

The States Collection – Rhode Island – I Want to be Brave
By Claudia Haas
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CAST: 3; (2 female; 1 male or female)

Carey: older teen/young adult (male or female); a volunteer at the Lighthouse

Maddie: 14 (female); she's going through "stuff" and it's not easy

Ida: (14) female; Once dubbed, the "bravest woman in the world," Ida is a helper

PLACE: Ida Lewis Lighthouse, Newport Beach, Rhode Island

TIME: Summer, today

SYNOPSIS: Maddie looks for help during a difficult time from Ida Lewis

TAGS: heroine, Ida Lewis, Rhode Island, lighthouse, teen crisis, rural, rural, brave

Lights up on CAREY and MADDIE as they enter a room in the building that was home to Ida Lewis.

CAREY

You're here a lot lately. It's too bad we don't have a punch card where after ten visits, you get one free. You must really love lighthouses.

MADDIE

Ida ... inspires me.

CAREY

I hear that a lot. It's nice to have a home-grown heroine in our backyard. I have to get ready for a tour but I'm not supposed to leave you alone.

MADDIE

I won't touch anything. Or sit on anything Or – do anything. I just want to feel her presence. I want to be brave like her.

CAREY

Brave? Like going out in a rowboat during an icy, winter storm to rescue people? Not many people have that courage. You know she rescued a sheep once?

MADDIE

I think that might be my favorite story.

CAREY

You have about five minutes. And then my tour of ten kids from the local camp will be here. Trust me, you don't want to experience that.

MADDIE

Thanks. Five minutes is all I need.

CAREY

Now where did I put my ear plugs?

(CAREY exits.)

MADDIE

How'd you do everything you did, Ida? I want to be fearless. Brave. Like you.

(IDA appears.)

IDA

I didn't think about the worse that could happen. I only thought of what needed to be done.

MADDIE

Whoa! You're an actor, right? For the tour.

IDA

No.

MADDIE

Someone playing a prank?

IDA

Try again.

MADDIE

I don't want to say "ghost" because that scares me. Everything scares me. But "ghosts" really scare me and I'm not brave.

IDA

I just thought – you have been here a lot lately – and maybe – you had something you wanted to say to me.

MADDIE

... I'm scared...

IDA

Just think of me as a figment of your imagination. And your figment is very curious as to why you have come here every day for the past ten days.

MADDIE

I'm going to turn around and not look at you, okay. Because maybe then I can make believe I am talking to myself.

(Beat.)

IDA

I'm waiting.

MADDIE

It's my mother. She's ... sick. And I want to help. But I don't know how. Because there's nothing I can do. I really want to be brave for her. And I really, really don't know how to do it. But you did. You were brave all the time.

IDA

Those rescues? If I had time to think about it, maybe I wouldn't have been so ... brave. It's amazing what you can do when someone is in the water yelling, "help." But there were other times when I wasn't brave. Other times, when I sat in my room and cried.

MADDIE

Not you! Not the person who was called "The Bravest Woman in America."

IDA

When my father took sick and I had to care for him... at the same time that my older sister was horribly ill and needed a lot of care – it was easy to give in to the sadness.

MADDIE

But you didn't. You worked the lighthouse and rowed your siblings to shore to go to school. You just kept going.

IDA

And that's what kept me going. There were things I had to do. What do you have to do?

MADDIE

Not a lot.

IDA

What can you do? To make things easier.

MADDIE

I don't know. I'm useless.

IDA

Can you hold a hand?

MADDIE

I guess.

IDA

Because people like to be touched. You can hold your mother's hand.

MADDIE

That's not being brave.

IDA

It's hugely brave. You'll see. You'll forget your fears for a bit as you stroke her hand. Can you tell her some of your favorite days with her?

MADDIE

I might cry.

IDA

Not if you pick something silly.

MADDIE

There was the time an orangutang at the zoo tried to swipe my frozen banana. Luckily he was behind bars!

IDA

There you go. Think about the good. Cook a meal. Dust a shelf. Kiss her forehead. And when you get tired of being "brave," go somewhere alone and let yourself be sad. Let yourself be whatever yourself needs to be. Just don't stay in the world of "sad" too long because you have things to do.

CAREY (O.S.)

Times up.

MADDIE

I have to go.

IDA

I know.

(MADDIE finally faces her.)

MADDIE

I'm Maddie.

IDA

Nice to meet you, Maddie. See, you're already brave.

MADDIE

.....

IDA

You just had a conversation with me. Am I figment or a ghost? Anything's possible. You can take on anything.

(And somehow – IDA exits.)

CAREY

They're getting off the bus now. I don't know if my nerves can take all that energy.

MADDIE

Be brave. Ida will help you.

(MADDIE exits and CAREY follows.)

END OF PLAY