



## Archbishop Hannan High School Blackfriars Audition Packet

### ***This Murder Was Staged***

by Patrick Greene and Jason Pizzarello

#### **Synopsis**

It's opening night of a brand-new mystery play, but just as the killer is about to be revealed, the body of the play's director falls onstage instead. In that moment, the theater becomes an active crime scene, and everyone from cast to crew to even the audience becomes a suspect. But how is the intrepid detective supposed to find the killer when everyone and their mother (literally) has a motive to want the demanding director gone? *This Murder Was Staged* is a fast-paced, backstabbing, backstage comedy from two of the writers of *The Alibis* and *Rogues' Gallery*. For questions or more information, please contact Mrs. Siemann at [ksiemann@hannanhigh.org](mailto:ksiemann@hannanhigh.org).

#### **Performance Dates at The Fuhrmann Auditorium**

October 3, 2024 at 7pm

October 4, 2024 at 7pm

October 5 at 1pm and 7pm

#### **Audition Dates & Location**

Saturday, August 10, 2024 from 9am-12pm, Room 308

#### **Audition Process & Instructions**

Auditions will consist of readings from the script. Students will use the provided audition sides in this packet and should prepare based on what roles they are interested in.

Any student may sign up to audition by clicking the sign-up genius link below. Audition time slots will be in 5 minute increments. Resumes and headshots will be accepted but are **not** required. Please print out the audition form provided below so you can indicate your character preferences, availability during rehearsals, and other information. Students should have their audition form filled out and ready to turn in when they walk into the audition room. Upon walking into the audition, please state your name, grade level, and which roll you will be reading.

Please take some time to review the play synopsis, character summaries, and other information provided. This will help you decide on the roles for which you would like to audition.

## Audition Sign Up Form

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/70A0845A5AB2EAAFE3-50422172-auditions>

Access Code: STAGED

## Rehearsal Schedule

Rehearsals will begin Monday, August 12th. Please see the rehearsal calendar in this packet.

Tech Week will take place at the Fuhrmann Auditorium with the following schedule:

- Saturday, September 28: 9am-4pm
- Monday, September 30: 3:30pm-9pm
- Tuesday, October 1: 3:30pm-9pm
- Wednesday, October 2: 8am-6pm Tech Day
- Thursday, October 3: Call - 5pm, Showtime - 7pm
- Friday, October 4: Call - 5pm, Showtime - 7pm
- Saturday, October 5: Call - 11am, Showtime - 1pm; Call - 5pm, Showtime - 7pm
- Set Strike will follow the final performance

Rehearsals may be added/changed depending on need. Once the show is cast, a more detailed calendar will be sent out regarding the rehearsal schedule and actors called for each day. **All actors must be available during tech week. No actor or crew member may miss rehearsal during tech week.**

**\*\*\*Conflicts must be noted on the audition form prior to the beginning of rehearsals. Your rehearsal availability may affect casting.\*\*\***

## Remember:

Casting is subjective and completely based on someone else's opinion. You will not get cast in every role you want, and sometimes you won't get cast at all. If you are not cast in this show, you should still celebrate the fact that you gave it your best shot. If this is not the right show for you, we hope to see you at the next audition.

## Characters

This show is written for actors to have multiple parts. Directors reserve the right to either double roles or split up ensemble roles to further expand the overall cast. **Detective Drake & Sinclair Hemmings will not be double cast in another role.** Characters listed in order of appearance.

**KEIRA GIMBAL** – (f) Lead actress/Lucy Savere. The leading lady and she'll do anything to keep it that way. Always cold. (Wears a dress and sunglasses.)

**TAYLOR FRANKLIN** – (f) Supporting actress/Carla Veneer. Ambitious attention seeker. Desperately wants a bigger role in everything whether it's a play or a murder investigation. Accident prone. (Always over-dressed to impress.)

**MARK TRUMBALL** – (m) Supporting actor/Professor Zrak. A rule follower, nervous, happy to have a role, and wishes they were getting back on track. Wears a sweater vest, and always seems to be retucking his shirt. (As the professor, glasses.)

**THORNTON JACKSON** – (m) Lead actor/Dash McCann. Has no idea he’s as dumb as a rock. (As Thornton, he always wears a jaunty hat. As Dash, he wears a scarf, and is constantly throwing it over his shoulder.)

**SUZANNA PHILLIPS** – (f) Supporting actress/Martha Will. An old pro who never got her shot at the lead. Bitter and over it all and can’t believe she’s surrounded by so many idiots. (Wears a sweater and comfortable pants. She’s ready to go home.)

**TRUDY MITCHELL** – (f) Stage Manager. Sarcastic but honest. (Wears a headset.)

**DETECTIVE KENDRA DRAKE** – (f) A police detective. No nonsense. (Wears a trench coat.)

**SINCLAIR HEMMINGS** – (m) Director. Does anyone like him? (Wears turtlenecks.)

**JASON GREENE** – (m) Playwright. A bit...scattered (Completely unkempt.)

**GRETA CRANSTON** – (f) Producer/Owner. Always trying to make a buck. (Wears shoulder pads.)

**CONSTANCE FLUGELBERT** – (f) Theatre Donor. Severe. (Hasn’t changed styles since the 40s.)

**HAROLD BUND** – (m) Set designer. Very angry. (Wears overalls.)

**SYLVIA LAFEVRE** – (f) Lighting designer. Also very angry. (Wears vibrant colors.)

**SCOUT TATUM** – Costume designer. Again, very angry. (Wears something that flows.)

**ALWYN GREY** – Choreographer. You guessed it! Angry. (Wears tights.)

**SAMMY MULVANEY** – Marketing Director. Angry, indeed. (Wears a smart suit.)

**XANDER BELL** – Telemarketer. Rather pleasant, actually. (Wears a shirt and tie.)

**CARL P. CUSTODIAN** – (m) The custodian. (Dresses like a custodian.)

**DAME MAGRAFF** – (f) A local arts critic. (Wears a vest.)

**CAST OF THE PEANUTS** – Charlie Brown, Lucy, Linus, Patty. (You’ll see.)

**MARSHA HUMBOLT** – (f) Audience member. (Dresses casually.)

**CAROL HUMBOLT** – (f) Another audience member, her sister. (Also dresses casually.)

\*\*\*The genders of the following characters can be changed for a production’s needs. Along with name changes, their pronouns mentioned (or any other gender references) in the script can be changed to suit the production:\*\*\*

**DET. DRAKE** (f) can become **KEN** (m)

**TRUDY** (f) can become **TERRY**, or **TERRI** (m)

**HAROLD** (m) can become **HAL** (f)

**SYLVIA** (f) can become **SAL** (m)

**SCOUT, ALWYN, SAMMY, & XANDER** can remain the same names & be any gender

**DAME** (f) can become **DANE** (m)

**MARSHA** (f) can become **MARSHALL** (m)

**CAROL** (f) can become **CONNOR** (m)

# BLACKFRIARS

## *This Murder Was Staged* Audition Form

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
*(First) (Middle) (Last)*

Grade Level: \_\_\_\_\_

Hannan Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Height: \_\_\_\_\_ Hair Color: \_\_\_\_\_

Roles you would like to be considered for:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Are you willing to take ANY role? (*Circle*) YES / NO

Special Skills (*dance, musical instruments, etc.*): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Past Theatre Experience:

Play:	Role:	Organization:
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

**CONFLICTS:**

Rehearsals begin Monday, August 12, 2024 - see the general rehearsal schedule listed below. Please list **ANY known conflicts** with this rehearsal and production schedule. All cast and crew members **MUST** be present for tech week and all performances. A more detailed schedule for each rehearsal will be sent once rehearsals begin. This is a commitment and it takes everyone to put together a successful show. Two unexcused absences from rehearsal will result in your role being recast.

***Your availability for rehearsals may affect casting decisions.***

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## August 2024

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
28	29	30	31	1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
				<i>(8th/9th 1st Day)</i>	<i>(All Grades 1st Day)</i>	AUDITIONS 9am-12pm
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
	Read Through 3:30pm - 5:30pm			Rehearsal 3:30pm - 5:30pm		
		<i>(Ring Mass, 6pm)</i>		Scene 1.1 Pages 9-16	<i>(Ring Dance)</i>	
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
		Rehearsal 3:30pm - 5:30pm		Rehearsal 3:30pm - 5:30pm		
	<i>(Meet the Teacher Night)</i>	Scenes 1.2 & 1.3 Pages 16-23		Scene 1.4 Pages 23-30		<i>(Crimson &amp; Navy Gala)</i>
25	26	27	28	29	30	31
		Rehearsal 3:30pm - 5:30pm		Rehearsal 3:30pm - 5:30pm		
		Scene 1.5 Pages 31-36		Scene 1.6 Pages 36-44		<i>(Back to School Dance)</i>

## September/October 2024

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Labor Day No School	Rehearsal 3:30pm - 5:30pm		Rehearsal 3:30pm - 5:30pm		
		Scenes 2.1 Pages 45-55		Scenes 2.2 & 2.3 Pages 55-63 (Keira Exit)		
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
		Rehearsal 3:30pm - 5:30pm		Rehearsal 3:30pm - 5:30pm		
		Scenes 2.3 & 2.4 Pages 63-70		Scene 2.5 Pages 71-77		
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
		Rehearsal 3:30pm - 5:30pm		Rehearsal 3:30pm - 6:30pm		Rehearsal 9am - 1pm
		Scene 2.5 Pages 78-85		Polish/Review		<i>Run Show</i>
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
	Rehearsal 3:30pm - 6:30pm	Rehearsal 3:30pm - 6:30pm		Rehearsal 3:30pm - 6:30pm		Tech Rehearsal 9am - 4pm
	<i>(Act 1 - Run &amp; Work)</i>	<i>(Act 2 - Run &amp; Work)</i>		<i>(Run Show)</i>		@ Fuhrmann
29	30	Oct 1	Oct 2	Oct 3	Oct 4	Oct 5
	Tech Rehearsal 3:30pm - 9pm	Tech Rehearsal 3:30pm - 9pm	Tech Day 8am - 6pm			11am Call 1pm Show
	@ Fuhrmann	@ Fuhrmann	@ Fuhrmann	5:00 Call 7:00 Show	5:00 Call 7:00 Show	5:00 Call 7:00 Show

\*\*\*Calendar is subject to change\*\*\*

## AUDITION SIDES

*Please choose one of the following monologues/scenes to perform at your audition.  
We may ask you to read other material for different roles in the audition.*

### **KEIRA / SUZANNA / MARK**

**KEIRA:** *(As Lucy Savere:)* It's actually quite simple, you see?

**MARK:** *(As Professor Zrak:)* Yes, I've figured it out myself...but you can say it first.

**SUZANNA:** *(As Martha Will:)* Oh, can it, Professor. You couldn't figure your way out of a phone booth.

**MARK:** *(As Professor Zrak:)* I most certainly could, and have on several occasions, except that one time, but those of us more worldly are aware of the fact that Amsterdam phonebooths are famously difficult.

**SUZANNA:** *(As Martha Will:)* Has anyone ever told you that you are an insufferable as— *(She's about to say "ass" but gets cut off.)*

**TAYLOR:** *(As Carla Veneer:)* Asinine! Will the both of you shut up! Go on, detective.

**KEIRA:** *(As Lucy Savere:)* Thank you, Carla. As I was saying, it's actually quite simple. The killer is right here in this closet. I know this because I lured him in here the same way you catch a mouse.

**THORNTON:** *(As Dash McCann:)* You put cheese in there?

**KEIRA:** *(As Lucy Savere:)* No, Dash, not cheese, but I did set a trap. And when I open this closet door, you will find the killer. He thought he could escape through his secret trap door in the back, but I disabled the latch. He went in, as he has so many times before, but this time, he could not come out. Not until now...

*(With a flourish, KEIRA, as Lucy, opens the closet door. A man, SINCLAIR HEMMINGS, stands there looking stricken. There is a pause as everyone takes in the unexpected face behind the door—are they acting, or are they truly surprised? After a brief moment, SINCLAIR falls face first onto the ground.)*

**KEIRA:** *(As Lucy Savere...but also not:)* Ahh...well, this isn't the gardener...maybe it's the... plumber, or the killer may have stashed yet another body...uh...

**THORNTON:** *(Breaking character:)* Is that Sinclair?

**SUZANNA:** *(Breaking character:)* Is he okay?

**KEIRA:** *(Desperately trying to remain in character:)* Yes, that's Sinclair...Pipe...man, the... plumber, whom we have not ever seen or even heard about up until now, but who has tragically been murdered. By, whoever still remains in this closet...

*(KEIRA, as Lucy, looks in the closet. No one is there.)*

**KEIRA:** *(Still trying:)* Who seems to have escaped. The truth is—

**MARK:** *(Breaking character:)* I think he's actually hurt.

**KEIRA:** *(Still:)* Yes, hurt to death. Poor plumber. And the killer has gotten away. The truth is, in life, not all mysteries are solved.

*(A voice is heard over the speakers.)*

**TRUDY:** *(From the speakers, or from off:)* Players, please hold.

*(The cast freezes.) (TRUDY, the stage manager, enters. She has a headset on. TRUDY walks over to SINCLAIR and bends down.)*

**TRUDY:** Hey Sinclair... You okay? Sinclair? *(To the back of the house:)* Can we bring the house lights up?

*(The house lights go up.)*

**MARK:** *(To the audience:)* Live theatre, am I right, folks?

*(The cast tries to laugh it off and play it cool. TRUDY is still trying in vain to rouse SINCLAIR.)*

**TRUDY:** *(Looking up, to everyone in the audience:)* Is there a doctor in the house?

**THORNTON:** *(As Dash:)* I'm a doctor!

**SUZANNA:** Sweetie, you're not a doctor.

## **DETECTIVE DRAKE**

**DET. DRAKE:** Here's what I understand. Here's what I — *(Searching for a spotlight:)* Where's my light? Terrible. Terrible lighting. Here's what I understand—There is an unsolved murder in this theater. A murder! Right now. In my profession we usually lack suspects but here we are with a room full of them and more nonsensical motivations than I can count and yet we are no closer to the truth than we were when the play ended and this mess began. We don't even have body! Hahaha. How's that for evidence?! You may think this case is a farce but I think it's really quite serious. A man is dead. Not a beloved man, clearly, but a man nonetheless. And that deserves a serious response. Now I know someone saw something. Someone had to see the body being moved. Now where is he? Where is Sinclair? Where is he?



## **DETECTIVE DRAKE**

**DET. DRAKE:** Now, if I am not mistaken, that is the body of one Sinclair Hemmings, the director of this tepid, and listless production.

**KEIRA:** Is it really necessary to trash our show right now?

**DET. DRAKE:** I don't deal in opinions, lady. I deal in facts. Fact: Sinclair Hemmings was murdered. Fact: The plotting in the second act was weak, and all of your performances, except for his (*Points to THORNTON:*) were unfocused and trite.

**THORNTON:** Thank you, doctor.

**DET. DRAKE:** (*Ignoring him:*) Fact: There is a murderer or murderers in our midst. Ladies and gentlemen and some children whose parents are now regretting bringing them to this show, we are witness to a crime and I ask everyone to stay seated. There is a killer among us. And I, Detective Kendra Drake, intend to find the culprit. (*Points to MARK:*) You!

**MARK:** I didn't do it!

**DET. DRAKE:** I didn't say you did. I just said, "you." But by the way you reacted, you're now a suspect.

## **DETECTIVE DRAKE**

**DET. DRAKE:** There is something I must say.

**SINCLAIR:** If you must.

**DET. DRAKE:** I must. (*She stares him down. Dramatic beat.*) Ever since I was a little girl...<sup>15</sup> (*She struggles to find her light onstage.*) Where's my... I can't— (*Finding her light again:*) That's better. You really ought to invest in a proper spot. (*She looks out delivering this to the audience.*) Anyway, as I was saying, ever since I was a little girl I dreamed of being a police detective. My father used to tell me— He was a rough Southerner at his core even though we lived in Buffalo, New York—

**SINCLAIR:** —This really isn't necessary.

**DET. DRAKE:** Please. Let me finish. This is my big monologue. (*Somewhat under her breath:*) We talked about this...

**SINCLAIR:** You've had all evening to work it in.

**TRUDY:** What are you two talking about?

**DET. DRAKE:** (*Determined to finish:*) My father he'd say, "Louanne." (*Slipping into a terrible*

*Southern accent:*) “Louanne, get ov’er here. What are doin messin with them there, handcuffs?” (*Normal voice:*) And I’d say, Pa—I’m playin cops and robbers. There’s been a murder and I’m gonna solve it. (*Snapping back to the father’s voice:*) “You ain’t solvin nothin’.” (*Back to child:*) But Pa! (*Father:*) “Cause you ain’t nothin. You ain’t been nothin. And you ain’t ne’er gonna be nothin’ Get that through your thick Yankee skull. Now go get me my can of gas-o-leane.” (*Child:*) Gas-o-line? What for? (*Father:*) “Cause I’m gonna burn’d down this house and all the evidence with it.” (*Child:*) But—

**SINCLAIR:** —Okay, okay, stop.

**DET. DRAKE:** What? Was it the accent?

**SINCLAIR:** No, the accent was fine. I loved how it made no sense, but also perfect sense.

**DET. DRAKE:** Good, right, that’s what I was going for.

## **THORNTON / KEIRA**

*(THORNTON and KEIRA are back in their characters from A Spot of Murder as they rehearse. They are just running lines, so KEIRA’s performance isn’t as spirited, but THORNTON is still going for it.)*

**KEIRA:** *(As Lucy Savere, but not really committed:)* Your latest movie was a bomb, isn’t that right, Mr. McCann?

**THORNTON:** *(As Dash McCann:)* Please, call me Dash.

**KEIRA:** Is that your real name?

**THORNTON:** *(Looking out:)* It’s the name my fans have come to know and love, and that’s all that matters.

**KEIRA:** Except they don’t love you as much anymore, do they? The public has grown weary of you. You’re an old hat, Dash.

**THORNTON:** It’s not true. I’m as popular now as I’ve ever been. I’m a star. A star!

**KEIRA:** *(She’s had enough:)* Okay, okay. Stop.

**THORNTON:** *(Breaks.)* What? No good? I thought I was pretty good.

**KEIRA:** You were...fine. It’s just this play. This theater. All of it.

**THORNTON:** What’s wrong with the play? I like it. It all ties together nicely.

**KEIRA:** That's exactly my point. There's no art, no nuance. Sinclair promised me a real starring R]role. Something I could sink my teeth into. Instead, I'm playing a Lady Detective. Big whoop.

**THORNTON:** But isn't it nice that at the end of the play, it's the end? The audience gets to just watch it and the leave and then do something else. People don't like to have to think about a play after it's over. Thinking is... *(His mind wanders...far, far away.)* What was it you were saying? Do I like peanut butter? ...Uh, yes, I guess I do.

**KEIRA:** I didn't ask if you... Why am I even talking to you about this?

**THORNTON:** I have a face that people like to talk at. I've been told this.

**KEIRA:** I just wish I had a dramatic monologue. I want to explore rage and pain. Instead I just say quippy lines and...solve the murder.

**THORNTON:** But isn't it nice when murder is fun. And you get to be the center of it all. I mean, I'm the lead, but you—

**KEIRA:** You're not the lead.

**THORNTON:** Yes, I am, I am the actor that stands most downstage, in front of everyone else. The lead. *(He smiles. Very sincere. And then he moves downstage a bit.)*

## **SINCLAR & TRUDY**

*(SINCLAIR HEMMINGGS pushes a table and chair onstage and places them in front of TRUDY, who takes a seat. She has a binder in front of her on the table. SINCLAIR paces behind her.)*

**SINCLAIR:** Do you know what I'm thinking?

**TRUDY:** *(Under her breath. Very dry:)* You're thinking you want to make some tweaks.

**SINCLAIR:** I'm thinking I want to make some tweaks. Act One should feel like "Act Fun," but it's feeling like... "Act None." Do you know what I mean?

**TRUDY:** Unfortunately, yes. And you want to start from page one and redo it all, don't you?

**SINCLAIR:** No, no not, not all. I think we could start somewhere back a bit. Close to the beginning.

**TRUDY:** Okay, what page?

**SINCLAIR:** Hmmm. One?

**TRUDY:** Page one?

**SINCLAIR:** That's a good idea. Let's do it all over.

**TRUDY:** We've spent the last three and a half days tech-ing Act One alone. We don't have enough time to start from scratch.

**SINCLAIR:** Nonsense. We're not using all of the hours in the day yet, are we?

**TRUDY:** We can't use all of the hours in the day—

**SINCLAIR:** What? Because there are rules and regulations and unions and laws of nature? Yada yada, yada— this is the Theatre.<sup>2</sup> What matters most is art, am I right?

**TRUDY:** No.

**SINCLAIR:** Great! Now, Judy...

**TRUDY:** It's Trudy.

**SINCLAIR:** Let's call that a minor rewrite.

**TRUDY:** You want to rewrite my name?

**SINCLAIR:** Trust me, it's an improvement. Never settle for the first draft of anything... Now, Judy... In addition to starting again from page one, I'm thinking about doing some recasting.

**TRUDY:** You want to recast the play during tech?

**SINCLAIR:** No, that's absurd... I want to recast some of the parts... We'll do a sort of audition-tech hybrid. I assume you've run those before.

**TRUDY:** That's not a thing that anyone has ever done before.

**SINCLAIR:** Then we are pioneers, Judy. I like your spirit.

**TRUDY:** I could kill you.

<sup>2</sup> Note: Sinclair never simply says this word, he performs it. Whatever choice the actor playing Sinclair makes, it should be BIG when saying this word. Maybe he says it in some pompous way. Maybe he pronounces it differently every time. Maybe he extends the words so that it goes on way too long. Whatever he does, it's highly eccentric.

**SINCLAIR / JASON**

**SINCLAIR:** Come, my boy. Sit.

*(JASON walks over to the chairs and sits. SINCLAIR does not sit. Instead, he hovers around JASON for this next section.)*

**SINCLAIR:** Good. I like a good sit after a rehearsal, don't you agree?

**JASON:** Uh...yeah, I like sitting.

**SINCLAIR:** So...what do you think?

**JASON:** I think it went well. It's still early. Lots to work on. But for now, I think we are in a good place.

**SINCLAIR:** No.

**JASON:** No?

**SINCLAIR:** I'm not asking what you think about the rehearsal. I am asking...what do you think?

**JASON:** About?

**SINCLAIR:** Life! Our universe! Our purpose here!

**JASON:** Oh, uh, well... That's a great question because in the play—

**SINCLAIR:** I don't have to ask. Do you know why?

**JASON:** Why?

**SINCLAIR:** Because that's what your play is all about...the universe. Our purpose. Life! It's all over the script. All of these big questions. All of this...thinking...

**JASON:** Well, I think theatre is uniquely suited to be able to explore challenging questions.

**SINCLAIR:** You have the audacity to sit there and tell me about the Theatre?

**JASON:** Well, I—

**SINCLAIR:** You can't even stand up and face me when you presume to lecture me on the Theatre.

*(JASON tries to stand. SINCLAIR immediately pushes him back down into his seat.)*

**SINCLAIR:** You love your words, don't you?

**JASON:** I'm a...writer...

**SINCLAIR:** No. You're a line cook. Mincing together a word stew. A dash of undergrad philosophy here. A pinch of Pinter there. A splash of cowardice. Maybe some dill.

**JASON:** Dill?

**SINCLAIR:** Yes, dill, and dull questions. But you know what you're missing?

**JASON:** Some...spice?

**SINCLAIR:** No, not spice, this is a metaphor, you fool! You're missing something every play must have...

**JASON:** What?

**SINCLAIR:** A reason for people to sit.

*(JASON tries to stand again. SINCLAIR pushes him back down.)*

**SINCLAIR:** There is no theatre without people out there *(he gestures)* sitting and watching. And you, my playwright friend, have given them no reason to sit and stay.

*(SINCLAIR pulls the chair out from underneath JASON, who falls.)*

**JASON:** Hey, why did you—

**SINCLAIR:** Because you don't deserve to sit until you give me a script that makes them want to sit.

**JASON:** I thought you liked my play. You said, "It's the single best piece of writing since Williams, or Miller, or Chekhov."

**SINCLAIR:** That's right... Burt Williams, my orthodontist; Edith Miller, my hairdresser; or Tony Chekhov, my—

**JASON:** You don't know anyone named Tony Chekhov.

**SINCLAIR:** Yes I do! He's my dog-walker. And Tony, Burt, and Edith are all terrible playwrights, so it wasn't much of a compliment.

**JASON:** If you didn't like my play, why did you choose it to direct?

**SINCLAIR:** Because I like you, Jason. And we're friends.

**JASON:** We are?

**SINCLAIR:** Yes, and as your friend, I feel it's my duty to let you know that your play is terrible.

**JASON:** How friendly of you.

### **GRETA CRANSTON & CONSTANCE FLUGELBERT**

*(GRETA CRANSTON enters. She is a dignified woman in her 50s or 60s. Smartly dressed. She is followed by CONSTANCE FLUGELBERT, a woman of about 97, who looks like she could be older, but her mind is still somewhat sharp.)*

**MS. CRANSTON:** It's a beautiful building. I love it to death. I do. My father built this for me all those years ago. He was a kind and generous man. People often said that he was the nicest polluter of the environment they'd ever met. This theater really is home to me.

**MS. FLUGELBERT:** Yes, yes, it's certainly...a building. Walls and whatnot.

**MS. CRANSTON:** But times are changing.

**MS. FLUGELBERT:** You don't have to remind me. People get all huffy now if you try to hire children as doorstops.

**MS. CRANSTON:** Yes...right... Well, as I was saying, theatre isn't what it used to be.

**MS. FLUGELBERT:** It used to be refined. It used to be something you dressed up for. It used to be Shakespeare. Now it's nothing but violence, and family quarrels, and girls dressed as boys, and ghosts, and existential ideas. Garbage if you ask me.

**MS. CRANSTON:** Right... Yes... Shakespeare had none of those things in his plays... Anyway, this building...it's in need of some improvements. Nowadays, a theater..."E. R." needs to be more than just a space for theatre..."R. E." Do you see what I mean?

**MS. FLUGELBERT:** Not a clue!

**MS. CRANSTON:** Allow me to explain. For a theater to survive these days, it needs to be able to exploit its most valuable resource.

**MS. FLUGELBERT:** The audience.

**MS. CRANSTON:** No... Real estate. As it stands, this building is not much more than four walls, a stage, and some seats, but it could be so much more.

**MS. FLUGELBERT:** I did pay to put in those smoke detectors twenty years ago. A fad if you ask me.

**MS. CRANSTON:** Yes, those were very much appreciated, and also required by law, but what

I am thinking about is much bigger. What this theater needs is a cafe, and a bar. It needs a full kitchen for fine dining. It needs to host not just plays, but events, weddings, celebrations.

**MS. FLUGELBERT:** Hmmmm. Sounds like a lot of money.

**MS. CRANSTON:** Well, yes, it would be a lot of money, but think of the return on investment.

**MS. FLUGELBERT:** Well, suit yourself. You want to spend your money on coffee machines and pizza pie...makers, and overhead lights...just fads, if you ask me...then be my guest.

**MS. CRANSTON:** Well, actually, you see, Ms. Flugelbert—

**MS. FLUGELBERT:** Call me Constance, deary.

**MS. CRANSTON:** Okay, Constance, you see—

**MS. FLUGELBERT:** Actually, I don't like the way it sounds coming out of your mouth. Stick to Ms. Flugelbert.

**HAROLD / SYLVIA / SCOUT / ALWYN / SAMMY / XANDER**

*If you're interested in these roles, please prepare at least 2 or 3 of them to read in the scene below (or all of them). We want to see what kind of over-the-top characters you can create, so make each one distinct and have fun!*

*(A phone rings. MS. CRANSTON takes out her phone.)*

**MS. CRANSTON:** *(Into her phone:)* This is Greta Cranston. How can I help you?  
*(On the opposite side of the stage, HAROLD BUND, the set designer enters, phone in ear. He paces around the stage.)*

**HAROLD:** I'm gonna kill him.

**MS. CRANSTON:** Harold?

**HAROLD:** I'm gonna kill him, Greta. This is what he tells me. He says, "I want the sets to float." I say, "Okay, you want the illusion of floating sets." He says, "No, I want the sets to really float. Like, float about the ground." How am I supposed to make a set literally float? I know this story is science fiction, but Greta, I can't make magic happen.

**MS. CRANSTON:** I'm sure you'll figure something out, Harold.

*(MS. CRANSTON hangs up. HAROLD exits [or doesn't—maybe HAROLD simply passes his phone off to the next person, or he switches characters]. The phone rings again.)*

**MS. CRANSTON:** *(Into her phone:)* This is Greta. How can I help you?



*(SYLVIA LAFEVRE enters, phone to her ear.)*

**SYLVIA:** I'm gonna kill him, Greta.

**MS. CRANSTON:** Well, hello, Sylvia. How are you?

**SYLVIA:** He says he wants it all lit by candlelight. He wants no artificial lighting. Just flame. We can't do that! It won't work and it's a fire hazard...and I'm pretty sure none of the smoke detectors work.

**MS. CRANSTON:** Okay, Sylvia. I'll talk to him.

*(MS. CRANSTON hangs up. SYLVIA exits, or passes the phone, or switches.) (Ring, ring.)*

**MS. CRANSTON:** *(Into her phone:)* This is Greta Cranston. How can I help you?

*(SCOUT TATUM enters. Phone in ear.)*

**SCOUT:** I'm gonna kill him, Ms. Cranston.

**MS. CRANSTON:** What is it now, Scout?

**SCOUT:** After working on all of those spaceship uniforms, now we are changing it to a period piece. And fine, I go along with it, but you know what he says...he wants the costumes to be from that period...not look like they are from the 1930s. He wants actual clothes that real people wore in the 1930s. We don't have the budget for that!

**MS. CRANSTON:** No, we certainly don't. I'll call him.

*(MS. CRANSTON hangs up. Her phone immediately rings again.)*

*(ALWYN GREY, the choreographer, enters, phone to ear.)*

**MS. CRANSTON:** *(Into her phone, getting increasingly annoyed:)* This is Greta Cranston. How can I help you?

**ALWYN:** I'm gonna kill him, Cranny.

**MS. CRANSTON:** Please, don't call me that.

**ALWYN:** He said to choreograph a big alien dance number, so I did, even though it wasn't in the script. Now, he says there are no aliens and I am supposed to choreograph a "murder weapons" dance number. That's not in the script either. And what does that even mean?

**MS. CRANSTON:** Sorry, Alwyn, please hold. *(She presses a button on the phone.)* Hello?

*(SAMMY MULVANEY, the marketing person, enters, phone to ear.)*

**SAMMY:** Greta, it's Sammy. I'm gonna kill him. He says he wants to have an ad during the Super Bowl. On our marketing budget, I can barely afford a half page in the Daily Reader.

**MS. CRANSTON:** Sorry, Sammy, please hold. (She presses a button.) Hello, this is Greta Cran—

*(XANDER, a telemarketer, enters, phone to ear.)*

**XANDER:** Hi, Ms. Greta Cranston. My name is Xander and I am calling on behalf of the Kathryn Funkhouser Society for Dogs That Deserve to Be Pet More Often. We're trying to raise funds to hire people to go out in the streets and pet more dogs, because dogs are the best and they deserve better. Can we count on your support?

*(MS. CRANSTON hangs up.)*

**MS. CRANSTON:** That's it. I'm turning my phone off.

**CARL**

**CARL:** Mother... I mean... Constance... Ugh, that doesn't sound right... The Woman Formerly Known as Mother Who No Longer Wants Me to Call Her That And Was Not In Fact My Mother, But My Stepmother...anyway, she didn't really like being seen with me...or near me.

**DET. DRAKE:** I see... And also, you said you steal from your stepmother?

**CARL:** I said that?

**DET. DRAKE:** Yes. You even said the amount—two hundred dollars.

**CARL:** I probably should have left that part out.

**TRUDY:** There's a lot you should have left out.

**CARL:** Ah, well, I'm pretty sure the statute of limitations has expired. And besides, it's not a crime if the person doesn't know they've been robbed.

**DET. DRAKE:** None of what you just said is true. And it's statute.

**CARL:** That's what I said. And (He says this as if making a brilliant point:) irregardless, I have a legitimate alibi as to my whatsabouts. And futherto, doc, I don't even know Sinclair... So checkmate.

**TRUDY:** Carl, we've already established that you know him...and have for a long time. And you want his car.

**CARL:** Right. Oh... Yeah... Okay, I admit it. I know him. But I didn't kill him. The end, by Carl P. Custodian.

**DET. DRAKE:** The end of...what?

**CARL:** In light of my grief over Sinclair's death, I will be taking no further questions.

**DET. DRAKE:** Now you're grieving? You just said... (To TRUDY:) Is he always like this?

**TRUDY:** Oh, no, he's usually much more incoherent.

**CARL:** I can hear perfectly fine... And that's why... I actually know who did kill Mr. Sinclair Hemmings, whom I very much miss and grieve, and who wanted me to have his cherry '93 Mazda Miata.

**DET. DRAKE:** There's someone you wish to accuse?

**CARL:** This might come as a shock to everyone, seeing as how he's just a little nobody of a person, but I have it on good authority, my own, that the killer is none other than... Does anyone have anything to drink? I'm getting kind of thirsty.

**DET. DRAKE:** Just make your accusation!

**CARL:** I really need to wet my whistle. I'm heroically parched right now.

**TRUDY:** Just say it, and you can have a juice box backstage.

**CARL:** You'll help me with the straw?

**TRUDY:** Sure, Carl.

**CARL:** Okay, it was the playwright.

## **CAROL & MARSHA**

**CAROL:** Here are your Raisinets, sister.

**MARSHA:** Thank you, sister. I really try and eat six boxes of fruit a day.

**CAROL:** Good for you. It's like they say, "if you don't have your health, you're probably sick." So what do you think of the play?

**MARSHA:** Absolutely thrilling. You know me— I love the theatre. Edge of my seat.

**CAROL:** Yes, edge of your seat and then under your seat. You were snoring by Scene Two.

**MARSHA:** Oh dear, could you hear that?

**CAROL:** Everyone could. One of the actors brought you a pillow.

**MARSHA:** I love actors. They never think about themselves.

**CAROL:** I hope there's music in the second half. Or some dancing. I thought it was going to be a musical.

**MARSHA:** It's not a musical?

**CAROL:** I know, right?! All plays should be musicals.

**MARSHA:** At least it's not one of those immersive things where the audience is involved in the show.

**CAROL:** That's true. If I wanted to be in the show I would have auditioned!

**MARSHA:** Oh no, I just thought of something. Remember how I used to sleepwalk when I was kid? What if I fall asleep again in the second half and wandered off?

**CAROL:** Yeah what if you wandered onto the stage and became part of the show!

**MARSHA:** Or backstage and messed up the props or closed the curtain too early!

**CAROL:** Or murdered someone!

**MARSHA:** (Beat.) Wait, what?