

### Audition to be Me:

Hello, my name is Caroline Donica. And I would like to audition for the role of myself.

Now, I know my odds of getting this part.

I know I'm not exactly who you have in mind.

Open Ethnicity was just a pat on your back.

Ethnically Ambiguous really meant no color.

Did you think I wouldn't notice that I sat five hours in line to say nine words while all the other girls read full sides?

I'm just here to fill your quota. To quantify, qualify, justify your casting.

After all, you only need one token to put on a play.

Shove me in the back as the maid or a mouse or man number 3.

No one would possibly believe that I could be a princess or a warrior.

I mean even when I was in Mulan, they slapped slanted eyes on the white girl and stuck me in the corner as a statue.

But they sure as hell believe that I'm a man. Or sometimes an evil wolf. Or a rambunctious rat. Whatever is sneaky and sly.

Just push me out when you need to make them laugh.

A yellow no speak English peel that slapsticks into your show.

I'm the prostitute, plaything, puppet. Submissive, silent, a side character.

The tiger mom, trophy wife, tittering like a fantasy fetish.

A lotus flower, porcelain doll, nerdy genius.

Or I can bring a touch of the exotic and erotic. I'll be so hypnotic they won't even notice how many times I've killed myself for them because they didn't see me. How many times they exploited my body because the gold runs through my skin and not my hair.

Now, that's not to say my friends with sunshine hair and a corner of the sky in their eyes have it easy.

They want to smack a blood-soaked slipper across the face of the next casting director who tries to force it on their feet.

But being boxed into something is a hell of a lot easier than being boxed out of everything but abuse.

But I shouldn't give up, you say.

The world will know you if you just hang in.

There's been like two whole movies with Asian people in them this year.

Look how well Kelly Marie Tran was received.

We're taking a step forward.

It won't be long now. That's a guarantee.

Be patient. Be patient. Be patient.

Why do I have to be patient to be equal?

For my face to have worth?

For my story to have value?

You want me to sit around waiting for God -

Oh! There's finally a call for people who look like me.

It's the one shot to leave a legacy.

The long-awaited opportunity to step into the sun.

But I don't speak Mandarin or Cantonese.

I can't tell you about my parents' passage here since the only long day's journey they made was a round trip flight to South Korea when they picked me up.

The only tea ceremony I know is dumping ten pink packets of sweetener into a cup of peach flavored ice.

The only Asian woman I saw in my childhood was Dr. Cristina Yang.

And you don't want the peel because inside the fruit is colorless.

The pale cream in a Westernized pastry packaged and purchased through an Oriental Trading Company.

Never forget you're not one of us, and always remember you're not one of them either.

It's hard being 3 dimensional in a 2d world.

Always auditioning to be me because I am not enough.

Knowing that it doesn't matter how hard I work my ass off. They won't see me beyond the color of my skin, the shape of my eyes, the height of my body, and the accent-less voice.

And five years ago, I was told, "You will never make it as an actress because you're Asian and short."

And four years ago, I was told, "You need to take up martial arts again if you want to be successful."

And three years ago, I was told, "There's no appetite in Hollywood for people who like you."

And two years ago, I was called a racial slur. And when I corrected the actress, she said, "Whatever."

And one year ago, I was told, "You need to change your last name to something more Asian."

And a few months ago when I was waiting for an audition in the hallway, a SCAD student told me, "Don't forget to open your eyes for the audition."

My eyes are not the problem.

My eyes are not the ones that are blind to beauty in broad spectrums.

My eyes are not the ones that wash white over the world.

My eyes are not the ones that shame the scope of shades and shapes.

My eyes are not the ones that hack away at humanity.

And I know that this is the part of my piece, I'm supposed to be strong.

This is where I'm supposed to say, "Damn their lies.

Who are they to say who I am? I don't need their approval, approbation, appreciation.

It's time for my declaration.

I am unapologetically me, and my anthem rings free.

And if you give a damn,

Take me baby,

Take me, baby."

Take me.

Just take me.

Thank you.