

THE CHERRY ORCHARD – FIRST ROUND AUDITION SCENES

# FIRST ROUND AUDITIONS

These audition scenes have been prepared solely for use in the Oxford Theatre Guild auditions for *The Cherry Orchard*.

Thank You

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When it comes to preparing the scenes - don't worry where the plays come from or are set. Read them through and concentrate on the characters – see how real you can make them!

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Scenes taken from

**Brideshead Revisited** by Roger Parsley, after Evelyn Waugh

**Nicholas Nickleby** by David Edgar, after Charles Dickens

**Pride and Prejudice** by Peter Kenvyn Jones, after Jane Austen

**The Woman in White** by Wilkie Collins

**The Government Inspector** by Nikolai Gogol

**A Month in the Country** by Ivan Turgenev

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**Brideshead Revisited**  
**JULIA & CHARLES**

- JULIA           It's sweet of you to come. Mummy has been asking for you, but I don't know if she'll be able to see you now after all.
- CHARLES       Is she very ill?
- JULIA           Yes. She's dying. She may live a week or two, or she may go at any minute. She's asleep now, but I can tell you what she wanted to say ... she was beastly to you, last time you met. She knows now that she was wrong about you ... she wanted to apologize.
- CHARLES       There's no need.
- JULIA           I was so sorry when you had to go. You'd become such a part of us  
But there's another thing. Sebastian— she wants him. I don't know if that's possible, is it?
- CHARLES       I hear he's in a very bad way ... I met with Blanche in London. After he'd given Rex the slip, Sebastian stayed with him in Marseille, I gather he was out of funds, stealing from his host, pawning what he took, and drinking the proceeds! A sot is how Blanche described him. Last heard of living in Fez with a German out of the Foreign Legion
- JULIA           Oh, Charles! (*She touches his arm*) It seems as if everything is changing, and nothing can stop it. Will you try and get him? I think Sebastian would want it, too, if he realized.
- CHARLES       I'll try.
- JULIA           Thank you. Thank you so much. There's ... no-one else I could ask.

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**Nicholas Nickleby**  
**MADAME MANTALINI & MISS KNAG**

MADAME M Miss Knag?

MISS K Madame Mantalini.

MADAME M Ah, Miss Knag, this is the young person I spoke to you about  
*(indicating Kate Nickleby)*

MISS K Oh good morning miss. And the rest of you girls, come on, come on,  
no gawping, is there no work to be done?

MADAME M I think, for the present, it will be better if Miss Nickleby to come into  
the showroom with you –

MISS K Showroom, yes.

MADAME M And try things on for people.

MISS K People, yes.

MADAME M She'll not be much use yet in any other way.

MISS K Way, no.

MADAME M And her appearance will –

MISS K Suit very well with mine.

*(to Kate)* For, yes, I see, Miss Nickleby and I are very much a pair  
although I am just a little darker, and I have, I think, a slightly smaller  
foot. Miss Nickleby will not, I am sure, be too much offended at my  
saying that, as our family has always been quite celebrated for its feet  
– the smallness of them – ever since the family had feet at all.

MADAME M You'll take care, Miss Knag, that she understands her hours.

MISS K Hours,

MADAME M And so forth.

MISS K So forth, yes.

MADAME M And I'll leave her with you.

MISS K Yes, of course, dear Madame Mantalini.

MADAME M Good morning, ladies.

MISS K Good morning, madame.

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**Pride and Prejudice**  
**JANE and BINGLEY**

**Bing:** Miss Bennet...

**Jane:** Yes, Mr Bingley?

**Bing:** I have something particular to say to you.

**Jane:** Yes, Mr Bingley?

**Bing:** I am sensible of a hurt that I may have unknowingly inflicted upon you when last you were in London. I must confess that I was wholly ignorant of your presence there, which, had I known, would not have kept me from one for whom I have always harboured the greatest regard. I can only hope that any hurt which I occasioned caused you no lasting pain, and I ask that you will forgive me.

**Jane:** There is nothing to forgive, Mr Bingley.

**Bing:** I have since discovered that it was my sister and my friend, who were instrumental in keeping the knowledge of your presence from me, in the mistaken belief that this would preserve me from an unhappy acquaintance and with some-one who was indifferent to me. I am now persuaded that the considerations of wealth and status urged upon me by my friends, though intended kindly, were mistaken and that my best interest will be served by following the dictates of my heart.

**Jane:** In matters of the heart, Mr Bingley, I believe we should always follow where it leads.

**Bing:** Will it, therefore, be impertinent of me to inquire if *your* heart is disposed towards another?

**Jane:** It is, Mr Bingley. For about a year now, my heart has been fixed upon a man to whom I could cheerfully devote my life. I have feigned indifference and kept this secret to myself, the better to preserve my reputation and to protect me from the pain of a rejection. Yes, Mr Bingley, there is someone else.

**Bing:** [*upset*] May I ask who the gentleman is?

**Jane:** Why, Mr Bingley, of course, it is you.

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**The Woman in White – Walter and Count Fosco**

- Fosco. Good evening, sir. Which is the right way, if you please, to Limmeridge House? I ask you the question, sir, as an expected guest. I am Count Fosco.
- Wal. The friend of Sir Percival Glyde!
- Fosco. Exactly! I arrived at the lodge-gate with Sir Percival and Madame Fosco. They drove on in the carriage to the house. I got out, seduced by the beauty of the park, to wander, and look about me.
- Wal. Sir Percival has arrived!
- Fosco. Strange, such enthusiasm at my age, is it not? Bah! Old as I am, and fat as I am, there is poetry in my soul. Nature has imperishable charms, inextinguishable tendernesses, for me. I wander in this noble park--I bathe myself in the glorious light--the sublime lines of Dante, on the evening (you know them, of course?), burst in fervent declamation from my lips. Little by little, your modest English twilight steals over the scene. I start; I look round; I find myself lost like a Babe in the Wood. Pity a poor foreign baby, sir!
- Wal. You are on the right road here. (He points out through the door towards the left.) Follow the path through the shrubbery, and you will find yourself at the house.
- Fosco. A thousand thanks! You are going yourself to the house?
- Wal. On the contrary. I am on my way out of the park.
- Fosco. You have a letter in your hand. If it is for the house, can I take it?
- Wal. I won't trouble you. I have waited here too long already. Good evening. (*Aside, looking at FOSCO.*) If Count Fosco were to save my life, I couldn't make a friend of him!
- (*He goes out.*)
- Fosco. (*alone, looking after WALTER*). A man who can resist the magnetic personal influence which I exercise over my fellow-creatures, is a man who piques my curiosity. That young gentleman is a problem that challenges me. I shall make it my business to solve him.

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### **The Government Inspector – Khlestakov and Waiter**

KHLESTAKOV. Well, what is it?

WAITER (with plates and a napkin). This is the last time the landlord will send you dinner.

KHLESTAKOV. Well, the landlord ... the landlord is a ... I spit on your landlord ! What have you got there ?

WAITER. Soup and roast-beef.

KHLESTAKOV. What, only two dishes ?

WAITER. That's all, sir.

KHLESTAKOV. What nonsense ! I won't have it ! Ask him what he means by it ! ... That's too little !

WAITER. No, the landlord says it's a good deal too much !

KHLESTAKOV. But isn't there any sauce ?

WAITER. No, there isn't any.

KHLESTAKOV. Pray, why not? I saw 'em myself getting a lot ready, as I went past the kitchen. And at the ordinary this morning two undersized little men were eating salmon and all sorts of good things.

WAITER. Well, if you please, sir, there is some, and there isn't.

KHLESTAKOV. How not ?

WAITER. There isn't any, then.

KHLESTAKOV. What, no salmon—no fish—no cutlets ?

WAITER. Only for the gentlemen as pays, sir!

KHLESTAKOV. What a fool you are !

WAITER. Yessir.

KHLESTAKOV. You beastly pig! ... Why are they eating, while I mayn't ? Why mayn't I too, confound it ? Ain't I a bona-fide traveller too, as good as they ?

WAITER. No, sir, not exactly, that's certain.

KHLESTAKOV. How's that, pray ?

WAITER. Well, the difference is pretty plain : they settles up !

KHLESTAKOV. Oh, I won't argue with you, you booby ! (*Pours out the soup and tastes it.*) What ! do you call that soup ? Why, you've simply poured hot water into a cup; it's got no taste, it only stinks ! None of that for me, thank you. Bring me some other soup !

WAITER. Very well, sir, I'll take it away.

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## **A Month in the Country – Lizaveta and Shpigelsky**

LIZAVETA BOGDANOVNA. Did you dine at Bolshintsov's?

SHPIGELSKY. Yes. ... I went to see him. And it's only on your account I came back here, upon my soul.

LIZAVETA BOGDANOVNA. Oh, nonsense. And do you know, Ignaty Ilyitch, Natalya Petrovna is cross with you. . . . She said something not very complimentary about you at dinner.

SHPIGELSKY. Really? Ladies don't like us poor fellows to have sharp eyes, it seems. You must do what they want, you must help them, and you must pretend not to know what they're up to. A pretty set! But we shall see. And Rakitin, I dare say, looked rather in the dumps, too?

LIZAVETA BOGDANOVNA. Yes, he, too, seemed, as it were, out of sorts. . . .

SHPIGELSKY. Hm. And Vera Alexandrovna? And Beliayev?

LIZAVETA BOGDANOVNA. Everyone, absolutely everyone seemed depressed. I really can't imagine what's the matter with them all to-day.

SHPIGELSKY. If you know too much, you'll grow old before your time, Lizaveta Bogdanovna. . . . But never mind them. We had better talk about our affairs. The rain hasn't left off. ... Shall we?

LIZAVETA BOGDANOVNA [*casting down her eyes primly*]. What are you asking me, Ignaty Ilyitch?

SHPIGELSKY. Oh, Lizaveta Bogdanovna, if you'll allow me to say so, there's no need to put on airs, and to drop your eyes like that! We're not young people, you know! These performances, these sighs and soft nothings--they don't suit us. Let us talk calmly, practically, as is proper for people of our years. And so--this is the question: we like each other ... at least, I presume that you like me.

LIZAVETA BOGDANOVNA [*a little affectedly*], Ignaty Ilyitch, really. . . .

SHPIGELSKY. Oh, all right, very well. After all, perhaps, airs and graces are . . . only proper in a lady. So then, we like each other. And in other respects too we are well matched. Of course, I am bound to say about myself that I am not a man of good family: well, you're not of illustrious birth either. I'm not a rich man; if I were, I shouldn't be where I am----- [*Laughs.*] But I've a decent practice, not all my patients die; you have, as you say, fifteen thousand roubles of your own, all that's not at all bad, you see. At the same time, you're tired, I imagine, of living for ever as a governess, and then fussing round an old lady, backing her up at preference, and falling in with her whims isn't much fun, I should say. On my side, it's not so much that I'm weary of bachelor-life, but I'm growing old, and then, my cooks rob me; so you see, it all fits in nicely. But here's the difficulty, Lizaveta Bogdanovna; we don't know each other at all, that is, to be exact, you don't know me ... I know you well enough. I understand your character. I don't say you have no faults. Being a spinster, you're little old-maidish, but that's no harm. In the hands of a good husband, a wife is soft as wax. But I should like you to know me before marriage; or else you'll, maybe, blame me afterwards. ... I don't want to deceive you.