

AUDITION PIECES FOR INVISIBLE : MAY 22 AND 23 @ 7.30pm

There will be scripts available on the night so no need to print out in advance unless you want to, but please familiarise yourself with the scenes as far as possible. It's likely we will swap about the parts and perform the scenes several times.

Cast

TIMANDRA *An artist in her 60s, a mother and grandmother, says what she thinks*
NELL *Mid 50s upwards : younger sister to EVIE. Mother of DAISY, living on the edge*
EVIE: *Same age as TIMANDRA: A Psychotherapist: Mother to PIPPA: Older sister of NELL, doesn't get on with her kids.*
DONNA: *Around 60 but dresses and behaves much younger, podcaster.*
BLESSING: *50 – 70: A fiery character, outraged with the world, a terrible baker.*
PIPPA: *30 – 40 (depending on age of EVIE): A successful professional woman: daughter of EVIE, outside the circle.*
DAISY: *30 – 40 (same age as PIPPA): A doctor. NELL's daughter, PIPPA's cousin, talks to EVIE rather than her mum.*

Note on ages: *The central five characters are very close friends and have been for years. They have adult children and grandchildren. As long as they look cohesively of an age, it's not too important. TIMANDRA and EVIE were at school together. NELL is younger than them.*

Audition Section 1: pp 16 – 23

DONNA *snaps shut her mirror and bag and smiles like a movie star at the blank faces of her friends.*

NELL: *(Still worried the subject might return to the hostage crisis)* So what are you thinking for your next one?

DONNA: Oh jeepers. There's just so many worthy subjects it's always hard to categorise and sift through to prioritise what we need to be talking about but, but, but, but, but! I think I do have a topic that I keep coming back to that I think could work. Yep. I think it could really work.

NELL: Ooh sounds intriguing.

DONNA: Yes. I've got a little way to go but I have my working title and once that's in place I feel everything else usually kind of slots in underneath it.

NELL: Are you ready to share it?

DONNA: With my best buds? Abso-frickin-lutely. *(EVIE and DONNA try hard to look really excited.)* Okay but this is top secret, yeah. It's a frickin' dog eat cat world out there. I don't want any old vlogger stealing my gold.

NELL/EVIE: Absolutely/ Of course/ We won't tell a soul/ Mum's the word

DONNA: Okay. Here goes: You Need to Rethink Everything You Thought You Knew About Shopping for Knickers. *(She waits for their ecstatic response which is slow to come.)*

Pause

EVIE/ NELL: OMG/ Wow/ What?/ What a great idea!/ Donna!/ Wow, wow, wow!

TIMANDRA: *(With exaggerated enunciation)* It's succinct.

DONNA: *(Ignoring TIMANDRA's sarcasm)* It's mind-blowing, isn't it? I mean, it just came to me. How many of us really, really give any proper thought about the knickers we buy? I mean how many? Yeah?

And it's a massive industry worth like, I don't know, trillions, I guess, like, we all wear knickers, right? And I thought we really need to just stop, right. Just stop and think about what we're doing and why we're doing it and how we're doing it and when we're doing it and I thought, oh my God Donna: this is a podcast! You've done it again! Another megatastic idea. *(Sighs happily. Holds out her glass to be filled)*

NELL: Well, I for one can't wait. I just can't wait to hear it, Donna. I. Can't. Wait.

TIMANDRA: Need some help buying your pants, do you Nell?

NELL: I'm always open to advice and expertise, Tim. I like to think I am keeping up with the world, not being left behind. I embrace progress. I relish the challenge of new technologies and I am striding towards the future not looking back to the past.

DONNA: Hey, that was good Nell, say it again, think I could use that in my podcast. *(She gets a smart notebook and pen out of her bag and begins to scribble. NELL is clearly very flattered.)*

EVIE: Sounds good, Elon Musk, but yesterday you tried to phone me with your remote control.

NELL: Oh fuck off, Evie.

DONNA: *(Reading back)* "I relish the challenge of new technologies ... striding towards the future not looking back to the past"

EVIE: Yes, it's good, but the striding would be better if it was matched with a physical verb rather than "Looking back" so *(quickly)* "striding towards the future" not staggering around in the past, maybe.

DONNA: Yes! That is better. Wow! You're good at this, Evie.

EVIE: Or maybe stumbling would be better, I can imagine Nell stumbling in the past.

TIMANDRA: What about lurching? Or reeling? They're quite like stumbling?

EVIE: I can sort of see Nell stumbling though, you know, stumbling and falling over new-fangled things that confuse her. Like that juicer she bought when she thought she'd do that Ten Day Cleanse 'n' De-tox and she couldn't get the lid to engage properly, and it popped off and sprayed the kitchen that horrible sludge green. That's more of a stumble, isn't it? A fudge, if you will.

TIMANDRA: Yes, I see what you mean, like when she bought that clever window steamer and she did her upstairs bedroom and put the wrong bit on the outside, and it wouldn't hold and fell off and cracked the windscreen of her car.

EVIE: Now that's more of a lurch than a stumble.

NELL: I am bloody here you know! And my point was that I embrace the future and new technologies, not like you bloody luddite cows.

EVIE: Yes, I see that, but our point is that you are delusional.

NELL: Bigger you! I am striding into the future.

TIMANDRA: You are Nell. With your dodgy hips.

EVIE: And she had to get Daisy to come round and set up Alexa for her. And then she fell out with Alexa because she wouldn't do what she said.

NELL: Well she wouldn't! I found her obstreperous. I didn't like her attitude one bit.

TIMANDRA: We all use our kids to do things for us. No choice.

DONNA: If we have them...

For a moment the momentum of the conversation stops while they smile sympathetically at DONNA who does not have children and uses every opportunity to remind them of this.

EVIE: Of course we do, and our kids are using their kids to set up stuff for them. I gave up once Bluetooth arrived. But we are not ashamed of that, are we Tim? We know we have boldly gone where no woman has gone before and now we're back at home in front of **Strictly** with a glass of Pinot Grigio, instead of pretending we know what toggling means.

DONNA: *(smugly)* I happen to know what toggling is. I can easily demonstrate it to you.

NELL: *(For once ignoring DONNA)* I'm not pretending! I'm saying it's a state of mind! I'm trying to keep up. I'm trying to embrace new technologies. I'm trying to stay young. In my mind at least!

DONNA: Yes! You are! You're living your best life!

EVIE: *(Under her breath)* I bloody hate that expression. *(Smiles at DONNA and gives her a thumbs up.)*

NELL: You're wrong about something else too.

EVIE: What's that?

NELL: I didn't **buy** the juicer or that bloody window cleaner. I nicked them.

TIMANDRA: True dat.

DONNA: Why do you shoplift Nell?

EVIE: Habit.

TIMANDRA: Necessity.

EVIE: Spite.

TIMANDRA: Thrills.

EVIE: Boredom.

TIMANDRA: Amusement.

EVIE: Greed.

TIMANDRA: Yes! Materialistic drive!

DONNA: (*To EVIE and TIMANDRA*) Really? Is that why she does it? You must know Evie, you're the psychotherapist.

EVIE: I am.

NELL: That doesn't mean anything.

EVIE: What's that supposed to mean?

NELL: It means just because people come and talk to you doesn't mean to say you understand them. You don't do very well with your own family, for example.

EVIE: None taken I'm sure. And what do you mean by that exactly? (*Challenging*) I mean, you're my family, Nell.

TIMANDRA: Oh nothing, she doesn't mean anything. It doesn't matter. Not important. Let's get back to bitching about her. I like that.

NELL: None taken either! Thank you very much Tim. I didn't realise you were bitching about me as I was in the room, though you do seem to keep forgetting that.

DONNA: Yes, you were telling me why Nell does all the shop lifting.

NELL: Donna! Don't you think I should answer that question? It is about me after all. Evie and Timandra can offer opinions but I am the only one who knows the true reasons behind my actions.

DONNA: When you put it like that, babe, yes, I want to hear what you have to say. Blimey, this could be the beginnings of another podcast. No, don't want to count my chickens before they're thatched. So Nell, go on, please, hun, tell me, why do you shoplift? (*She opens her notebook, pen poised but barely takes her eyes off NELL.*)

Pause while NELL waits for their complete focus and attention.

NELL: (*primly*) I'd rather not say.

EVIE: Oh give over! I knew you were going to say that! That's why we jumped in. Come on you miserable bugger, tell us, we want to know!

TIMANDRA: Yes we do! I've been receiving stolen goods into this house for years. I think I deserve an explanation.

NELL: (*Crossly*) Oh alright. But there's not much to tell.

EVIE: Not much to tell, you could open a small branch of Selfridges with the stock you've got stashed in your garage. Most of it you've never opened!

NELL: Okay, okay. If you must know, I think half the reason I keep doing it, is because no one has stopped me. There. I've said it. I think if I got caught, I'd give it up, but I haven't and, to be honest, I don't think I will.

DONNA: Is that because you're so good at it? Such an accomplished crook?

NELL: Not really, no. I think it's because I'm invisible.

EVIE: What?

NELL: Not like in a superhero sort of way. I just think to huge swathes of the population I don't exist. Sometimes I walk down the high street and I watch the way people make eye contact. You know if you're walking straight towards someone, your eyes involuntarily make eye contact and then look to the direction you intend to go so you don't go the same way and bump into each other. It's a tiny flickering signal that we pick up from each other to stop us colliding. Well, I think my life in the outside

world is full of tiny flickers, people glance at me and move on. I am not worth the tiniest bit of attention. I do not register. I am instantly forgettable. No one looks at me. No one looks at me like they used to, anyway.

TIMANDRA: The woman makes a good point.

NELL: It's being a woman, of a certain age, a certain type. I'm just not that interesting to many people anymore.

EVIE: That's not true, Nell.

NELL: It is Evie. I can walk into any shop, and I barely register. I am smartly enough dressed not to raise any alarm bells. I make the odd purchase. I chat to the assistants; they are always desperate to get away to someone more interesting, more attractive, younger! No one suspects that I am filling my bags with their overpriced tat and taking it home and storing it neatly in my garage. Invisible, you see. And how do you catch a ghost?

EVIE: But don't you ever feel guilty? I mean, it is breaking the law.

NELL: (*Shrugs*) They won't even notice it's gone more than likely. I never steal from the little independents, unless they're particularly twattish to me. Then they're fair game. And I don't do it as much as I used to. Only when there's something that gets under my skin. Like this morning. (*Indicates everything on the table.*)

DONNA: What happened this morning?

Audition Section 2: pp 27 - 30

Enter BLESSING carrying a poorly decorated cake. BLESSING has an air of fury and muddle around her. She wants to right the wrongs of the world but can't quite work out how.

BLESSING: Shitting hell!

TIMANDRA: Talking of refined.

NELL/EVIE/DONNA: Hi Blessing./ Wondered where you'd got to./ Hello lovely.

Blessing immediately begins to rummage for plates, forks, a knife to cut the cake, napkins, and clears space on the table during the following speech. She is obviously flustered and quite grumpy. The others look on. This behaviour is nothing new to them. Throughout they may make the appropriate tuts or 'no's as necessary to show they are listening and sympathetic to her plight.

BLESSING: Hi, hi, hi, hi, hi. Sorry I'm late. Things ran away from me a little. I had to let the cake cool before I could ice it and then, in your car park, just now Tim, I've just had a bit of a run in with one of your neighbours. An utter fuckwit. Nearly bloody ran me over. Nearly sodding dropped the cake I'd spent all morning baking. Been up since 5. Though that's not really newsworthy, as you know. Didn't start baking then. Did that a bit later. So, I park up and get the cake out and there's a car pulling in to park and so I make to walk behind it and it starts to REVERSE into the parking space and nearly bloody knocks me over. I mean why in the name of all that's sacred does ANYONE reverse into a parking space!? (*She doesn't wait for the answer.*) I have to veer out of the way, and I've got my hands full and, this isn't the first time this has happened to me, so I think to myself, I'm going to have a word with this genius. At the very least he needs an introduction to his wing mirrors. So, I wait until he gets out of the car and I say 'Excuse me,' all polite even though my rage is bubbling like a volcano inside me, I say, 'Excuse me, are you aware you just about ran me down?' and he looks appalled. He's quite young. Tall. Thin. Totally shocked and he's all apologies and I think Christ he's going to cry, and so then I say, 'May I ask why you had to REVERSE into the parking space thus endangering my life and that of my baked goods?' and he looks a bit taken aback at the question but then he says, bold as you like, 'Zombie apocalypse.' And I say, 'I beg your pardon?' and he shrugs his shoulders and says, 'Zombie apocalypse. If there's a zombie apocalypse, I can get away faster,' and he smiles at me and trots off to wherever he

was bloody going, leaving me standing agog. Have you ever heard of anything so absurd? *(By now BLESSING is cutting the cake viciously and handing it out to everyone. Once the final piece is cut, she sits at the table too.)*

NELL: So that's why they do it? I've often wondered. I'm rubbish at reversing, so I never bother.

EVIE: I thought it all stemmed from it being better to reverse with a warm engine. It was good practice to reverse into a space rather than out of one with a cold engine.

TIMANDRA: Yes, that was true in 1935. Engineering has moved on since then.

DONNA: It's a fascinating take on the subject. I might do a poll on my Insta. How Many of You Reverse Park for Fear of an Apocalypse? It could be a real issue for some. Especially post covid.

They look at her.

BLESSING: Well at least the cake survived the near miss. Then I bloody tripped up your doorstep; the cake nearly took a tumble then too. Maybe the universe is trying to tell me something. Anyway, this one is a carrot and walnut with a passionfruit and ginger icing. I got the recipe online.

Reluctantly they start to eat. DONNA only toys with it on the plate, smiling warmly at

BLESSING.

EVIE: Oh Blessing, it's absolutely awful, as usual. What the hell have you put in it this time?

TIMANDRA: Yes, it's dreadful.

NELL: Inedible, Blessing.

BLESSING: I really must stop baking. I have absolutely no ability for it. It's a total waste of time. I didn't have any actual ginger so I just bashed up a few ginger nuts and I didn't have any walnuts either, so I put in pine nuts.

TIMANDRA: That makes more sense.

BLESSING: And I didn't have enough carrots, so I put in a couple of spuds.

EVIE: We've talked about following recipes, haven't we? I think you have to remind yourself it's best not to bother unless you've got everything the recipe requires.

NELL: And why is it so claggy? It's like porridge in the middle.

BLESSING: Well, I didn't have that long to cook it. Time management just isn't my strong point, so I whacked the oven up really high, as high as it would go actually, and put it in for ten minutes.

TIMANDRA: That explains the black bits. I thought they were the pips from the passionfruit.

BLESSING: No, I didn't have any passionfruit.

NELL: *(Pushing her plate away and reaching for her wine glass.)* Okay lovely, well at least you tried Blessing. Thank you.

BLESSING: So, what have I missed? Have you started yet?

TIMANDRA: Nope.

Audition Section 3: pp 63 - 66

The doorbell rings.

TIMANDRA: Who the bloody hell can that be?

DONNA: *(Resigned)* I'll go shall I?

They wait, PIPPA with growing impatience.

DONNA: *(Offstage)* It's Daisy!

TIMANDRA: Why didn't she just come in, the half-wit!

Enter DAISY and DONNA.

DAISY: The door was locked. Someone put the snib on. I'm not a fucking half-wit, thank you Timandra. *(She kisses NELL and hugs her.)* How are you? Wanted to make sure you were bearing up.

TIMANDRA: Pippa's here. We're in the middle of a police enquiry. *(Sarcastically)* It's riveting.

DAISY: *(To PIPPA)* Sorry I didn't stay longer Pip, I had the kids to pick up. You know what it's like.

PIPPA: *(Cold)* Don't worry about it. And I don't actually know what it's like. No kids. Just used to hearing the excuse.

DAISY: Right, yes, of course. *(Pouring herself wine)* I meant by that, that you must be aware that some women our age have reproduced and therefore, like it or not, have responsibilities to their offspring. Remarkably Pippa, I wasn't commenting on the specifics of your reproductive world, though it's no surprise that you respond to my throwaway comment by putting yourself at the centre of the universe as usual and somehow manage to both give, and take, offense. *(She raises her glass)* Cheers!

PIPPA: *(Pause)* Fuck off Daisy

DAISY: No. You fuck off.

PIPPA: No. You fuck off.

DAISY: No you fuck off.

DAISY: No you fuck off.

PIPPA: No you fuck off.

DAISY: No you fuck off.

DONNA: Girls, girls please!

TIMANDRA: It's like they're eight years old all over again.

PIPPA: WILL SOMEONE JUST GIVE ME MY FUCKING BRONZE SO I CAN GET OUT OF HERE AND NEVER SEE ANY OF YOU GODDAM WITCHES AGAIN!

There is stunned silence.

NELL: I threw it in the canal.

PIPPA: What?

NELL: The Bronze. I threw it in the canal. I don't remember where. I was too upset over the death, the untimely, terrible and all too awful death of my sister. I hurled it with all my might into the motherfucking canal.

PIPPA: You monster.

TIMANDRA: That's rich.

PIPPA: *(Turning to TIMANDRA)* What exactly have I done to you to make you hate me?

TIMANDRA: I could ask the same. You just said you never wanted to see any of us again.

A Beat

PIPPA: *(Sits down, exhausted. Pause.)* In the hospital, did any of you offer me a lift home?

BLESSING: What?

PIPPA: After she ... died, after we knew she was dead. We all went out into the waiting room. You were there too, Daisy. It was terrible. Horrific. You were all crying. Loudly. Eventually, I think it was you Blessing, you said there was nothing more to be done there, which was true, and you all agreed and you all decided how you were getting home or rather where you were going, back here of course, one way or another.

DONNA: Oh dear, Pippa, I should have/

PIPPA: The answer is none of you offered me a lift home. *(Pause)* I got an Uber, on my own, back to my empty house. I had to wait for the Uber. 40 minutes. Alone. At 2 in the morning.

DAISY: Pip/

PIPPA: You didn't even see me in that waiting room.

NELL: That's hardly fair. We were grief-stricken.

PIPPA: And I wasn't? That's what you think isn't it? That I don't care. That I'm not as affected as all of you. *(There is the threat of tears but anger prevails)* She was my mother! **My** mother! And I had to go home on my own, without her, because you left me out. Like she used to.

TIMANDRA: What do you mean?

PIPPA: It doesn't matter. What's the point. She's dead.

TIMANDRA: Tell us.

PIPPA: I don't want to.

TIMANDRA: Tell us.

PIPPA: It's just hard not being one of the inner circle, not part of the club.

BLESSING: Go on.

PIPPA: She brought everything to you. There wasn't much left to share. I know you only officially meet up once a week but there are all the phone calls, and then texting, and it's always one of your birthdays or one of you is having a crisis or needs help with a new venture or some decorating or you're all trying yoga or hiking or pottery. You all take up so much time. All the time. There's no room for anyone else. You, this group, are the priority.

DAISY: She has a point.

NELL: Daisy ...

PIPPA: And I think it's great, actually. I wish I had friends like you. Even one or two. That's what it's about. But I couldn't find a way in. Why didn't I ever get an invite? Why wasn't I included too? Just a little bit. That's what I wanted. You made me feel, I don't know ... **unwanted** and, well ... **judged**. Judged and **found** wanting. Especially by her. My own mother. Not the right fit for whatever it is you do or say or think or feel.

DAISY: I know what she's saying.

NELL: Daisy, I've never judged you.

DAISY: Ha! Mum? Seriously? You might not say the words but it's written all over your face.

NELL: What do you mean? That's a bit unfair.

DAISY: Look I don't want to get into it okay? Not now.

NELL: Oh I suppose you would have with your Auntie Evie – always running off to her for your cosy little chats weren't you? Yes, I knew all about them. She never missed the chance to rub my face in the fact that my own daughter would rather talk to her than to me. Bloody cow!

DAISY: Mum! Listen to yourself! This is exactly **why** I can't talk to you. You don't see me for who I am. I'm not just your daughter, an appendage, an add on, an extension of you. I'm my own person. But you never see me like that. It's like everything I say is somehow a reflection on **you**. It's infuriating. It's suffocating.