



A Texas Premiere

Playhouse Creatures

by April De Angelis

*"I'm an actress. They've never had one of those before.
I'm a novelty. They ask me things."*

November 7 - 23, 2024



MATCH

Midtown Arts and
Theater Center Houston
3400 Main Street
Houston TX

"Playhouse Creatures" is presented by arrangement with Concord Theatricals on behalf of Samuel French, Inc.
www.concordtheatricals.com

NOTES FROM THE PRODUCER

We all rise by lifting others. That is a guiding principle I want to embrace with Lionwoman Productions TX. This starts in our relationships with one another, choosing patience, kindness, and flexibility, giving each other space for mistakes and collaboration, failings and qualities brought. Theater is a communal event and a powerful connection that can show us our best selves. Thank you for being a part of this new adventure. Humbled to have you with us.



*Driven Theater Company
Co-Artistic Director,
Dr. Jolie Rocke, with Producer*



Lionwoman Productions TX is proud to partner with our fiscal sponsor, **Driven Theater Company**, a 501c3 organization dedicated to empowering, connecting, and entertaining diverse audiences with issue-driven theater, and education designed to encourage the healthy development of the individual, the family, and society. Founded in 2010, Driven provides a safe environment that fosters change through education, empowerment, and engagement. Multidisciplinary artists create while audiences connect, receive, and release information. The work moves people to feel, think, and act.

The DTC Vision:

- Empower people who make change in their lives or the lives of others.
- Connect individuals to information, their selves, and others.
- Move people to think, feel, and act.
- Create a safe space for artists, while audiences rejuvenate through education and engagement.

To learn more go to: driventheater.org



Lionwoman Productions TX presents

The Texas premiere of

PLAYHOUSE CREATURES

By April De Angelis

Directed by Marshall Mays

November 7 – 23, 2024

CAST

(in order of appearance)

Doll Common	Michelle Britton
Nell Gwyn	Alexandra Szeto-Joe
Elizabeth Farley	Jeana Magallón
	Cat Thomas (11/17)
Mrs. Marshall	Tyne Jeanae
Mrs. Betterton	Christianne Mays *
	Jennifer Doctorovich* (11/14)

Time and place:

Between the netherworld and London in the 1660's

ACT I / Scenes

Between time and life
The streets of London
The stage
The tiring room

Intermission

ACT II/ Scenes

The stage
The tiring room
A London back street
Between time and life

* Member of Actors' Equity Association

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CREATIVE TEAM

Producer	Michelle Britton
Director	Marshall Mays
Stage Manager	Curmira Bill
Set Designer	Brandi L. Alexander
Lighting Designer	Edgar Gugardo
Costume Designer	Leah Smith
Sound Designer	Hayley Christensen
Properties Design/ Scenic Painter	Charly Topper
Wigmaster and Stylist	Gisell Rubio
Technical Director	Tyler R. Rooney
Fight Director	Ann C. Harlan
Dialect Coach	Carolyn Johnson
Intimacy Coordinator	Deborah Hope
Movement Coach	Amy Garner Buchanan
Dramaturg	Jen Onopa
Carpenter	Kayla Meins
Running Crew	Samantha Connelly Rafael Lopez



MEET OUR COMPANY



BRANDI L. ALEXANDER (Set Designer) is from Houston. She has worked as scenic designer on *Othello: The Remix* and *Thunder Knocking at the Door* (Stages Repertory Theatre), lighting designer on *Ride the Wave* (VORTEX Repertory Theatre, Austin, TX) and assistant scenic designer on *Fiddler on the Roof* (A.D. Players). At University of Houston and For the Houston Shakespeare Festival, she worked on *Our Lady of 121st Street*, *King Lear*, and *Cymbeline*. For Stages Repertory Theatre, she designed *Panto Snow White and The Seven Dorks*. She earned her MFA in scenic design at the University of Houston, where her design credits included *Shakespeare in Love*, *Marisol*, *Picnic*, *Silence*, and *Little Shop of Horrors*. Brandi participated in USITT's 2023 Emerging Creatives Showcase, was awarded Chautauqua Theater Company's 2023 Scenic Design Fellowship and Main Street Theater's 2022 BIPOC Scenic Design Fellowship and was a 2022 winner of the Black Theatre Network's Judy Dearing Student Design Competition.



CURMIRA A. BILL (Stage Manager) is an emerging, Houston-based Stage Manager, with a passion for leading fellow storytellers with empathy and diplomacy. In 2023, she won The Ensemble Theatre's George Award for her manage of the regional premiere of Angelica Chen's *Phenomenal Woman*. Brimming with boundless energy, Curmira spends nearly six months of the year leading Main Street Theater for Youth's yearly touring production to schools and performing arts centers throughout the state of Texas. She is thrilled to join Lionwoman Productions TX for the company's inaugural production and Texas premiere of *Playhouse Creatures*!



MICHELLE BRITTON (Doll Common) has been involved in the magic of theater since her first portrayal of "the Elven Queen" in the UST Summer High School Workshop production of *The Hobbit*, at the age of thirteen. With over thirty years of experience, she has worked as an actor, director, writer, musical stager, improv artist, educator, and producer in L.A., New York, the Southwest, and the U.K. A former member of AEA, AFTRA, and SAG, she has appeared as an actor in 150 + shows, including the British premiere of Stephen Sondheim's *Follies*. Select acting credits include: *The Game's Afoot*, *The Real Inspector Hound*, *Mrs. Mannerly*, *Blithe Spirit*, *The Divine Sister*, *Little Women*, the world premiere of *And L.A. is Burning...* (Winner of Houston Press's Ten Best Performances Award), *Thoroughly Modern Millie*, and *Peace in Our Time*, among others. As an educator, she has 20+ years teaching theater and speech. She received her BA from University of Southern California. Theater changes lives. Thank you for being here!



AMY GARNER BUCHANAN (Movement Coach) A seasoned practitioner and coach for Laban Movement, Amy is a theatremaker and educator who has lived and worked in Melbourne, Houston and London. Recent credits **as writer-performer** include: *Babies and Bathwater* (Dublin Gay Theatre Festival), *A Pinch of Vault* (Drayton Arms Theatre), *Make Me* (Spotify), *We Never Get Off at Sloane Square* (Drayton Arms Theatre, Park Theatre), *Tennessee Williams: Women of Paradise* (Trafalgar Studios). **As Director-Dramaturg:** *Pieces of Us* (Rosemary Branch Theatre, Edinburgh Fringe). **As Actor:** *Women of Smoky Wars* (Kensington Olympia Festival of Music and Arts); *Macbeth* (London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art). **As Voiceover Artist:** *Cinder & Black* trailer. **As Assistant Stage Manager:** *Hansel & Grettel* (Creation Theatre, Oxford).



HAYLEY CHRISTENSEN (Sound Designer) is a Houston native designer specializing in sound and projections. Recent design work includes *Stuart Little*, *Miss Nelson is Missing*, and *Last Stop on Market Street* (Main St. Theater for Youth), and *Pippin*, *The Mountaintop*, *American Idiot*, *Buyer and Cellar*, *Kinky Boots*, *Disaster!*, and *The Adams Family* (Weathervane Theatre). Audio Engineer: *Fever's Harry Potter: A Yule Ball Celebration*, Main Street Theater for Youth's *Click Clack Moo: Cows that Type*, and *The Lightning Thief: The Percy Jackson Musical*, and Weathervane Theatre's *Hello, Dolly*, *Sister Act*, *Heathers: The Musical*, and *Nice Work if You Can Get It*.



JENNIFER DOCTOROVICH * (Mrs. Betterton, 11/14/24 and understudy) Jennifer has appeared in multiple Houston theater productions, including: *Breaking Out of Sunset Place*, *Shaking the Blue Flamingo* (Queensbury Playhouse); *Turquoise* (Next Iteration Theatre); *Out of This World*, *Uncle Vanya* (Main Street Theater); *Unidentified Human Remains...*, *Assassins*, *Box Office of the Damned* (TheatreLab); *A Winter's Tale* (Houston Shakespeare Festival); *Broken Glass* (Stages Repertory Theatre); *Life with Father* (Actors Theatre); *The Glass Mendacity*, *Good Night Desdemona...* (New Heights Theater); *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* (Santa Clarita Shakespeare Festival). New York: *Hotel Oubliette* (with Austin Pendleton, Monmouth University Summer Festival); *The Glass Mendacity* (Actor/Producer with the Genesius Guild); *Film/TV: My 600lb Life* (as Jennifer Doctorovich), *Pollock*, *Law and Order*. Jennifer earned her BFA from the California Institute of the Arts, and is a member of the Actors' Equity Association.



EDGAR GUAJARDO (Lighting Designer). Edgar is a Lighting and Scenic Designer/ Theatrical Producer/ Poet/ Actor/ Painter/ Carpenter originally from Pharr, Texas, but has been residing in Houston for fourteen-plus years. He has a BFA in Theatrical Production with an emphasis in Lighting Design and Scenic Design from the University of Houston. He was the former Assistant Electrician on Mickey Mouse's *Rockin Road Show* for Disney Live and the former Assistant Technical Director of Queensbury Theatre company. He currently is the Resident Lighting Designer and Technical Director for Opera in the Heights and Production Manager of the Deluxe Theater FWCR.



ANN C. HARLAN (Fight Director) began focusing on stage combat and styles of stage movement in the mid 1990's, performing in stage combat shows in "Renaissance" festivals in TX and OK, teaching workshops and staging for local schools and theaters. She received her M.F.A. in Theatre from the University of Houston School of Theater and Dance, with a focus on Stage Combat, studying with Associate Professor and SAFD Fight Master, Brian Byrnes. As the SW Region Representative for the Society of American Fight Directors (2002-2012), she was one of the co-founders of the Texas Intensive Stage Combat Workshop, an ongoing event each September. She has taught classes and workshops for numerous schools and local colleges. Her stage work has been featured at Main Street Theater, Mildred's Umbrella, Queensbury Theater, Texas Lyric Theater, Upstage Theater, and Unity Theater, and more. She is immensely pleased to be joining the creative team of Lionwoman Productions TX.



DEBORAH HOPE (Intimacy Coordinator) trained with Tony Award winner, Ann James (founder of ICOC), and places emphasis on creating safe spaces for actors to explore and craft honest, vulnerable and memorable characters in a consent-based environment. IC Credits include: *Dear Jack*, *Dear Louise*; *The Christmas Shoes* (AD Players); *Dancing Lessons* (Unity Theatre); *Stagolee*; *Taking Steps* (Main Street Theatre); *Melville & Hawthorne* (Thunderclap Productions). She is also an award-winning actress (*August: Osage County*, (Dirt Dogs Theatre), *Fit To Be Tied* (Stages Repertory Theatre), with recent acting credits at AD Players, Stages and Main Street, among others. Deborah is thrilled to be a part of the inaugural production of *Playhouse Creatures* with this incredible cast and creative team. Brava Lionwoman! We're gonna hear you roar!!



TYNE JEANAE (Mrs. Marshall) is excited to make her Lionwoman Productions TX debut! You may remember her from shows at the Ensemble Theater, including *Stew*, *A.D. Players*, Main Street Theatre, HSPVA, and Stages' *cullud wattah*. Tyne is a Third Ward Houston native, social justice organizer, and birth doula. She graduated with her BFA from SMU in Acting/Directing and a B.A in Human Rights. You can catch her next as a director for Fade to Black's reading series. The biggest bow to the Black women who've carried her, the ancestors, family & friends, and her mama, who's audacious approach to life, made Tyne who she is.



CAROLYN JOHNSON (Dialect Coach) is a Dialect & Acting Coach, Equity Actress, Director, and Singer with more than 30 years of experience. Most recently, she coached *The Light in The Piazza*, for Opera in The Heights. She has coached for The Alley, Houston Grand Opera, Teatro Real Opera (Madrid), The Barbican (London), Prague Shakespeare Company, and Stages Houston, among others. Carolyn regularly teaches voice and text for Prague Shakespeare Company's Shakespeare training intensive in Prague and works with the online dialect resource, AccentHelp.com.



CHRISTIANNE MAYS (Mrs. Betterton) is a seasoned stage, film and television actress, who was a company member at The Alley for two years (*The Man Who Came to Dinner*, *The Heiress*, *I Hate Hamlet*, *The Mousetrap*, among others). Other credits include: *1946*, *Full Bloom*, *Chekhov in Yalta*, Tony Kushner's *Homebody/ Kabul* - winner, Houston Press Best Performance of a Really, Really Long Monologue (Main St. Theater); *Kindertransport*, *Broken Glass*, *Speaking in Tongues* (Stages Repertory Theatre); *Enemy of the People*, *Ghosts*, *Hamlet* (Classical Theatre Company); *King Lear*, *MacBeth*, *A Winter's Tale*, *Two Gentlemen of Verona* (Houston Shakespeare Festival); *Barefoot in the Park* (Unity Theatre). Film and television roles include: *A Woman of Independent Means* (starring Sally Field), the independent film, *Picture Bride*, shown at Cannes and winner, Audience Award for Best Dramatic Picture (Sundance). Christianne has a BA from Rice, an MFA from UCLA and is a member of SAG-AFTRA and Actors' Equity Association.



MARSHALL MAYS (Director) An actor and director for 40 years, including Off-Off B'way. Founder and Artistic Director of the Kaleidoscope Theatre Company (NYC). For Kaleidoscope, he directed *End of Summer*, *Love's Labours Lost*, *She Stoops to Conquer*, *As You Like It*, and the world premieres of Travis G. Baker's *Sex and Violence and God and Mr. Smith*. For New York's 2016 Take Ten Play Festival, he directed *Hangman* (winner of Best Director and Best Actor categories). He directed the critically-acclaimed cabarets: *You & I: Cindy Firing Pays Tribute to Barbara Cook*, and a duet show, *Carry On!*, both of which have been performed so far in New York, Chicago and Provincetown. Director (Theatre Outlet in Allentown): *Picasso at the Lapin Agile*, *Reckless*, and the world premiere of Christopher Renstrom's, *Zion*, among others. As an actor, Marshall has appeared in over 60 productions in NY, PA and Houston, including *Enemies* at Main Street Theater. He earned his MFA in Acting from Penn State University and holds a Bachelor of Architecture degree from Rice University.



JEANA MAGALLÓN (Mrs. Farley) is an actress, director, writer, and teaching artist local to Houston, Texas. Professional acting credits include, *Untitled Horse Play* (Alley Theatre); *Massacre: Sing For Your Children* (Alta Arts Center); *Body Of Christie*, *Inner View* (Stages Repertory Theatre); *HiTOUCH* (Mildred's Umbrella); *Lysistrata* (Classical Theatre Company), *Blast Radius* (The Octarine Accord); *Like a Jet Fueled Mariposa* (Teatrx), *Salome* (Houston Grand Opera). Jeana is a company actress at **Strange Bird Immersive** and a co-founder of the media production team **Says Who? Productions**. She is also a teaching artist for **Brave Little Company**, where she has the pleasure of teaching children of all backgrounds and experiences the joys of storytelling.



KAYLA MEINS (Carpenter) is the carpenter for Lionwoman Productions' performance of *Playhouse Creatures*! Currently studying at the University of Houston, she has been an assistant/ co-tech director for *Twelfth Night* and *Everybody*, as well as a carpenter for numerous productions. Outside works include working as a technical director for *Cyrano de Bergerac* (Zoom Shakespeare Company), props artisan and carpenter for *Peter Pan* (Rec Room Arts) and *Heroes of the Fourth Turning* (Rec Room Arts), carpenter for *La Cage Aux Folles* (Barrington Stage Company), and performing as Ilse in *Spring Awakening* (Rec Room).



JEN ONOPA (Dramaturg) is an educator and theatermaker. Recent directing credits include: *We Are Proud to Present* (Makhanda Arts Festival, South Africa), *Re/Emergence* (Park Hill Orchard, MA), *The Lily's Revenge* (UMass Amherst), *The Happiest Song Plays Last* (UMass Amherst), *The Three Sisters* (133rd St. Arts Center, NYC). Assistant Directing: *The Father* (4th Wall Theatre), *Sonder Station* (Alley Theatre Conservatory).



TYLER R. ROONEY (Technical Director) is a theater artist from Houston, Texas, who is proud to be part of the Lionwoman team. With an extensive portfolio in the performing arts, Tyler has demonstrated his skills in a variety of productions across numerous theaters. Over the past year, he has served as a lead carpenter for Main Street Theater, as well as being part of the stage operations crew at the Alley Theatre. His acting credits include the Houston premiere of *Trouble in Mind*, *Chitty Chitty Bank Bank*, *Dragons Love Tacos* (Main Street Theater); *Super Freak: The Rick James Story* and *New Jack City* (Je'caryous Entertainment); *Tosca* (Houston Grand Opera), as well as performances in *Summer Fest* with Aired Dance, *Babes in Toyland Ballet* (Taylor Dance Studio), *Cinderella Ballet* (Julie Rogers Theatre), *Sleeping Beauty Ballet* (Lake Charles Civic Ballet). Tyler earned a B.S. in Theatre and Dance, along with a Minor in Music, from Lamar University. "It has been such a pleasure to bring an amazing piece of work to the stage and to be part of the creative team that made this happen."



GISELL RUBIO (wig stylist) is a Houston-based artist who started her theatre career in 2018 as a costume intern. Gisell is currently the wardrobe supervisor at Stages Theatre. Through her theatre career, she has had the opportunity to grow her costume construction skills and has recently been diving into wig styling. She just completed her first assignment as Costume Designer for *Ms. Holmes and Watson* (Stages Repertory Theatre), and as wig stylist/wardrobe supervisor for *The Latino/Latina/Latinx/Latine Vote* (wig stylist/wardrobe supervisor). Gisell wants to thank everyone who has supported and encouraged her through this exciting journey.



ALEXANDRA SZETO-JOE (Nell Gwyn) is thrilled to be a part of Lionwoman Production's inaugural show! A Houston native, Alexandra splits her time between Texas and New York City, where she earned her BFA from NYU Tisch School of the Arts. Recent credits include: *As You Like It* (Catskill Mountain Shakespeare); *POTUS* (Stages; Regional Premiere); *Georgiana and Kitty: Christmas at Pemberley* (Main Street Theater; Regional Premiere); *The Summer's Tale* (Tapestry Players; American Premiere). Other credits: *The Wickhams: Christmas at Pemberley* (2022), *Miss Bennet: Christmas at Pemberley* (2021), *The Real Inspector Hound* (Main Street Theater); *Salome* (Houston Grand Opera); *The Wolves, Cabaret, Much Ado About Nothing, Machinal* (NYU Tisch School of the Arts). Alexandra is represented by Pastorini-Bosby Talent Agency for Commercial/TV&Film. Special shoutout to her mom and brother for their constant support!



LEAH SMITH (Costume Designer) Previous costume design credits include: *Switzerland*, *POTUS*, *Panto Snow White* (Stages Repertory Theatre); *Fiddler on the Roof*, *The Play That Goes Wrong*, *The Sound of Music* (A.D. Players); *Medea*, *Marriage of Figaro*, *War of the Worlds*, *Nevermore*, *Peer Gynt* (Classical Theatre); *Macbeth*, *Julius Caesar*, *Twelfth Night*, *Richard III*, *Henry V* (Houston Shakespeare Festival); *Heroes of the Fourth Turning* (Rec Room); *Wolf Play*, *The Hunchback of Seville* (Mildred's Umbrella); *Opera Orlando* (Associate Design): *The Secret River* (Titan Theatre); *Medea*, *Richard III*; *Sense and Sensibility*, *Pavilion*, *Fairview*, *Disgraced*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *True West* (Fourth Wall Theatre Company); University of Houston: *Animal Farm*, *Dancing at Lughnasa*, *She Kills Monsters*, *Three Sisters*, *The Miser*, *The Liar*; *Cityscape Kalamazoo*: *Tony & Tina's Wedding*. She previously served as production manager for Terrible Enfants Theater Company, and is now the Costume Shop Manager at Stages. Leah received her MFA in Costume Design from the University of Houston, and her BFA from Western Michigan University.



CAT THOMAS (Mrs. Farley, 11/14/24, and Understudy) has so enjoyed getting to take part in this rehearsal process. She is an actor, director, and producer based in Houston. Recent acting credits include *Always a Bridesmaid*, *See How They Run* (Unity Theatre), Octarine Accord's production of *The Honeycomb Trilogy*. Cat is a Co-founder of the Women led company **Says Who? Productions**, has acted with Indiana's Hoosier Shakes and American Shakespeare Center. She is the Lead Performance Teacher for Stages' Young Artists Conservatory and this season helped put on the Falasteen Arts Festival in downtown Houston. Cat also spends her time dubbing anime with Sentai Filmworks and making independent films. She received her BFA in Acting from the University of Houston's School of Theatre and Dance in 2019.



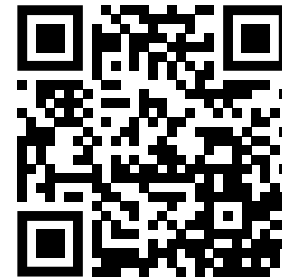
CHARLY TOPPER (Properties Designer, Scenic Painter) is delighted to be part of the first Lionwoman Productions TX stage production ever! Originally from Fort Worth, TX, she served as the Technical Theater Coordinator at Sam Houston State University from 2015-2021. She has been the resident Properties Designer and Scenic Charge Artist for A.D. Players since 2021 and the Properties Designer for Mainstreet Theater Youth since 2023. Favorite credits include: *Fiddler On The Roof* and *The Play That Goes Wrong* (A.D. Players), and *The Lion*, *The Witch*, and *The Wardrobe* and *Fancy Nancy* (Mainstreet Theater Youth).



LIONWOMAN PRODUCTIONS TX

Mission

To present great theater that bridges understanding between people, aiming to lift all voices, celebrate diversity, and affect positive change. We seek to promote the works of local artists, with paid opportunities and visibility for their ideas and creative expression. Lionwoman Productions TX is honored to partner with our 501c3, local, fiscal sponsor, Driven Theater Company, as well as Kaleidoscope Theater, in New York. All donations are tax-deductible.



www.lionwomanproductionstx.com

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Cont'd next page

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www.lionwomanproductionstx.com

DIRECTOR'S NOTES: **Playhouse Creatures**

summons from the late 1660s four real, historical, extraordinary actresses, who were among the first women to perform on the English stage during the Restoration. This is a play about the past. The ghosts of our ancestors, the memories that places and buildings keep, the memories of parents, past relationships, past glories, and past trauma. This is a play about the triumphs, trials and tribulations of five strong, determined women who were there in the beginning of something new. This play is also a brutally honest love letter to the women (and men) who make theatre happen. And while there is great humor and some wonderful, ridiculous comedic moments in the play, there is always a rigorous honesty that these five women live in a world where many are just one paycheck, one fire, one untimely death, one catastrophe away from losing everything they hold dear. But they persist. They persevere.

---- Marshall Mays

Meet the playwright



April De Angelis is an acclaimed playwright who has worked in stage, radio and television. She is known for her powerful exploration of feminist themes and women's lives. Originally trained as an actress, her acclaimed plays, such as "Playhouse Creatures" (1993) and "Jumpy" (2011), blend sharp wit with deep emotional insight. A two-time finalist for the Susan Smith Blackburn playwrighting prize, among other recognitions, she is also recognised for her adaptations, including the stage version of Elena Ferrante's *My Brilliant Friend*. Her work remains a significant force in contemporary British theatre. Television includes *Aristophanes* (Channel 4) and she has written extensively for radio, including the acclaimed adaptation of *Peyton Place* (BBC Radio, 2002). April is currently writing the book of a musical based on the film, *Saving Grace*. Her original musical, *Gin Craze*, received rave reviews at its opening, Theatre Royal Northampton (2021), and was just revived this past season. She is currently under commission to the RSC, Glyndebourne and Fiction House.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH EVENTS

(part of the Lionwoman Productions mission)

- 11/07/24, 6:55pm: Swordplay demonstration for audience
- 11/10/24, 5:30pm: Talkback with the playwright, zooming in from London to speak with the audience
- 11/14/24, 6:30pm: PRIDE NIGHT! With pre-show reception, all are welcome!
- 11/17/24, 2:25pm: Swordplay demonstration for audience

PANEL DISCUSSION:

Women Empowerment: Changing the Landscape

Look for details on our website in 2025!

For all the people who've helped, friends and new connections, THANK YOU for making everything possible!

Lionwoman Productions TX Advisory Board

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the extraordinary cast, crew, and designers!

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Christianne Mays
and
Marshall Mays!*

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from the Book Club:*

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