

## CASTING

5 Male – 3 Female [flexible]

The cast calls for a minimum of eight cast members, with room for many extras. Two male roles [Dr. Keens and Jake] can be cast male or female.

## SET / TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

The play takes place within a theater and set requirements are flexible. The script describes porch, kitchen, and living room settings which may be as real or as abstract as desired. Basic lighting is adequate. A spotlight is described in one scene.



## CHARACTERS

DR. KEENS .....A new young director. Very businesslike.

JAN/EDITH.....The troupe's lead actress.

ROSE/GRANDMA.....Longest standing troupe member.

STEPH/FRANCIS.....A younger actress who thinks she's much better than she is.

JAKE .....A small boy, ROSE'S son.

BOBBY/SHAWN .....The troupe's lead actor.

TOM/HARVEY.....Troupe member. No-nonsense.

PAUL/LAWYER.....Combination crew and backup actor.

\* Paul, Jake, and Dr. Keens can each be cast as a female with all pronouns being changed accordingly. Jake may be renamed "JANE" and Paul re-named "PAULA."

## SETTING

A theater in a small town

## TIME

The present

*[A modern-day theater in a small down. As the lights come up, the curtain is closed. JAN wanders out in front of the curtain from L. She looks around as if she may be in the wrong place. DR. KEENS enters from R carrying a box of stage props. In the top of the box is a plaster leg cast. He is all business and does not expect to find JAN. He stops when he discovers her.]*

KEENS: Ah. Will you look at that. Someone actually decided to show up for rehearsal. You know, practice should have started over an hour ago.

JAN: I know, Dr. Keens, I'm so sorry I'm late. But you remember we all said Wednesdays were difficult to schedule.

*[Pause. KEENS turns to exit.]*

Is everyone else still here?

KEENS: *[Stops, turns. She has struck a nerve.]* No. No one else is here.

JAN: What? Did they leave already? Oh, I am terribly sorry...

KEENS: *[Interrupting]* No, they didn't leave. None of them bothered to come either.

JAN: No one? Not even Bobby?

KEENS: Oh, Bobby. Well, at least he phoned. Said he wouldn't be here, couldn't help it, he'd call later.

JAN: Well, then why are you still here? You didn't need to stay.

KEENS: Someone has to work. Theater doesn't produce itself Miss...

JAN: Jan, you can call me...

KEENS: *[Interrupting]* Okay, Jan. There's plenty of work to do – even without a cast and crew. No need to waste the whole evening.

JAN: What sort of work?

KEENS: Well, I've finally managed to get rid of some of the clutter that last director left behind. It's a wonder he could even get into that office.

*[Lifts cast from box.]*

Take this for example. It was taking up a whole shelf. Ugh. How did it escape the incinerator so long?

*[Drops cast back in box.]*

JAN: Well, you know, 'Break a leg' and all...

*[She gives up and peers into the box.]*

But this isn't all stuff from the office.

*[Curtain slowly opens to reveal the stage of the theater. L is the exit to outside. R is the exit to the director's office. Set pieces sloppily laid about. Unit pieces may be used to create the illusion of couches, etc. DL is a front porch scene with steps, UC are chairs and a couch arranged as a living room, and DR is a table and chairs representing a kitchen. Flats may be placed UR and UL to provide entrance and exit spots for scenes from the play.]*

KEENS: No, I also tried to find some of the props we still need.

JAN: And this is what you were going to use?

*[shock as she sees what's inside]*

Oh, Dr. Keens, this won't do. You have the "Odd Couple" dishes. You really need the "Driving Miss Daisy" china. Come on, I'll show you where we keep it.

*[Jan pulls Keens into the stage proper and continues in the direction of going off UR, but stops and does a double take as she sees the set pieces on stage.]*

JAN: Oh, this isn't what you were planning to use for the play is it?

KEENS: *[Mocking]* Well, this is all I seemed to be able to find.

JAN: This won't work. Just look. You have the "Noises Off" chairs next to the "Steel Magnolias" couch. The audience won't know whether to laugh or cry. Come on, help me get rid of this couch. We'll find something more appropriate.

*[JAN moves to lift one end of the couch. KEENS is unimpressed and reluctant to move.]*

JAN: Well, don't just stand there. Grab your end there. Can't you see this is clearly not a comedy couch? Come on.

*[More forcefully.]*

Come on!

*[KEENS finally gives in. He deposits his box on the couch and the two move the couch off R. A lighting change indicates the passage of time as BOBBY, JAKE, TOM, JAN, STEPH, ROSE, and PAUL enter L. Everyone is talkative as they enter. They are cast members arriving to begin another evening's rehearsal. JAKE is a young boy, the son of ROSE. He darts about the stage like a child in a candy store.]*

ROSE: Jake, BEHAVE! I am not going to spend the evening chasing you around the wings. Find a quiet spot to play and NO RUNNING!

JAKE: *[Already offstage]* Yes, mom!

ROSE: *[To STEPH]* It has been such a crazy week. I'm glad we made it here at all this evening.

STEPH: I know what you mean. And then traffic was just awful. I've hardly gotten to glance at my script!

BOBBY: *[To TOM]* Say, did you ever get a chance to try that garden hose nozzle I told you about?

TOM: Boy, did I. And it's just like you said. You get the whole lawn standing on my front step. I could irrigate in my slippers if I felt like it. And the next time the neighbor's dog wanders through...

KEENS: *[Entering from R]* All right, everyone. My watch shows seven-oh-two. We're already running late. Let's get busy. Bobby and Tom, can you get the stage set up for the porch scene? Ladies, let's try a quick run-through. I don't want to waste any time this evening!

*[BOBBY and TOM move set pieces to create the impression of a front porch DL as the scene continues on.]*

JAKE: *[Running from R]* Dr. Keens, Dr. Keens, Dr. Keens!

KEENS: *[Tolerant]* What is it, Jake? We're trying to start rehearsal.

JAKE: Dr. Keens, can I go up in the loft? Pleeeeease?

ROSE: No, you may not, Jake. Now, leave us alone. We're here for play practice. If you can't find anything to do you can walk out to the car and fetch your Legos, but stay out of the way.

*[To KEENS]*

I'm sorry, Dr. Keens, but Arthur had to work tonight. I'll see that Jake doesn't bother us.

KEENS: No, I understand. Let's just try to get started.

*[Announcing]*

All right, do you men have my porch set up? ... That looks good... Now where are the ladies? I should have Edith and Francis ready to walk onto the porch... Are we ready? Let's use our time wisely, folks!

*[The CAST may filter offstage or assemble UR as if to watch, except for JAN and STEPH who move DL ready to exit and prepare for their entrance. Several have found scripts to follow along. STEPH'S script is not very used.]*

STEPH: We're ready Dr. Keens. You just tell us what to do and we're all set.

KEENS: All right, why don't you ladies go offstage there and we'll run this scene from the entrance.

STEPH: You got it. Come on, Jan, let's go.

*[STEPH and JAN exit L, then return in character. They are two townsfolk gathering on the porch [DL] to gossip. STEPH is reading from her script and sounds like it. JAN is giving her lines from memory.]*

STEPH: Edith, I just can't wait to tell everyone. Isn't this a beautiful day for such good news?

JAN: Oh, I know. Who would have thought that someone on our very street...

STEPH: That Grandma Lentil!

JAN: She is so sweet. I'm so happy for her. What do you think she'll do with the lottery winnings?

STEPH: Well, I don't know. She's gone without for so long. She might fix that front step, or paint the porch... what am I saying? She can buy a whole new house.

JAN: You win the lottery and you can buy more than a new house. Do you think she'll be any different? Now that she's a millionaire? I hope she stays the same Grandma Lentil.

STEPH: Oh, me too, I hope she stays the same forever.

*[Pause]*

Except...

JAN: What?

STEPH: No, no, it sounds just awful to say it.

JAN: Come on, go ahead.

STEPH: Well, sometimes, I wish... and I know this is terrible, but it might be nice if she would die.

*[There is puzzled silence as everyone tries to understand the line. KEENS looks at his script, frustrated. Finally JAN realized the problem and reaches over and turns the page in STEPH'S script. STEPH is startled and continues her reading.]*

STEPH: ...her hair a darker color. You know, she does have that old lady, blue hair look.

JAN: Oh, that's not so terrible, Francis, I've thought the same thing. But I bet neither of us will ever have the guts to tell her.

STEPH: No, I guess not.

JAN: Look,

*[pointing DR.]*

is that the Greyhound pulling in there? Let's go find Grandma's sons. I wonder what they're like.

*[The two get up and head R. KEENS stops them and sets up the next part of rehearsal.]*

KEENS: All right, ladies. It looks like we need a lot more work on some of those lines before we work on the blocking any more. Why don't you find some place to go over your lines. Steph, can you work on your memorization? And it needs to sound much more natural.