

AUDITION INFORMATION



NOISES OFF

Written by MICHAEL FRAYN

Directed by Melissa Findley

Audition Dates: Sun, Apr 28 & Mon, Apr 29, 2024
Performance Dates: Jun 13-30, 2024

WELCOME

Thank you for your interest in auditioning for a Theatre Tallahassee production!

If you've auditioned for us before, welcome back!

If this is your first time auditioning at Theatre Tallahassee, we're thrilled to have you! We've been around now for 75 years, and we wouldn't have lasted so long without new people, new talent, and new voices.

Whether you're a veteran performer who just moved to town or you've never been on stage before but really want to try, we'd like to encourage you to audition for shows at Theatre Tallahassee.

We're aware that auditioning can be an overwhelming experience, even if you've done it a hundred times before. We've put this information booklet together for you to help you learn a little more about the play, the characters you will be reading for, and to give you some idea of what to expect during auditions.

Please read over the character list and director's comments, and pay attention to any specific audition requirements for this show. Then review any script sides provided. You will also need to fill out and submit an audition form.

Break a leg!

MAINSTAGE SEASON

This production is part of our Mainstage Season of shows. Theatre Tallahassee's Mainstage auditorium seats up to 271 audience members a night. Shows run for three weekends, with opening night on a Thursday, and the following weekends running Friday through Sunday. The second Saturday is a double show day, with both a matinee and evening performance. Additional shows may be added depending on ticket sales, or benefit performances.

ABOUT OUR AUDITIONS

Theatre Tallahassee auditions are open, and we want to encourage diversity – we try our best to discourage directors from pre-casting roles. And unless specified in the character list, most roles are open to all races and ethnicities.

Know what you're auditioning for. Do a little research on the play and characters. Audition sides are included in this packet, as well as a character breakdown to give you some idea of which roles you'd like to audition for.

Audition requirements and formats may vary from show to show. Some directors prefer "closed" auditions where actors wait in a separate room until called. Some like to have every actor in the room. Some prefer monologues, or cold readings, or need you to sing. This audition packet should give you an idea of what you can expect.

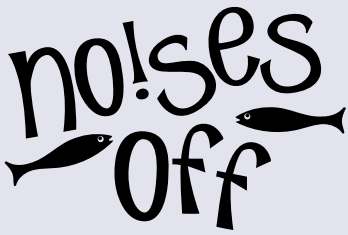
We know that it can be disappointing not to get a part. We always have more people audition than we have roles for, and there are many factors that directors have to weigh when casting. We encourage you to audition often. Just because you weren't right for one role, doesn't mean that you won't be perfect for another.

We look forward to seeing you on stage. Break a leg!

COVID CHANGES

Theatre Tallahassee strongly encourages all actors, crew, and staff to be fully vaccinated at least 14 days prior to the first in-person rehearsal. Other precautions such as temperature checks, and mask-wearing, plus testing are possible, pending the environment at the time that rehearsal commences.

A reminder: as a non-profit, community theatre, we are unable to provide payment for actors, and we understand that the risks of an unmasked performance at this time may be too high for some volunteer actors, despite all the precautions we will be taking to minimize that risk. Please consider this before auditioning.



THE PLAY

This play-within-a-play captures a touring theatre troupe's production of "Nothing On" in three stages: dress rehearsal, the opening performance, and a performance towards the end of a debilitating run. Progressing from flubbed lines and missed cues in the dress rehearsal to mounting friction between cast members, slamming doors, falling trousers, and flying sardines in their final performances, audiences are treated to a hilarious behind-the-scenes peek that truly challenges the age-old saying "The show must go on."

This show requires a cast with impeccable comedic timing, strong memorization skills and a great deal of physical stamina (some characters more than others). It is also very much an ensemble piece, and the cast must be able to work together as a whole.

ABOUT THE DIRECTOR

MELISSA FINDLEY

Melissa has directed numerous shows at Theatre Tallahassee over the past eleven years, including *Love, Loss, & What I Wore*, *Murder on the Nile*, *The Underpants*, *And Then There Were None*, *Steel Magnolias*, *Arsenic & Old Lace*, *Murder on the Orient Express*, and *The Lifespan of a Fact*. Her first show ever here at Theatre Tallahassee was *Noises Off* back in 2010, when she played Poppy. *Noises Off* is one of her favorite shows, and she can't wait to revisit it this time from the director's chair. During the day, Melissa serves as the theatre's graphic designer and PR coordinator. She also set designs, stage manages, and performs in her spare time.

noises off

IMPORTANT DATES

Actors must be able to commit to all Tech/Dress Rehearsals, and all Performances.

○ AUDITIONS

Sun, Apr 28 at 7pm
Mon, Apr 29 at 7pm

Wed, Apr 30 at 7pm

Call backs, by director invitation only

■ REHEARSAL PERIOD

Rehearsals will typically be Mon-Fri, 7-10pm. Final schedule may change depending on cast conflicts. However, due to how reliant this show is on everyone being present for rehearsals, please keep conflicts to an absolute minimum.

■ TECH WEEK/DRESS JUNE 3-12

Tech runs & dress rehearsals.

○ PERFORMANCES

JUNE 13-16

JUNE 21-23

JUNE 28-30

Thurs, Fri, Sat shows at 8pm. Sun matinees at 2pm. Second Saturday (June 22) is a double show day with a 2pm matinee, and 8pm show. Call times are usually 1.5 hours before curtain. Please plan for possible pick up rehearsals on the 20 & 27.

APRIL

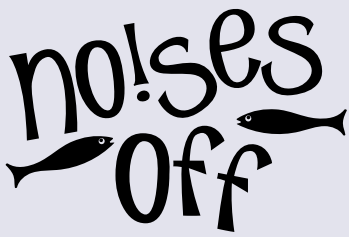
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MAY

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JUNE

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CHARACTERS

All roles are open to any race/ethnicity. This show is very British, so please bring your best British accent to auditions.

LLOYD DALLAS (*Male presenting, age 35-50. Any race/ethnicity.*) The director of “Nothing On.” Lloyd’s voice drips with sarcasm, and the exhaustion of a director who has been pushed to the brink of sanity. He possesses a “certain fading charm” and handsomeness, as well as enough charisma to make him likable despite his sharp tongue. He is currently dating Brooke, but also Poppy on the side. This character has a minimal amount of physical comedy.

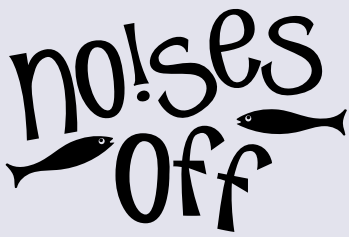
DOTTY OTLEY (*Female presenting, age 45-60s. Any race/ethnicity.*) A renowned character actress returning to the stage after many years of playing a recurring TV character role. Dotty occasionally lives up to her name and can be easily confused or forgetful. She also has a taste for much younger men and behind the scenes of the show is dating Garry. The actress playing Dotty needs to have an excellent memory for lines and impeccable comedic timing. This role has a minimal amount of physical comedy.

MRS. CLACKETT - Dotty’s character in “Nothing On,” is even more absent-minded than she is. She is the Brent’s housekeeper who only wants to spend her day off watching TV with her feet up and a nice plate of sardines.

GARRY LEJEUNE (*Male presenting, age 25-35. Any race/ethnicity.*) Garry has spent most of his acting career on TV. He’s handsome, somewhat charming, but not particularly good at articulating his thoughts. He is dating Dotty, but is a bit insecure in his relationship with her and his jealousy fuels a lot of the backstage drama of the show. This is the role with the most amount of physical comedy: he falls downstairs, has to hop/climb up and down stairs with his shoes tied, and spends most of the show running back and forth and up and down several flights of stairs, often at a break-neck pace.

ROGER TRAMPLEMAIN - Garry’s character in “Nothing On,” is a high-class real estate agent trying to sneak in a quickie with a co-worker while pretending the Brent’s home is actually his.

BROOKE ASHTON (*Female presenting, age early 20s-early 30s. Any race/ethnicity.*) Brooke is perhaps best known for playing roles named “Girl in…” and for not wearing much in the way of clothing. She’s beautiful, a little pouty, and although she can come off as an air-headed, she’s also the most focused actress on stage and never messes up a line. This role requires a medium amount of physical comedy, including running up and down stairs in heels, and falling



over a sofa. The actress playing Brooke should be comfortable wearing underwear on stage (although we will tailor how revealing it is to the actress's comfort).

VICKI - Brooke's character in "Nothing On," works with Roger and has snuck off with him to "his" country home for a little afternoon quickie. It should be stated that Brooke is actually a decent actress in this role and takes it quite seriously.

FREDERICK FELLOWS (*Male presenting, age 30s-45. Any race/ethnicity.*) If Brooke appears to be the airhead of the troupe, Freddy is perhaps the actual one. He's not very bright and often needs things explained to him. He is, however, quite sweet and kind to his castmates, and in Act One has just been left by his wife. This role has a large amount of physical comedy including: hopping up and down stairs with his pants around his ankles, while also having various objects "glued" to his hands.

PHILLIP BRENT - Freddy's character in "Nothing On," is an upper-class married man who has snuck back into the country because he's hiding from the (British version of the) IRS for tax evasion. He is not particularly bright and easily spooked.

BELINDA BLAIR (*Female presenting, age 30s-45. Any race/ethnicity.*) Belinda has been acting since early childhood, and is the most professional of the troupe. As a happily married woman off-stage, she serves as the play's mother-hen and takes care of everyone. She is also the most gossipy character in the show. This role has a medium amount of physical comedy and spends much of the show running up and down stairs and getting physically involved in many of the off-stage shenanigans.

FLAVIA BRENT - Belinda's character in "Nothing On," is an upper-class woman who is definitely the brains of her marriage. She is also easily jealous and suspicious.

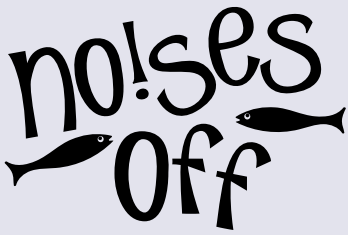
SELSDON MOWBRAY (*Male presenting, age 60s+. Any race/ethnicity.*) An aging actor who has been in the theatre the majority of his life. He likes to have a little nap now and then, his hearing isn't particularly good any more (nor is his eyesight), and he has a bit of a drinking problem. He often wanders off, much to the alarm of the rest of the cast. This role has a medium amount of physical comedy, with some stair climbing and also climbing in and out of a (low) window. Occasionally his pants end up around his ankles.

BURGLER - Selsdon's character in "Nothing On," is an elderly burglar, far past his prime, with a tendency to talk to himself while he works.



POPPY NORTON-TAYLOR (*Female presenting, age 20s-40s. Any race/ethnicity.*) Poppy is the beleaguered assistant stage-manager for “Nothing On,” who spends most of her time being bullied a bit by Lloyd and trying to keep track of everyone and everything. She is both attracted to and angry at Lloyd, who she recently was dating before he turned to Brooke. This role has a minimum amount of physical comedy.

TIM ALLGOOD (*Male presenting, age 20s-50s. Any race/ethnicity.*) Tim is the exhausted stage manager and lead technician for “Nothing On.” He doesn’t sleep much, and spends most of his time running errands and trying to fix the set. He also is the “understudy” for all of the male roles in “Nothing On” and occasionally has to go on for them when they are incapacitated. This role requires a medium amount of physical comedy.



AUDITION INSTRUCTIONS

Auditions will consist of readings from the script sides provided. You may be asked to read for roles you are not necessarily auditioning for. Sides should not be memorized.

Regarding accents: This show is British and we would like to see your best attempt at a British accent. If it is impeding you, we will ask you to drop it on your second read.

If you need special accommodations for auditions (i.e. uncomfortable with in-person auditions due to Covid, unable to attend audition dates, disability accommodations, etc.), please contact the director, Melissa Findley at melissa@theatretallahassee.org.

Download and fill out an Audition Form ahead of time:

[Audition Form \(Word Format\)](#)

[Audition Form \(PDF Format\)](#)

Forms can also be accessed by visiting TheatreTallahassee.org/Auditions

Do I need to bring a headshot or resume?

No. You may bring them if you have them, but they are not required.

SIDE 1

CLACKETT/DOTTY
LLOYD
ROGER/GARRY
BROOKE

When character names shift in the script it indicates they're dropping their 'Nothing On' character and being themselves.

MRS. CLACKETT. It's no good you going on. I can't open sardines and answer the phone. I've only got one pair of feet. *(She puts the sardines down on the telephone table by the sofa, and picks up the phone.)* 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 them, 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 called on the telly — the royal you know — where's the paper, then ... ? *(She picks up the newspaper lying on the sofa and searches in it.)* ... And if it's to do with letting the house then you'll have to ring the houseagents, 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. *(She replaces the receiver. Or so the stage directions say in Robin Housemonger's play, 'Nothing On'. In fact, though, she puts the receiver down beside the phone instead.)* Always the same, isn't it. Soon as you take the weight off your feet, down it all comes on your head. *(Exit MRS. CLACKETT into the study, still holding the newspaper. Or so the stage-direction says. In fact she moves off holding the plate of sardines instead of the newspaper.)*

(As she does so, DOTTY OTLEY, the actress who is playing the part of MRS. CLACKETT, comes out of character to comment on the move.)

DOTTY. And I take the sardines. No, I leave the sardines. No, I take the sardines.

(The disembodied voice of LLOYD DALLAS, the director of 'Nothing On', replies from somewhere out in the darkness of the auditorium.)

LLOYD. You leave the sardines, and you put the receiver back.

DOTTY. Oh yes, I put the receiver back.

(She puts the receiver back, and moves off again with the sardines.)

LLOYD. And you leave the sardines.

DOTTY. And I leave the sardines?

LLOYD. You leave the sardines.

DOTTY. I put the receiver back and I leave the sardines.

LLOYD. Right.

DOTTY. We've changed that, have we, love?

LLOYD. No, love.

DOTTY. That's what I've always been doing?

LLOYD. I shouldn't say that, Dotty, my precious.

DOTTY. How about the words, love? Am I getting some of them right?

LLOYD. Some of them have a very familiar ring.

DOTTY. Only it's like a fruit machine in there.

LLOYD. I know that, Dotty.

DOTTY. I open my mouth, and I never know if it's going to come out three oranges or two lemons and a banana.

LLOYD. Anyway, it's not midnight yet. We don't open till tomorrow. So you're holding the receiver.

DOTTY. I'm holding the receiver.

LLOYD. 'Squire, Squire, Hackham, and hold on...'

(DOTTY resumes her performance as MRS. CLACKETT.)

MRS. CLACKETT. Squire, Squire, Hackham, and hold on, don't go away, I'm putting it down. *(She replaces the receiver.)* Always the same, isn't it. Put your feet up for two minutes, and immediately they come running after you.

(Exit MRS. CLACKETT into the study, still holding the newspaper. Only she isn't holding the newspaper. The sound of a key in the lock)

LLOYD. Hold it.

(The front door opens. On the doorstep stands ROGER, holding a cardboard box. He is about thirty, and has the well-appointed air of a man who handles high-class real estate.)

ROGER. ... I have a housekeeper, yes, but this is her afternoon off.

LLOYD. Hold it, Garry. Dotty!

(Enter VICKI through the front door. She is a desirable property in her early twenties, well-built and beautifully maintained throughout)

ROGER. So we've got the place entirely to ourselves.

LLOYD. Hold it, Brooke, Dotty!

(Enter DOTTY from the study.)

DOTTY. Come back?

LLOYD. Yes, and go out again with the newspaper.

DOTTY. The newspaper? Oh, the newspaper.

LLOYD. You put the receiver back, you leave the sardines, and you go out with the newspaper.

GARRY. Here you are, love.

DOTTY. Sorry, love.

GARRY. *(Embraces her.)* Don't worry, love. It's only the technical.

LLOYD. It's the dress, Garry, honey. It's the dress rehearsal.

GARRY. So when was the technical?

LLOYD. So when's the dress? We open tomorrow!

GARRY. Well, we're all thinking of it as the technical. *(To DOTTY.)* Aren't we, love?

DOTTY. It's all those words, my sweetheart.

GARRY. Don't worry about the words, Dotty, my pet.

DOTTY. Coming up like oranges and lemons.

GARRY. Listen, Dotty, your words are fine, your words are better than the, do you know what I mean? *(To BROOKE.)* Isn't that right?

BROOKE. *(Her thoughts elsewhere.)* Sorry?

GARRY. *(To DOTTY.)* I mean, OK, so he's the, you know. Fine. But, Dotty, love, you've been playing this kind of part for, well, you know what I mean.

LLOYD. All right? So Garry and Brooke are off, Dotty's holding the receiver...

GARRY. 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!

DOTTY. That's right, my sweet. Isn't that right, Lloyd?

LLOYD. Beautifully put, Garry.

GARRY. No, but 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... *(To BROOKE.)* I mean, aren't you?

BROOKE. Sorry?

LLOYD. Anyway, you're off, Dotty's holding the receiver...

GARRY. Sorry, Lloyd. But sometimes you just have to come right out with it. You know?

LLOYD. I know.

GARRY. Thanks, Lloyd.

LLOYD. OK, Garry. So you're off...

GARRY. 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...

LLOYD. Thank you, Garry. I'm very touched. Now will you get off the fucking stage?

SIDE 2

ROGER
VICKI
MRS. CLACKETT

When character names shift in the script it indicates they're dropping their 'Nothing On' character and being themselves.

ROGER. ... I have a housekeeper, yes, but this is her afternoon off. *(Enter VICKI as before.)* So we've got the place entirely to ourselves *(ROGER goes back and brings in a flight bag, and closes the front door.)* I'll just check. *(He opens the door to the service quarters. VICKI gazes round.)* Hello? Anyone at home? *(Closes the door.)* No, there's no one here. So what do you think?

VICKI. Great. And this is all yours?

ROGER. Just a little shack in the woods, really. Converted posset mill. Sixteenth-century.

VICKI. It must have cost a bomb.

ROGER. Well, one has to have somewhere to entertain one's business associates. Someone coming at four o'clock, in fact. Arab sheikh. Oil. You know.

VICKI. Right. And I've got to get those files to our Basingstoke office by four.

ROGER. Yes, we'll only just manage to fit it in. I mean, we'll only just do it. I mean ...

VICKI. Right, then.

ROGER. *(Putting down the box and opening the flight bag.)* We won't bother to chill the champagne.

VICKI. All these doors!

ROGER. Oh, only a handful, really. *(He opens the various doors one after another to demonstrate.)* Study ... Kitchen ... And a self-contained service flat for the housekeeper.

VICKI. Terrific. And which one's the ... ?

ROGER. What?

VICKI. You know ...

ROGER. The usual offices? Through here.

(He opens the downstairs bathroom door for her.)

VICKI. Fantastic.

(Exit VICKI into the bathroom. Enter MRS. CLACKETT from the study, without the newspaper.)

MRS. CLACKETT. Now I've lost the sardines ...

(Mutual surprise. ROGER closes the door to the bathroom, and slips the champagne back into the bag.)

ROGER. I'm sorry. I thought there was no one here.

MRS. CLACKETT. I'm not here. I'm off, only it's the royal you know, where they wear those hats, and they're all covered in fruit, and who are you?

ROGER. I'm from the agents.

MRS. CLACKETT. From the agents?

ROGER. Squire, Squire, Hackham and Dudley.

MRS. CLACKETT. Oh. Which one are you, then? Squire, Squire, Hackham, or Dudley?

ROGER. I'm Tramplemain.

MRS. CLACKETT. Walking in here as if you owned the place! I thought you was a burglar.

ROGER. No, I just dropped in to ... go into a few things ... *(The bathroom door opens. ROGER closes it.)* Well, to check some of the measurements... *(The bathroom door opens. ROGER closes it.)* Do one or two odd jobs ... *(The bathroom door opens. ROGER closes it.)* Oh, and a client. I'm showing a prospective tenant over the house. *(The bathroom door opens.)*

VICKI. What's wrong with this door?

(ROGER closes it.)

ROGER. She's thinking of renting it. Her interest is definitely aroused.

(Enter VICKI from bathroom.)

VICKI. That's not the bedroom.

ROGER. The bedroom? No, that's the downstairs bathroom and WC suite. And this is the housekeeper, Mrs. Crockett.

MRS. CLACKETT. Clackett, dear, Clackett.

VICKI. Oh. Hi.

ROGER. She's not really here.

MRS. CLACKETT. Only it's the royal, you know, with the hats.

ROGER. *(To MRS. CLACKETT.)* Don't worry about us.

MRS. CLACKETT. *(Picks up the sardines.)* I'll have the sound on low.

ROGER. We'll just inspect the house.

MRS. CLACKETT. Only now I've lost the newspaper.

SIDE 3

FLAVIA
PHILIP
MRS. CLACKETT

When character names shift in the script it indicates they're dropping their 'Nothing On' character and being themselves.

Enter PHILIP through the front door.)

PHILIP. No, it's Mrs. Clackett's afternoon off, remember. *(Enter FLAVIA carrying a flight bag like GARRY's.)* We've got the place entirely to ourselves.

(PHILIP closes the door.)

FLAVIA. Home!

PHILIP. Home, sweet home!

FLAVIA. Dear old house!

PHILIP. Just waiting for us to come back!

FLAVIA. It's rather funny, though, creeping in like this for our wedding anniversary!

PHILIP. It's damned serious! If Inland Revenue finds out we're in the country. even for one night, bang goes our claim to be resident abroad. Bang goes most of this year's income. I feel like an illegal immigrant

FLAVIA. I'll tell you what I feel like.

PHILIP. Champagne? *(He takes a bottle out of the box.)*

FLAVIA. I wonder if Mrs. Clackett's aired the beds.

PHILIP. Darling!

FLAVIA. Well, why not? No children. No friends dropping in. We're absolutely on our own.

PHILIP. True. *(He picks up the bag and box and ushers FLAVIA towards the stairs.)* There is something to be said for being a tax exile.

FLAVIA. Leave those!

(He drops the bag and box and kisses her. She flees upstairs. laughing, and he after her.)

PHILIP. Shh!

FLAVIA. What?

PHILIP. *(Humorously.)* Inland Revenue may hear us!

(They creep to the bedroom door.)

Enter MRS. CLACKETT from the service quarters carrying a fresh plate of sardines.)

MRS. CLACKETT. *(To herself.)* What I did with that first lot of sardines I shall never know.

(She puts the sardines on the telephone table and sits on the sofa.)

PHILIP AND FLAVIA. *(Looking down from the gallery.)* Mrs. Clackett!

(MRS. CLACKETT jumps up.)

MRS. CLACKETT. Oh, you give me a turn! My heart jumped right out of my boots!

PHILIP. So did mine!

FLAVIA. We thought you'd gone!

MRS. CLACKETT. I thought you was in Spain!

PHILIP. We are! We are!

FLAVIA. You haven't seen us!

PHILIP. We're not here!

MRS. CLACKETT. Oh, like that, is it? The income tax are after you?

FLAVIA. They would be, if they knew we were here.

MRS. CLACKETT. All right, then, love. You're not here. I haven't seen you. Anybody asks for you, I don't know nothing. Off to bed, are you?

PHILIP. Oh ...

FLAVIA. Well ...

MRS. CLACKETT. That's right. Nowhere like bed when they all get on top of you. You'll want your things, look. *(She indicates the bag and box.)*

PHILIP. Oh. Yes. Thanks.

(He comes downstairs, and picks up the bag and box.)

MRS. CLACKETT. *(To FLAVIA.)* Oh, and that bed hasn't been aired, love.

FLAVIA. I'll get a hot water bottle.

(Exit FLAVIA into the mezzanine bathroom.)

MRS. CLACKETT. I've put all your letters in the study, dear.

PHILIP. Letters? What letters? You forward all the mail, don't you?

MRS. CLACKETT. Not the ones from the income tax, dear. I don't want to spoil your holidays.

PHILIP. Oh good heavens! Where are they?

MRS. CLACKETT. I've put them all in the pigeonhouse.

PHILIP. In the pigeonhouse?

MRS. CLACKETT. In the little pigeonhouse in your desk, love.

SIDE 4

BELINDA
BROOKE
FREDERICK
DOTTY
GARRY
LLOYD
SELSDON
TIM
POPPY

BELINDA. *(To BROOKE.)* Don't you cry, my sweet! It's not your fault!

BROOKE. No, I've got something behind my lens.

FREDERICK. Yes, you couldn't expect Brooke to keep anyone in sight.

DOTTY. *(Pointing at SELSDON without seeing him.)* But he was standing right there in the stalls before we started! I saw him!

BROOKE. Who are we talking about now?

BELINDA. It's all right. my sweet We know you can't see anything.

BROOKE. You mean Selsdon? I'm not blind. I can see Selsdon.

(They all turn and see him.)

BELINDA. Selsdon!

GARRY. Oh my God. he's here all the time!

LLOYD. Standing there like Hamlet's father.

FREDERICK. My word, Selsdon, you gave us a surprise. We thought you were ... We thought you were ... not there.

DOTTY. Where have you been, Selsdon?

BELINDA. Are you all right. Selsdon?

LLOYD. Speak to us!

SELSDON. Is it a party?

BELINDA. 'Is it a party?'

SELSDON. Is it? How killing! I got it into my head there was going to be a rehearsal. *(He goes up on to the stage.)* I was having a little postprandial snooze at the back of the stalls so as to be ready for the rehearsal.

BELINDA. Isn't he lovely?

LLOYD. Much lovelier now we can see him.

SELSDON. So what are we celebrating?

BELINDA. 'What are we celebrating?'

(Enter TIM from the wings.)

TIM. I've looked all through his dressing room. I've looked all through the wardrobe. I can't find the gear. *(LLOYD indicates SELSDON.)* Oh.

SELSDON. Beer? In the wardrobe?

LLOYD. No, Selsdon. Tim, you need a break. Why don't you sit down quietly upstairs and do all the company's VAT!

TIM. VAT, right

LLOYD. *(Discreetly.)* And Tim - just in case he and the gear do walk off together one night, order yourself a spare Burglar costume.

TIM. Spare Burglar costume.

LLOYD. Two spare Burglar costumes. One to fit you, one to fit Poppy. I want a plentiful supply of spare Burglars on hand for any eventuality.

TIM. Two spare Burglars.

(Exit TIM into the wings.)

BELINDA. He has been on his feet for forty-eight hours, Lloyd.

LLOYD. *(Calling.)* Don't fall down, Tim. We may not be insured.

SELSDON. So what's next on the bill?

LLOYD. Well, Selsdon, I thought we might try a spot of rehearsal.

SELSDON. Oh, I won't, thank you.

LLOYD. You won't?

SELSDON. You all go ahead. I'll sit and watch you. This is the beer in the wardrobe, is it?

BELINDA. No, my sweet, he wants us to rehearse.

SELSDON. Yes, but I think we've got to rehearse, haven't we?

LLOYD. Rehearse, yes! Well done, Selsdon. I knew you'd think of something. Right, from Belinda and Freddie's entrance ...

(Enter POPPY from the wings, alarmed.)

POPPY. Lloyd ...

LLOYD. What? What's happened now?

POPPY. The police!

LLOYD. The police?

POPPY. They've found an old man. He was lying unconscious in a doorway just across the street.

LLOYD. Oh. Yes. Thank you.

POPPY. They say he's very dirty and rather smelly, and I thought oh my God, because ...

LLOYD. Thank you, Poppy.

POPPY. Because when you get close to Selsdon ...

BELINDA. POPPY!

POPPY. No, I mean, if you stand anywhere near Selsdon you can't help noticing this very distinctive ... *(She stops, sniffing.)*

SELSDON. *(Putting his arm round her.)* I'll tell you something, Poppy. Once you've got it in your nostrils you never forget it. Sixty years now and the smell of the theatre still haunts me.

(Exit SELSDON into the study.)

BELINDA. Oh, bless him!

LLOYD. Tell me, Poppy, love — how did you get a job like this, that requires tact and understanding? You're not somebody's girlfriend, are you?

(POPPY gives him a startled look.)

BELINDA. Don't worry, Poppy, my sweet. He truly did not hear.

(Enter SELSDON from the study.)

SELSDON. Not here?

LLOYD. Yes, yes, there!

BELINDA. Sit down, my precious.

DOTTY. Go back to sleep.

LLOYD. You're not on for another twenty pages yet.

SIDE 5

TIM
POPPY

(TIM is walking anxiously up and down in his dinner jacket. POPPY is speaking into the microphone in the prompt corner.)

POPPY. *(Over the tannoy.)* Act One beginners, please. Your calls, Miss Otley, Miss Ashton, Mr. Lejeune, Mr. Fellowes, Miss Blair. Act One beginners, please.

TIM. And maybe Act One beginners is what we'll get. What do you think?

POPPY. *(To TIM.)* Oh, Dotty'll pull herself together now we've called Beginners. Now she knows she's got to be on stage in five minutes. Won't she?

TIM. Will she?

POPPY. You know what Dotty's like.

TIM. 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?

POPPY. If only she'd speak!

TIM. If only she'd unlock her dressing room door! Look, if Dotty won't go on ...

POPPY. Won't go on?

TIM. If she won't.

POPPY. She will.

TIM. Of course she will.

POPPY. Won't she?

TIM. I'm sure she will. But if she doesn't ...

POPPY. She must!

TIM. She will, she will. But if she didn't ...

POPPY. I'd have five minutes to change. Four minutes.

TIM. If only she'd say something.

(The pass door opens cautiously, and LLOYD puts his head around. He closes it again at the sight of POPPY.)

POPPY. I'll have another go. Takes your mind off your own problems, anyway.

(Exit POPPY in the direction of the dressing rooms.)

SIDE 6

PHILIP/FREDERICK
LLOYD
BELINDA
GARRY
POPPY
TIM

When character names shift in the script it indicates they're dropping their 'Nothing On' character and being themselves.

(Exeunt ROGER and VICKI into the bedroom. Only they can't, because the bedroom door won't open. The sound of a key in the lock, and the front door opens. On the doorstep stands PHILIP, carrying a cardboard box. He is in his forties, with a deep suntan, and writes attractive new plays with a charming period atmosphere.)

PHILIP. No, it's Mrs. Clackett's afternoon off, remember.

LLOYD. Hold it

(Enter FLAVIA carrying a flight bag like GARRY's. She is in her thirties, the perfect companion piece to the above.)

LLOYD. Hold it.

PHILIP. We've got the place entirely to ourselves.

(PHILIP closes the door. Only the door won't stay closed. A pause, while GARRY struggles to open the door upstairs, and FREDERICK struggles to close the door downstairs.)

LLOYD. And God said, 'Hold it.' And they held it And God saw that it was terrible.

GARRY. (To FREDERICK and BELINDA, the actor and actress playing PHILIP and FLAVIA.) Sorry, loves, this door won't open.

BELINDA. Sorry, love, this door won't close.

LLOYD. And God said, 'Poppy!'

FREDERICK. Sorry, everyone. Am I doing something wrong? You know how stupid I am about doors.

BELINDA. Freddie, my sweet, you're doing it perfectly.

FREDERICK. As long as it's not me that's broken it.

(Enter POPPY from the wings.)

LLOYD. And there was Poppy. And God said, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fetch Tim to fix the doors.

(Exit POPPY into the wings.)

BELINDA. Oh, I love technicals!

GARRY. She loves technicals! (Fondly.) Isn't she just, I mean, honestly, she loves technicals! Dotty! Where's Dotty?

BELINDA. Everyone's always so nice to everyone.

GARRY. Oh! Isn't she just, I mean, she really is, isn't she. (Enter DOTTY from the service quarters. To DOTTY.) Belinda's being all, you know.

BELINDA. But Freddie, my precious, don't you like a nice all night technical?

FREDERICK. The only thing I like about technicals is you get a chance to sit on the furniture. (He sits.)

BELINDA. Oh, Freddie, my precious. It's lovely to see you cheering up and making jokes. (She sits beside him, and embraces him.)

FREDERICK. Oh, was that a joke?

BELINDA. This is such a lovely company to work with. It's such a happy company.

DOTTY. Wait till we've got to Stockton-on-Tees in twelve weeks time.

BELINDA. Are you all right, Lloyd, my precious?

LLOYD. I'm starting to know what God felt like when he sat out there in the darkness creating the world. *(He takes a pill.)*

BELINDA. What did he feel like, Lloyd, my love?

LLOYD. Very pleased he'd taken his Valium.

BELINDA. He had six days, of course. We've only got six hours.

LLOYD. And God said, 'Where the fuck is Tim?' *(Enter from the wings TIM, the company stage manager. He is exhausted.)* And there the fuck was Tim. And God said, 'Let there be doors, that open when they open, and close when they close.'

TIM. Do something?

LLOYD. Doors.

TIM. I was doing the front of house.

LLOYD. Doors.

TIM. Doors?

LLOYD. Tim, are you fully awake?

BELINDA. Lloyd, he has been putting the set up all weekend.

LLOYD. You're not trying to do too much, are you, Tim?

BELINDA. Tim, my love, this door won't close.

GARRY. And the bedroom won't, you know.

TIM. Oh, right.

(He sets to work on the doors.)

BELINDA. *(To LLOYD.)* He hasn't been to bed for forty-eight hours.

LLOYD. Don't worry, Tim. Only another twenty-four hours, and it'll be the end of the day.

(LLOYD comes up on stage.)

BELINDA. Oh, look, he's come down to earth amongst us.

LLOYD. Listen. Since we've stopped anyway. OK, it took two days to get the set up, so we shan't have time for a dress rehearsal. Don't worry. Think of the first night as a dress rehearsal. If we can just get through the play once tonight for doors and sardines. That's what it's all about. Doors and sardines. Getting on – getting off. Getting the sardines on – getting the sardines off. That's farce. That's the theatre. That's life.

BELINDA. Oh, Lloyd, you're so deep.

CREDITS

NOISES OFF

Written by MICHAEL FRAYN

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