

Wait Until Dark

By Frederick Knott

Produced by Wendy Muncaster

Directed by Deborah Ozga

Auditions: August 11 & 12, 6:30 pm

Callbacks: Saturday, August 16, 10 am

Rehearsals: August 18 through October performance dates

Performances: October 9-25

Location: Holland Civic Theatre

About the Show ... A sinister con man, and two ex-convicts, are about to meet their match. They have traced the location of a mysterious doll, which they are much interested in, to the Greenwich Village apartment of Sam Hendrix and his blind wife, Susy. Sam had apparently been persuaded by a strange woman to transport the doll across the Canadian border, not knowing that sewn inside were several grams of heroin. When the woman is murdered, the situation becomes more urgent. The con man and his ex-convicts, through a cleverly constructed deception, convince Susy that the police have implicated Sam in the woman's murder, and the doll, which she believes is the key to his innocence, is evidence. She refuses to reveal its location, and with the help of a young neighbor, figures out she is the victim of a bizarre charade. But when Roat kills his associates, a deadly game ensues between the two. Susy knows the only way to play fair is by her rules, so when darkness falls, she turns off all the lights leaving both of them to maneuver in the dark until the game ends.

Wait Until Dark is set in the 60s, a "more-innocent" and "trusting" time, with the gender roles and stereotypes of the 40s and 50s colliding with new awareness, and demands for equality starting to emerge. There's definitely a strong current of empowerment for both women and the handicapped running through the play, which is accomplished through deeds, not preaching.

Character Breakdowns:

Susy: (*Mid 20s through 40s*) Smart and resourceful, but downplays it, can improvise in tough situations, but has never had to until the accident that blinded her and the events of the play. Very perceptive and sensitive to details heightened by her blindness. Definitely a planner and organizer, Susy turns the tables on three experienced con men, and by the end of the play we can see that she is much more than the stereotypes of the day would have her be.

NOTE: There is definitely the possibility and opportunity for Susy to be played by a blind or vision-impaired actor. BUT vision-status will only count in casting decisions if it comes to a choice between two equally-capable actors.

Role Size: Very large. Susy is "on" primarily throughout the whole show.

Other Role Requirements:

✓ Any sighted actor must be comfortable with the idea of spending a period of rehearsal blindfolded to get natural and comfortable with Susy's world.

✓ Stage combat sequences

Roat: (30s – 50s. Plausibly depicts both a father and a son at one point, in addition to flipping into an Italian speaking character.) Easygoing, smooth, persuasive, and friendly in a subdued, cool way. In reality, he is nothing but ruthless, cold, and efficient. He has thought of it all. Definitely a megalomaniac and psychopath, BUT is not a cardboard crazy. Even though he's "wrong" from the very first, the character must grow and develop into a monster while still remaining someone you'd have no problem sitting next to on the bus or having a pleasant conversation with. He's the mastermind of the plays events, a master con, and is totally in control until Susy turns the tables on him, and even then, his confidence and ego have him convinced he's still in charge.

Role Size: Large. Roat is on and off throughout, but when he is on, he commands the stage. He and Susy finish the show for the last scene in a game of cat and mouse and fight to the death.

Other Role Requirements:

- ✓ stage combat sequences
 - ✓ No facial hair (actor must be willing to be clean shaven – possible mustache ok'd)
 - ✓ 3 characters in addition to main character
-

Mike Tallman: (30s and up). Quick, wise guy, con artist. He's not fond of violence but recognizes it has a time and place in his line of work. Aside from Sam (Susy's husband), he comes off as the nicest guy in the piece, except for the con he's trying to pull. Given the right situation, he might just get straight and turn out to be a nice guy. Or, maybe not.

Role Size: Very Large. Mike is primarily on throughout.

Other Role Requirements:

- ✓ stage combat sequences (must be willing to learn prat fall downstairs)
 - ✓ must be able to lay still (dead) for a large portion of a scene
-

Carlino: (Typically played by a male, this role is also open to a female who can pull off a strong character, 30's and up ... Male: A real physical presence, not necessarily big, but physically menacing. Female: She is not afraid to get her hands dirty; butch). Carlino has no compunctions about resorting to violence; in fact, he might actually prefer and enjoy it. As a con artist able to pull off elaborate plots, his mental "slowness" could just be part of the con he's pulling on the world. Is not intimidated. Roat without the polish, while he's not a babbling psycho, we should feel there's something wrong about this guy from the first.

Role Size: Large. Carlino needs to play his tough guy from Brooklyn role and easily pull off his Sergeant Carlino "character" who he portrays through the majority of the show.

Other Role Requirements:

- ✓ Brooklyn or other wonderful NY accent!
-

Sam: (20s to 40s, Susy's contemporary) An upcoming, professional photographer. Ex-marine. Met Susy when she was learning how to cross the street after her accident and he saved her. Definitely a loving husband and devoted, we learn this through the little things he does for her amongst the rush of his work and trying to help Susy learn to deal with her still-new blindness. Hence he seems brusque, and sometimes short with her, but it becomes clear that this is just him doing what they've together agreed is his role in helping and loving her. He's an interesting

combination of artistic type (photographer) and real detail obsessive. Overall, he's a very nice guy.

Role Size: Small. Sam has two great scenes and is a great role for the actor who wants to get his feet wet, but not spend a lot of time in rehearsals.

Other Role Requirements:

✓ Must be comfortable running on a stage lit only with flashlights

Gloria: (middle-school and up, playing younger. May make exception for mature 5th grader) Really precocious, but very quick to figure things out. Gloria is someone the audience initially dislikes because she is really a brat! Hence, while Susy won't let Gloria get away with anything, she also gives Gloria the respect, expectation, and understanding that Gloria doesn't get elsewhere, showing a much softer and helpful young girl the audience quickly learns to love. Gloria is a very strong character from a very hard home life who turns out to almost be Susy's guardian angel. She is a "real" girl – definitely not polished looking. This is a real acting opportunity for a teen or pre-teen actor.

NOTE: Our intentions are to double cast this role, with the shows being shared 50/50.

Role Size: Medium. Gloria has several very large scenes throughout the show, all one on one with Susy.

Other Role Requirements:

✓ Ideal actress will be 5'2" or smaller.

✓ Saturday rehearsals in addition to others.

Two Policemen: (18 and up, Male or Female)

Role Size: Very Small

Other Role Requirements:

✓ Must be comfortable running on a stage lit only with flashlights

Lisa: (attractive, petite, woman, 18 and up) Murder victim, seen only as a body.

Role Size: non-speaking (dead body)

Other Role Requirements:

✓ Must be able to fall limp, moved by another and lie on stage "dead" for a duration of a scene.
