



***A Funny Thing Happened On The Way To The
Gynecologic Oncology Unit At The Memorial Sloan
Kettering Cancer Center Of New York City***

Halley Feiffer

Directed By: Mande W Wunderle

Audition Dates: Monday, May 16th and Tuesday, May 17th at 7:00pm

Performance Dates: Thursday, June 23rd - Saturday, June 25th

SHOW SYNOPSIS

A foul-mouthed 20 something comedian with a need for acceptance and a middle-aged man struggling with his personal life and wardrobe are forced together unexpectedly when their cancer-stricken mothers become hospital roommates. Together they can help each other find acceptance and healing, if only they could stand each other for more than five minutes.

CHARACTER BREAKDOWN

We will be auditioning actors of all races, ethnicities, genders, and abilities, ages 18+.

Casting the following roles:

Karla – a woman, late 20's to early 30's. She is charismatic and witty with a childlike demeanor that hides a foul mouth and a dirty mind. This spunky and angry stand-up comedian has a knack for dark humor and putting up walls to keep the outside world from seeing the pain she is going through.

Don – A man late 30's to early 40's. The kind of man you could pass on the street without noticing. Stress describes this boring "everyday man" who employs anger as his main reaction to coping with the massive pain of his all too fresh divorce and the illness of his mother.

Marcie – A woman 50's. Karla's mother who is recovering from a hysterectomy to treat her stage 1 endometrial cancer. Has a very dry wit akin to her daughter's. Her dark humor covers deep pain which also hides an abusive cruelty towards her daughter. She is still very capable of a deep love and tenderness.

Geena – A woman 60's. Don's mother. A brave, tired woman who has not concerned herself with looks, or appearance for about 40 years. Weary from battling ovarian cancer for 7 years. This is a non speaking role.

AUDITION INFORMATION

All auditionees must be 18 or older

Content warning – there will be simulated oral sex (cunnilingus) on stage, please take this into consideration before auditioning.

A completed online audition form is required for all auditions. The online audition form can be completed by following this link: <https://forms.gle/CZvmDCFt1NR3oZcUA>

Auditions will consist of side readings from the script.

WHAT TO PREPARE

Below are the sides we will be reading in audition. Please take some time to familiarize yourself with the roles that you could fill. You may be asked to read the same side more than once or to read for a different character than you stated interest in on the audition form, this does not mean you will not be considered for said character. I am looking for chemistry between actors and good comedic timing. Remember to have fun with the script, it is a genuinely funny show, with a lot of heart.

Side 1 (Karla)

KARLA. "I've been single for so long? I've started having sexual fantasies about my vibrator."

Marcie's mouth hangs open; she snores. Some drool begins to seep out.

(*Re: the drool.*) Oh. Um.

Karla looks around, spots a box of tissues on the bedstand.

She grabs a tissue and delicately wipes Marcie's mouth. Throws the tissue away.

Now what do you think works better, "sexual fantasies" or "sex dreams"? Or "wet dreams"?

Marcie emits a little groan in her sleep.

I know. I actually think "wet dreams" is the funniest option, but I'm worried it might not get a laugh because girls don't have wet dreams.

Considers this.

Per se...

Marcie emits a tiny, forceful snore.

Yeah, fuck it. Wet dreams? You're in.

Crosses something out and scribbles in her notebook.

And I have more stuff I could add on to it, too—like I could elaborate even more?

Marcie emits a sort of shuddering, four-part, near-violent snore.

Ummm...

Karla reaches out and gives her mom's arm a quick, somewhat awkward little rub. Then—she returns to her notes.

Like I could—oh Idunno this is all just *improv*, but like I could be like: "Instead of a strong, chiseled, oiled-up man throwing open my bedroom door and raping me? I just have visions of like, my vibrator standing in the archway, backlit by silvery moonlight, sometimes wearing a fedora (sometimes not), and lovingly fucking me 'til sunrise."

Beat.

What do you think of that? That was just *improv*.

Marcie starts to snore lightly, almost rhythmically. Karla begins to chew her cuticles, absently, as she peruses her notes.

Maybe the rape part was a bit much.

Karla continues to chew her cuticles as she starts to scribble in her notebook.

Don enters, quietly. He is an unassuming man in his late forties. His face is drawn, gray, pursed; he looks like he has been through the wringer both in life-in-general and also more acutely quite recently. He wears a corduroy jacket with big holes in both elbows and a pair of extremely depressing sweatpants.

He slips in silently and sits down next to Geena's bed. Looks at Geena. His face fills with sadness. He reaches out and takes her hand, gives it a squeeze. Then, he leans back in his

chair, reaches into his jacket pocket and removes a copy of the New Yorker. He reads.

On the other side of the curtain, Karla starts to talk again, oblivious.

I don't know, I kinda don't think there's anything funnier than rape.

Don reacts, with horror.

A loud snore from Marcie.

Okay, well what if I just said something like... *(Reading from notes.)*

"I'm in bed, dripping wet, waiting for my vibrator to come fuck me"?

On the other side of the curtain, Don is becoming increasingly aghast.

Maybe that's like—does that kinda take the teeth out of it, though? Am I being a pussy? Arghhh, I can never tell if I'm just resorting to being a big, gaping-wide pussy.

On the other side of the curtain, Don thinks he is perhaps hallucinating.

Karla scribbles in her notebook, then gets another idea.

Or I could even work the rape element *into* it, but in like a different way—like I could say something like: "I love getting fucked by my vibrator 'cause I know it'll never rape me."

Thinks.

Or something like that.

On the other side of the curtain, Don has put his New Yorker down and is listening to Karla with silent horror and fury.

Karla continues, oblivious, to chew her cuticles, scribble, think, improvise. She laughs at something she just wrote down.

How about—ha ha—how about: “I only rape myself with my vibrator when I’m *really angry* at myself”?

Marcie snores.

Too much?

Karla chews a cuticle and scribbles.

Don’s face is, at this point, nearly crimson. He is shaking.

Okay here’s a compromise: “I only play out my rape fantasies with my *vibrator*, ’cause I know it will always respect my safe word.”

Thinks.

It’s still maybe too vague...

Scribbles.

Side 2 (Karla and Don)

DON. You have a really...*firm* / ...handshake...

KARLA. Oh, I know—it's something my mom always, like, *drilled* into us when we were kids.

DON. Really?

KARLA. Yeah, she would always be like: "A weak handshake is an invitation for someone to fuck you over."

DON. Whoa.

KARLA. I know.

DON. I mean, I think I *agree* with her, / but...

KARLA. I / know.

DON. I've just never heard it *phrased* quite that way.

KARLA. I know. She has a...well. Let's just say that some of her parenting methods? Have been...unorthodox.

DON. (*Shrugs.*) My mom used to bring me to her book club and point at the hors d'oeuvres and say: "Eat up, 'cause that's your dinner!"

KARLA. If my sister and I refused to eat dinner? My mom would march into the other room and start packing a suitcase.

DON. My mom used to put me to sleep by telling me stories about all the men she'd pursued romantically before my dad.

KARLA. My mom used to put us to sleep by turning on "SV Squad."

DON. You mean the show that's all about sex crimes?

KARLA. (*Grinning, nodding.*) YUP.

DON. *That's* how she put you to sleep?

KARLA. We found it soothing!

DON. You find "SV Squad" soothing?!

KARLA. Well, now we've graduated to "SV Ped," but—

DON. What is "SV Ped"?!

KARLA. It specifically examines child-related sex crimes?

DON. Jesus... / christ.

KARLA. It's a far superior show. The performances are subtler. The writing is exemplary. The kids are really cute—until they get kidnapped and—

DON. Just stop.

KARLA. 'K sorry.

DON. (*Can't wrap head around this.*) So now you fall asleep to "SV Ped"?

KARLA. My mom does, like, every night. And I do sometimes.

DON. What about your sister?

Something shifts in Karla. Her face falls, a bit. She becomes darker.

KARLA. Um...

Beat.

No, she doesn't.

Side 3 (Karla and Don)

KARLA. What's so funny?

DON. Oh. Sorry. I. I didn't mean to ah. Laugh. So loud. I'll keep it down. Sorry.

KARLA. But what are you laughing at?

DON. You really wanna know?

KARLA. *Yeah...*

DON. Oh. I thought you were—I thought you were just saying “what's so funny” as a, um. As one of your euphemisms, and what you really meant was... “shut up.”

Beat.

KARLA. *(Slightly bemused.)* “One of my euphemisms”?

DON. You know, how you'll say stuff like: “Hey Don, I'm gonna go get some coffee from the cafeteria, do you want anything?” When what you really mean is: “Hey Don, can you go get me some coffee from the cafeteria?”

Karla laughs. Don smiles.

Or how you'll be like: “Hey Don, what time is it?” When what you really mean is: “Hey Don, it's time for you to go get me some coffee from the cafeteria.”

Karla laughs, louder. Don smiles, wider.

Or how you'll be like: “Hey Don, it's nice to see you again,” when what you really mean is: “Why are you still *here*, Don? When is this whole thing going to be *over* so I never have to see your face again?”

Beat. Deadly silence. It gets super awkward. Then—

Embarrassed, Don returns to reading the New Yorker.

KARLA. So *what's so funny?*

A beat. Don hesitates. Takes his feet off the bed. Looks around. Makes sure Marcie and Geena are asleep. Then—

DON. It's this, ah. I'm just rereading this, um. It's this... “Shouts & Murmurs” piece? In the...*New Yorker*? It's about...

He considers.

Ahm. It's not a very...appropriate...

Beat.

I'm not sure I should—it's sort of, um... (*Choosing words carefully.*)
...blue...humor...?

Beat.

KARLA. Are you fucking kidding me, Don.

Beat.

DON. Okay it's about, um. It's about the life of a, uh. Of a...condom?
(*Feels humiliated, but continues.*) It's. Ahmmm... It's from the point
of view of a condom, but it's funny because you don't know?

Beat.

That it's a...condom...? At first you can't tell? What it...is?

Beat.

That's why it's...so funny?

*He hopes he can just finish the conversation here. She doesn't
give him anything.*

A beat. Then—he continues, with great reluctance.

So you don't know that it's a condom, you just...you know it, um, it
lives in a wallet? And sometimes it gets taken out but um. Never...
used? And it gets to, um, it gets to meet...all the other...things?
That um, live? In the wallet, too?

*A beat. Karla just stares at Don. He stares back at her. Then—
he continues.*

Like, it meets its owner's NYU ID card, and um his library card and
his Jamba Juice card? (That part is really funny.) And eventually
you, um. You figure out that it's a...condom. You know? And that
part is *really* funny.

It's all getting even more uncomfortable. He keeps going.

So then later on in the piece, the owner of the, um, the wallet and
the, um, the *condom*, he um. He meets a girl? And he takes out the
condom. To, uh. You know...

Beat.

But—it's expired! He can't use it!

Don laughs. Karla does not. Don stops laughing. Continues.

But the girl he's with, ah. *She* has a condom. But the condom—*our*
condom (I mean I don't mean *our* condom, I mean—um, you know

the condom) —*that* condom gets...put into a box? And um. (*Gets a little misty-eyed.*) That box becomes like a...memory box? For the condom's owner? And this new girl? For their *relationship*, I mean. So the condom now gets to, ah, *meet* all these love notes and, um, movie stubs and various sweet nothings et cetera that get put into the memory box? To commemorate the relationship? That started, ah, with the... (*Almost wistfully.*) ...expired condom?

A beat. Karla stares at Don. He looks back at her. Then—

KARLA. That doesn't sound funny *at all*.

DON. (*A bit defensively.*) I think it is...

KARLA. My jokes are way better than that.

Side 4 (Don, Marcie, and Karla)

DON. Doesn't Karla, um...practice? Her...stand-up routines? For you? She said that—

MARCIE. We don't spend a lotta time together.

Karla reenters with a Dixie cup of seltzer.

KARLA. Here, Mom.

Karla approaches her mom with the cup. Marcie does nothing.

Um.

Karla holds out the cup to her mom. Marcie does nothing.

MARCIE. I need someone to feed it to me.

KARLA. Oh. Okay.

Karla slowly and awkwardly brings the cup to Marcie's lips.

MARCIE. *(Eyes still closed.)* I want *him* to feed it to me.

KARLA. Oh.

MARCIE. I'm sick of you.

KARLA. Mom.

MARCIE. I'm kidding.

KARLA. Okay.

Karla brings the cup to Marcie's lips again.

MARCIE. I do want *him* to feed it to me, though.

KARLA. *(Stung.)* Oh.

Beat.

Why?

MARCIE. Because you bore me?

Beat.

What? Are you going to *cry*?

KARLA. No...

MARCIE. *(To Don.)* When she was a little girl? *Everything* made her cry. "Time for dinner!" She'd cry. "Take your plate to the sink!" Bawling. "Brush your teeth and put your jammies on!" Hysterical sobs.

Marcie laughs, remembering.

KARLA. Mom...

MARCIE. *(A bark.)* What! *(To Don.)* She has a very *bleak* worldview. Always did. I'd say: "Go to bed" and she'd hear: "Nobody loves you."

KARLA. *(Fighting tears.)* Mom...

MARCIE. Don't argue with me I have cancer.

Karla steps back. Looks away from her mom.

(Mockingly.) "Boo hoo hoo hoo hoo!"

Karla says nothing. Tries very hard not to cry. Don watches her. Then—he gently approaches Karla and takes the Dixie cup out of her hand. She lets him.

REHEARSAL SCHEDULE:

A script read through will take place on Monday, **May 23rd at 7:00**. A detailed rehearsal schedule will be created once the show has been cast and will be sent to the cast prior to the first read through. **Rehearsals will tentatively take place Monday through Friday from 7-10 with some Saturday rehearsals closer to the run of the show.** A tentative schedule can be found on the last page of this packet. When filling out the audition form, please be sure to inform us of all known conflicts so we can accurately create a workable schedule for all those involved with the production. Conflicts will not necessarily prevent you from being cast, but with such a small cast it is important for everyone to be as available as possible through the entire rehearsal process. All actors must be available for tech rehearsals, dress rehearsals, and all performances.

For the roles of Marcie and Geena, please indicate whether it would be more convenient to arrive at rehearsal at the same time as the rest of the cast and to leave early, or if arriving later and leaving at the same time as the rest of the cast works better with your schedule.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR INTEREST IN AUDITIONING. I KNOW THIS WILL BE A BEAUTIFULLY HILARIOUS SHOW TO BE A PART OF AND TO SEE ON STAGE.

- **Mandee Wunderle, director**

May						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
	Auditions 7:00 PM	Auditions 7:00 PM		Call backs (if needed) 7:00 PM		
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
	Read Thru 7pm	K & D 7pm-10pm	No Rehearsal	K & D 7pm-10pm	K & D 7pm-10pm	
29	30	31				
	Memorial Day No Rehearsal	K & D 7pm-10pm M & G 7pm-8:30pm				

June						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2	3	4
			All 7pm-10pm Off book	All 7pm-10pm	All 7pm-10pm	
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
	All 7pm-10pm	All 7pm-10pm	All 7pm-10pm	All 7pm-10pm	All 7pm-10pm	
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
	All 7pm-10pm Costume Parade	All 7pm-10pm	All 7pm-10pm	All 7pm-10pm Costume Run Thru	All 7pm-10pm Costume Run Thru	Tech cue to cue 12pm-4pm Actors @ 1pm
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
	All 7pm-10pm	All 7pm-10pm	All 7pm-10pm	Show	Show	Show
26	27	28	29	30		
Strike						