

**A NOTE ON COSTUMING:**

Avoid the urge to put these characters in giant foam representations of the letters they play. I invite you to use the history of each letter to know their story and use this to inform how they may dress. They are not two-dimensional caricatures but grounded, measured, three-dimensional characters.

**A NOTE ON NOTATION:**

Single letters surrounded by slashes indicate that the performer makes the sound of the letter. For example /B/ prompts the performer to make the sound "Buh" with as little vowel sound as possible.

Lines that are expressed [in brackets] are open to improvisation.

**A NOTE ON PACE:**

In general, most scenes move quickly. Much of the humor excels from how naturally it can be delivered. Use these parody idioms in your daily life, act like you really work in that office like they did for The Office, anything that will connect you more to this new world to make its language flow naturally.

For the most part, when letters mention the Humans, they do so with an immense amount of love, adoration, and wonder. Their greatest passion is participating in readings which is their chance to show of to, and a performance for, the Humans. Thus getting to understand them as a beloved audience is most Letter's utmost passion.

ACT IScene 1

Empty Stage. Exciting Revelatory music. Then an abrupt stop. ETA enters the stage, hurried, and with papers in-hand. Her steps are loud. She wears a headset.

ETA

Ladies and Gentlemen... and every incredible human that sees me right now!

(Beaming with adoration.)

May I have a suggestion of a language that you speak?

Eta encourages the audience to react but no matter what:

I believe I heard English. Thank you very much.

Blackout. Light quickly bounce back up on JULIET who is spotlight in an interview chair. She has a bag in-tow.

**AN INTRODUCTION SONG.**  
**Contemplative, anticipatory,**  
**strong. The scene below could be**  
**re-written into the song.**

IOTA

(V.O.)

Juliet, You have been recognized by The Humans as a helpful servant. And your dedication to Consonant representation has not gone unnoticed.

JULIET

Where are all the monks? Where did Ireland go!?

IOTA

(V.O.)

You no longer have to worry about... them. Your proven work as a functional fricative has taken an enormous burden off of my shoulders.

JULIET

I swear - I did not copy you Great Iota. I would never do such a thing to He Who Stands Alone. I came up with it just like you guys did!

IOTA

Yes, Juliet - FEAR NOT! While I will relish the loss of serving The Humans their beloved /J/, change must come. Thus, you are officially being invited to join the Order of the Alphabet as the palatal affricate "J". Do you accept?

JULIET

Well I really do more than just the palatal affricate thing right now but...

IOTA

(V.O.)

DO YOU ACCEPT!?

JULIET

God, yes!

IOTA

(V.O.)

Excellent. HR will be with you shortly. We are enchanted and delighted to have your special talents as a member of our team. END TRANSMISSION!

ETA enters, with a clip-board this time.

JULIET

I thought for sure a pair of you guys would walk out. Which are you, H or R?

ETA

That's not funny at all.

JULIET

Oh, um... I'm sorry.

ETA

My name's Eta. I wear a lot of hats here. You must be-

JULIET

Juliet.

ETA

Very good, and you do the palatal.... thing? Can I hear it?

JULIET

Sure... /J/.

ETA

Oh my god. You sound just like him... Wow... He did it. Now Iota is the Last Pure Vowel.

JULIET

I can do a soft version too. Watch-

ETA

Save it for the talent show.

JULIET

Oh-uh... okay?

ETA

Do you have everything you need? There... *is* no going back. You do... *have* to stay forever. Does that work for you?

JULIET

Wait... but I was just working with Ampersand last week and he used to be a part of the Abacedarium right!?

ETA

DO NOT SAY SAY THAT NAME. Ready-steady?

JULIET

You know, sure! Yeah.

A flurry of motion sets off behind JULIET and ETA. The office is being set up. ALPHA also enters. ALPHA has a septum piercing and almost gives finger-gun energy.

ETA

This is-

JULIET

Oh my god. Is that THE Alpha? I love your work in assonance.

ETA

Woah! Slow down newbie!

ALPHA

Oh, Eta it's fine... It's my side hustle, get over it! These suits. Pinch ahold of that ruck sack and let me show ya around, sweetie.

ETA

Alpha will take you on a tour of the facility. Here is a key to your room. We put you with the only other member who does affricatives. You'll be rooming with Charlie. He's a little... out there.

CHARLIE enters. Bookish. Wired. CHARLIE types his reference papers feverishly and never stops working.

JULIET

Thank you. I- it's great to work with you.

ETA

Thank you. I'll take your things to your room.

ETA exits with JULIET's bags.

ALPHA

So- Juliet, huh? Hope you don't have any vials of poison in that bag!

JULIET

No, and wouldn't that... willfully lead people into death?

ALPHA

(Beaming.)

Iiiiiit sure would! It's a awful story anyway. Two kids die... that's the story. Anyway, let's take a walk.

ALPHA leads JULIETTE through the office. XI and OMICRON begins to take their seat at their desk.

JULIET

This day is amazing. I feel like superscript.

ALPHA

Your probably know us best from our readings. When a human sits down to focus on us.

They pass a Reading Hall where a group of letters is currently performing a reading.

It's the time when we we pull out all the stops. We get up in front of The Humans and show them who we really are so well that's it's practically burned into the back of their eyes!

JULIET

Jesus.

ALPHA

And to put on the best show imaginable! Can I hear your sound?

JULIET

Oh my god, really? Sure... Just.. it's uh... it goes like this... /J/.

ALPHA

(Astonished.)

No. Way. Are you... trying to sound like him?

JULIET

Noooooo...

ALPHA

Okay! Just checkin'.

JULIET

If this is show biz, then what's up with all the office work?

ALPHA

Well, some of us do more readings than others. Guys at the front of the Alphabet stay working for the most part but not everybody's so lucky.

JULIET

Oh, I am OUT- I HATE that you guys have a cast system.

ALPHA

And you're right in the middle.

JULIET

Actually I kinda like it here, it's pretty nice.

ALPHA

But we aren't here just to be fireworks in the Human mind. We're also constantly working here - for them - to help them process what we just made them see. We synthesize morals, digitize text, textualize film - anything that helps them make sense of it all.

Because once we're in the head of a Human, we have a responsibility to influence and change the way they think for the rest of their lives for the better. And they don't even realize it. The Order of the Alphabet is such a powerful natural force that most Humans don't realize that by using it they create the greatest product you could ask for: Context.

JULIET

Okaaaaay this is takin' a different turn than I thought.

ALPHA

You wanted the bull, you get the horns. Some of the gigs are really fun. Horror is synthesized into caution - editorial content becomes unbridled rage.

They keep walking. ETA re-enters and works near CHARLIE on the computers.

JULIET

(Referring to ETA.)

I see he's a glyph of few words.

ALPHA

Yeah, he's a silent type.

JULIET

Hey, I noticed the posters for the intramural cursive team.

ALPHA

Oh, do you sign?

JULIET

Oh, I dabble.

ALPHA

Hey, whatever gets the ink pumpin'. Not really my thing.

They continue to an area near Xi.

ALPHA

This is our quantities department. Right now we're operating under a Roman system which is, admittedly, really confusing. Iota is usually here to handle single quantities, and Victor there takes care of larger groups like a handful.

JULIET

Wow... you guys need a new system.

ALPHA

Hey, this is a far cry from what it was.

JULIET

Oh my god, it was WORSE?

ALPHA

And you see Mr. Trouble over there in the corner... That's Xi. He can handle double the workload that Victor can in the quantities department. Although, he's mostly in here filling in as punishment for being so disruptive.

JULIET

Oh, I've heard of him. Ole dead cartoon eyes.

ALPHA

Ole... three of him in a row on a cartoon bottle of liquor.

JULIET

Did he even *exist* before cartoons.

ALPHA

Who cares!

(Whispers.)

I heard he was a porn addict.

Anyway... Lambda, Delta, Charlie, and Mu also come in for some really big quantities that I can't even imagine. But that's kinda rare. And that's quantities.

JULIET

Wait- Hold the phoneme... Aren't Charlie and Foxtrot involved with the weather too? Like aren't they degrees or something?

ALPHA

You really know your stuff. But no, those departments don't collaborate.

JULIET

Well, then how do people know how hot and cold it is?

ALPHA

We work with a temp agency.

BETA enters.

Beta!

BETA

How ARE weeeeeeee!?

Alpha and Beta hug.

ALPHA

Beta's in charge of housing on the back end and wardrobe for our reading.

BETA

Fabulous darling. Excellent to meet the illustrious Juliette. Do we have any food or textile allergies?

JULIET

No allergies- I know I'm kind of slim but I'll eat anything! Love kerning, leading. But as far as clothes I'm allergic to Comic Sans.

BETA

I would never do that to you. Don't worry. Now, honey I have noticed that your ascender goes a little bit lower than most of us do... is that... is that a choice?

JULIET

Yes, that is a choice I've made.

BETA

Conviction-passion-sarcasm-we-love-it. I'm here to make you look good. Who knows... maybe some day you'll be an illumination.

JULIET

What's an illumination?

ALPHA

You ever see Omicron do "Once upon a time."

JULIET

Oh, iconic - I could never do that.

BETA

Don't sell yourself lower cased. We'll get everything set in your room and let you get acclimated. Alpha and I have some "testing" to do.

ALPHA

Let me know if you have any questions at any time, Juliette. And if anything gets weird, always inform your supervising vowel. Eta's right down the hall.

ETA does not stop typing.

ETA

Do NOT... try to talk to me.

JULIET

Absolutely. Thanks.

ALPHA and BETA exit. JULIET walks over to CHARLIE who types so quickly it can't possibly be accurate. He doesn't stop working.

JULIET

Hey...

CHARLIE

/CH/.

JULIET

I'm Juliet.

(Extending a hand.)

Nice to meet you...

CHARLIE

Charlie...

JULIET

...What are you workin' on?

CHARLIE

Di- ... You just made me lose my... Ugh- Hold on... Digitizing.

JULIET

Alright... well you enjoy.

JULIET shakes her head and goes to the quantities area near XI. She seems really familiar with the equipment.

XI

Hey. Chuck over there can be kinda particular.

JULIET

Yeah He kinda seems to enoy his space.

XI

And let me guess, you think's there's buried treasure under me.

JULIET

I... did you hear... Alpha.

XI

Yeah I heard *Alpha*. I heard you too, J-hole.

JULIET

Hey, I'm sorry Xi. I love your work in railroad signs. I really don't know what I was saying. I'm just tryin to... fit in.

XI

It's not up to you to do that right or wrong. If you're here you fit. And I guess all they want is more characters who treat me like I'm just a place for a signature.

JULIET

Who's work are you filling in for?

XI

What do you care?

JULIET

I have been known to synthesize the quantity out of a Roman Numeral before. It's Iota isn't it.

XI

Yeah, and I still have mine.

JULIET

God... he won't do *any* leg work. If you have multiples give me the last in the series.

XI

What?

JULIET

If you have a secondary or tertiary 'I' - Let me do it.

XI

Really?

JULIET

Yeah they Greeks use to have me do it freelance all the time. Had to do it by hand back then but they still got the the idea out if it.

XI

Impressive. Don't want to get know for it, though. You'll get them to make you do it all the time, trust me.

JULIET

Hey, do you guys have the tech that shows you what our humans interpret from the information we send??

XI

I mean, I can show you the bare bones. The coding behind it. But for us it would be like trying to understand something from another dimension. Ultimately, we inform them, and there behavior informs us. They choose what we get to do and we get to do that with as much artistry and passion as possible. Readings here are LAVISH, grotesque even. Very high production value.

YOGH enters and walks directly to the water cooler with his Nalgene Bottle. He fills it up and coyly acts like he doesn't see XI.

JULIET

(Makes sure they're alone.)

You sound like a big fan.

XI

When I'm not thinking of ways to shake the Abecedarium from it's roots.

(Nasty smile.)

JULIET

You're kinda intense. Let's hang out some time!

XI

You hear that Yogh, the new girl's hitting on me.

YOGH

Oooooo, look at you.

JULIET

No I just mean we should hang out.

(Getting her first look at YOGH.)

We should all hang out.

XI

Yeah, hang out Yogh.

JULIET

I meant some other time.

YOGH

Well I can't hang out right now, I 'm late and I need to run a gerund. I'm Yogh.

XI

He's just a space away from being the last letter. Hope he doesn't fall off!

JULIET

Juliet, nice to meet you.

XI

Don't ignore me.

YOGH

Well, you know I wasn't always the next in line to be last... but if you're looking to hear *that* conspiracy, rest assured that Xi is gonna give it to you.

XI

Oh, I'm gonna give it to you.

JULIET

I don't- I don't think I want to get into all of that.

XI

X gon' give it to you.

YOGH

Xi, don't. They really don't want us acting like authorities over that situation.

XI

I'm not...

(Deep breath.)

But don't you think it's just a little bit odd that Ampersand got into the alphabet just because of the song? Somethin fishy goin' on there....

YOGH

Put it with the rest of your X-Files.

XI

(Shaking his head.)

That was a great show. I can't believe that you just said such a lame thing with a reference to such a great show.

A bell rings out.

YOGH

Okay, gotta go.

YOGH exits. XI gets ready to leave too.

JULIET

Woah. There's a Bell?

XI

Yeah. It's the only way we know when to leave.

JULIET

What is this, the show where they are saved thereby?

XI

Wow Alpha and Iota must write your jokes.

JULIET

I'm just glad I have a better chance to get to know you guys.

XI

Good timing getting here I guess! Wait- what?

JULIET

Who was that?

XI

That was just Yogh, they're even farther in line than me. You want to... know us?

JULIET

Not Biblically!

XI

Oh, I was gonna say - we just met.

JULIET

I've just never seen an ascender like that.

XI

Excuse me?

JULIET

It was just... SO... Straight.

XI

Does Eta need to get the HR hat on?

JULIET

No, I'm not- it's not sexual. I'm not trying to make a diphthong with them or anything. Pretty fascinated though...

XI

Yeah, most people just point out how tall they are.

JULIET

Do you guys hang out?

XI

Oh, we're thick a thieves. Back of the list buds. We try to help each other. Except Upsilon The Second, or Double-Upsilon as he loves to call himself.

JULIET

Why?

XI

No, Double-U.

JULIET

Ugh- No. Why don't you help Double Upsilon?

XI

He's a Gemini.

JULIET

Oh...

XI

Just kidding. He's a vowel. He doesn't need help. Wanna grab dinner? Just - like - to hang out? There's a great drop-shadow spot by my place.

JULIET

I don't know what else I'm gonna do.

XI

Yogi goes there every night. We'll probably run into them there too.

JULIET

I don't care- sure?

The environment around XI and JULIET starts to change again, this time into a restaurant.

## Scene 2

XI

Right this way.

JULIET

Hey I was gonna ask you something.

XI

Yes, Yogh is single.

JULIET

No - Do you think there would be much openness from the vowels to us... trying out some new sounds i- in... in readings??

XI

Oh my god, you're a little agitator too.

JULIET

I wouldn't have joined if I didn't really want to help the Humans express themselves as close to how they would naturally express it as possible. And I know that I can do that. Why would I do anything to limit my abilities when I know I'm trying to do something like that? Let alone somebody else doing it to me.

XI

Uh... Okay I guess it's nice to have a friend who's can monologue.

Beat.

Wait- What noise do you think you're so good at anyway?

**JULIET'S I WANT SONG. Longing with French influence. It becomes a duet with Xi and an I want song for all letters who are being suppressed.**

JULIET

(Soft J.)

/J/.

XI

(He is very surprised and laughs a lot.)

What the fuck was that!?

JULIET

I don't know I just thought it sounded fancier.

XI

It DID. I loved it! Please don't get me wrong but... yeah I would not share that with anybody else.

YOGH enters and joins them.

JULIET

I figured.

YOGH

Figured what.

JULIET

No- Nothing.

XI

No, do it.

YOGH

Do what?

Beat.

**REPRISE, brief, of JULIET's I WANT SONG.**

JULIET  
(Softer this time.)

/J/.

YOGH  
Hey, I used to do that!

JULIET  
Really?

YOGH  
Yeah, they made me stop.

JULIET  
Well what in Wingdings ARE you guys allowed to do here!?  
This organization isn't worth Sanskrit.

XI  
Drink.

YOGH  
Uh... we need to get you away from Xi.

XI  
I just told them to only practice in the shower!

YOGH  
Jules, I wouldn't get brave with that stuff. Never even RISK  
the potential to take away a vowel's job. They're the  
structure of this whole operation.

XI  
Easy there, Yo. Normally I'd be all about it, Juliet. I'd  
even help you do it. But altering operations is a recipe for  
a pissed Iota.

YOGH  
And you don't want to get backspaced.

XI  
Okay - NOW we need to lighten the mood. I swear, you are the  
most paranoid letter on this character map.

YOGH  
No, she just seems nice. Not just anybody can sound that  
luxurious.

XI  
Okay... let's eat.

Scene 3

A wealth of other Letters enter and

signify XI, YOGH, and JULIET's entrance, including Quopa (who wears a bowler hat). They fill up the space which is now the bar. YOGH, XI, and JULIET enter to see a sign for "The Dangling Participle."

YOGH

This is THE place to be for Letters on the back end.

XI

Quopa!!!

QUOPA

Bless my serifs! If it isn't everybody's favorite Chromosomes.

XI

Yeah, good luck getting us to that kinda job site at the same time, though!

YOGH

It's fine we can just double up at the next appointment. What could go wrong?

UPSILON enters and lingers by the door.

QUOPA

And our new, Shakespearean character...

JULIET

Yes, Juliet. It's fascinating to be here.

QUOPA

And you came at a good time. We used to do word processing on quill and scroll! - *Oh my god.*

YOGH

What?

QUOPA

Why is she *always* here?

XI

Who?

QUOPA

Upsilon. I swear to GOD she is everywhere I go.

YOGH

Somebody's got an admirer.

XI

More like a stalker.

JULIET  
 Woah!

QUOPA  
 No, Xi's right.

UPSILON approaches.  
 XI  
 It's a serious issue - Upsi-daisey!

UPSILON  
 Good evening back end. And it it... Julius?

JULIET  
 Juliet.

UPSILON  
 Ah yes, well... both of them were written to die anyway, so... I wanted to be sure to greet you especially as I myself am new to Vowelship. I took it over from Victor.

JULIET  
 Oh, I see. I'm honored.

UPSILON  
 Of course. Listen, I manage the back end for readings and I just wanted to make sure that this "Soft sound" idea is something you're just doing as a hobby.

JULIET  
 Oh, uh... Yes... it's just something I do among friends.

UPSILON  
 Okay, because I know it sounds fun but it's actually been done before. It's old, actually, and really boring now so...

JULIET  
 Thank you for... that insight.

UPSILON  
 Oh, of course! Just remember, we have you here because we love what you've done. Give us *that*. Speaking of which, I love what you've done with your hair, Quopa.

QUOPA  
 I am hearing a hat... below which I am bald.

UPSILON  
 (Laughs too hard.)  
 Quippy devil, I'm talking about that hungry caterpillar on your glottal-stopping lips.

QUOPA  
 Can I talk to you over here for a second?

Quopa and UPSILON exit.

JULIET

Well that was inappropriate.

XI

That's vowel privilege for you.

JULIET

This is the thirds time I've wanted to ask so I guess I'll just say it. I need a drink.

ETA is bartending and gives JULIET a drink.

How do you guys put up with it all?

YOGH

I mean we do it together.

XI

Syntax, Yogh.

YOGH

There are letters that can do it alone but most of us know how to help each other. Especially on the back half.

XI

Yogh likes a hot slug massage.

YOGH

Xi likes to be in the bathroom with his laptop for really long periods of time.

XI

Because that's where the connection is best.

JULIET

Alright, I mean as long as you guys are good.

XI

The food doesn't hurt either. Let's not forget why we came here. Hold tight.

XI exits.

JULIET

That glyph contains multitudes.

YOGH

Yeah, he's pretty great.

JULIET

How long have you guys been together?

YOGH

What? Ugh- Sorry I said it that way. He's an alright glyph.

JULIET

Was that the only new sound that you've dabbled in?

YOGH

Listen... I'm sorry if you find this rude but you're still giving me slight Iota vibes when I look at first glance. It makes me kinda feel like I have to hold my cards to my chest. You'll understand after you see some of the things Iota likes to "brings down from the top."

JULIET

Who made him king in the castle?

YOGH

He's in charge because he's a whole word on his own.

JULIET

Then shouldn't it be Alpha?

YOGH

She doesn't do it capitalized. Besides she's also pretty swamped with roadside assistance stuff.

JULIET

But... Eta. Eta works hardest out of anybody-

YOGH

I before E, Juliet.

JULIET

Oh... right.

XI returns. He gives food to each of them. It comes conveniently wrapped.

XI

Quopa and Upsilon are making out again.

JULIET

Let me guess, now Quopa's gonna be in way more readings?

XI and YOGH laugh.

YOGH

Not a chance.

XI

Hey, you should come to our costume party. You can wear any font.