

Auditions Notice:

Cold Comfort Farm by Paul Doust (adapted from Stella Gibbons's novel), directed by Anna Parker

Auditions: Tuesday 20th and Thursday 22nd May at 7.30pm (just choose one evening to attend) at Lantern Methodist Church, Griffiths Road, Wimbledon, SW19 1SP.

Accents: Mr Neck is American, the Starkadders 1930s rural/rustic so Mike Tierney, as vocal coach, will be part of the audition process. The emphasis will be on playing with trying something different in order to then refine speaking when in role. Depending on how many people are around at any one time on 20th or 22nd May, Mike will lead some group or individual exercises.

Audition copy for each character will be available at the auditions.

Performances: Tuesday 12th-Saturday 16th August at 7:45pm, plus matinee at 3:00pm on the Saturday. All at the Studio at New Wimbledon Theatre, SW19 1QG.

Rehearsals: Must be available for most Tuesdays and Thursdays 7:30-9:30pm, starting with a read through on 27th May. You will also be needed from 11:30am on Sunday 10th August for the get-in and tech rehearsal and all evening on Monday 11th August for the dress rehearsal.

If you have any questions about the information in this Auditions Notice, or about the production generally, please email auditions.carlton@gmail.com.

The Play:

Think D H Lawrence and primal urges, Bronte brooding on the moors, with a good pinch of Evelyn Waugh. The novel is an affectionate satire of 1930s rural bodice ripping novels with literary references.

Well educated but poor, Flora, orphaned in her 20s, is homeless. She goes to her relatives, the Starkadder family of Cold Comfort farm, in the rural ghastliness of... Sussex.

Liking everything to be tidy, she sets about tidying her dysfunctional family: seemingly insane matriarch Aunt Ada, who saw 'something narsty in the woodshed' as a child, beautiful Elfine, who roams the hills writing poetry, Uncle Amos, who leads the religious cult of 'The Quivering Brethren' (and sisters), Rennet who throws herself in a well whenever 'Mark' is mentioned, let alone Cousin Judith's obsession with her son Seth, who is lustily obsessed with his own gorgeoussness.

Setting

Primarily the kitchen of Starkadder farm over the course of the farming calendar, but with one evening at the Hawk-Monitor's for a ball.

This Production:

There is enough reality in the characters to ground the play. Because of its adaptation from a novel, with literary references, there are various devices used such as the Chorus and characters directly addressing the audience. We will make sure to keep enough character reality with these other elements.

Characters

Flora Poste - 20s-30s, poised, organised and organising, which can cause conflict

Judith - Late 40s-50s, madly histrionic and obsessed with her son, Seth

Elfine - 20s, fey, writes poetry, flits about

Aunt Ada - 70s-80s, seemingly mad from seeing 'something narsty in the woodshed', controlling matriarch

Rennet* - 30s, initially distressed victim who finds her voice

Mrs Hawk-Monitor* - 40s-50s, local aristocrat, Richard's mother

Reuben - 20s-30s, runs the farm with deep and passionate love

Seth - 20s-30s, gorgeous and knows it, despise women who lust after him

Amos** - 40s-50s, leader of local cult 'The Quivering Brethren'

Sneller** - Butler for the Hawk-Monitors

Urk*** - 30s, most primitive of Flora's cousins, supposedly engaged to Elfine since her birth

Richard Hawk-Monitor*** - 20s-30s, nice but dim local aristocrat, in love with Elfine

Adam - Old, madly attached to his 'beasts', the cows, and Elfine

Mr Neck - Hollywood producer

Charles - 20s-30s, Flora's love interest who has a plane

Additionally there is The Quivering Brethren, the Chorus and a family gathering called by Aunt Ada, which will all be made up of cast members.

*, ** and *** indicates possible doublings depending on cast.