

Welcome!

Thank you for auditioning for A Good Old-Fashioned Murder. We're excited to meet you and begin creating together. In this packet, you'll find directions to the audition as well as additional character information, direction, and a scene or scenes to prepare. We've decided to include all of the roles. We'll have asked you to read for a particular role, but you can familiarize yourself with the others if you like.

AUDITION LOCATION:

Auditions will be conducted at Crescent Church, 6 University Rd, Belfast BT7 1NH. There is a small parking area just across the street from the Crescent Arts Centre. You are permitted to park there during your audition. A small door leads from the parking area into the church. We'll be on the left side in the cafe.

If you want to sit down outside the cafe, have some water or a snack, we'll come out and get you when it's your time.

Map link:

<https://maps.app.goo.gl/7khUu9CoRjYTTRgc7>

If you are unable to make your audition for any reason, please email soutcat.auditions@gmail.com.

VICKI

Vicki Virtue is our doe-eyed detective. She doesn't have a lot of experience, but she is driven to succeed. Ideal actor appears early 20s, can simultaneously play the uncertainty of youth and discipline to persevere all while delivering a clever quip.

Background:

The following scene is the initial setup for the story. Vicki arrives at the home of Collette Norwood, a young-ish widow of a much older husband. The husband died under suspicious circumstances. We'll pick up at Norwood's "Are you a reader" line.

Vicki isn't an investigator -- her father is. However, he's passed out drunk and they need the money. So she's here, masquerading as the P.I. to try to save her family.

WESTERFIELD

Mrs. Norwood will see you shortly.
Wait here.

He unceremoniously closes the door, sealing her in.
Alone.

The sounds of a party in the other room are muted. As Vicki waits, a piano plays somewhere in the house. Vicki gets up, idly wandering the room. Curiously, she examines photos and knickknacks. Trailing a finger along one of the bookshelves, a volume sticking out slightly, catches her attention. She removes it from the shelf and some newspaper clippings fall to the floor. She bends to pick them up. But pauses. The headlines are about medical experiments in Italy. As Vicki reads, the door opens. The sounds of laughter and merriment pour into the quiet room. Vicki spins, startled. Nervous and afraid she may be transgressing, she quickly shoves the clippings back into the book.

MRS. NORWOOD, an attractive older woman, dressed all in black, stands in the doorway. A stylish veiled beret sweeps across her eyes. While she's garbed in mourning, her attire and makeup are stylish and dramatic.

Mrs. Norwood kicks at something Vicki can't see -- almost as though something is caught on her shoe. However, she watches Vicki.

MRS. NORWOOD

(frowning)

Are you a reader?

VICKI

(blushing)

I'm sorry. I like books--

MRS. NORWOOD

Dr. Franco is always after me to read more. His book mostly, but the occasional bit of Dumas.

Vicki quickly tucks the book away on the shelf.

Mrs. Norwood looks Vicki up and down with a disapproving scowl.

MRS. NORWOOD

You're not Vince Vice.

VICKI

Virtue. Our last name is Virtue.

MRS. NORWOOD

No one associates Vince with virtue.

The older woman moved toward a bar cart sitting along one wall.

VICKI
I'm his daughter, Vicki. Vince
was... under the weather.
Allergies.

MRS. NORWOOD
And to what is Mr. Vice allergic?

The older woman begins pouring whiskey over a glass of ice cubes. Vicki watches the pour before replying.

VICKI
Rye.

MRS. NORWOOD
Aren't we all.

Mrs. Norwood takes a drink. As an after thought, she gestures for Vicki to help herself. The younger woman shakes her head.

VICKI
You're Mrs. Norwood?

MRS. NORWOOD
Collette, please. That's a lovely
halloween getup you're wearing.

VICKI
I was trying to dress for the job.

MRS. NORWOOD
I think you mean the role.

Vicki takes a deep breath, slowly exhaling.

Mrs. Norwood narrows her eyes.

MRS. NORWOOD
You don't like me.

VICKI
Your people and mine don't have
the best history.

MRS. NORWOOD
(Laughing)
You think we're all that
different?

VICKI
An unwed Catholic girl without two
pence to rub together, and a
wealthy Prod widow? Yes. I think
we're different.

MRS. NORWOOD

Two women trying to survive as
best they can in a world gone mad.

Vicki frowns, unsure what to make of the remark.

MRS. NORWOOD

(cont.)

I hired your father for a
particular type of job. I don't
see how you can do it.

Vicki's hands shake. Licking her lips, she speaks slowly,
a hint of quaver in her voice.

VICKI

You hired Vince to find something,
I assure you, I'm quite
practiced--

Mrs. Norwood snorts in disbelief, but Vicki presses on.

VICKI

(cont.)

I'll find what you're looking for.

Something softens in Mrs. Norwood's face. The cynicism
falls away.

MRS. NORWOOD

Very well. I'm looking for my late
husband's will.

Vicki appears suddenly skeptical.

VICKI

I read about that in the
Telegraph.

MRS. NORWOOD

(mocking)

Not the Newsletter?

VICKI

Your husband told no one else
about this will -- in fact, he
told a number of people he'd
intentionally cut you out.

MRS. NORWOOD

(dismissive)

Sensationalism, I assure you.

VICKI

And if I don't believe you?

MRS. NORWOOD
Then you'll need to find work
elsewhere.

VICKI
(nodding)
Very well. How do we proceed?

Mrs. Norwood raises an eyebrow, then glances at the door.

MRS. NORWOOD
I'm having a dinner party -- all
of my late husband's friends.
Mingle. Ask questions. Find the
will. I'm not the private
investigator.

VICKI
Of course.
(Gesturing at her
clothes)
But...

Mrs. Norwood laughs.

MRS. NORWOOD
We'll say you're a cousin. A very
distant cousin. Who arrived
unexpectedly.

Vicki nods.

MRS. NORWOOD
(Cont.)
It's here somewhere, Miss Virtue.
One of them knows where.
(grimacing)
Probably Matheson.

VICKI
The English solicitor who is the
executor of your husband's current
will.

Mrs. Norwood nods.

Vicki looks at the door, listening to the sounds of the
party, and slowly hangs her head.

VICKI
You're right. I'm not the right
person for this job. I'm sorry for
wasting your time.

MRS. NORWOOD

(alarmed)

Please. All my money is tied up in this book deal. Without the will... I'm going to lose my home. Everything. I'll be on the street.

VICKI

I'm sorry. Truly I am. But... I don't know the first thing about British solicitors and society parties. I'll be a clown in there. A token Catholic fresh off the turnip truck, to be the butt of all your jokes.

Reluctantly, Mrs. Norwood crosses to a desk, where she opens a drawer and draws out a letter. Gravely, she crossed back to Vicki and hands it to her.

MRS. NORWOOD

I told you we're not so different.

Slowly Vicki unfolds the page. A threat is scrawled in an unstable hand. Someone intends to kill Mrs. Norwood.

VICKI

(Wide-eyed)

This is a matter for the police.

MRS. NORWOOD

If you can find the will, I'll pay you cash. Directly. Not to your father.

Vicki licks her lips, she slowly hands the paper back to Mrs. Norwood, then nods.

VICKI

Okay. Let's find this other will.

VICKI VOICE OVERS

We're considering the idea of having Vicki do some classic P.I. voice overs to narrate key moments in the story. The following page is so you can show us how you would handle those narratives.

If you're reading for Vicki, please be prepared to try these as well.

VICKI

(Voice Over)

This was the sort of thing my mother warned me about. A catholic girl pulling up to the home of a wealthy prod -- like Daniel being tossed into the mouth of that giant fish.

VICKI

(Voice Over)

The pieces were starting to fit together, like Moses loading the Israelites onto the ark two-by-two to cross that Red Sea. I could imagine that poor woman, sent out by a temp service. An immigrant happy to have a job in days like this, struggling with a language she didn't understand -- but still a happy woman. A joyful woman. And then, she witnesses a murder. We all come together. We stare at the body. We move it around, but no police come. She doesn't know what we're saying -- and when everyone's talking and you can't understand a word, you get paranoid, so you do. To her, we were all conspirators. Everyone of us helped bump off Matheson -- and she was collateral. The witness that needed to be silenced. What must the last hours of her life been like?

VICKI

(Voice Over)

I realized, I was making exactly the same mistake that poor maid had. I looked around that place and saw a room full of rich prods. It took me all night to begin to make out the shades of gray. Franco was a German, masquerading as a Spaniard. Probably a Catholic back home. He'd made his way into society on his brains, not from money or religion. But he was a man with secrets and a past. Norwood was a poor girl from Belfast not so different from me. She'd parlayed a pretty face into a wealthy marriage and now it was coming back to bite her. Duffy was a similar story.

(MORE)

VICKI (CONT'D)

A woman with looks and talent trying to carve out a life. I was too caught up seeing sinners to recognize a room full of people whose story could have been mine with only a few details swapped. The mystery was Westerfield. A butler probably didn't come from money, but he was the classiest one in this joint. What was his story? How did he wind up here with this crew of misfits?

VINCE

Vincent Virtue aka Vinny Vince - Vicki's wayward father is an experienced detective with a little too much time in the bottle. Struggling to turn over a new leaf and protect his daughter from his own dangerous career, sometimes overbearing Vince is acting as Vicki's mentor.

Background:

We'll pick up from Vicki's "Dad?" line. As this scene begins, Vicki has been in the manor chasing after Mrs. Norwood's lost will. Vince was initially hired to "find" it, the implication being that he was going to forge a document and then pretend to find it. Instead, Vicki knocked Vince out with Chlorale Hydrate (Mickey Finn) and took on the case herself -- searching for an actual will, which Vince doesn't believe exists. Waking up with a sore head, Vince rushes to the manor to rescue his wayward daughter. When he arrives at the service door, he's told to wait in the kitchen while someone goes to get Vicki.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Vicki steps into the kitchen nervously. Light and shadow play across the empty room.

VICKI

Hello?

She turns to look back the way she's come. Slowly, she walks around the space, searching.

Behind her, one of the shadows slowly resolves into a tall figure in a dark coat, a fedora casting the face in shadow. As Vicki's anxiety grows, the figure grabs her from behind, covering her mouth.

She screams, flings her head back, knocking the fedora askew and revealing the face of VINCE, a tired but tough looking man in his late 40s or early 50s.

VINCE

Ow. Take it easy.

He releases her and Vicki turns on him.

VICKI

Dad? What are you doing here?

VINCE

Well, after I woke up from that micky you slipped me, I thought I should come see what sort of mess you'd got yourself into.

VICKI

My mess? Do you have any idea what case you've taken?

VINCE

(Nodding knowingly)
Yeah, the kind with vicious snakes and knives around every corner.

VICKI

Why would you agree to a case like this?

VINCE

What are you doing here, Vic?

VICKI

Someone has to pay the bills.

He winces, but exhales and gives her a steady look.

VICKI

(Cont.)

Ok. Yeah. I see what you mean.

VINCE
No chance you'll just go home and
let me handle it?

VICKI
Your track record for "handling
it" isn't great.

He raises his hands in protest.

VINCE
I'm clean.

VICKI
I put the chloral hydrate in your
whiskey bottle.

Vince sees the chloral hydrate bottle sitting on the
counter.

VINCE
Did you bring it with you?

He crosses to the bottle, picks it up and studies it.

VICKI
No. That was here.

VINCE
(Setting the bottle down)
Where they make the food?

VICKI
You're changing the subject. I'm
here because you didn't keep it
together.

Vince turns back to her.

VINCE
One weak moment, love. I may not
be great all the time at home, but
this is business.

VICKI
Do you have any idea how much of
the devil's hooch is on pour up
there?

Clearly, he wants to argue, but he settles himself
instead.

VINCE
Fine. You can be my fire
extinguisher.

VICKI
No. This is my case. Go home.

VINCE
(Smirking)
And who's gonna be your fire
extinguisher?

VICKI
I don't need a chaperone.

VINCE
No. You need a private
investigator.

She punches at him. He dodges and weaves and they both
laugh.

VINCE
(Cont.)
What have you learned?

VICKI
Mrs. Norwood is looking for--

VINCE
The will? You buy that?

Vicki blushes.

VINCE
(Cont.)
Who are the players?

VICKI
Do you know the actress, Dee Dee
Duffy?

VINCE
(Snorts)
She's a strange cat, that one.

VICKI
I think she's sweet.
Misunderstood.

VINCE
Mis-something.

VICKI
Now, this Dr. Franco, he's--

There's a scream. Vince immediately moves toward the
stairs.

VINCE
Stay here.

VICKI

By all means, keep me safe by
leaving me alone in the dark
kitchen with the knives and the
poison.

He rushes away. She follows.

DR. FRANCO

Dr. Emelio Franco - What kind of a scientist gets chased out of Germany in 1932? "Franco" may not be his real name. The good doctor moved on to Italy, where once again his "experiments" made him persona-non-grata. Staring over for a third time in Northern Ireland, our mad scientist is keen to find investors for his book on healing the mind through the power of lobotomy. Despite the campy description, the ideal actor for this role can take the wild material and keep it real.

Background:

Matheson has been found dead. The phones are out. You pulled a gun and tried to escape, but Vince punched you, and the butler grabbed your gun. You are trying to publish a book detailing all you've learned about the human brain, but no one will finance the project, except Collette Norwood. Your goal for the night was to get Thomas Matheson to buy into the project, but he mocked you instead. A good chunk of your answers in the following scene are lies, but not all of them.

Vince pulls Dr. Franco to the far corner of the room. As Westerfield makes drinks for Duffy and Norwood, Vince looks expectantly at Vicki. She focuses on Dr. Franco.

VICKI

Ok, tough guy, how's your jaw feel?

FRANCO

(To Vince)

If you were a gentleman you would send the maid to get me some ice. It is quite painful.

VINCE

Then I guess it's lucky for me I'm not a gentleman, cause nobody's leaving this room, pal. You're just lucky I'm a nice guy. Most toughs would give you a lot rougher than a sock on the jaw for a gun play like that.

FRANCO

You're hardly going to lay the blame for your violent behavior on me.

Vicki crosses swiftly to the drink cart and grabs a freshly iced glass from Westerfield before he can pour the drink he's mixing. Coming back to Dr. Franco, she shoves the glass toward his jaw.

VICKI

Here. Just to show you how swell we are.

Pausing, she looks at Vince. He nods for her to continue. Franco glares at the out thrust glass for a moment, then takes it and holds it against his jaw.

VICKI

(Cont.)

What happened after you left to go make your phone call?

FRANCO

Obviously, I went into the hall and use the phone. Then-

VICKI

Who did you call?

FRANCO

Not that it's any of your business, but I called my publisher.

VICKI

Why would you call your publisher
in the middle of a dinner party?

FRANCO

Aren't you an investigator?

Vicki looks at Vince again. He smiles and nods for her to
continue.

VICKI

Ok. So you called your publisher
to say you blew it with Matheson,
he wasn't going to invest, and
your little project is sunk. That
it?

FRANCO

While Mr. Matheson's derogatory
remarks and lack of vision are
unfortunate they hardly warrant
the termination of my book.

VICKI

You got off the phone. Then what?

FRANCO

(Shifting)

I... um... proceeded up the
stairs.

(More confident)

I loaned Colette a book she has
yet to return. I went to her
bedroom in the hopes of retrieving
it.

VINCE

Is it your habit to enter a
woman's bedroom without her
permission?

FRANCO

(sly)

I've known Colette a long time.

VICKI

But you asked if you could use the
phone.

Franco smiles unapologetically.

VICKI

(Cont.)

Alright. To get up the stairs, you
had to pass by Matheson.

FRANCO

He was in a heated discussion with Miss Duffy. I averted my gaze.

VICKI

But he was still alive?

FRANCO

(Nods his head)

Unless you are suggesting a very animated corpse? No? Did I mention he was arguing with Miss Duffy?

VICKI

(Rolling her eyes)

Yeah. I caught that the first time. Was she carrying anything large and heavy she could sap him with?

FRANCO

As I said, I averted my gaze.

VICKI

Yes. We've already established what a gentleman you are.

VINCE

(Sarcastically)

Thanks for all your help.

FRANCO

(rubbing his jaw)

Oh, it's my pleasure, Shamus.

MATHESON

Thomas Matheson - The executor of the fortune likely denied to Mrs. Norwood, Matheson is a posh, English Harvey Weinstein. A troll who delights in inflicting his own misery on everyone he meets, Matheson is a power suit without a soul.

Background:

You've been invited to a dinner party by Collette Norwood. You know that she has invited you to suck up. You now control all of her late husband's fortune and she has nothing. In fact, everyone at this party is sitting in the palm of your hand -- and you're looking forward to making them all squirm. Dee Dee Duffy, the actress, is your arm-candy for the evening. Emelio Franco may be a real doctor, but he's a fool and his experiments are dangerous. You don't know Collette's new addition to the party, the young girl in the funny outfit, but you do like young girls... You and Collette have a history. In fact, she was the love of your life -- but she chose Mr. Norwood over you and your life ambition is to make her pay for that choice. Westerfield, now reduced to a butler, was another of Collette's suitors. He fought in the trenches of WWI and didn't come back the same man.

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

As the party enters the room, Duffy is drawn to an elegant silver candelabra, which she pets like it is a bird or a small animal.

NORWOOD

It's an heirloom, Duffy. And you've no where to hide it in that dress.

Duffy offers her a snide scowl.

MATHESON

Sound as possessive as you like, Colette, it doesn't belong to you either.

As they move to their seats around the table, Norwood attempts to change the subject.

NORWOOD

Charming as ever, Thomas, Emilio has just been telling me about the most startling discovery he has made for his book.

FRANCO

Collette is flattering me, but I believe I have conclusively linked the mandibular lobe and aggression.

The maid serves soup into bowls from a tureen and Westerfield places the bowls carefully before each guest, from the left, ladies first.

MATHESON

Oh? You've discovered that cutting holes in people's brains makes them angry? Genius!

FRANCO

You misunderstand. Where other surgeons are severing the frontal lobe, I believe it's possible to leave a bridge, a conduit by which the patient can come back into essential features of their mind, but only at need, using a special trigger.

Duffy squirms uncomfortably, but Mrs. Norwood is fascinated.

MATHESON

And what if the trigger happens when you don't mean for it to?

FRANCO
(Shifting in his seat)
That would be an unfortunate
mistake. But we're talking about
theoretical medicine--

MATHESON
Sure we are.

FRANCO
I assure you, if you read my book--

MATHESON
No one in their right mind will
ever publish your quackery.
(Turning to Vicki)
What about you?

Surprised and taken aback, Vicki blinks.

MATHESON
(cont.)
No English?

VICKI
Must take a lot of capital.

MATHESON
What?

VICKI
Researching brain surgery. People
willing to let you cut on their
heads can't come cheap.

MATHESON
(laughing)
You found a funny one, Collette.
Maybe you should take in strays
more often.
(To Vicki)
What was your name?

VICKI
Vicki.

MATHESON
A Catholic girl named Victoria?

VICKI
My mother meant to call me Nicola,
but she was afraid none of you
Prods would know what it meant.

Matheson studies her outfit.

MATHESON

(Condescending)

It's hard living up to the expectations of others.

(He pivots to Norwood)

How's your house hunting going?

NORWOOD

Really, Franklin. You have the manners of a goat.

MATHESON

I was raised to be practical Colette. I know that marrying a rich old man won't help you if he dies and leaves you nothing.

DUFFY

Tommy-dear, tell everyone about my show.

MATHESON

Please. Don't open your mouth, it spoils the illusion.

Duffy looks around the table, almost as though she can't understand what he's just said.

NORWOOD

Darling, do try to behave. I know you fumbled your way to privilege by accident, but there's no need to flaunt it.

MATHESON

Don't be coy, Colette. She has a nonspeaking role in our little play, something you should understand well given your occupat-

(Westerfield ladels hot soup into his lap)

Ow! Idiot!

WESTERFIELD

My apologies, sir. I don't know what came over me.

MATHESON

Think nothing of it. We must find someway to occupy our disabled veterans. Even the cowards.

The maid enters the room making an elaborate pantomime of the phone and pointing to Matheson.

WESTERFIELD

I believe you have a phone call,
sir. Likely your wife.

DUFFY

Tommy-dear-

Ignoring her, Matheson gets to his feet.

MATHESON

(To Norwood)

If you'll excuse me.

He exits without waiting for her response.

DUFFY

Dee Dee Duffy - This chorus girl who catapulted to West End stardom is plagued by stories of her quicksilver temper and violent outbursts, though she is often kind and sympathetic. Is she bi-polar? Does she have a split personality?

If you'd like to sing something, we'd love to hear it. The current plan is for her to sing Cole Porter's What is this Thing Called Love?

Background:

You have holes in your memory. Some parts are clear. Others fuzzy. You know you were Thomas Matheson's mistress. You think he was going to leave his wife for you, but now he's dead.

Murdered in the very act of returning to his wife. Sometimes, you think Dr. Franco is evil, other times he is simply annoying.

In this scene, Duffy's personality changes every time she says the word, shiny. We'll try it a few different ways, but for simplicities sake, I'm going to call them Good Duffy and Bad Duffy. You begin the scene as Good Duffy. The first "shiny" is in the stage directions the middle of page 1. This scene flip flops five times. Have fun! :)

INT. LIBRARY - NIGHT

The body of the maid lays on the floor. Vicki is stooped down, studying the stab wound.

Duffy is standing in the corner, shivering, trying to rub her arms to keep herself warm. Her dress is speckled with blood, and she's sucking her thumb.

VICKI
(Looking up at Duffy)
Tell me what you saw.

Before Duffy can answer, Franco bursts into the room followed by Norwood.

DUFFY
(Pointing)
You did this! I saw you with the
knife!

Norwood takes a step back. Franco steps forward calmly.

FRANCO
Don't you remember? We were in the
kitchen.
(He checks his watch)
Five minutes ago.

Duffy licks her lips, barely whispering the word 'shiny.' Her whole demeanor shifts. She stands up straighter, her chin lifts, and her face hardens.

FRANCO
(Cont.)
I was making cucumber sandwiches,
after all, I have to sustain my
patients.
(chuckling)
You had one of your episodes,
reached for the knife and cut your
finger.

Duffy looks at her cut thumb, the one she was sucking.

FRANCO
(Cont.)
I tried to staunch the bleeding,
but... you attacked me and fled
the room with the knife.

DUFFY
(As though remembering)
Oh. Yeah.
(Laughing harshly)
Your face, though.

VICKI

Five minutes ago, we were in this room, you and I, talking.

Duffy sees the knife in the maid's back. It catches the light.

DUFFY

(Barely audible)

So shiny.

She collapses into a chair, shivering and shaking her head. Vince arrives, dragging a struggling Westerfield. He flings the butler onto the sofa.

DUFFY

(Cont.)

I don't remember. I don't know what happened.

(Squealing)

There's blood on my dress. Why is there blood on my dress?

NORWOOD

I'm not the investigator, but it seems obvious what's happened here.

DUFFY

(Distraught)

You think I did it? Because I can't remember? Because you think I'm crazy? I -- maybe -- what if --

Franco checks his watch again.

DUFFY

(whispers)

Shiny.

(louder, more confident)

I think it was you.

She jabs a finger at Norwood as she gets to her feet, suddenly moving like a predator.

DUFFY

(cont.)

You think we don't all know what happened to your husband? Everyone of us is named in that will but you. Is that your plan? Bump us off one by one until you're the only possible inheritor?

Vicki nods to Vince who grabs Franco's arm, moving the watch.

DUFFY
(cont. - whisper)
Shiny.

VICKI
(To Duffy)
You think Mrs. Norwood killed her
maid?

Duffy looks at the dead body, her hand going to her
mouth. She staggers back a few steps.

DUFFY
I... I...
(She glances between
Norwood and the body)
She's dead.

Norwood looks pointedly at Vicki.

VICKI
You were just telling us Mrs.
Norwood killed her.

DUFFY
I was? Why would I...
(Looking at Dr. Franco)
What's wrong with me? What did you
do to my memory?

WESTERFIELD

Westerfield - Did the butler do it? Is he really even a butler? Westerfield is stiff and stuffy, but under the surface is a WW1 soldier who never fully recovered from the war. He hides a secret love of music and Mrs. Norwood.

Background:

You weren't always a butler. Once a starving artist, you courted the beautiful Collette Norwood, only to be pushed aside for an older and richer man. In the depths of loss, you threw yourself into your music, building a promising career as a classical pianist before the German's invaded France. When England called, you answered. Something happened in the trenches. It haunts you. Your hands shake. You don't play anymore -- not where anyone can see. You took service with Mr. Norwood to be close to the only woman you ever loved. Only, she and her friends act as though they don't know you. You're just a servant to them.

INT. SITTING ROOM - NIGHT

Westerfield stands stiffly. He ignores Vince who stands just behind him, and focuses his distain on Vicki

VICKI

So you helped Mr. Matheson into his coat and then?

WESTERFIELD

My job is to be discreet, Miss...
is it Virtue or
(Glancing over his
shoulder at Vince)
Vice?

VICKI

Virtue!

Vince raises a hand in a calming gesture. Westerfield smirks. Westerfield watches Norwood who is handing Duffy a drink and laughing at something Franco is saying

VINCE

Yeah. She's quite a looker, isn't she.

He pats Westerfield on the shoulder. The butler shrugs his hand away.

VICKI

Now who needs a chaperone?

Vince turns his attention back to her.

VINCE

Sorry. You're right. Please answer the questions.

VICKI

So, even with a dead guy lying in the hallway you think your discretion is important?

WESTERFIELD

I have the gun, miss. If I were your killer, would I not simply shoot all of you and depart?

VINCE

Might be harder than you think.

WESTERFIELD

As I understand it, it is traditional to assess motive in these types of situations. What is my motive?

Vicki glances at Vince, who shrugs. She chews her lip.

VICKI

Even if you're not the killer, you saw things. They could be important.

WESTERFIELD

I observe that Miss Duffy was quite upset at the prospect of Mr. Matheson's return to his wife.

VINCE

We all observed that, genius.

WESTERFIELD

I further observed that Mrs. Norwood was concerned about her finances while Mr. Matheson was the executor of Mr. Norwood's will and Dr. Franco's fortunes are, shall we say, entangled with hers.

VICKI

Everyone has a motive but you. That it?

WESTERFIELD

Your mockery doesn't alter the facts.

VINCE

Any other observations you want to share?

Duffy wanders over holding a cocktail.

WESTERFIELD

I believe I heard Miss Duffy playing the piano.

VICKI

Clair de Lune?

DUFFY

That's a funny name.

She giggles.

WESTERFIELD

You know it?

VICKI

My granny has the phonograph.

WESTERFIELD

She has good taste.

DUFFY

You don't like Cole Porter?

WESTERFIELD

I believe music, like good
company, should be ordered.

VICKI

But you don't think that's a
motive?

Westerfield frowns. He looks at Norwood who is still
talking with Franco. Slowly, he turns back to Vicki.

WESTERFIELD

I doubt you could even begin to
understand my motives, miss. I
think you might need to have lived
somewhat longer than a horsefly.

NORWOOD

Collette Norwood - An aging beauty whose world is crumbling, our Femme Fatale is cunning enough to have murdered her much older husband, but did she? A trail of broken hearts has painted a target or two on her back, and speculation in the local papers says the late husband left her nothing in his will.

Background:

The following scene is one of the first in the film. You've hired Vinny Vice, an unscrupulous investigator, to produce a forged will. You know your late husband left you nothing, but you haven't spent your youth and beauty to get nothing. You hope that a fake will might be enough to pressure Matheson into cutting you a fat check. If that doesn't work, you plan to put roofies in his dessert and create a scandal big enough that he'll cut you a check for your silence. One way or the other, you're walking away with some of the money that you earned.

Nothing is going to plan, though. First, you find the note. A threat. Then, instead of Vinny Vice, his goody-two-shoes daughter appears. Can you use her somehow to pressure Matheson? You'll have to try.

WESTERFIELD

Mrs. Norwood will see you shortly.
Wait here.

He unceremoniously closes the door, sealing her in.
Alone.

The sounds of a party in the other room are muted. As Vicki waits, a piano plays somewhere in the house. Vicki gets up, idly wandering the room. Curiously, she examines photos and knickknacks. Trailing a finger along one of the bookshelves, a volume sticking out slightly, catches her attention. She removes it from the shelf and some newspaper clippings fall to the floor. She bends to pick them up. But pauses. The headlines are about medical experiments in Italy. As Vicki reads, the door opens. The sounds of laughter and merriment pour into the quiet room. Vicki spins, startled. Nervous and afraid she may be transgressing, she quickly shoves the clippings back into the book.

MRS. NORWOOD, an attractive older woman, dressed all in black, stands in the doorway. A stylish veiled beret sweeps across her eyes. While she's garbed in mourning, her attire and makeup are stylish and dramatic.

Mrs. Norwood kicks at something Vicki can't see -- almost as though something is caught on her shoe. However, she watches Vicki.

MRS. NORWOOD

(frowning)

Are you a reader?

VICKI

(blushing)

I'm sorry. I like books--

MRS. NORWOOD

Dr. Franco is always after me to read more. His book mostly, but the occasional bit of Dumas.

Vicki quickly tucks the book away on the shelf.

Mrs. Norwood looks Vicki up and down with a disapproving scowl.

MRS. NORWOOD

You're not Vince Vice.

VICKI

Virtue. Our last name is Virtue.

MRS. NORWOOD

No one associates Vince with virtue.

The older woman moved toward a bar cart sitting along one wall.

VICKI
I'm his daughter, Vicki. Vince
was... under the weather.
Allergies.

MRS. NORWOOD
And to what is Mr. Vice allergic?

The older woman begins pouring whiskey over a glass of ice cubes. Vicki watches the pour before replying.

VICKI
Rye.

MRS. NORWOOD
Aren't we all.

Mrs. Norwood takes a drink. As an after thought, she gestures for Vicki to help herself. The younger woman shakes her head.

VICKI
You're Mrs. Norwood?

MRS. NORWOOD
Collette, please. That's a lovely
halloween getup you're wearing.

VICKI
I was trying to dress for the job.

MRS. NORWOOD
I think you mean the role.

Vicki takes a deep breath, slowly exhaling.

Mrs. Norwood narrows her eyes.

MRS. NORWOOD
You don't like me.

VICKI
Your people and mine don't have
the best history.

MRS. NORWOOD
(Laughing)
You think we're all that
different?

VICKI
An unwed Catholic girl without two
pence to rub together, and a
wealthy Prod widow? Yes. I think
we're different.

MRS. NORWOOD

Two women trying to survive as
best they can in a world gone mad.

Vicki frowns, unsure what to make of the remark.

MRS. NORWOOD

(cont.)

I hired your father for a
particular type of job. I don't
see how you can do it.

Vicki's hands shake. Licking her lips, she speaks slowly,
a hint of quaver in her voice.

VICKI

You hired Vince to find something,
I assure you, I'm quite
practiced--

Mrs. Norwood snorts in disbelief, but Vicki presses on.

VICKI

(cont.)

I'll find what you're looking for.

Something softens in Mrs. Norwood's face. The cynicism
falls away.

MRS. NORWOOD

Very well. I'm looking for my late
husband's will.

Vicki appears suddenly skeptical.

VICKI

I read about that in the
Telegraph.

MRS. NORWOOD

(mocking)

Not the Newsletter?

VICKI

Your husband told no one else
about this will -- in fact, he
told a number of people he'd
intentionally cut you out.

MRS. NORWOOD

(dismissive)

Sensationalism, I assure you.

VICKI

And if I don't believe you?

MRS. NORWOOD
Then you'll need to find work
elsewhere.

VICKI
(nodding)
Very well. How do we proceed?

Mrs. Norwood raises an eyebrow, then glances at the door.

MRS. NORWOOD
I'm having a dinner party -- all
of my late husband's friends.
Mingle. Ask questions. Find the
will. I'm not the private
investigator.

VICKI
Of course.
(Gesturing at her
clothes)
But...

Mrs. Norwood laughs.

MRS. NORWOOD
We'll say you're a cousin. A very
distant cousin. Who arrived
unexpectedly.

Vicki nods.

MRS. NORWOOD
(Cont.)
It's here somewhere, Miss Virtue.
One of them knows where.
(grimacing)
Probably Matheson.

VICKI
The English solicitor who is the
executor of your husband's current
will.

Mrs. Norwood nods.

Vicki looks at the door, listening to the sounds of the
party, and slowly hangs her head.

VICKI
You're right. I'm not the right
person for this job. I'm sorry for
wasting your time.

MRS. NORWOOD

(alarmed)

Please. All my money is tied up in this book deal. Without the will... I'm going to lose my home. Everything. I'll be on the street.

VICKI

I'm sorry. Truly I am. But... I don't know the first thing about British solicitors and society parties. I'll be a clown in there. A token Catholic fresh off the turnip truck, to be the butt of all your jokes.

Reluctantly, Mrs. Norwood crosses to a desk, where she opens a drawer and draws out a letter. Gravely, she crossed back to Vicki and hands it to her.

MRS. NORWOOD

I told you we're not so different.

Slowly Vicki unfolds the page. A threat is scrawled in an unstable hand. Someone intends to kill Mrs. Norwood.

VICKI

(Wide-eyed)

This is a matter for the police.

MRS. NORWOOD

If you can find the will, I'll pay you cash. Directly. Not to your father.

Vicki licks her lips, she slowly hands the paper back to Mrs. Norwood, then nods.

VICKI

Okay. Let's find this other will.

THE MAID

The Maid - Hired just for the dinner party, there was a significant mix up when the agency sent over a woman who doesn't speak a word of English. Still, she has a joyful attitude and is eager to please.

Since all your dialogue will be in a foreign language, we're just going to improve a few scenes in your language and see how that goes.