

AUDITION MONOLOGUES:

Please prepare all monologues for the Character which you are auditioning.

Mrs. Clackett (*flustered*). It's no good you going on. I can't open sardines and answer the phone. I've only got one pair of feet. Hello.... Yes, but there's no one here, love.... No, Mr. Brent's not here...He lives here, yes, but he don't live here now because he lives in Spain... Mr. Philip Brent, that's right.... The one who writes the plays, that's him, only now he writes them in Spain... No, she's in Spain, too, they're all in Spain, there's no one here... Am I in Spain? No, I'm not in Spain, dear. I look after the house for him, but I go home at one o'clock on Wednesday, only I've got a nice plate of sardines to put my feet up with, because it's the royal what's-it's called on the telly -- the royal you know -- where's the paper, then? And if it's to do with letting the house then you'll have to ring the house-agents, because they're the agents for the house.... Squire, Squire, Hackham and who's the other one...? No, they're not in Spain, they're next to the phone in the study. Squire, Squire, Hackham, and hold on, I'll go and look. Always the same, isn't it. Soon as you take the weight off your feet, down it all comes on your head.

Lloyd Dallas 01 (*unhappy*). Let me tell you something about my life. I have the Duke of Buckingham on the phone to me for an hour after rehearsal every evening complaining that the Duke of Gloucester is sucking boiled sweets through his speeches. The Duke of Clarence is off for the entire week doing a commercial for Madeira. Richard himself -- would you believe? Richard III? Has now gone down with a back problem. I keep getting messages from Brooke about how unhappy she is here, and now she's got herself a doctor's certificate for nervous exhaustion -- she's going to walk! I have no time to find or rehearse another Vicki. I have just one afternoon, while Richard is fitted for a surgical corset, to cure Brooke of nervous exhaustion, with no medical aids except a little whisky -- you've got the whisky? -- a few flowers -- you've got the money for the flowers? -- and a certain faded charm. So I haven't come to the theatre to hear about other people's problems. I've come to be taken out of myself, and preferably not put back again.

Lloyd Dallas 02 (*mad*). Poppy! Bring the book! Is that the line, Poppy? "I don't understand why the Sheikh looks like Philip?" Can we consult the author's text, and make absolutely sure? (*Finds the line.*) "What's that, Dad?" Right. That's the line, Brooke, love. We all know you've worked in very classy places up in London where they let you make the play up as you go along, but we don't want that kind of thing here, do we. Not when the author has provided us with such a considered and polished line of his own. Not at one o'clock in the morning. Not two lines away from the end of Act One. Not when we're just about to get a tea break before we all drop dead of exhaustion. We merely want to hear the line. (*Suddenly puts his mouth next to her ear and shouts*) "What's that, Dad?" (*All patience and politeness again.*) That's all. Nothing else. I'm not being unreasonable, am I? (*Vicki runs off stage*) Exit? Does it say "exit"? Oh dear, now she's going to wash her lenses away.

Garry Lejeune (*Announcing to cast*) Don't worry, everyone it's only the technical. (*is corrected by the director*) What, it's the dress rehearsal? So when was the technical? Well, I say... we're all thinking of it as the technical. (*to other actors*) Aren't we. And we have all those words, I mean..... Right! Here we are worrying about the words, and they are all coming up like oranges and lemons. Now listen Lloyd... I am not knocking the words, the words are fine, they're better than fine. They're, they're, do you know what I mean? Right? I mean, OK, fine. No, but here we are, we're all thinking, my God, we open tomorrow, we've only had a fortnight to rehearse, we don't know where we are, but my God, here we are! But you know what I mean, we've got to play Weston-super-Mare all the rest of this week, then Yeovil, then God knows where, then God knows where else, and so on for God knows how long, and we're all of us feeling pretty much, you know ... Sorry, Lloyd. But sometimes you just have to come right out with it. You know? Lloyd, let me just say one thing. Since we've stopped. I've worked with a lot of directors, Lloyd. Some of them were geniuses. Some of them were bastards. But I've never met one who was so totally and absolutely ... I don't know ...

Frederick Fellowes (*Confused and carrying a box*). Sorry Lloyd, you know how stupid I am about moves. Sorry, Garry Sorry, Brooke It's just my usual dimness. (*To LLOYD.*) But why do I take the things off into the study? Wouldn't it be more natural if I left them on? I mean I thought it might be somehow more logical. Lloyd, I know it's a bit late in the day to go into all this ... but. Thank you, Lloyd. As long as we're not too pushed. But I've never understood why he carries an overnight bag and a box of groceries into the study to look at his mail. I know it has to be out of the way for the next scene, I see that, and Selsdon needs them in the study for his scene, I see that all right, I see all that. I just don't know why I take them. (*Gets a thought*) Maybe if you could just give me a reason I could keep in my mind... Thank you Lloyd.

Belinda Blair 01 (*Trying to cheer everyone up during rehearsal*).

Oh, I love technicals! Everyone's always so nice to everyone. Freddie, my precious, don't you like a nice all-night technical? It's lovely to see you cheering up and making jokes. This is such a lovely company to work with. It's such a happy company. (*after an incident*) Oh, look at Freddie, the poor love! He's just got a little nosebleed, my sweet. He's got a thing about violence. It always makes his nose bleed. Freddie? He's feeling a little faint, my love. He's got this thing about... (*she tries to demonstrate bleeding*). Well, I won't say the word. We all understand, my dear.

Belinda Blair 02 (*desperately trying to salvage the show*). I'll tell you what's happening. He's not in there, my precious - he's... in here, look, and so am I. Look, I know this is a great surprise for everyone. I mean, it's quite a shock for us, finding a man lying at the bottom of the stairs! (*To PHILIP.*) Isn't it, darling? But, but now we've all met we'll just have to ... Well, we'll just have to introduce ourselves! Won't we, darling? This is my husband. I'm afraid surprises go straight to his nose! (*put a handkerchief on Philip's nose and tilts his head back. Another actor enters*) Oh, how delightful - another unexpected guest. So why don't you ... why don't you ... see what you can see in the garden? (*She pushes VICKI out of the front door*). And darling, you go off and get that bottle marked poison in the downstairs loo. That eats through anything. (*pushes Phillip off stage*) Yes, never mind, it's all right. We'll think of something. (*The director comes on stage dressed as a burglar*) Oh no... Hold on! We know this man! He's not a burglar! (*pulling him center stage*) He's our social worker! He's that nice man who comes in and tells us what to do! That's right, what to do! So what do you say..... He's saying, he's saying - just get through it. Get through it for doors and sardines! Yes? He's saying 'All we want now is for this to end... I mean for a nice happy ending!'

Tim Allgood (*Over house mic*). Act one beginners, please. Your calls, Miss Otley, Miss Ashton, Mr. Lejeune, Mr. Fellowes, Miss Blair. Act one beginners, please. (*steps away from mic*) And maybe Act One beginners is what we'll get. Oh I hope, Dotty'll pull herself together now we've called Beginners. Now she knows she's got to be on stage in five minutes. Will she? Won't she? I don't know. We've only been on the road for a month! We've only got to Ashton-under-Lyne! What's it going to be like by the time we've got to Stockton-on-Tees? If only she'd speak! If only she'd unlock her dressing room door! (*has a scary thought*) But what if she won't go on? Of course, she will, won't she, I'm sure she will... but what if she doesn't. she will, she will... but if she didn't... I'd have five minutes to change. (*looks at watch*) Four Minutes! I'll have another go. Takes your mind off your own problems, anyway. (*running to dressing rooms*) Dotty!

Selsdon Mowbray (*Opening the front window*) No bars, no burglar alarms. They ought to be prosecuted for incitement. (*He climbs in.*) No, but sometimes it makes me want to sit down and weep. When I think I used to do banks! When I remember I used to do bullion vaults! What am I doing now? I'm breaking into paper bags! So what are they offering? (*He peers at the television.*) One microwave oven. (*He unplugs it and puts it on the sofa.*) What? Fifty quid? Hardly worth lifting it. (*He inspects the paintings and ornaments.*) Junk ... Junk ... If you insist. (*He pockets some small item.*) Where's his desk? No, they all say the same thing ... They all say the same thing 'It's hard to adjust to retirement.' No, I miss the violence. I miss having other human beings around to terrify ... It's nice to hear a bit of shouting and screaming around you. All this silence gets you down ... I'm going to end up talking to myself ... right, that's downstairs tidied up a bit. (*He starts upstairs.*) Just give the upstairs a quick going-over then.

Poppy Norton-Taylor (*worried and out of breath from running around the theatre*).

Selsdon is missing, I can't find him anywhere. You don't think he's been (*mimes chugging a bottle*) do you? But it's the technical, he wouldn't, would he? Not at a technical. It's my fault, he shouldn't have been out of my sight! I was told, he must never be out of sight! But he's been as good as gold all the way through rehearsals. He's not in the dressing room, the lavatories, the scenery dock, the prop room or paint stores. Then the police called, they've found an old man. He was lying unconscious in a doorway just across the street. They say he's very dirty and rather smelly, and I thought oh my God, because... because when you get close to Selsdon. What I mean is that if you stand anywhere near Selsdon you can't help noticing this very distinctive.... (*Suddenly she stops, and sniffs the air*) ... he is standing right behind me isn't he.

Brooke Ashton (*doing her lines as though someone gave her every little gesture*).

This is great. And this is all yours? It must have cost a bomb. If someone is coming at four o'clock we better hurry I've got to get those files to our Basingstoke office by four. We'll only just manage to fit it in. This place is so big, look at all these doors, so which one is.... You know. Fantastic, we won't bother to chill the champagne. We'll just take it up with us. (*opens door*) This isn't the bedroom, it's a closet with all black sheets and things. (*Moving on*) in here, it's another bathroom, you're always trying to get me into bathrooms. In there... wait, I hear voices. But there's no one here. You hear all sorts of funny things about these old houses. You don't think there's something creepy going on? I can feel goose-pimples all over I'm going to get into bed and put my head under the covers.