



Audition Notice

ROPE

by Patrick Hamilton

Directed by Brendan James and Charles Langford

Venue: Windsor School of Arts, 381 Lutwyche Rd, Windsor

Performance dates: 1, 2, 7, 8, 9, 14, 15 July

Rehearsals: Starting Monday 17th April
Mondays & Thursdays 6:30 - 9:30 pm
Sundays 1:30 - 4:30 pm

Audition Details

Date: Sunday, 26th March
Times: 10:00am

Call back (if required): Monday, 27th March, 6:30pm

Audition Information:

- **Check the dates.** If you cannot make any of the performance dates or critical rehearsals, **do not audition.** Unavailability at certain points during the production may not be critical, but we can avoid awkwardness and additional work if people provide info at this early stage.
- **Complete the Audition Registration Form** to register your interest with your name, phone number and role/s you're auditioning for.
- **Practice and prepare** one (or more) of the script extracts for your preferred character(s) - these will be read together as audition pieces on the day.
- **Email** production@growltheatre.org.au for more information or any questions.

Membership fees: If you are cast for a role, you will need to become a financial member of Growl Theatre which is \$30 per calendar year.

www.growltheatre.org.au

Performance Address: Windsor School of Arts, 381 Lutwyche Rd, Windsor, Qld, 4030

Mailing Address: 21 Yarraman St, Lutwyche, Qld, 4030



SYNOPSIS

A brilliantly tense play from Patrick Hamilton, the author of *Gaslight*, which was performed by Growl Theatre in 2022.

Believing themselves to be intellectually superior to their contemporaries, two friends murder their fellow undergraduate purely to see if they can get away with it.

They then throw a party, serving food from the top of the trunk where they have hidden his body. Tension and suspicions increase as the evening wears on.

First produced and published in 1929, and filmed by Alfred Hitchcock in 1948, *Rope* remains one of the classics of the thriller genre and its themes are still relevant to the current day.

CHARACTERS - DESCRIPTION & AGES

Wyndham Brandon - Male, 20-30s (Large role, approximately ~200 lines)

A wealthy, charming and intelligent young man who is also a cold-blooded murderer. Feeling superior in all things, and a dangerously firm believer in Friedrich Nietzsche's Übermensch (Superman) concept.

Charles Granillo - Male, 20-30s (Large role, approximately ~200 lines)

Brandon's friend and accomplice in the murder, he is less confident and more nervous. Well-thought of as courteous and friendly by others, he grows more nervous and panicked and struggles to hide it, even with a few drinks as the night goes on.

Kenneth Raglan - Male, 20-25 (Small role, approximately ~50 lines)

Younger than Brandon and Granillo, Kenneth looks up to Brandon. Simple and quite hopeless but overall likable with a sense of humor and fun to any dinner party.

Leila Arden - Female, 20-25 (Small role, approximately ~50 lines)

Representing an ignorant and obnoxious society, and with pure young innocence, Leila is a beautiful and flirtatious young woman who is a close friend of the murdered victim.

Sir Johnstone Kentley - Male, 40-50s (Small role, approximately ~50 lines)

The father of the murdered victim, Sir Johnstone is a placid old man, previously in positions of power, though he's never abused it like Brandon and Granillo. Now retired, he's an avid book collector and cares for his family, including his invalid wife.

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Mrs Debenham - Female, 50-60s (NOTE: This role has been precast)

Sir Johnston's sister, and clueless, distant, and dull. When she does talk (rarely), it's always vague and unimportant. Played as a small piece of comic relief but also an accurate picture of a shallow society.

Rupert Cadell - Male, 25-30s (Large role, approximately ~200 lines)

Former teacher to Brandon and Granillo, Rupert is a charismatic, observant and calculating poet with an injury and mental anguish after experiencing WW1. Easily aggravated, especially by the younger Leila and Kenneth, who he approaches with sarcasm.

Could be approached as a smart detective, a philosopher, a cheeky rival to Brandon and Granillo, and/or an angry, vengeful force of malice hidden by a mask of a witty artist.

Sabot/Mrs. Wilson - Male/Female, 25-40s (Small role, approximately ~50 lines)

Cast as either a French servant or an English maid, this role is Brandon and Granillo's hired help, who sets up for the party. Dutiful and attentive, they always do their best to please their young masters and guests.



Rehearsal Schedule

APRIL: Sunday 16, 1:30pm, Monday 17 6:30pm, Thursday 20, 6:30pm, Sunday 23, 1:30pm, Monday 24, 6:30pm, Thursday 27 6:30pm, Sunday 30, 1:30pm

MAY: Monday 1, 6:30pm, Thursday 4, 6:30pm, Sunday 7, 1:30pm, Monday 8, 6:30pm, Thursday 11, 6:30pm, Sunday 14, 1:30pm, Monday 15, 6:30pm, Thursday 18, 6:30pm, Sunday 21, 1:30pm, Monday 22, 6:30pm, Thursday 25, 6:30pm, Sunday 28, 1:30pm

JUNE: Thursday 1, 6:30pm, Sunday 4, 6:30pm, Monday 5, 6:30pm, Thursday 8, 6:30pm, Sunday 11, 1:30pm, Monday 12, 6:30pm, Thursday 15, 6:30pm, Sunday 18, 1:30pm

Tech Set up:

JUNE: Saturday 17 10am, Sunday 18, 10am

Critical Dress/Tech Rehearsals:

JUNE: Sunday 18, 1:30pm, Monday 19, 6:30pm, Thursday 22, 6:30pm, Sunday 25, 1:30pm, Monday 26, 6:30pm, Thursday 29, 6:30pm

Performances:

JULY: Saturday 1, Sunday 2 (matinee), Friday 7, Saturday 8, Sunday 9 (matinee), Friday 14, Saturday 15 (matinee and evening show).

7:30pm evening shows, 2:00pm matinee shows

Bump Out:

JULY: Sunday 16, 10am

Please note: While every step will be taken to ensure a happy and safe production on these dates, the ongoing presence of COVID in the community may mean the production could be delayed or postponed.

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Rehearsal Schedule (Calendar)

| APRIL | | | | | | |
|-------|----|-----------|--------------------|-------------|----|----|
| Mo | Tu | We | Th | Fr | Sa | Su |
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| 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 |
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| 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 |
| 29 | 30 | 31 | | | | |
| JUNE | | | | | | |
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| 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 |
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| 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 |
| | | | | | | |
| | | Rehearsal | Critical Rehearsal | Performance | | |

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SCRIPT EXTRACTS

Extract #1 - Brandon and Granillo talk after the murder

The matches can be heard rattling in the air and falling on the floor. Granillo picks them up and lights his own cigarette. The two pin-points of light are all that come from the darkness. Pause

It's about time you pulled yourself together, isn't it, Granno? Sabot will be here in a quarter of an hour.

Pause

Granillo You fully understand, Brandon, what we've done?

Brandon Do I know what I've done? ... Yes. I know quite well what I've done. *(His voice becomes rich, easy, powerful, elated and yet withal slightly defiant)* I have done murder.

Granillo Yes.

Brandon *(continuing in the same voice)* I have committed murder. I have committed passionless — motiveless — faultless — and clueless murder. Bloodless and noiseless murder.

Granillo Yes.

Brandon And immaculate murder. I have killed. I have killed for sake of danger and for the sake of killing. And I am alive. Truly and wonderfully alive. That is what I have done, Granno.

Long pause

What's the matter? Are you getting superstitious?

Granillo No. I'm not superstitious.

Brandon *(suavely)* Then may I put on the light?

Granillo No. You mayn't ...

The fire glows faintly; the figures of Brandon and Granillo may now be dimly discerned

During the following Granillo moves DS and sits in the armchair L

Brandon?

Brandon Yes?

Granillo You remember when Ronald came in?

Brandon What do you mean — “when Ronald came in”?

Granillo When Ronald came in here — when he came in from the car. You were standing at the door.

Brandon Yes.

Granillo Did you see anyone standing there? Up the street — about seventy yards?

Brandon Well, what of it?

Granillo Oh, nothing ... Brandon ...

Brandon Yes?

Granillo When I met Ronald. When I met him — coming out of the Coliseum ... When I met him, and got him into the car — why shouldn't someone have seen us?

Brandon What do you mean by someone?

Granillo Oh, someone. Anyone. Did we think of that, Brandon?

Brandon I *did*.

Pause

Granillo It's in the room, you know. Do you think we'll get away with it?

Brandon When? Tonight?

Granillo Yes.

Brandon Are you suggesting that some psychic force, emanating from that chest there, is going to advise Sir Johnstone Kentley of the fact that the remains — or shall I say the lifeless entirety — of his twenty-year-old son and heir is contained therein? (*Pause*) My dear Granillo, if you are feeling in any way insecure, perhaps I had better fortify you with a brief summary of facts — with mathematics, as it were. Let me please give you — —

Granillo Listen!

There is a tense stillness

Brandon What *are* ... ?

Granillo Listen, I tell you!

There is another pause. Granillo springs up, goes over to the window, and peeps through the curtains

It's all right. I thought it was Sabot. (*He sits in the L chair again*)

Brandon Sabot, in the first place, will not be here until five minutes to nine, if then, for Sabot is seldom punctual. Sabot, in the second place, has been deprived by a wily master of his key. He will therefore ring. Let me, I say, give you a cool narration of our transactions. This afternoon, at about two o'clock, young Ronald Kentley, our fellow-undergraduate, left his father's house with the object of visiting the Coliseum Music Hall. He did so. After the performance he was met in the street by your good self, and invited to this house. He was then given tea, and at six forty-five precisely, done to death by strangulation and rope. He was subsequently deposited in that chest. Tonight, at nine o'clock, his father, Sir Johnstone Kentley, his aunt, Mrs Debenham, and three well-chosen friends of our own will come round here for regalement. They will talk small talk and depart. After the party, at eleven o'clock — —

Extract #2 - Leila, Raglan, Sir Johnstone and Mrs Debenham join the party
with Brandon and Granillo

Act I

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Leila and Raglan shake hands. Brandon indicates a chair between Raglan and Granillo and Leila sits down

Brandon Now what are you going to have, Leila? Kenneth's having a gin and It.

Leila I'd adore one.

Brandon goes to the sideboard and mixes Leila's drink. There is a rather awkward silence

(To Granillo) And how are you getting on?

Granillo Very well, thanks. And how are you?

Leila Oh, I'm all right. *(She turns and grins at Raglan)*

Raglan is only too willing to grin at Leila

Of course, I simply *know* — that I've seen you somewhere before.

Raglan *(looking foolish)* Really?

Leila You're not a Frinton-on-Sea expert, are you?

Raglan No. I just go there occasionally, that's all.

Leila How weird! Because I could simply *swear* that I've seen you somewhere before.

Raglan *(grinning)* Oh — how weird!

Brandon *(giving Leila her drink)* Previous incarnation, I expect. Here you are, Leila. Excuse mess. We're in a horrible mess here altogether. Kenneth'll tell you about it. I've come into a library.

Leila Come into a library, my dear? My dear, how weird!

Brandon Yes. And I hope you don't think you're going to get anything to eat, because all the servants are away and we're very humble.

Leila No — you told me that, and I had a simply *gluttonous* high tea. *Gorged*, my dear!

Brandon Oh, well, that's all right. I really wouldn't have asked you — only this is the last chance of seeing you before we go.

Leila Are you going up tonight, then?

Brandon Yes.

Raglan Of course, I'm feeling absolutely ghastly — coming dressed like this.

Leila Why? I'm sure I ought to be dressed too. *(She turns to Brandon)* Of course you must admit, my dear, this is a most mysterious and weird meal.

Granillo *(a little too heavily)* Why mysterious and weird?

Leila senses Granillo's heaviness; this causes a faintly embarrassed little pause

Oh — I don't know. Just mysterious. And weird. (*Pause. To Raglan*) Don't you think it's mysterious and weird? Such a queer time, to begin with.

The doorbell rings

Brandon (*cutting in rather loudly*) Here we are. I'll bet you that's old Kentley. Forgive me a moment. I must go and usher him in.

Brandon exits, leaving the door open

Voices can be heard from below

Leila (*softly, rolling her eyes*) Who's the newcomer?

Granillo (*rising and putting his cigarette out in the ashtray on the table*) The newcomer, Leila, is the revered Sir Johnstone Kentley, who has come here to look at books.

Leila My dear!

Granillo Unless it's Rupert — which it may be, of course. (*He moves to the door*)

Sir Johnstone (*talking as he enters*) ... which of course, can never be done.
Ah, how do you do, Granillo. How are you getting on?

Sir Johnstone and Granillo shake hands

You know my sister, don't you?
Mrs Debenham Yes! (*She smirks*)

Mrs Debenham and Granillo shake hands

Raglan looks sheepish and Leila does not quite know what to do with herself

Brandon (*taking the stage*) Now let me introduce you all ... This, Mrs Debenham, is Miss Leila Arden ... Miss Arden — Sir Johnstone Kentley.

Leila and Sir Johnstone shake hands

Leila Howdyoudo.

Sir Johnstone Howdyoudo.

Brandon And this is Mr Kenneth Raglan.

Raglan and Sir Johnstone shake hands

Raglan Howdyoudo, sir.

Sir Johnstone Howdyoudo.

Mrs Debenham smirks

There is an embarrassed pause

Brandon And there we are. And here, Sir Johnstone, is an armchair which I think is more or less in your line.

Brandon leads Sir Johnstone down to a chair; Sir Johnstone sits

And here is a chest, from which we're going to feed, the table having been commandeered for books.

During the following, Granillo makes sure that everyone is seated again and moves to stand at the mantelpiece

Sir Johnstone (*peering at the chest*) That's not a Cassone, is it?

Brandon No, sir. It's not genuine, it's a reproduction. But it's a rather nice piece. I got it in Italy. *(To Sir Johnstone)* Now will you have a cocktail, sir?

Sir Johnstone Good heavens, no, my boy. *(He looks vaguely about the room)*

Brandon And you, Mrs Debenham?

Mrs Debenham merely smirks

You won't?

Mrs Debenham Oh, yes, please.

Brandon Ah. Good. Now what will you have? Will you have a gin and Angostura, or a gin and French, or a gin and Italian?

Mrs Debenham Yes, please. *(During the following her mind drifts off elsewhere so she is not paying attention)*

Sir Johnstone These books I'm going to see — where are they, Brandon?

Brandon *(going to the sideboard again and mixing Mrs Debenham's drink)*
Oh, the books. They're in the other room. The dining-room. I laid them out as well as I could, and there's more space in there.

Sir Johnstone I shall be interested to see them — most interested ... I seem to remember that Wickham had a really remarkable little lot of Shakespeariana ...

Brandon Yes. But I'm afraid the Folios were sold before he died. But there's a run of the Quartos, and a really amazing lot of Baconian stuff. At least, I'm told it's very fine.

Extract #3 - Rupert walks in on Brandon and Granillo having an argument

Act II

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Granillo (*moving over to pour himself another drink; very nervously*) That's all right.

Rupert Oh — (*hobbling DC*) I hope I'm not interfering.

Brandon (*moving to the fireplace and lighting a cigarette*) No. It's my fault. You didn't know that Granno and I behaved like that, did you, Rupert? But we often have outbursts, like this — and always about trifles, eh, Granno?

Granillo Yes. (*He drinks*)

Brandon On this occasion it was a question of a case of Beethoven gramophone records, which poor old Granno couldn't produce. I was chiding him for his remissness. The party'll have to do without its Beethoven tonight.

Rupert Well, it's an ill wind that blows nobody any good. What a queer thing to quarrel about.

Brandon Yes. But we do quarrel about queer things nowadays, don't we, Granno?

Granillo We do.

Rupert (*sitting down*) Can I have another drink, please?

Granillo, preoccupied, does not respond

Brandon Granno.

Granillo Yes. Whisky?

Rupert Yes, please.

Granillo pours a whisky for Rupert and brings it over to him. His hand is trembling violently as he gives the drink to Rupert, and this does not go by unobserved

Rupert Can I have some soda?

Granillo Oh. Sorry. (*He moves back and pours soda into the glass, then returns with it to Rupert*)

Rupert Thank you. Ever so much. (*He drinks*)

Granillo returns to the sideboard during the following

(*After a pause*) Well, as a matter of fact, I'm in here on an errand.

Brandon An errand?

Rupert Yes. I want some rope.

Brandon } (*together*) Rope!
Granillo }

Rupert Yes. Why so excited? Rope. The young people in the other room, having exhausted the lyric possibilities of the gramophone, are now projecting their entire youthful *élan* and ingenuity into the composition of a parcel. And they want something to do it up with.

Extract #4 - Rupert questions Sabot

Act I

27

There is a pause. The sound of the rain becomes louder

Rupert *(after a pause; quietly)* It's going to be a dirty night.

Sabot Yes, sair. It's set in now, sair.

Rupert I suppose Mr Brandon'll still be going, though.

Sabot Pardon, sair?

Rupert I suppose Mr Brandon'll still be going, though — to Oxford?

Sabot Oh — yes, sair. I suppose so, sair.

Sabot busies himself with clearing. He picks up a large pile of plates. Rupert all at once puts the book down and looks at the little ticket again

Rupert Have you any idea of the date, Sabot?

Sabot Ze date, sair? Yes, sair. It ees zee — er — *(screwing up his eyes)* er — sixteenth, sair.

Rupert The — ? *(He is about to repeat "the sixteenth" in surprise)*

Sabot *(quickly)* No, sair! No, sair! It ees not, sair! It ees the *seventeenth*, sair!

Rupert *(looking quite openly at the ticket)* Yes. I thought so. The seventeenth.

Pause

Rupert Have you been getting into trouble lately, Sabot?

Sabot Trouble, sair?

Rupert Yes. Trouble.

Sabot Er ... *Trouble*, sair?

Rupert Uncanny as it may seem, the word I employed, Sabot, was trouble.

Sabot Er ... What kind of trouble, sair?

Rupert Why — have you a selection?

Sabot Ah, sair. Life. She is full of trouble.

Rupert She certainly is. Indeed she is almost unintermittently troublesome. I was wondering, though, whether you had been getting into any trouble with your employers.

Sabot Me, sair? No, sair. What should make you think so, sair?

Rupert Well, I telephoned this house at a quarter to eight and heard the most hysterical noises.

Sabot Hysterical noises, sair?

Rupert Hysterical — Sabot — noises. Somebody had evidently lost their nerve. I was wondering whether you were the cause of it.

Sabot Me, sair? No, sair. Not me, sair. I was not here till five to nine.

There is a long pause. Sabot continues clearing the meal away

Rupert Then are *you* the one that frequents the Coliseum, Sabot?