

THE GOVERNMENT INSPECTOR
ADVERTISING BRIEF FOR LAUNCH

14TH MAY 2021

PLAY SYNOPSIS

The play is set in a provincial Russian town (a long way from St Petersburg!) which is run by the town elders who all have their noses in the trough! The mayor is the leader of the town and he runs it with a rod of iron! He dictates to all the other towns folk what happens. He is supported by the other leaders of different aspects of the town management including police, schools, hospital and the courthouse.

Enter one lowly clerk from St Petersburg and his servant, trying to get a free lunch wherever they go! The clerk is very arrogant and thinks he is owed a living. His servant is very dismissive of his boss! They have arrived and are mistaken for a government inspector who is due to visit to inspect the running of the town.

The supporting townsfolk all fawn to the clerk and try to ingratiate themselves to him. These include two very stupid landowners who act very much like twins! The mayor's wife and daughter are also involved and are looking for possible suiters for the daughter.

This is a satirical comedy of errors with a very irreverent look at Russian provincial life and the class system in the 1830's. It also includes sexual innuendo and swearing. None of the characters are particularly pleasant with a general air of selfishness in their behaviour, leading to a lot of comedic moments.

The CAST:

THE MAYOR – very pompous character who orders the town's people around. Very empire building stuff. Willing to bend the rules to suit his requirements. Can't bear the fact he may get ousted from his job.

ANNA (His Wife) – A woman above her station, lords it over the rest of the townsfolk and tries to control her daughter. Not a lot of respect for her husband. Trying to get her daughter married off to nobility.

Maria (Mayor's Daughter) - Dressed by her mother as a "mini me". Bit of a petulant character. Looking to find a suitable and "rich" husband.

DOBCHINSKY & BOBCHINSKY – Local businessmen, think Tweedledum and Tweedledee. Complete idiots and fawn to the mayor to maintain their status. Great comic roles.

LYAPKIN-TYAPKIN – Town Judge who tries to appear thoughtful and knowledgeable about the law but is not a very good judge. Has trouble asserting

his status. Has set up his own life in the courthouse including hunting and fishing trips. Also likes a drink.

ZEMLYANIKA – Trustee of charitable Institutions. Very sloppy dresser and not very interested in getting involved with local politics. Basically a lazy person.

KHLOPOV – Schools Superintendent. Trying to impose his personality on others, wants promotion and more status. No one takes any notice of him. Not very good at organising teaching staff.

KHLESTAKOV – A clerk who is thought to be the Government Inspector by the towns leaders. He is very arrogant and lives by his wits! Would like to live well but can't afford it. Generally dismissive of his servant but secretly needs him.

OSIP – not very servant like, very opinionated and thinks he knows better than his boss. Quite clever in working scams.

POLICE SUPERINTENDENT – Has trouble controlling the town. Would like to be somewhere else!

POSTMASTER – gentle character but very nosy, always interested in gossip, mostly started by him/her.

MISHKA (Mayor's Servant) – small part in Act 3. Very subservient, but does not respect his/her employer.

WAITER – small part in Act 2. Typical status, doesn't like his job.

POLICEMAN (2) – very formal and obedient, if a little stupid.

Dr GIBNER – small non speaking part in Act 1. Could also play a shopkeeper in Act 4.

3 Other Shopkeepers – small parts in Act 4. M/F. Bit of a chance to try being on stage if you haven't done it before!

SERGEANT'S WIFE – small speaking part in Act 4. Dowdy.

LOCKSMITH'S WIFE – small speaking part in Act 4. Bright.

So as you see a great variety of characters within the play. Although there are some set gender characters:

Men: Khlestakov, Osip, The Mayor, Bobchinsky, Dobchinsky, Lyapkin-Tyapkin, Police Superintendent, Zemlyanika.

Women: Anna, Maria, Mishka, Sergeant's Wife, Locksmith's wife.

We are looking to cast fairly freely with some of the characters played by women or men. Others including: Postmaster, Khlopov, and shopkeepers could be played by either gender.

Audition Pieces

Cast of 18 + (minimum)

KHLESTAKOV (Page 29 – 31) (37 -39)

OSIP (pages 28- 30) (52-53)

MAYOR (pages 5- 8) (37 -39)

ANNA (pages 26-27) (46-48)

MARIA (pages 26-27) (49-51)

DOBCHINSKY (pages 15-18) (81-82)

BOBCHINSKY (pages 15-18) (81-82)

LYAPKIN-TYAPKIN (pages 5-7) (70-72)

KHLOPOV (pages 11-13) (110-111)

POLICE SUPERINTENDENT (pages 23-26)

POSTMASTER (pages 13-14) (74-75) (108-109)

LOCKSMITH'S WIFE (Pages 88-90) including women 2 (pages 104 - 105) 3 scene

SERGEANT'S WIFE (Pages 88-90) including Women 1 (Pages 104-108) 2 scene

ZEMLYANIKA (pages 5-7) (70-71)

WAITER (pages 34 – 36) (page 43) 2 scenes could double up as Policeman (page 68)

POLICEMAN (PAGES 19-22) (page 53 no lines) (page 68 one line) (page 86 line off stage) (page 99 no lines) (page 114 one line)

MISHKA M/F (Page 50 no lines) (pages 52-53) 1 scene, could double up as a shopkeeper

SHOPKEEPERS M/F (3) 1/4, 2/5, 3/6. (pages 86-88) (pages 101-103) 2 scenes

Dr Gibner (M/F) – one scene non-speaking part (could be a shopkeeper)

Avdota (M/F) – one scene non-speaking part (could be a shopkeeper)

AUDITION PIECES

KHLESTAKOV (page 29-31)

K: What have I told you?

O: what?

K: My bed

O: Its your bed, yep. And me, the serf, on the floor.

K: Your arse has been on my bed. I can see the bloody indent. (sniffs) I can smell you on it. Augh....

O: I've been stood right here, brushing down your coat.

K: It's still warm. Eesh...

O: Maybe I fainted. Passed out from malnutrition. Happens when you don't eat.

K: Get my tobacco pouch. I want to smoke.

O: You smoked the last of it two days ago.

K: Well, find some, scrape out my pockets or something...

O: I did. That's what you smoked.

K: Then get on your bloody knees, serfboy! Search the floor for stray bits.

Osip looks at him , shakes his head at K's desperation.

O: Glad one of us has got some dignity left.

K scowls and paces around

K: I don't want you standing there.

O: Tough.

K: You just remind me how starving and shit I feel... Get your arse down to the restaurant and get me some food. Try round the back of the kitchen. Find a skivvy or some illiterate dishwasher and talk to them. Menial to menial. Tell them I need to eat *now!* Whatever they can rustle up, doesn't have to be much...

O: I've been up and down, up and down. They ain't going to say yes just 'cause it's the seventeenth time... Landlord's orders. We've to get nothing. Not a bean.

K: That's just....I mean, that's just.....

O: His inn, his rules.

K: It's not a rule, It's tyranny. It's *despotism*. What about the horses?

O: What about the horses.

K: What do they feed the horses? They must feed the horses.

O: I overheard, They've called in the police.

K: The police? Why? What for?

O: @Cause you're a thief, a con-artist.... What else did he say? A bulshitter, a lie peddler and a disgrace to your class.

K: You enjoy this, don't you?

O: I don't give a monkey's any more. I'll be going to jail with you, I don't get spared.

K: All right, all right, enough, enough. Whine , whine, whine. (*pause*) Once more. I'm ordering you. Say you fainted. Say you're weak and you passed out. Say your ancestors, your parents, your grandparents, all starved to death in the last famine and in their memory, could you just have a wee bowl of soup? And tell them I'm not getting any of it – then sneak it upstairs to me. I'll let you have a few spoonfuls.

O: half of it.

K: Piss off! Half....seven eighths.

O: A third.

K: A quarter.

O: done.

K: (*in a croaky, dry mouthed whisper*) And speak like this .. You've no strength. And hobble....

OSIP Exits

Christ I'm famished...! Went out to walk it off – every bloody shop, full of things to eat... Tormenting me... This is all because of Pensa – Why did I stop in Penza? Bags hardly inside the hotel, I have to go sniffing out a card game. I can still see him, that bastard bastard infantry captain, fresh faced young infantry bastard captain, *No, I've never played cards before..* Puts his hand down – two pairs. Two bloody pairs. Cleaned me out. I hadn't been there five minutes. I'll be back. I'll have you, you cocky grinning shit... Penza was a bloody paradise compared to this skid marked dump hole... Not one shopkeeper will give me credit. Not one! I went too far in the cheese shop – winking at the shopgirl.. I bet she went to the police. I bet she did, little bitch.

KHLESTAKOV/ MAYOR (page 37-39)

M: May I humbly welcome you to our town.

K: Say again?

M: You are incognito – I mean, you are welcome. Most utterly warmly welcome

K:Thankyou.

M: I must first apologise for intruding on you like this.

K: Not at all.

M: I take it as my honourable and honorary duty as the, the duly appointed legislative head of this town to extend a hand of, of greeting and to ensure that all visiting.. visitors are completely satisfied with the standard of hostelry and welcome we strive so humbly to extend to them.

K: I, I don't know why it has come to this, I really don't... I, I have money – money is being sent to me as we speak. My father has an estate. That landlord, he should be locked up. He should swing from the rafters.You try his beef. And the soup is piss. He should get Siberia for that soup... And try drinking the tea – stinks of fish. He tried to starve me – *deliberately* withholding food – then he tried to poison me... I can honestly say never in my life have I.. Get them to bring the beef! I'll show you. Order the beef and let's see if you can put it anywhere near your mouth.

M: My profoundest apologies, I knew nothing about this. Our beef is top top quality, beef brisket, shank,beef shoulder – I buy it at the market. Shoulder medallions, beef tenderloin. It's succulent. The traders are from Kholmogorsky, proud region of beef. May I, in the meantime offer you a different room, a bigger room upstairs perhaps, with a view?

K: A different room?

M: Something airier. With more light. And a view.

K: A view? Funny.

M: If you'll follow me

K: I won't go to prison! I work high up – *high* high up – in Petersburg...

M: (*aside*) He knows everything....

K: Call the police but I am not moving! (*Bangs fist on the table*) I am staying right here and I will be contacting the minister in charge. This is an outrage.

M: Please, the last thing I.... I don't want to.... Please don't take offence. I have a beautiful wife and a lovely sweet daughter who are the world to me.

K: Wife and daughter, eh? Congratulations! You'll be going home to them while I rot in a cell....

M: I'm new in the job – I haven't done it for long....

DOB: (*nodding*) Nearly five years....

M: And I'm still learning. And still keen- I still have the fire, the drive. But it's hard – I'm not complaining – trying to juggle home life and public office and running a small town, single handedly it feels at times... And the pay, I mean, it's no fortune – it's hardly enough to keep us in tea and sugar so... anything I take on top – any bribing that does go on – is only to pay for essentials.... So there's something on the table at the end of

the day for my wife and daughter. It's all for them. *And* the town. This town's like a fourth member of the family to me. You want to hear my wife – leave the town outside, Anton, don't bring it into our home' – but I have to, I *want* to. I even set a a place for it at dinner.... Oh and that widow? The sergeant's widow? If anyone told you it was me who had her flogged, that is slander. Outright slander. Lies, vindictive falsehoods, circulated by my enemies and certain shopkeepers. You can't hold this position and please everyone, as you yourself must know. We must do what we feel is best for the majority, wouldn't you agree?

K: You flogged a widow....

M: I didn't! I didn't!

K: I don't care! I'm stranded here! Powerless. I have nothing. Nothing. Don't you understand?

M: (*aside*) I understand. Oh I understand... Halle- bloody-lujah..! If you're a little short on funds... Your Excellency, I would only be to happy to abilge.

K: Your *Excellency*?

M: Just tell me how much you require?

K: Require?

M: How much?

K: You want a, a number? As in... an, an amount?

M: Yes please.

K: Eh.. Well. I.... could settle the bill right now if I ... if you could... Two hundred?

M: Two hundred?

K: But if....

M: MY pleasure. Two hundred. (*takes notes from wallet*) Two hundred.