbread man couldn't run fast enough to escape you all. Rarely was there a crumb left. Poor guy. Oh, how I loved to sing to you all. Gloria Franklin, I remember you especially enjoyed the singing. Did you know music builds overall brain development and creates pathways in the brain that improve cognitive functioning to include reading comprehension, and mathematical ability, in particular. And you thought we were just having fun! When it came to teaching, I had to be an innovator. I knew the challenges you would face out there in the world and if you couldn't do basic math, understand a contract you were asked to sign, or think critically before making a decision, you were already 5 steps behind everyone else. If I was tough, it was because I wanted you to be prepared for the world you were about to enter. And look how well you all turned out...well, most of you.

Well class, according to the clock on the wall, our time is almost up. Before you go, let's test your math skills. Oh stop the groaning. I'm just kidding. But the only way to measure what you have learned, and not just memorized, is to consistently test your knowledge. I consider myself a pretty good teacher but I am only as good as the information you retain. That's how I



measure my success. I knew math was a hard subject for many students and that's why I looked for ways to make it easier to learn. So I thought to myself, how do I make math something my students look forward to instead of dreading? The idea of an immediate and visually tangible reward system came to mind and that resulted in the creation of (*points to the board*) the Magic Math Board.

Did you ever wonder how the board actually works? As you know, the front of the board has 60 slots containing 30 math problems and scrambled answers that appear to be randomly placed. When you got the correct answer, a bright light flashed in the center. And by the amazed look on your faces when you got an answer right, you thought sure it was magic. What you didn't know was that the real "magic" happened in the back of the board which was made of plywood.

(*Reveals the back of the board*) The back of the board was criss-crossed with 30 electrical wires - each independent of the other - running from a question slot to an answer slot. The board was powered merely by plugging it into a standard electrical socket. Pretty simple, isn't it? The Board generated a lot of buzz throughout the academic community but what most amused me was the reaction I got when people learned that I, Frankie Anderson, was a woman.

It's been wonderful seeing each and every one of you again after so many years. You are the reason I became a teacher in the first place. Although I never married or had children of my own, I felt like I helped raise a community. Whether you know it or not, you gave me a tremendous sense of purpose and accomplishment. Now go on out in the world and continue to make me proud.

## **HENRY CRICHTON**

black male

A barber, beloved by the city of Lynchburg, well traveled and connected.

His scene will be a full song with a guitar or fiddle accompaniment

1830 – 1899

For his audition piece, please sing 16 - 32 bars of an upbeat folksy song, acapella.

If you don't know any songs, "Old Joe's Place" from *A Mighty Wind* would be a great one to use.

Here's a link to that song: <https://youtu.be/Z4xHzqV3Ctw?si=ldC9CkDXrGplm3bH>

## **CELIA HAMMILTON**

white female 1859 – 1930's

*\*\*Her audition monologue will be added soon\*\**

## **ARABELLA DORMILE**

black female died 1867

*\*\*Her audition monologue will be added soon\*\**