AUDITION PACKET: *An Old Fashioned Family Murder* by Joe DiPietro

Presented by the Encore Players Senior Readers Theatre at the Black Mountain Center for the Arts and directed by Deborah Lonon.

About the Play: *An Old Fashioned Family Murder*

Set on a dark and stormy night in 1943, Joe DiPietro's comedic mystery farce unfolds at the grand estate of the elderly Colonel Claythorne. Tensions erupt when a pompous murder-mystery author reveals a family secret: the Colonel has altered his will to completely cut out one of his daughters. When a murder inevitably occurs soon after, everyone in the household—including the Colonel's daughters and a dim-witted fiancé—becomes a prime suspect. The earnest but somewhat unsuccessful Detective Paul Peck arrives to solve the crime, only to have the investigation complicated by backstabbing and hidden motives. Ultimately, it is the detective's meddling but deeply observant mother, Mrs. Shirley Peck, whose sharp instincts unravel the family's betrayals and outmatch the official investigation.

Cast Breakdown & Descriptions

- **Mrs. Shirley Peck**: An unassuming, deeply observant, and fiercely loving visiting widow. She uses her sharp wit and "mother-knows-best" advice to heavily interfere in the investigation, determined to make her son look like a genius.
- **Clarice Claythorne**: The Colonel's eldest daughter. She is a cold, glamorous, and calculated aspiring actress who carries herself with the dramatic flair of a classic film noir *femme fatale*.
- **Dotty Claythorne**: The Colonel's youngest daughter. In stark contrast to her sister, she is a mousy, excitable, and obsessed fan of murder-mystery novels.
- **Detective Paul Peck:** Shirley's son, an eager but somewhat green "junior" detective who arrives at the mansion to pick up his mother. He suddenly finds himself tasked with solving his very first murder case to earn a promotion.
- **Arthur Whittington:** A middle-aged, highly successful, yet incredibly arrogant and hacky mystery novelist. He speaks with a ridiculous English accent and is the catalyst for the chaos after exposing the secret about the Colonel's will.
- **Jasper Jamison**: Clarice's attractive and smooth-talking fiancé. A former country club "pool boy" (or second assistant manager of guest aquatic services), he is rather dim-witted, heavily mocked by Whittington, and suspected of being a gold-digger.
- Sounds Effects "performer"

Casting Philosophy & Adaptability

The Encore Players value community and participation above all else. To ensure the best experience for everyone involved, our casting process is highly flexible:

- **Age-Blind Casting:** Ages mentioned in the original script are **not relevant**. We are looking for the personality and vocal energy of the character, regardless of chronological age.
- **Gender Adaptation:** Roles may be **gender-swapped or adapted** to suit the individuals who audition.

Audition Process & Schedule

Location: Black Mountain Center for the Arts (Main Floor Theater)

Format: Cold readings from the script. No monologue or memorization required. Auditions will be run by our director, Deborah Lonon.

Audition Dates: Monday and Tuesday, August 17 & 18; 12:00 pm - 2:00 pm both days

Rehearsal Calendar

We will hold **two 4-hour rehearsals** per week for a total of **6 sessions**.

- **Days:** Tuesdays and Thursdays
- **Time:** 12:00 pm - 4:00 pm
- **Start Date:** Tuesday, October 6
- **Location:** BMCA Gale Jackson Theatre

Performance dates: October 23-25 - all performances at 2:00 pm

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What to Bring

- A collaborative spirit and a love for storytelling.
- Water and reading glasses, if you use them.
- Your calendar to confirm availability for the 6-session rehearsal window.