



AUDITION PACKET

Black Comedy

By Peter Shaffer

Directed by Minden Anderson, minden.anderson@gmail.com

FOR MORE INFORMATION: 218-451-0715 or countyseatgm@aol.com

AUDITIONS: Sunday, Jan. 28 at 6 pm.

**If this audition time does not work for you please contact the director to set up an alternative time.*

***Please note casting may take 1-2 weeks. Those not cast - may or may not receive an individual phone call.*

Feel free to contact the theater for cast list or further questions.

WHAT DO I NEED FOR AUDITIONS? Auditions will consist of a cold read from the Acting Sides and possibly other sections from the script. Full scripts are available for perusal upon request. Bring a completed audition form and a calendar reflecting any conflicts with you.

REHEARSAL & PERFORMANCE INFORMATION:

Rehearsals may begin as early as Feb. 5, 2024

Local Performances to be held: March 13-17 & 21-24 (subject to change)

ABOUT THE SHOW:

Lovesick and desperate, sculptor Brindsley Miller has embellished his apartment with furniture and objects d'arte "borrowed" from the absent antique collector next door, hoping to impress his fiancée's pompous father and a wealthy art dealer. The fussy neighbor, Harold Gorringer, returns just as a blown fuse plunges the apartment into darkness and Brindsley is revealed. Unexpected guests, aging spinsters, errant phone cords, and other snares impede his frantic attempts to return the purloined items before light is restored.

Setting: The action of the play takes place in Brindsley's apartment in South Kensington, London.

Time: 9:30 on a Sunday night in the mid-sixties.

Characters: 5 male, 3 female

Brindsley Miller – a young sculptor (mid-twenties), intelligent and attractive, but nervous and uncertain of himself.

Carol Melkett – Brindsley's fiancée. A young debutante; very pretty, very spoiled; very silly. Her sound is that unmistakable, terrifying debutante quack.

Miss Furnival – a middle-aged lady. Prissy and refined. Clad in the blouse and sack skirt of her gentility; her hair in a bun, her voice in a bun, she reveals only the repressed gestures of the middle class spinster – until alcohol undoes her.

Colonel Milkett – Carol's commanding father. Brisk, barky, yet given to sudden vocal calms which suggest a deep and alarming instability. It is not only the constant darkness which gives him his look of wide-eyed suspicion.

Harold Gorringer – the bachelor owner of an antique-china shop, and Brindsley's neighbor, Harold comes from the North of England. His friendship is highly conditional and possessive: sooner or later, payment for it will be asked. A specialist in emotional blackmail, he can become hysterical when slighted, or (as inevitably happens) rejected. He is older than Brindsley by several years.

Schuppanzigh – a German refugee, chubby, cultivated, and effervescent. He is an entirely happy man, delighted to be in England, even if it means being employed full time by the London Electricity Board.

Clea – Brindsley's ex-mistress. Mid-twenties; dazzling, emotional, bright, and mischievous. The challenge to her to create a dramatic situation out of the darkness is ultimately irresistible.

Georg Bamberger – an elderly millionaire art collector, easily identifiable as such. Like Schuppanzigh he is a German.

Audition Form:

Black Comedy

Please bring this completed form with you to your audition with calendar and conflicts
(*acting resume and headshots are optional*).

Name_____

Address_____

Home phone_____

Cell phone_____ (Do you text message? Yes / No)

E-mail_____

Occupation_____ Age_____ Height_____

Work or school hours_____

Have you been vaccinated for Covid-19? Yes / No Pronouns_____

If you are familiar with this play, are there any part that interests you?

Would you accept another part if not offered any listed above? _____

Would you consider being an understudy for a role? _____

Would you consider working on the crew or technical team? _____

Do you, **sing**, dance, **play an instrument** or have other special talents? If so, please explain level of skill:

Experience: Although not required, please list some of your theater background.
Some of this information may be used in the playbill for the show.

Do you have ANY conflicts during the rehearsal/performance schedule? _____

Please list ALL conflicts below (be as specific as possible to dates, times). Additional conflicts after being cast may not be accepted?

Casting Agreement:

By accepting a role, I agree to play the role assigned to me to the best of my ability, trusting the judgement of the director and staff. In doing so, I also agree to wear the costumes, makeup and wig or hairstyle of the director's and/or designer's choosing.

Initial_____

Attendance Agreement:

By accepting a role, I agree to attend all rehearsals and performances as defined by the rehearsal schedule. I agree to arrive in a timely matter and be prepared to start when directed to do so. I also agree to abide by all theater rules while at rehearsals and performances.

Initial_____

Thank you so much for auditioning for the show!
We appreciate your time and interest in the County Seat Theater Comp

BLACK COMEDY

A Farce

CHARACTERS

BRINDSLEY MILLER – a young sculptor (mid-twenties), intelligent and attractive, but nervous and uncertain of himself.

CAROL MELKETT – Brindsley's fiancée. A young débutante; very pretty, very spoiled; very silly. Her sound is that unmistakable, terrifying débutante quack.

MISS FURNIVAL – a middle-aged lady. Prissy and refined. Clad in the blouse and sack skirt of her gentility, her hair in a bun, her voice in a bun, she reveals only the repressed gestures of the middle class spinster – until alcohol undoes her.

COLONEL MELKETT – Carol's commanding father. Brisk, barks, yet given to sudden vocal calms which suggest a deep and alarming instability. It is not only the constant darkness which gives him his look of wide-eyed suspicion.

HAROLD GORRINGE – the bachelor owner of an antique-china shop, and Brindsley's neighbour, Harold comes from the North of England. His friendship is highly conditional and possessive: sooner or later, payment for it will be asked. A specialist in emotional blackmail, he can become hysterical when slighted, or (as inevitably happens) rejected. He is older than Brindsley by several years.

SCHUPPANZIGH – a German refugee, chubby, cultivated, and effervescent. He is an entirely happy man, delighted to be in England, even if it means being employed full time by the London Electricity Board.

CLEA – Brindsley's ex-mistress. Mid-twenties; dazzling, emotional, bright, and mischievous. The challenge to her to create a dramatic situation out of the darkness is ultimately irresistible.

GEORG BAMBERGER – an elderly millionaire art collector, easily identifiable as such. Like Schuppanzigh, he is a German.

SETTING

The action of the play takes place in Brindsley's apartment in South Kensington, London.

TIME

9:30 on a Sunday night in the mid-sixties.

Reading #1

CHARACTERS

BRINDSLEY MILLER – a young sculptor (mid-twenties), intelligent and attractive, but nervous and uncertain of himself.

CAROL MELKETT – Brindsley's fiancée. A young débutante; very pretty, very spoiled; very silly. Her sound is that unmistakable, terrifying débutante quack.

(Two voices are heard: BRINDSLEY and CAROL. They must give the impression of two people walking round a room with absolute confidence, as if in the light. We hear sounds as of furniture being moved. A chair is dumped down.)

BRINDSLEY. *(Exhausted.)* There! How do you think the room looks?

(Pause.)

CAROL. *(Quacking.)* Fabulous! I told you it would. I wish you could always have it like this. That lamp looks divine there. And those chairs are just the right colour. I told you green would look well in here.

BRINDSLEY. Suppose Harold comes back?

CAROL. He is not coming back till tomorrow morning.

(We hear BRINDSLEY pacing nervously.)

BRINDSLEY. I know. But suppose he comes tonight? He's mad about his antiques. What do you think he'll say if he goes into his room and finds out we've stolen them?

CAROL. Don't dramatize. We haven't stolen *all* his furniture. Just... *(Slowly.)* two chairs, the sofa, the table, the lamp, the bowl and the vase of flowers, that's all.

BRINDSLEY. And the Buddha. That's more valuable than anything.

CAROL. Oh, do stop worrying, darling.

BRINDSLEY. Well, you don't know Harold. He won't even let anyone *touch* his antiques.

CAROL. Look, we'll put everything back as soon as Mr. Bamberger leaves. Now stop being dreary.

BRINDSLEY. Well, frankly, I don't think we should have done it. I mean – *anyway*, Harold or no.

CAROL. Why not, for heaven's sake? The room looks divine now. Just *look* at it!

(Tiny pause.)

BRINDSLEY. Darling, Georg Bamberger's a multi-millionaire. He's lived his life against this sort of furniture. Our few stolen bits aren't going to impress him. He's coming to see the work of an unknown sculptor. If you ask me, it would look much better to him if he found me exactly as I really am: a poor artist. It might touch his heart.

CAROL. It might – but it certainly won't impress Daddy. Remember, he's coming too.

BRINDSLEY. As if I could forget! Why you had to invite your monster father tonight, I can't think!

CAROL. Oh, not again!

Reading #2

CHARACTERS

CAROL MELKETT – Brindsley's fiancée. A young débutante; very pretty, very spoiled; very silly. Her sound is that unmistakable, terrifying débutante quack.

MISS FURNIVAL – a middle-aged lady. Prissy and refined. Clad in the blouse and sack skirt of her gentility, her hair in a bun, her voice in a bun, she reveals only the repressed gestures of the middle class spinster – until alcohol undoes her.

COLONEL MELKETT – Carol's commanding father. Brisk, barked, yet given to sudden vocal calms which suggest a deep and alarming instability. It is not only the constant darkness which gives him his look of wide-eyed suspicion.

CAROL. Would you like a drink?

MISS FURNIVAL. I don't drink, thank you. My dear father, being a Baptist minister, strongly disapproved of alcohol.

(A scuffle is heard among milk bottles off, followed by a stifled oath.)

COLONEL. *(Offstage.)* Damn and blast!! *(Barking.)* Is there anybody there?

CAROL. *(Calling.)* In here, Daddypoo.

COLONEL. *(Offstage.)* Can't you put the light on, dammit? I've almost knocked meself out on a damn milk bottle.

CAROL. We've got a fuse. Nothing's working.

(COLONEL MELKETT appears, holding a lighter which evidently is working – we can see the flame, and, of course, the lights go down a little.)

MISS FURNIVAL. Oh, what a relief! A light!

CAROL. This is my father, Colonel Melkett – Miss Furnival. She's from upstairs.

COLONEL. *(Shortly.)* Good evening!

MISS FURNIVAL. I'm taking refuge for a moment with Mr. Miller. I'm not very good in the dark.

COLONEL. When did this happen?

(MISS FURNIVAL, glad for the light, follows it pathetically as the COLONEL crosses the room.)

CAROL. Five minutes ago. The main thingy just went.

COLONEL. And where's this young man of yours?

CAROL. In the flat opposite. He's trying to find candles.

COLONEL. You mean he hasn't got any?

CAROL. No. We can't even find the matches.

COLONEL. I see. N.O. No Organization. Bad sign!

CAROL. Daddy, please. It could happen to any of us.

COLONEL. Not to me.

(He turns to find MISS FURNIVAL right behind him and glares at her balefully.)

(The poor woman retreats to the sofa and sits down. COLONEL MELKETT gets his first sight of BRINDSLEY's sculpture.)

What the hell's that?

CAROL. Some of Brindsley's work.

COLONEL. Is it, by Jove? And how much does that cost?

CAROL. I think he's asking fifty pounds for it.

COLONEL. My God!

CAROL. *(Nervously.)* Do you like the flat, Daddy? He's furnished it very well, hasn't he? I mean it's rich, but not gaudipoo.

COLONEL. *(Examining a chair.)* Very elegant – good: I can see he's got proper taste.

(He sees the Buddha.)

Ah, now that's what I understand by a real work of art – you can see what it's meant to be.

MISS FURNIVAL. Good heavens!

CAROL. What is it?

MISS FURNIVAL. Nothing...it's just that Buddha – it so closely resembles the one Harold Gorringer has.

(CAROL looks panic-stricken.)

COLONEL. It must have cost a pretty penny, what? He must be quite well off... By Jove – it's got pretty colours!

(He bends to examine it.)

CAROL. *(Sotto voce, urgently, to MISS FURNIVAL.)* Do you know Mr. Gorringer?

MISS FURNIVAL. Oh, very well indeed! We're excellent friends. He has such lovely things...

Reading #3

CHARACTERS

BRINDSLEY MILLER – a young sculptor (mid-twenties), intelligent and attractive, but nervous and uncertain of himself.

CAROL MELKETT – Brindsley's fiancée. A young débutante; very pretty, very spoiled; very silly. Her sound is that unmistakable, terrifying débutante quack.

MISS FURNIVAL – a middle-aged lady. Prissy and refined. Clad in the blouse and sack skirt of her gentility, her hair in a bun, her voice in a bun, she reveals only the repressed gestures of the middle class spinster – until alcohol undoes her.

COLONEL MELKETT – Carol's commanding father. Brisk, barksy, yet given to sudden vocal calms which suggest a deep and alarming instability. It is not only the constant darkness which gives him his look of wide-eyed suspicion.

HAROLD GORRINGE – the bachelor owner of an antique-china shop, and Brindsley's neighbour, Harold comes from the North of England. His friendship is highly conditional and possessive: sooner or later, payment for it will be asked. A specialist in emotional blackmail, he can become hysterical when slighted, or (as inevitably happens) rejected. He is older than Brindsley by several years.

COLONEL. Now look you here. I've been extremely patient with you, young man. But enough is enough. It's P.E. now – Patience Exhausted. If you think I'm going to let my daughter marry a born liar, you are very much mistaken.

CAROL. Daddy – please!

COLONEL. Quiet, Dumpling. Let me handle this.

BRINDSLEY. What's there to handle, sir, for heaven's sake?

HAROLD. *Marry!* Did he say *marry*!

CAROL. Well, that's the general idea.

HAROLD. You and this young lady, Brin?

CAROL. Are what's laughingly known as engaged. Subject of course to Daddy's approval.

HAROLD. Well, I never!

(Furious at the news and at the fact that BRINDSLEY hasn't confided in him.)

What a surprise.

BRINDSLEY. We were keeping it a secret.

HAROLD. Evidently. How long's this been going on, then?

BRINDSLEY. – A few months.

HAROLD. You sly cat.

BRINDSLEY. *(Nervously.)* I hope you approve, Harold.

HAROLD. You sly, secretive cat. You certainly know how to keep things to yourself, don't you?

BRINDSLEY. I meant to tell you, Harold. You were the one person I was going to tell...

HAROLD. But you didn't.

BRINDSLEY. I – I – I never got around to it.

HAROLD. You chose to keep it from me.

BRINDSLEY. I didn't choose – I just forgot.

HAROLD. Say no more. There's no obligation to share confidences. I've only been your neighbour for three years. I've always assumed there was more than a geographic closeness between us, but I was obviously mistaken.

BRINDSLEY. Oh don't start getting huffy, Harold!

HAROLD. I'm not getting anything. It'll just teach me not to bank on so-called friendship. It's silly me again! Silly, stupid, trusting me!

COLONEL. Good God, man!

(MISS FURNIVAL rises in agitation and gropes her way to the drinks table.)

CAROL. *(Wheedling.)* Now come, Mr. Gorrings. We haven't told anybody. Not one single soulpoo. Really.

COLONEL. At the moment, Dumpling, there's nothing to tell. And I'm not sure there's going to be!

BRINDSLEY. Look, sir, we seem to have got off on the wrong foot. If it's my fault, I apologize.

MISS FURNIVAL. *(Groping about on the drinks table.)* My father always used to say, "To err is human: to forgive divine."

CAROL. I thought that was somebody else.

MISS FURNIVAL. *(Blithely.)* So many people copied him.

Reading #4

CHARACTERS

BRINDSLEY MILLER – a young sculptor (mid-twenties), intelligent and attractive, but nervous and uncertain of himself.

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COLONEL MELKETT – Carol's commanding father. Brisk, barks, yet given to sudden vocal calms which suggest a deep and alarming instability. It is not only the constant darkness which gives him his look of wide-eyed suspicion.

CLEA – Brindsley's ex-mistress. Mid-twenties; dazzling, emotional, bright, and mischievous. The challenge to her to create a dramatic situation out of the darkness is ultimately irresistible.

* Brindsley and Clea are in the bedroom. All other characters are in the living room.

COLONEL. (*Pouring.*) At last...a decent glass of scotch. Are you getting your bitter lemon?

MISS FURNIVAL. (*Cheerfully pouring herself an enormous gin.*) Oh yes, thank you, Colonel!

COLONEL. I'm just wonderin' if this Bamberger fellow is goin' to show up at all. He's half an hour late already.

HAROLD. Oh! That's nothing, Colonel. Millionaires are always late. It's their thing.

MISS FURNIVAL. I'm sure you're right, Mr. Gorringer. That's how I imagine them. Hands like silk, and always two hours late.

BRINDSLEY. (*Disengaging himself.*) No-one in the world kisses like you.

CLEA. I missed you badly, Brin. I had to see you. I've thought about nothing else these past six weeks. Brin, I made the most awful mistake walking out.

BRINDSLEY. Clea – *please!*

CLEA. I mean we've known each other for four years. We can't just throw each other away like old newspapers.

BRINDSLEY. I don't see why not. You know my politics, you've heard my gossip, and you've certainly been through all my entertainment section.

CLEA. Well, how about a second edition?

BRINDSLEY. Darling, we simply can't talk about this now. Can't you trust me just for an hour?

CLEA. Of course I can, darling. You don't want me down there?

BRINDSLEY. No.

CLEA. Then I'll get undressed and go quietly to bed. When you've got rid of them all, I'll be waiting.

BRINDSLEY. That's a terrible idea!

CLEA. (*Reaching for him.*) I think it's lovely. A little happy relaxation for us both.

BRINDSLEY. (*Falling off the bed.*) I'm perfectly relaxed!

CAROL. Brindsley!

CLEA. "Too solemn for day, too sweet for night. Come not in darkness, come not in light." That's me, isn't it?

BRINDSLEY. Of course not. I just can't explain now, that's all.

CLEA. Oh, very well, you can explain later...in bed!

BRINDSLEY. Not tonight, Clea.

CLEA. Either that or I come down and discover your sordid secret.

BRINDSLEY. There is no sordid secret!

CLEA. Then you won't mind my coming down!

CAROL. (*Roaring together.*) **COLONEL.**

Brindsley!!! Brindsley!!!

BRINDSLEY. Oh, God!...! All right, stay. Only keep quiet...

Reading #5

CHARACTERS

BRINDSLEY MILLER – a young sculptor (mid-twenties), intelligent and attractive, but nervous and uncertain of himself.

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SCHUPPANZIGH – a German refugee, chubby, cultivated, and effervescent. He is an entirely happy man, delighted to be in England, even if it means being employed full time by the London Electricity Board.

BRINDSLEY. (*Scrambling down.*) I'm coming down, Carol...
I'm coming down...

(*SCHUPPANZIGH enters. He wears the overcoat and peaked cap of the London Electricity Board and carries a large toolbag, similarly labelled.*)

(*SCHUPPANZIGH speaks with a German accent.*)

SCHUPPANZIGH. 'Allo, please? Mr. Miller? Mr. Miller? I've come as was arranged.

BRINDSLEY. My God...it's Bamberger!

CAROL. Bamberger?

BRINDSLEY. Yes, Bamberger.

(*He rushes down the remaining stairs, pulling CAROL with him.*)

SCHUPPANZIGH. You must have thought I was never coming!

(*He takes off his overcoat.*)

BRINDSLEY. (*Airily.*) Noo, no... Not at all! I'm delighted you could spare the time. I know how busy you are. I'm afraid we've had the most idiotic disaster. We've had a fuse.

HAROLD. You'll have to speak up, dear, he's stone deaf!

BRINDSLEY. (*Yelling.*) We've had a mains fuse – not the best conditions for seeing sculpture.

SCHUPPANZIGH. Please not to worry. Here!

(*He produces a torch from his pocket and "lights" it.*)

(*The light on stage dims a little, as usual, to indicate this. All relax with audible sighs of pleasure.*)

CAROL. Oh, what a relief!

BRINDSLEY. (*Hastily dragging the sheet over the rest of the sofa.*) Do you always travel with a torch?

SCHUPPANZIGH. Mostly, yes. It helps to see details.

(*He sees the others.*)

You are holding a private view?

BRINDSLEY. Oh no. These are just some friends...! (*He yells in his ear.*) May I present Colonel Melkett?

COLONEL. (*Yelling in his other ear.*) A great honour, sir!

SCHUPPANZIGH. (*Banging his ear, to clear it.*) No, no, mine – mine!

BRINDSLEY. Miss Carol Melkett!

CAROL. (*Screeching in his ear.*) I say: hallo! So glad you got here! It's terribly kind of you to take such an interest!

SCHUPPANZIGH. Not at all.

BRINDSLEY. Harold Gorringer – a neighbour of mine!

HAROLD. (*Shouting.*) How do? Very honoured, I'm sure.

SCHUPPANZIGH. Enchanted.

HAROLD. I must say it's a real thrill, meeting you!

BRINDSLEY. And another neighbour, Miss Furnival!

SCHUPPANZIGH. Enchanted.

MISS FURNIVAL. (*Hooting in his ear.*) I'm afraid we've all been taking refuge from the storm, as it were.

SCHUPPANZIGH. Excuse me, but why are you all shouting at me? I'm not deaf.

BRINDSLEY. (*To HAROLD.*) You told me he was.

HAROLD. I read he was.

MISS FURNIVAL. (*Sadly.*) My father was.

BRINDSLEY. I'm terribly sorry, sir. A misunderstanding.