

Audition Monologues for "The Dining Room"

"The Dining Room" opened on Broadway in the 80's and was written by A.R. Gurney. The comedy calls for 3-4 men and 3-4 women who each play 7-8 different roles.

There are several monologues to choose from and please bring them to your audition. Everyone needs to perform 2 monologues showing your range of 2 different aged characters. You should be familiar with the monologues you have selected, but do not need to have them memorized. You can have them in hand when you audition. You may be asked to read an additional monologue.

Female Monologues

Sarah (teens)

Can you watch TV while you eat?...That's something. At least you don't have to talk... My parents said they tried eating in the kitchen when I went to boarding school. But when I got kicked out, they moved back in here. It's supposed to give me some sense of stability... Shit no! It just makes me nervous. They take the telephone off the hook, so no one can call, and my brother gets itchy about his homework, and when my sister had anorexia, she still had to sit here and watch, for God's sake, and my parents spend most of the meal bitching, and the whole thing bites, Helen. It really bites. It bites the big one... You call the boys and tell them it's all clear.

Meg (in her 20's)

I've been involved with a woman, Dad, but it's not working, and I don't know who I am, and I've got to touch base. ... I'm all mixed up, Dad. I'm all over the ballpark. I've been seeing a Crisis Counselor, and I've taken a part-time job, and I've been jogging two miles a day, and none of it is working, Dad. I want to come home. I want to take my children to the Zoo, and the Park Lake, and the Art Gallery, and do all those things you and Mother used to do with all of us. I want to start again, Dad. I want to start all over again.

Grace (in her 40's)

But let me tell you a very short story before you do. About your dear Aunt Martha. Who also made a little decision when she was about your age. She decided -- if you breathe a word of this, I'll strangle you -- she decided she was in love with her riding master. And so she threw everything up, and ran off with him. To Taos, New Mexico. Where your father had to track her down and drag her back. But it was too late, Carolyn! She had been overstimulated. And from then on in, she refused to join the workday world. Now there it is. In a nutshell. So think about it, while I'm ordering the groceries. And decide.

Peggy (in her 30's)

All right, children. You win. Now Roberta is very busy in the kitchen because she also has a dinner party tonight. So who would like to help bring things out? All right. Tell you what. Billy, you get the ice cream, and Sandra, you bring out the cake! Careful, careful! Walk, don't run! And be polite to Roberta because she's working very hard. And Brewster and Winkie, you'll have other responsibilities! For instance, Brewster: when Billy and Sandra reappear through that door, what will you do?

Ruth (in her 70's)

Lately I've been having this recurrent dream. We're giving this perfect party. We have our

dining room back, and Grandmother's silver, before it was stolen, and Charley's mother's royal blue dinner plates, before the movers dropped them, and even the finger bowls, if I knew where they were. And I've invited all our favorite people. Oh I don't mean just our old friends. I mean everyone we've ever known and liked. We'd have the man who fixes our Toyota, and that intelligent young couple who bought the Payton house, and the receptionist at the doctor's office, and the new teller at the bank. And our children would be invited, too. And they'd all come back from wherever they are. And we'd have two cocktails, and hot hors d'oeuvres, and a first-rate cook in the kitchen, and two maids to serve, and everyone would get along famously! My husband laughs when I tell him this dream. "Do you realize," he says, "what a party like that would cost? Do you realize what we'd have to pay these days for a party like that?" Well, I know all that. But sometimes I think it might almost be worth it.

Male Monologues

Tony (20s)

Thanks, Aunt Harriet. That was terrific. ... This is a classroom project. For Amherst... Anthropology, actually. ... Well you see we're studying the eating habits of various vanishing cultures. For example, someone is talking about the Kikuyus of Northern Kenya. And my roommate is doing the Cree Indians of Saskatchewan. And my professor suggested I do a show on us. ... The Wasps. Of Northeastern United States. ... You can learn a lot about a culture from how it eats... Well. Consider the finger bowls, for example. There you have an almost neurotic obsession with cleanliness, reflecting the guilt which comes with the last stages of capitalism. Or notice the unnecessary accumulation of glass and china, and the compulsion to display it. Or the subtle hint of aggression in those pistol-handled knives... (she asks him to leave) Aunt Harriet...

Jim(30s)

I'd like Scotch, sweetheart. Make it reasonably strong. You'll find the silver measuring gizmo in the drawer by the trays. I want two shots and a splash of water. And I like to use that big glass with the pheasant on it. And not too much ice. I saw Mimi Mott the other day ... can you hear me? There she was, being a very good sport with her third husband. Her third. Who's deaf as a post and extremely disagreeable. So I took her aside-can you hear me? I took her aside, and I said, "Now Mimi, tell me the truth. If you had made half as much effort with your first husband as you've made with the last two, don't you think you'd still be married to him?" I asked her that. Point blank. And you know what Mimi said? She said, "Maybe. "That's exactly what she said. "Maybe." If she had made the effort.

Father (30s)

Now you listen to me, Charlie. Miss Kelly may be an excellent teacher. Her factoring may be flawless, her geography beyond question. But Miss Kelly does not teach us politics. Nor does she teach us how to run our lives. She is not going to tell you, or me, to leave in the middle of a pleasant breakfast, and get caught in the bulk of the morning traffic, just so that you can arrive in time for a silly hymn. Long after you've forgotten that hymn, long after you've forgotten how to factor, long after you've forgotten Miss Kelly, you will remember these pleasant breakfasts around this dining room table. And here is your mother to prove it.

Grandfather (60-70)

Everyone's going away? Hear that, Dora? Everyone's going away... I didn't go away... Didn't even go to Country Day. Went to the old P.S. 36 down on Huron Street. Didn't finish either. Father died, and I had to go to work. Had to support my mother... My father didn't go to school

at all. Learned Greek at the plow... I didn't do too badly. Without a high Episcopal boarding school, and an indoor hockey rink... Everyone wants to go away. Me? I went away twice. Took two vacations in my life. First vacation, took a week off from work to marry your grandmother. Went to Hot Springs, Virginia. Bought this table. Second vacation: Europe. 1928. Again with your grandmother. Hated the place. Knew I would. Miserable meals. Took a trunkload of shredded wheat along. Came back when it ran out. Back to this table. They're all leaving us, Dora. Scattering like birds... This one wants to go to one of those fancy New England boarding schools. He wants to play ice hockey indoors with that crowd from Long Island and Philadelphia. He'll come home talking with marbles in his mouth. We won't understand a word, Dora. And we won't see much of him, Dora. He'll go visiting in New York and Baltimore. He'll drink liquor in the afternoon and get mixed up with women who wear lipstick and trousers and whose only thought is the next dance. And he wants me to pay for it all. Am I right?

Harvey (70-80)

I'll sit here. We can look out. There's a purple finch who comes to the feeder every evening. Brings his young. Now I want to go over my funeral with you. Now I want the funeral service announced at the end of the obituary, and to occur three days later. That will give people time to postpone their trips and adjust their appointments. And I want it at three-thirty in the afternoon. This gives people time to digest their lunch and doesn't obligate us to feed them dinner. Notice I've underlined the word church. Mr. Fayerweather might try to squeeze the service into the chapel, but don't let him. I've lived in this city all of my life, and know a great many people, and I want everyone to have a seat and feel comfortable. If you see people milling around the door, go right up to them and find them a place, even if you have to use folding chairs. Are we clear on that?