

The Dining Room cut/splice monologues for Auditions

Please choose one to do:

Female #1

Scene context: two young girls have just come home from school to Sarah's house, and have arranged to meet boys and drink liquor, without their families knowing.

Sarah (young teen): Can you watch TV while you eat?...That's something. At least you don't have to talk... My parents said they tried eating in the kitchen when I went to boarding school. But when I got kicked out, they moved back in here. It's supposed to give me some sense of stability... Shit no! It just makes me nervous. They take the telephone off the hook, so no one can call, and my brother gets itchy about his homework, and when my sister had anorexia, she still had to sit here and *watch*, for God's sake, and my parents spend most of the meal bitching, and the whole thing bites, Helen. It really bites. It bites the big one... You call the boys and tell them it's all clear.

Female #2

Scene context: Meg is a young mother who's unexpectedly come home to her parents' home, with three small children, and Meg's privately speaking to your father, asking for them to stay, as she's separated from her husband and her life is pretty confused, at the moment; her father, though he loves his daughter, is pretty startled by their arrival and a possible complete upheaval of life.

Meg: I've been involved with a woman, Dad, but it's not working, and I don't know who I am, and I've got to touch *base*. ... I'm all mixed up, Dad. I'm all over the ball park. I've been seeing a Crisis Counselor, and I've taken a part-time job, and I've been jogging two miles a day, and none of it's working, Dad. I want to come home. I want to take my children to the Zoo, and the Park Lake, and the Art Gallery, and do all those things you and Mother used to do with all of us. I want to start again, Dad, I want to start all over again. ... You don't want us here, do you, Dad?... I can't go back, Dad!"

Gender Neutral

Scene context: this is a business consultation. A psychiatrist has recently purchased a stately, older home, for the family and also including an office. The architect has come by with plans to re-do the entire first floor, and eliminate a dining room. Though both were originally played as male, historically, gender has often been changed with these roles, in production.

Architect (30's or 40's): Now, let's review your day. You come down to breakfast, everybody's fixing his or her own thing. Eggs, cornflakes, pop-tarts, whatever. You eat, chat, read the paper, say good-bye, come in here to go to work, Do you have a nurse or a receptionist?... Well, you come in here to the reception room, maybe adjust the magazines on a table, here, maybe add your newspaper to the pile, then you go through a sound-proof door into your office. You turn on your stereo-console here, maybe select a book from a wall-unit here, and then settle behind your desk module here. You read, you listen to music. Soon – buzz – a patient arrives. You turn off the music, put aside your book, and buzz him in through the sound-proof doors. He flops on the couch here, tells you his dream, you look out the window here, he leaves, you write him up, buzz in the next. Soon it's time for lunch. You go in here, have **lunch with ... one of the kids, and maybe stroll back in here for a nap. More buzzes, more patients, and**

soon it's time for a good easy cooperative supper with your family... Look, I know whereof I speak: I grew up in a room like this... This is home turf to me.

Male #1

Scene context: Tony is a student at Amherst, and has just had his great aunt demonstrate a full table setting, and how to use the cutlery, the finger bowls, the napkins, etc., as he filmed her. She was enjoying talking about the family's history and his attention... until these next moments.

Tony: Thanks, Aunt Harriet. That was terrific. ... This is a classroom project. For Amherst... Anthropology, actually. ... Well you see we're studying the eating habits of various vanishing cultures. For example, someone is talking about the Kikuyus of Northern Kenya. And my roommate is doing the Cree Indians of Saskatchewan. And my professor suggested I do a show on us. ... The Wasps. Of Northeastern United States. ... You can learn a lot about a culture from how it eats... Well. Consider the finger bowls, for example. There you have an almost neurotic obsession with cleanliness, reflecting the guilt which comes with the last stages of capitalism. Or notice the unnecessary accumulation of glass and china, and the compulsion to display it. Or the subtle hint of aggression in those pistol-handled knives... (she asks him to leave) Aunt Harriet...

Male #2

Scene context: A young boy (about 10) has come to see his wealthy, long-widowed, older Grandfather (75ish), who has just sat down to lunch, served by his long-time maid (Dora). The boy is late to lunch, wanting to surprise his grandfather at the Club, but he wasn't at the Club. The boy has been coached by his family to ask his Grandfather for tuition to go away to boarding school. The grandson has JUST said "Everyone's going away (to school) these days."

Grandfather: Everyone's going away? Hear that, Dora? Everyone's going away... I didn't go away... Didn't even go to Country Day. Went to the old P.S. 36 down on Huron Street. Didn't finish either. Father died, and I had to go to work. Had to support my mother... My father didn't go to school at all. Learned Greek at the plow... I didn't do too badly. Without a high Episcopal boarding school, and an indoor hockey rink... Everyone wants to go away. Me? I went away twice. Took two vacations in my life. First vacation, took a week off from work to marry your grandmother. Went to Hot Springs, Virginia. Bought this table. Second vacation: Europe. 1928. Again with your grandmother. Hated the place. Knew I would. Miserable meals. Took a trunkload of shredded wheat along. Came back when it ran out. Back to this table. They're all leaving us, Dora. Scattering like birds... This one wants to go to one of those fancy New England boarding schools. He wants to play ice hockey indoors with that crowd from Long Island and Philadelphia. He'll come home talking with marbles in his mouth. We won't understand a word, Dora. And we won't see much of him, Dora. He'll go visiting in New York and Baltimore. He'll drink liquor in the afternoon and get mixed up with women who wear lipstick and trousers and whose only thought is the next dance. And he wants me to pay for it all. Am I right?