

# Audition Packet

## *The Women*

by Clare Boothe Luce

(1936)

Director: Paul de Freitas [paul@defreitas.info](mailto:paul@defreitas.info)

Assistant Director: Erica Ebanks [eebanks@me.com](mailto:eebanks@me.com)

Auditions: Saturday, August 29<sup>th</sup> 2020 – 2pm to 4pm

Callbacks: Tuesday, September 1<sup>st</sup> 2020 – 7:30pm

CV19 Protocols will be in place. (1) Wear a mask in the theatre unless on stage auditioning. (2) Practise spatial-distancing norms unless in your family group. (3) Use hand sanitizer frequently and especially after any contact. (4) Limited seating, but enough for all persons auditioning, will be available - please avoid bringing non-auditioners to the theatre at this time.

### **Rehearsals:**

November 2019 – February 2020  
(with two-week Christmas/New Year break)

### **Production Dates:**

Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays  
February 18, 19, 20, 25, 26, 27, 2021  
March 4, 5, 6, 2021

*The Women* had an original cast of 35. We have reduced the cast to 21 by double and triple casting minor but important characters. The decision as to how the play is cast will depend on the auditions since it is possible to drop supporting roles in some scenes. The stage play and the two subsequent movie versions are set in New York. The CDS production will not indicate a locale so that an American accent does not become an issue. The script will be altered to modern standards of public sensitiveness without affecting the comedy.

Please note that *The Women* timetable may conflict with rehearsals for the CDS May 2021 production of *NOISES OFF*. You can be in one or the other but not both. If you have any questions about conflicts, please contact Paul de Freitas.

## THE PLOT

*The Women* is a 1936 play, a *comedy of manners* by [Clare Boothe Luce](#). It is billed as a commentary on the pampered lives and power struggles of various wealthy *Manhattan socialites* and up-and-comers and the *gossip* that propels and damages their relationships. While men frequently are the subject of their lively discussions and drive the action on-stage, they are never seen or heard.

A group of friends meet at the house of Mary Haines. While Mary is out of the room, Sylvia confides to the others that she has heard from her manicurist that Mary's husband is cheating on her. Cheekily, Sylvia points Mary to the manicurist to have her nails done.

A few days later, Mary visits the beauty parlour to have her nails done. The talkative manicurist is quick to share the gossip, asks Mary if she knows Mary Haines and mentions that her good friend, Crystal Allen, is having a tryst with a Mrs Haines husband

Mary confides to her mother, Mrs Morehead, about Stephen's infidelity. Her mother tells her to grin and bear it for the sake of her son and daughter. Her mother insists that Mary take a break to think things over and go on a trip with her.

We meet Crystal Allen at the dress-makers where she pretends to have just moved here and wants to open a charge account. She offers Stephen Haines as a reference. Mary coincidentally is at the dress-makers and learns that Crystal is there. She confronts her. Crystal refuses to budge – she owns Stephen now.

The whole affair reaches the tabloids because of careless chatter by Edith who tells an enhanced version of events to a gossip columnist. Mary is the talk of the town, her friends and servants. She finally decides that she must divorce Stephen.

Despite her mother's advice, Reno is the place for a quick divorce and Mary goes there. But first she breaks the news to Little Mary who is distraught. While in Reno, with some of her friends, Mary signs the divorce papers, just after receiving a call from Stephen saying he intends to marry Crystal and keep Little Mary.

We jump forward two years – Crystal is already tired of Stephen and has other men friends. Little Mary overhears her talking on the phone to one of them. Crystal's few contacts with Mary's group of friends lead them to believe she is being unfaithful to Stephen. She denies it.

Mary discovers from Little Mary, by putting two and two together, that Buck, latest husband of her friend the Countess de Lage, is having an affair with Crystal. Mary had turned down an invitation to a party at which it was expected Crystal and Stephen would attend. Mary changes her mind and goes to the party to confront Crystal with what she has learned

Mary confronts Crystal in Sylvia's presence, and promises to ensure that Crystal's affair with Buck becomes common gossip for Stephen to hear. Crystal retreats. Stephen has arrived in a car to pick up his wife. Mary goes out to him.

CURTAIN CLOSE / OPEN

Crystal is pulling Sylvia's hair.

Curtain Call...

**THE WOMEN - AUDITION REQUEST - PLEASE COMPLETE AND SEND THIS QUESTIONNAIRE TO [paul@defreitas.info](mailto:paul@defreitas.info)**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Gender: **FEMALE** Role age: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Home: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell: \_\_\_\_\_  
 E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Are you willing to accept any role(s)? \_\_\_\_\_ (Supporting cast will play multiple roles)

If you selected "No" above, which roles are you willing to accept? Indicate below with a "Yes"...

Character	Role (All roles are FEMALE – ages are approximate)	Yes/No
JANE (A maid)	20s to 30s: Pretty and quite correct	
NANCY (Mrs. Blake)	35: Sharp, but not acid, sleek but not smart, worldly and yet virginal.	
PEGGY (Mrs. John Day)	25: Pretty, sweet. Peggy's character has not, will never quite "jell."	
SYLVIA (Mrs. Howard Fowler)	35: Glassy, elegant, feline. Extravagant bosom of which she is proud	
EDITH (Mrs. Phelps Potter)	35: Sloppy, expensively dressed matron indifferent to everything but self, she is incapable of either deliberate maliciousness or spontaneous generosity.	
MARY (Mrs. Stephen Haines)	35: A lovely woman who is what most of us want our happily married daughters to be like.	
COUNTESS DE LAGE	40's: Amiable, silly, overweight and heiress-type	
CRYSTAL ALLEN	Early 30's: A pretty vamp	
LITTLE MARY	11-13: Mary's daughter - Broad-browed, thoughtful, healthy little girl, physically well-developed for her age	
MRS. MOREHEAD	55: Mary's mother - Bourgeois aristocrat of 55	
MIRIAM AARONS SECOND SALESGIRL	Late 20s: Breezy, flashy red-head	
FIRST HAIRDRESSER FIRST SALESWOMAN (Miss Shapiro) FIRST WOMAN	30s-40s:	
SECOND HAIRDRESSER SECOND MODEL / CORSET CIGARETTE GIRL	20s to 30s:	
EUPHIE SECOND SALESWOMAN A NURSE	30s to 50s: A beautician's assistant, a sales woman (senior) and a jaded nurse	
OLGA – A MANICURIST PRINCESS TAMARA GIRL IN DISTRESS	20s to 30s: Russian, regal, soignée	
PEDICURIST HELENE (A maid) FIRST GIRL	20s to 30s: Chic French maid	
MISS FORDYCE MISS TRIMMERBACK SADIE	30s to 50s: Raw-boned, affable English spinster Very tailored, businesslike woman Hat check woman	

A FITTER MISS WATTS SECOND WOMAN	30s to 50s: Very tailored, businesslike woman older than Miss Trimmerback	
MAGGIE (Cook) LUCY DOWAGER	40s to 50s: Buxom, middle-aged woman Slatternly middle-aged, husky woman	
EXERCISE INSTRUCTOR FIRST SALESGIRL A DEBUTANTE	20s to 30s:	
FIRST MODEL (Miss Myrtle) SECOND GIRL	20s to 30s:	

Have you read the script of or seen *The Women*?

Are you comfortable cutting your hair for this production?

Are you comfortable dyeing your hair for this production?

Are you comfortable kissing onstage?

NOT APPLICABLE

Would you be able and willing to attend evening rehearsals?

(from approximately 7 to 9)

If not cast, are you interested in working backstage?

Check all positions of interest:

Props:            Publicity:            Costumes:            Stage Crew:            Make-Up:

List all relevant previous theatre experience (on and offstage). Please feel free to attach a resumé if you have one:

Days of the week on which you can rehearse (evening rehearsal during business week - daytime on weekends)

Monday      Tuesday      Wednesday      Thursday      Friday      Saturday      Sunday

**Please list all time conflicts between November 1<sup>st</sup> and December 17<sup>th</sup> (i.e. work travel, vacations, etc.). Conflicts from January 11<sup>th</sup> to March 7<sup>th</sup> 2021 will not be accepted.**

Is there anything else you would like us to know?