

Mirth Masters

MIRTH MASTERS

CAST: BOBBY 20+ age appropriate with SIDNEY
 CUSTOMER 20+
 SIDNEY 20+ age appropriate with BOBBY
 VIC 20+

NOTE ON CHARACTERS: These characters can be played by actors of any gender-identity or race. The pronouns used are gender-neutral, but directors should feel free to change the pronouns in the play as they feel is appropriate.

SETTING: The interior of "Maxine's Mansion of Mirth." This is Greater Vancouver's premiere clown warehouse, so... a basic store layout essentially with clown paraphernalia.

AT RISE: BOBBY stands behind a sales counter, dressed as a clown and in full clown makeup. BOBBY is obviously bored and is reading a book, "The Sheltering Sky" by Paul Bowles. The store is empty. A few beats after the lights come up, a clown horn sounds as a door chime, and CUSTOMER enters and walks to the counter.

BOBBY (*flat and deadpan*)

Welcome to Maxine's Mansion of Mirth, the Lower Mainland's Premier Discount Clown Supply Warehouse, I'm Bobby Giggles, how can I help you.

CUSTOMER

Um, hi. I'm um, well, looking for, um... You see I'm thinking about, you know, trying... (*beat*) I'm new to all this (*gestures around*). I mean, I don't mean to--

BOBBY

Its' fine, don't worry about it, everyone is nervous their first time. *(toward off-stage)* Sid? You come out here for a sec?

SIDNEY enters also in full clown regalia

SIDNEY *(flat and deadpan)*

Welcome to Maxine's Mansion of Mirth, the Lower Mainland's--

BOBBY

I already gave them the--

SIDNEY

Oh, right, good.

BOBBY

This is "Sidney Tickles," they can help you find what you need.

CUSTOMER

Great, thanks, um, Billy?

BOBBY

Bobby.

CUSTOMER

Bobby.

BOBBY

Giggles.

CUSTOMER

Giggles... right. *(to Sidney)* So I'm thinking about... *(leads Sidney away toward some merchandise)*. I'm thinking about, you know, Clowning?

CUSTOMERS's voice trails off and CUSTOMER and SIDNEY wander away and have a silent or sotto voce ad-libbed conversation about CUSTOMER's prospective purchases throughout the next portion of the play.

BOBBY's cellphone rings.

BOBBY

Hi ma. *(beat)* We close at 7, so I should be out of here around 7:30, why? *(beat)* Yeah, no plans, was just going to go home and read. *(beat)* Sure, yeah, I can come by. *(more)*

BOBBY (cont.)

You sure you and Dad want to wait that long for-- (beat) Yeah ma, I'm aware mac and cheese is my favorite-- (beat) Ma? Ma! I'll see you around 8. (beat) I'll still be in-- (Bobby gestures at their makeup and outfit) Ok, love you too.

SIDNEY and CUSTOMER walk back over toward the counter while having the following exchange.

CUSTOMER

Thank you. I was really nervous coming in here, and, well, you made me feel way more comfortable about the whole thing. That beginner set up you showed me seems perfect. Thank you.

SIDNEY

You're very welcome. Embracing your inner clown is a big step. Next time you come in you'll feel right at home. And believe me, there's nothing you can say or ask about that is going to shock either of us. I mean, look around. (to Bobby) We still have the "Mirth-Master Starter Kit 5000" in stock?

BOBBY

Think so, lemme check.

BOBBY exits

SIDNEY

Oh, we should talk balloon animals.

CUSTOMER

Oh, that seems... advanced?

SIDNEY

It's actually clowning 101, and it's not as hard as you think. The Mirth-Master kit has everything you need to get started, but next time you come in we can show you some more advanced techniques. We also have a great selection of books and DVDs. YouTube is also a great resource.

BOBBY enters

CUSTOMER

Yeah, ok, great. This is so much more than just orange wigs and big shoes!

BOBBY

We've got it in stock. (*CUSTOMER hands Bobby a credit card, and BOBBY completes the sale and hands back the card*) Ok, you are all set; just drive your car around back, and Prickly Pete will help you load the kit into your car.

CUSTOMER

Ok. Well, thank you. Both.

BOBBY

Anytime.

SIDNEY

Take care.

CUSTOMER exits

BOBBY

We've got four more "5000" set-ups left in stock, just so you know. (*beat*) You give them the balloon pitch?

SIDNEY

Product of the week.

BOBBY

Product of the week.

After a shy pause, BOBBY goes back to reading their book.

SIDNEY

What'cha reading?

BOBBY

Oh, just some book. It's called "The Sheltering Sky".

SIDNEY

Is it new?

BOBBY

Well, it's new to me, but no, it was written in 1949.

SIDNEY

Ah. What's it about?

BOBBY

It takes place right after the end of World War II and it's about this married couple from New York, socialites, who have kind of drifted apart after ten years of marriage and decide to go to North Africa to try and, I don't know, I guess use the adventure to find themselves and their marriage.

SIDNEY

Does it work?

BOBBY

I don't know; I'm only three-quarters of the way through. But, I don't think so. I have this feeling it's not going to end well.

SIDNEY

That's sad. But romantic, you know? And real. No matter how it ends. I love stories that don't have Hollywood endings. Life's not like that.

BOBBY

Yeah. I know. It's hard, you know, finding someone who, gets you... Hey, did you ever read--

BOBBY is interrupted by the clown-horn as door chime. VIC enters wearing clown-like clothing, but no makeup

BOBBY (*still looking at SIDNEY*)

Welcome to Maxine's Mansion-- (*looks over at Vic*) Oh, hey Vic, Thursday already?

VIC

Yep. Time for the weekly re-up. Were you guys able to get ahold of any of the more exotic stuff? The imports?

SIDNEY

Yep, most of it. The oversized clogs from Holland came in, as well the French can-can stuff, the Kabuki makeup got here on Tuesday, along with most of the masks.

VIC

The Russian Babushka outfits?

SIDNEY

Nope, those are stuck in customs. Oh, hey Bobby?

BOBBY

Yeah?

SIDNEY

You got the thing?

BOBBY

The? OH! Right, yeah. (*Bobby reaches under the counter and tosses a small clown horn with a squeeze ball on the end to Vic*) Here, classic Slovakian.

SIDNEY

Slovenian.

BOBBY

Slovenian.

SIDNEY walks away to straighten shelves or do some other business

VIC

Wow, so cool! (*honks the horn*) Thanks Bobby! Oh, hey that the new Mirth-Master?

BOBBY

Yep, the 5000.

VIC

Cool. Where's the...? OH! I see it now. So, Sid ask you out yet?

BOBBY

WHAT?

SIDNEY looks over at this exclamation, BOBBY tries to play it off all nonchalant. SIDNEY goes back to what they were doing

VIC

Oh man, you're a sweet kid, Giggles, you really are, but you are numb-er than a box a rocks when it comes to the heart.

BOBBY

Sid? And me? Come on. I mean, look. (*gestures at Sid and gets lost in it*) They're sexy as-- I mean, you know, look. Sid and me?

VIC

Sid's sweet on you kid. Believe that. And don't sell yourself short there Giggles. You ain't half bad. Not my type, but not half bad.

BOBBY

Not your type?

VIC

Not unless you're all inked up under that outfit and secretly a member of an outlaw biker gang? *(beat)* Didn't think so. Not my type.

SIDNEY walks back over to the counter.

BOBBY *(to VIC)*

Ok, I think you're all set.

VIC

On the account, yeah Bobby? Oh, Giggles, you got a main squeeze yet. *(BOBBY gives VIC the stare of death)* Ok, see you next week. Oh, and just a heads-up, I'm gonna need a bunch of high-end squirting flowers in a few weeks.

BOBBY, having a hard time finding their voice, just nods

SIDNEY

Got it. No problem.

VIC

Prickly working today?

SIDNEY

Yeah, Pete's back there and has your stuff ready to load up.

VIC

Good. Gotta ask 'em how the custom chop on that '87 Harley came out.

VIC winks at BOBBY and exits, BOBBY just nods.

SIDNEY

Ok, I'll be in the back doing the restock if you need me. *(Bobby nods)* You ok, Bobby? *(Bobby nods)*. Ok. Well, I'll just be... ok.

SIDNEY exits, BOBBY stares at where SIDNEY was for a second, then goes back to their book. After a beat or two, SIDNEY re-enters.

SIDNEY

Hey Bobby?

BOBBY (*finding his voice*)

Yeah?

SIDNEY

In your book, the married couple, do you think they were ever really in love, or were they just a product of their time.

BOBBY

What do you mean?

SIDNEY

You know, you said they were socialites, so I assume they were from similar families, and similar social circles, and it's the 1930s, and, well, did they just get married because that's what you did, or did they ever really love each other? Was there anything there to "rediscover" in North Africa?

BOBBY

Well, they really don't seem to have all that much in common, you're right.

SIDNEY

I'd like to read it, after you're done. If that's ok?

BOBBY

Sure.

SIDNEY turns to exit, but stops as BOBBY speaks.

BOBBY

Hey Sid?

SIDNEY

Yeah?

BOBBY

You, um, wanna get coffee or something after work sometime? We could talk about the book, or books, or... stuff.

SIDNEY

What about tonight?

BOBBY

What? Oh, I, uh, well I promised my parents I'd swing by for dinner tonight.

SIDNEY

Oh, ok.

SIDNEY starts to exit but stops and turns when BOBBY speaks.

BOBBY

Would you like to come?

SIDNEY

What are they having?

BOBBY (*sheepishly*)

Uh, macaroni and cheese. Homemade tho, my Mom's secret recipe.

SIDNEY

Macaroni and cheese is my all-time favorite.

SIDNEY smiles at BOBBY for a second, then turns and exits. BOBBY watches SIDNEY leave, smiles, and goes back to their book.

END OF PLAY