



AUDITION NOTICE

TOWARDS ZERO

a play in 3 acts by AGATHA CHRISTIE and GERALD VERNER

directed by Will Harris

27 February – 4 March 2022

Read through: Tuesday 13th September at 8pm.
Auditions: Tuesday 25th & Thursday 27th October, 8pm.
Rehearsals start: 29th November; thereafter Tuesdays & Thursdays;
(Sundays 12, 19, 26 February)

Scripts may be obtained from Will: 020 8395 9978; wjh@blueyonder.co.uk

(Italicised passages are taken directly from the script.)

Agatha Christie published her novel *Towards Zero* in 1944. This adaptation for the stage was written in 1951 by the prolific writer Gerald Verner, although Christie did write her own stage adaptation at much the same time. The events of both plays explore how the characters, through their various interactions, move towards the 'zero hour' of a murder and how the murder shouldn't be the beginning of a story but the end. The cast involves several characters, 4 women and 7 men. The action takes place in a classic murder mystery setting, *a large, very beautiful room of exquisite taste*.

Lady Tressilian is having a gathering at her home in Cornwall. Among the guests is her late husband's ward Nevile Strange with his wife Kay. His previous wife, Audrey is also present, and this is the situation giving rise to a central theme in the play of jealousy.

Cast and Audition Pieces: (shown by page numbers. Physical attributes not crucial.)

THOMAS ROYDE *is a good looking middle-aged man, bronzed by many years in the sun.*

Came to the house as a boy. Rather set in his ways. Amiable, though an introvert. It is he who puts forward the idea of a murder being the beginning of a story. In love with Audrey. 8–10; 20–21; 62–64.

KAY STRANGE Second wife of NEVILLE. Impetuous. Self-centred. Hot-tempered. *Sobs hysterically and storms out, slamming the door behind her.*

Jealous of AUDREY, of whom she says she's never forgiven Nevile for going off with her. *"This is her revenge. She got him to fix it so that we'd be together and then she set to work on him. She knows just how to look pathetic. Poor sweet, injured little kitten with all her blasted claws out."* Out of place at house-party, wants to get away. Substantial part. 22–25; 31–33; 56–58.

MARY ALDIN *is about 36, reserved, pleasant and noncommittal in manner.*

Housekeeper, calls herself LADY TRESSILIAN's dogsbody, though she is very fond of her. On first-name terms. LADY T says "*she's never had any life of her own. And now, perhaps, it's too late.*"

Small part. 8–10; 31–33

MATHEW TREVES *is an elderly and distinguished lawyer of great experience and shrewdness. He retired from his London firm some years ago and is now a keen observer of human behaviour.*

Old school, correct, courteous.. 18–19; 27–29; 92–94.

NEVILLE STRANGE First-rate athlete. Star tennis player. Infatuated by KAY but still cares about AUDREY.

Thinks getting the two together would be a good idea.

Substantial part. 66–69; 92–94.

LADY TRESSILIAN *is a white-haired aristocratic-looking woman of immense gravitas. Very much of her generation, a snob. "When I was a girl such things did not happen. Men had their affairs, naturally, but they did not allow them to break up their married life". "The last so-called butler we had actually whistled 'Come into the Garden, Maud' as he served at the table".*

Small part, Act 1 only.

AUDREY STRANGE *is very fair but carries a strange air of repressed emotion. With ROYDE, however, she is completely natural and happy: still devoted to him.*

Quiet manner. Complete contrast with KAY. 20–22

TED LATIMER *is a very dark, good-looking man of about 26. His dinner suit fits him a shade too well. Long-time friend of KAY, still very much in love with her.*

Staying at nearby hotel, comes to house for dinner. 31-33; 80–82

SUPERINTENDENT BATTLE *is a big man, aged about fifty. Experienced, shrewd. Keeps an avuncular eye on LEACH.*

Substantial part, Acts 2 and 3 only. 56–58; 62–64; 85–86

INSPECTOR LEACH *is a man of about forty. He speaks with a slight Cornish accent.*

BATTLE's nephew. 51–52; 61

PC BENSON *is a young man, fair and very quiet.*

Very small part, only a few words, but on stage quite a lot. Acts 2 and 3 only.

I do hope there will be a lot of interest in this play. It's an excellent thriller, with strong, believable characters. I am greatly looking forward to working on it and providing a splendid evening's entertainment for our Courtyard audiences.

WH