

Dial M for Murder

by Frederick Knott
Director: Ian M Butterfield
Play dates: 21-28 May 2022

Director's Notes:

- Ages are only a guideline. I am more concerned about performance and being convincing in the role rather than age, **however** the relative ages of Lesgate and Tony is important and there can't be too wide an age gap between Max and Sheila, or Sheila and Tony.
- There are no 'small' roles in the play (other than an off-stage voice and a pre-recorded announcer, for which we are not auditioning).
- Tony is the largest role as he is on stage for most of the play and tends to 'control the action' when present.
- Sheila, like Tony, is on stage for a significant part of the play, although she has less dialog to learn than Tony the role is no less demanding for that fact.
- Lesgate only appears in the first half of the play.
- Inspector Hubbard only appears in the second half of the play but as the detective this is a major role once he does appear.
- The play will be set in the early 1950s. **It is expected that male actors will have their hair cut and styled to match that period. Sheila could wear a wig but it is preferred if she can cut/style her own hair appropriately.**
- The play is set in Maida Vale, London. "RP" accents for all characters, except for Hubbard who, in contrast, should have a less refined accent to those around him. This could be a "regional accent" or East London but must be very natural and **avoid** a "Gor blimey, Gov'ner" over the top clichéd accent.
- I prefer to not have a prompt for performances. A prompt will be used for rehearsal and the rehearsals will be structured to wean actors off using the prompt as we near performance dates. ***If performing without a prompt is an issue for you please let us know at audition time.***
- Rehearsals will take place over Late March/April/May. Please let us know if you will be away for any significant time during those months..

Sheila Wendice (age 30-40)

Charming, attractive wife of Tony Wendice. Something of a socialite. She is normally submissive to her husband. She is quite nervous when interviewed by the police. A year ago she had an affair with Max Halliday and was on the verge of leaving Tony for him.

Audition piece:

With Max: Page 4 "There's something else" to top of page 9 "Let's drink to – the way things turn out"

Max Halliday (age late 20's through 40's)

Charming, Intelligent, television script writer. Just returned from a year working in the US. His affair with Sheila ended a year ago, but following his return to the UK he has renewed his friendship with her.

Audition pieces:

With Sheila: Page 4 "There's something else" to top of page 9 "Let's drink to – the way things turn out"

With Tony: Page 74 (end) "You mustn't give up trying" to Page 76 "You've got to make them believe"

Tony Wedice (age 30-40)

Former professional tennis player. Stopped playing one year ago, so needs to be reasonably athletic looking. He is very confident and is in control of every situation (until towards the end of the play).

Audition pieces:

Solo: Page 12 – Telephone conversation from "Hello?" to end of scene.

With Tony: Page 74 (end) "You mustn't give up trying" to Page 76 "You've got to make them believe"

With Lesgate: Page 26 "Mrs Moretti asked me to sell it for her" through to Page 29 "Approximately where you are standing"

Captain Lesgate (age 6 – 10 years older than Tony, ie mid 30s – 50)

Confidence Trickster who has had several identities, currently posing as an army captain complete with military moustache. Tony was at the same school as him and knows him by his real name, Swann. He is confident and sure of himself, however in his conversation with Tony, although Lesgate is confident it must be clear that Tony has 'the upper hand'.

Audition piece:

With Tony: Page 26 "Mrs Moretti asked me to sell it for her" through to Page 29 "Approximately where you are standing"

Inspector Hubbard (age: the script says 45, but any age from 30 through 65 is possible).

The archetypal detective. He is normally very calm, courteous and controlled, but every now and then he displays a flash of temperament which can be rather frightening. The script says he is definitely someone to be reckoned with.

Audition piece:

Solo: (+interjections read in) Page 93 "The first clue came quite by accident" to Page 96 "Er... you didn't"