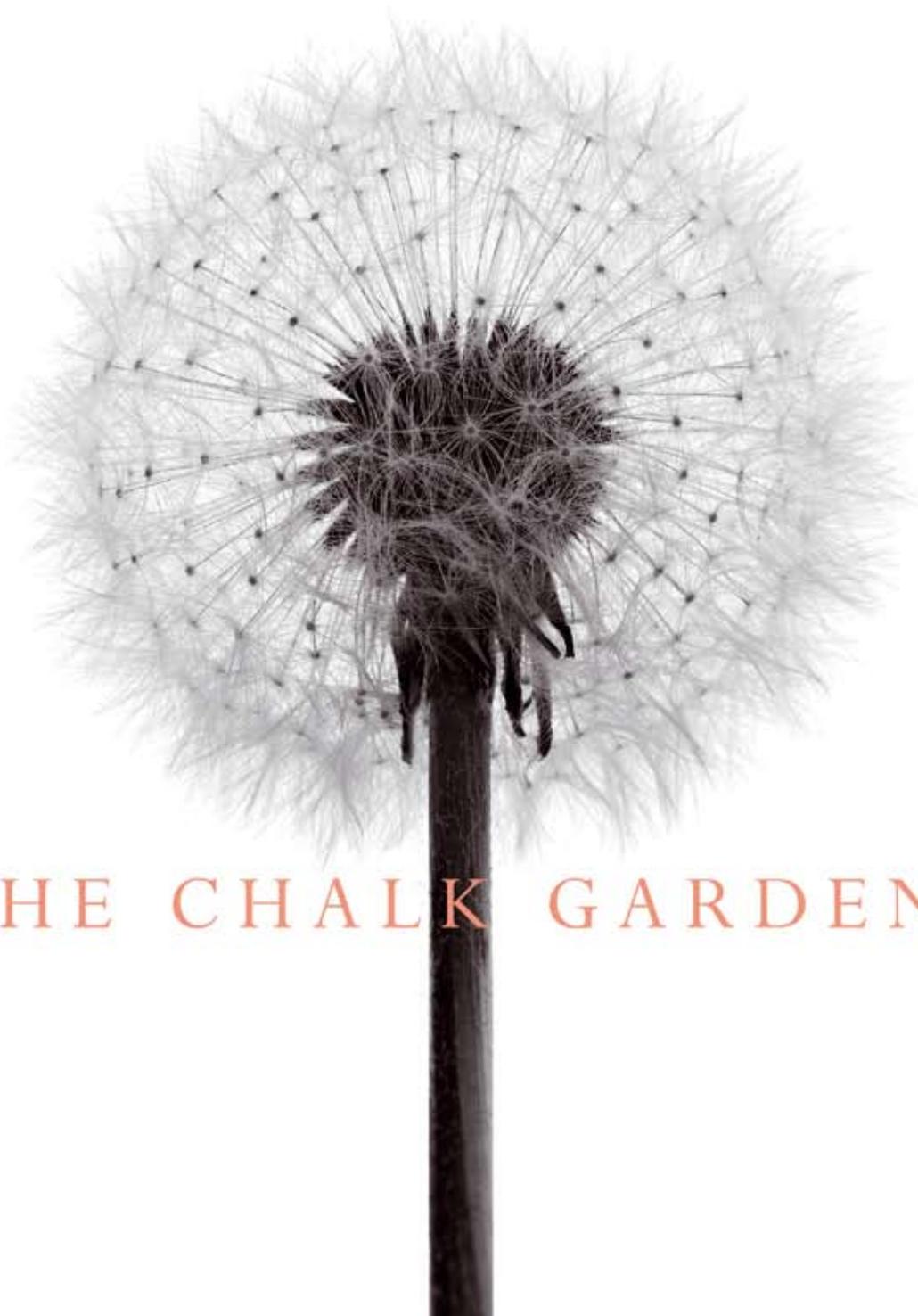


DOMMAR[®]

Study Guide for



THE CHALK GARDEN

By Enid Bagnold

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Creative Team

Director: Michael Grandage

Michael is Artistic Director of the Donmar Warehouse. For the Donmar:

Othello, John Gabriel Borkman, Don Juan in Soho, Frost/Nixon (also West End & Broadway), The Cut (also UK tour), The Wild Duck (Critics' Circle Award for Best Director), Grand Hotel (Olivier Award for Outstanding Musical Production & Evening Standard Award for Best Director), Pirandello's Henry IV (also UK tour), After Miss Julie, Caligula (Olivier Award for Best Director), The Vortex, Privates on Parade, Merrily We Roll Along (Olivier Award for Best Musical & Critics' Circle Award for Best Director), Passion Play (Critics' Circle & Evening Standard Awards for Best Director), Good.

Designer: Peter McKintosh

For the Donmar: John Gabriel Borkman The Cryptogram, Boston Marriage (also New Ambassadors). **Other theatre includes:** for the West End: The Dumb Waiter, The 39 Steps, Summer and Smoke, Donkeys' Years, The Home Place, The Birthday Party, Ying Tong, A Woman of No Importance; for the RSC: King John, Brand, The Merry Wives of Windsor, Pericles, Alice in Wonderland and Through the Looking Glass; for the NT: Honk!, Widowers' Houses. Other theatre work includes: Romance (Almeida), The Home Place (Gate Dublin), Honk! (UK tour, Boston, Chicago, Tokyo and Singapore), The Scarlet Letter, Just So, Pal Joey (Chichester), Hilda (Hampstead), The Rivals (Bristol old Vic), The Wizard of Oz (Birmingham Rep).

Lighting Designer: Paule Constable

For the Donmar: The Man Who Had All the Luck, Othello, Absurdia, The Cut, Little Foxes, Proof, Bondagers.

Other theatre includes: Received the 2006 Olivier Award for Best Lighting Design for Don Carlos, 2005 Olivier Award for Best Lighting for His Dark Materials, 1999 LA Critics' Award for Amadeus and had further nominations for The Street of Crocodiles (Complicité), Amadeus, Uncle Vanya (RSC) and Play Without Words (NT).

Composer and Sound Designer: Adam Cork

For the Donmar: Othello, Frost/ Nixon (also Gielgud & Broadway - 2007 Drama Desk Award nomination), John Gabriel Borkman, Don Juan in Soho, Caligula, Henry IV, The Wild Duck, The Cut.

Other theatre includes: Suddenly Last Summer - Olivier Award nomination for Best Sound Design (Albery), Don Carlos (Gielgud), The Glass Menagerie (Apollo), Speaking Like Magpies, The Tempest (RSC), The Late Henry Moss, Tom and Viv (Almeida).

Enid Bagnold: life as art

'I was born with the first motor cars, and I never thought I should die. Death is so unnatural.'

Enid Bagnold¹

LAUREL: I should have thought as one got older one found death more natural.

MRS ST MAUGHAM: Natural! It's as though the gods went rook-shooting when one was walking confident in the park of the world! And there are pangs and shots, and one may be for me! Natural!

THE CHALK GARDEN, Act I.

Enid Bagnold's life and writing is inextricably entwined. Her experiences, her philosophies, the people she met, the places she lived, all influenced - and featured in - her novels and her plays. The following timeline illustrates this:²

1889. Born in Rochester, Kent. Spent time in Jamaica as a child. Is educated in both England and Switzerland.

1907. Makes her 'debut' in pre-war society as a young lady waiting for marriage. Persuades her parents to let her take art classes at Walter Sickett's School of Art including the more risqué 'life' classes. Her first poems are also published this year.

1912. Moves into a Chelsea flat with two friends, continues to paint. Lives the bohemian lifestyle she craves and works as a journalist on the papers *Hearth and Home* and *Modern Society*.

1914. The First World War breaks out. Enid becomes a nurse and keeps a diary of her experiences.

1918. This diary becomes her first book, *Diary Without Dates*. The book takes such a critical stance on hospital life and routine that the military authorities dismiss Enid.

1919. Enid's life changes drastically when she meets Sir Roderick Jones, Head of Reuters.

1920. Enid marries Roderick. Reluctantly takes on the social responsibilities of being Lady Jones whilst continuing to write under her maiden name of Enid Bagnold. Her second book, *The Happy Foreigner* – based on her time in France as an ambulance driver immediately after the Armistice – is published.

1921. Her first child, Laurian, is born.

1923. Her second child, Timothy is born. Shortly afterwards, her third book, *Serena Blandish* is published, with her friend Catherine d'Erlanger barely disguised as the Countess Flor di Folio.

1924. Roderick and Enid buy North End House in Rottingdean. The house and garden will later become the inspiration for the setting of THE CHALK GARDEN.

1926. Her third child, Richard is born.

1930. Dominic, her fourth and last child is born.

1935. Her book, *National Velvet* is published. Enid bases the character of Velvet on herself as a child.

1938. *The Squire* is published. The novel's central female character, Caroline, is largely inspired by Enid's friend, the beautiful and aristocratic Cynthia Asquith. It becomes the last book she will write for 10 years.

1939. The outbreak of World War Two.

1941. Roderick steps down as Head of Reuters. Enid's play, *Lottie Dundass* premieres in Santa Barbara, California. Edith chooses the name for her play from the inscription on a gravestone in Ovingdean Churchyard.

1942. Charles Cochran acquires the English rights to the play, telling Enid 'You have written another "Juliet" – a young girl of twenty with thirty years of acting experience needed.' *Lottie Dundass* opens at the Theatre Royal, Brighton, with Ann Todd playing Lottie.

1943. The production transfers to the Vaudeville Theatre, London, with Sybil Thorndyke joining the cast as Lottie's mother.

1944. Paramount releases its film of *National Velvet*, with the young Elizabeth Taylor playing Velvet. It becomes an instant hit.

1946. Writes another play, *Poor Judas*, which is set on the eve of war. It is her most serious work to date, written after living through World War Two.

1950. Publishes her first novel since 1938, *Loved and Envied*. Once again Enid draws on her own life, this time on her friend Diana Cooper, as inspiration for her work. The novel is an instant commercial success.

1952. Despite her renewed success as a novelist, Enid is still drawn to the stage, with a strong desire to hear her words being spoken by the great actors of her day. Her next play *Gertie*, only runs for four days in New York. The play is based on an incident where two of her friends staying at Rottingdean read and admire a novel written by the young Laurian, Enid's daughter. The friends' admiration and the prospect of early fame for her daughter inspire Enid.

1953. Enid writes what will become her most well-known play, THE CHALK GARDEN. The play is inspired by many aspects of her life – her home at North End, her granddaughter and the nanny – both of whom lived with her for a while.

1955. THE CHALK GARDEN opens at the Barrymore Theater, New York, to rapturous acclaim.

1956. THE CHALK GARDEN opens in Birmingham and moves to Brighton prior to its West End opening at the Theatre Royal Haymarket with Edith Evans and Peggy Ashcroft.

1960. Enid's next play, *The Last Joke*, based on her life-long friend, the Romanian Prince Antoine Bibesco, opens to disastrous reviews. Enid spends her time nursing Roderick.

1962. Roderick dies. THE CHALK GARDEN is released as a film with Deborah Kerr and Hayley Mills.

1965. *The Chinese Prime Minister* opens in London after premiering in Toronto two years earlier. The play's central idea is that new experiences can and must still happen in old age.

1968. Enid's final play, *Call Me Jacky* runs for two weeks at the Oxford Playhouse. She describes it as being about 'a lady who seems behind the times but is in front of them.'

1969. Enid publishes her autobiography

1975. *Call Me Jacky* is re-invented as *A Matter of Gravity*. It opens in Philadelphia starring Katherine Hepburn. Enid, aged 85, bravely makes the transatlantic flight to see it.

1976. Enid is made a CBE in the New Year's Honours list.

1981. Enid dies aged 91.



THE CHALK GARDEN: an introduction to the setting, cast and characters

This is a very autobiographical play. Enid Bagnold is onstage as Mrs St Maugham and her house is the inspiration for the setting.

Michael Grandage, Artistic Director, Donmar

In 1952, the year prior to Enid writing THE CHALK GARDEN, there were changes in the post-war Bagnold household. Enid's husband had retired and was spending more time at the family home in Rottingdean, and her son, wounded in the war, came to live there with his wife and young daughter. Enid advertised for a nanny for her young granddaughter. The events which followed captured Enid's imagination and inspired her to write THE CHALK GARDEN:

'The shoal of extraordinary applicants immediately provided inspiration. It seemed as if all the originals and castaways of Hove and Brighton came out of their single rooms to present themselves at her door... One of them, a woman 'with a high roman nose and white hair' was given the job. Intrigued, Enid watched this woman living in a sort of inner silence into which she tried to enfold the child, never entering family conversation if she could help it. Then, one day, a judge friend came to lunch. Bagnold noticed that the nanny, sitting at a separate table with the child, 'showed a strange, almost trembling interest' in the guest. 'She not only turned round, she came right around as a ship turns and you see its bowsprit.' The fuse had been lit. What, Bagnold wondered, had caused such an intense reaction.'

Anne Sebba, Enid Bagnold's biographer³

The Setting

The entire onstage action takes place in the sitting room of Mrs St Maugham's manor house in Sussex, demanding 'a full and glorious set'⁴ to locate the piece. The year is 1956. Bagnold offers a detailed description of the setting in her stage directions:

Time: The present

Place: A room in one of those Manor Houses which border the Village Green in a village in Sussex. The soil is lime and chalk. The village is by the sea.

The Scene: From one high window in the room preferably downstage Left, the personages on the stage can see, when standing up, the life that goes on, on the Village Green.

Back stage there is a wide French window, standing open, that gives onto the garden. On stage Left is a door leading to the main part of the house. A corridor (much grander than the room seen in the Set) leads presumably to the front door, to dust-sheeted entertaining rooms, and to the rooms upstairs. Farther upstage Left is a baize door leading to MAITLAND's pantry.

A small door opens downstage Right to show a narrow flight of stairs leading to Pinkbell's bed room. If another door to the garden would be useful it can be placed upstage right.

Beyond the open French window a bosky, be-lillied garden runs slightly uphill. A June gale blows. The room has a look of vigour and culture. The furniture is partly inherited, partly bought in MRS ST MAUGHAM'S young days. It is probably Regency but the owner of this house does not tie herself to anything. She has lived through many moods, and is a jackdaw for the Curious and Strange. The only object necessarily described is her worktable backstage, running the length of the windows. It is a rough table, rather high and long. Under it lie a disorder of baskets, garden trugs, a saw, two long-handled grass-cutters, a tin of Abol, a sack of John Innes potting soil, a log basket full of raffia, and rubber clogs etc. On top of the table are strewn scissors, string, gardening books, flower catalogues, gardening gloves, a small watering can for vases in the room, a trowel, etc.

Director Michael Grandage and designer Peter McKintosh wanted to find inventive ways to make the setting for the Donmar's production of THE CHALK GARDEN three dimensional and interesting. To achieve this, they decided to focus on the space outside: the garden and the world beyond – a bleak wasteland. The design began as something domestic and cosy, but by putting the ceiling right up and making it all glass, they began to get the desired effect of focussing on the world beyond the setting.

The creative team have based the setting on the eccentric world of Enid Bagnold's garden room in her own home, North End House in the village of Rottingdean in East Sussex, described by her biographer as 'a 'strange and cluttered place.'⁵ In the original production of THE CHALK GARDEN in New York in 1955, Enid had suggested Cecil Beaton as the designer, hoping to see her own garden-room on stage, and was delighted at the way he reproduced 'the work-table, garden syringes, saw, shears, hats, baskets, catalogues, everything.'⁶

Observation point

When you take your seat for the Donmar's production of THE CHALK GARDEN, spend some time taking in the details of the set design.

How has designer Peter McKintosh recreated the play's setting for the Donmar stage?

What does the interior tell you about the person who inhabits this room?

Cast, in order of appearance, and characters



Miss Madrigal PENELOPE WILTON

Miss Madrigal is already on stage as the audience arrive. She is here to be interviewed for the post of companion to **Mrs St Maugham's** granddaughter, **Laurel**.

In the stage directions, there is an exacting description of **Miss Madrigal** as *an enigmatical, contained woman, neat and non-committal in dress, with fine eyes and a high aquiline look. She has the still look of an eagle on a rock.* She is an 'unusual' character, whom **Maitland** believes will be offered the post of companion, because 'Madam loves the Unusual!'

As Act II opens, two months later, **Laurel** refers to **Miss Madrigal** as 'the Boss', a reference to the order, however precarious, she has bought to the household - and the garden.

Laurel is determined in her efforts to play detective and piece together **Miss Madrigal's** past:

LAUREL (*To Maitland*) Look how she came to us – with nothing. A lady from a shipwreck. Her brush is new and her dresses. No box of shells by *her* bed – no mirror backed with velvet. Oh – she's cut off her golden past like a fish's tail.'

Her quest leads her to believe that **Miss Madrigal** 'knows about life' and this knowledge is 'intense' and 'dreadful', something 'cut in stone over her mind.'



Little Lady STEPH BRAMWELL

She is a little, bird-like woman....comes in rapidly, like a bird over a lawn

The Little lady is another applicant for the post of companion.



Maitland JAMIE GLOVER

3RD LADY Are you the butler?

MAITLAND I am the manservant.

3RD LADY A world of difference!

Maitland's role in the household is all encompassing – and frantic. As a manservant he doesn't hold the authority and status of butler, yet he is expected to carry out the same duties – and more:

MAITLAND I am everything! I'm the kingpin and the pivot and the manservant and the maidservant and the go-between – (*he turns on Laurel*) – and the fire extinguisher.

The house never settles, and so there is a constant stream of tasks for **Maitland** to attend to amidst the chaos.



Third Lady Applicant LINDA BROUGHTON

The 3rd Lady Applicant, whose beauty is decayed, sails in by the front door.

As her name implies, she is the third candidate to be interviewed for the post of companion.



Laurel FELICITY JONES

The girl Laurel comes in from upstairs. She is sixteen, dressed in a summer dress, and wears a most unsuitable amount of jewellery. She shuts the door behind her and surveys the others with an unruffled, contemplative stare.

Laurel is **Mrs St Maugham's** granddaughter. She has been living with her grandmother since her own mother's second marriage. She introduces herself to the applicants by saying that she sets fire to things, and is not allowed alone, except in the garden. She also informs them that her father shot himself when she was twelve, and that she was in the room at the time. It is up to us, as the audience, to gauge what is true and what is false in what Laurel says.

At the opening of Act II, **Maitland** observes how **Miss Madrigal** has 'changed' **Laurel**. When confiding in the **Judge**, **Miss Madrigal** says that when she met Laurel, with her 'cobwebs' and 'fantasies', she thought she had met her younger self again.



Mrs St Maugham MARGARET TYZACK

Mrs St Maugham, wearing her hat and gardening gloves, appears outside the window up C. She is an old, overpowering, once beautiful, ex-hostess of London Society.

Mrs St Maugham appears a robust and overbearing character, both physically and emotionally. When asked to comment on her state of health, **Maitland** responds, 'She has the health of – (*grasping for the unexplainable in Mrs St Maugham's health*) something in Nature.' **Laurel** advises **Miss Madrigal** that if she wants to get on with her grandmother, she must 'admire her eccentricity.'



Nurse LINDA BROUGHTON

NURSE (*Stiff; reproachful*) We've been ringing, Mrs St. Maugham.

MRS ST MAUGHAM I heard nothing.

NURSE (*Moving to the table up C, acidly*) Our breakfast tray was late again.

MRS ST MAUGHAM One can't have everything.

NURSE Mr Pinkbell says one should have a great deal more.

The Nurse is employed to care for Pinkbell, **Mrs St Maugham's** former butler who has suffered a stroke. She is Pinkbell's 'voice' in the play.

Observation point

Although Pinkbell never appears, what influence does he hold over the household? What impact does his behaviour have on the other characters? How does this alter as the play progresses?



Olivia SUZANNE BURDEN

Olivia is **Mrs St Maugham's** daughter, and **Laurel's** mother. **Maitland** describes her as 'A shy lady. A nice one.' **Olivia's** objective in the play is to reclaim her daughter from her mother.



The Judge CLIFFORD ROSE

The Judge is the final character to be introduced to us. He is an old friend of **Mrs St Maugham's** who is invited to lunch, appearing in Acts II and III.

The Garden

The **garden** is a potent presence in the play, so much so, that it deserves a place here under the character headings.

- **Laurel** tells the applicants in the opening scene that her grandmother is 'a great gardener, but nothing grows for her.'
- When **Mrs St Maugham** makes her first entrance it is from **the garden**, where she has been working.
- **Laurel** is not allowed to be left alone 'except in the garden.'
- **Mrs St Maugham** tells **Miss Madrigal** that Pinkbell is 'so good with the garden', directing it from his window.
- When her lilies blow over in the wind, **Mrs St Maugham** calls it 'this mule of a garden.' Re-entering with a sheaf of broken stemmed lilies later on, she exclaims 'Oh – when things are killed in my garden it upsets me.'
- **Mrs St Maugham** bullies **Miss Madrigal** out to see **the garden**, instructing **Laurel** to 'listen' to **Miss Madrigal** while she's in **the garden** with her, because she 'knows her subject' and wants **Miss Madrigal's** opinion on it. When **Miss Madrigal** makes her entrance back in from **the garden** it is '*on a high wave of indignation*' at the state of it. **The garden** then becomes the subject for the climactic close of Act I.
- By Act II **Miss Madrigal** is challenging Pinkbell's authority over **the garden**, calling him an 'amateur gardener'. When this causes a confrontation between **Miss Madrigal** and **Mrs St Maugham**, **Laurel** pleads with her grandmother to be reconciled with the governess by promising her **the garden** if she stays.
- **Mrs St Maugham** introduces **Miss Madrigal** to the **Judge** as 'My right hand. My green hand. The mistress of my garden.'

The symbolism of **the garden** is considered in Section 4.

 **Observation point**

When you see the Donmar's production of THE CHALK GARDEN, try and identify the 'agenda,' of each character in each scene. How do they communicate this in performance?

'People of that class are not privy to self-doubt; the play works best when each character plays their own agenda.'

Penelope Wilton (Madrigal) during rehearsals for the CHALK GARDEN

'Each character is fighting for their agenda – it stops them being polite.'

Abbey Wright, Assistant Director on THE CHALK GARDEN



THE CHALK GARDEN: genre, style and language

An 'artificial comedy'

THE CHALK GARDEN was universally acclaimed by the critics when it opened at the Haymarket Theatre, London on 11th April, 1956. Kenneth Tynan, reviewing the production for *The Observer*, claimed that 'The West End theatre justified its existence' by staging the play, alluding to the usual style of West End production which he believed preserved 'a formal, patrician acting style for which the modern drama has no use.' He suggested that THE CHALK GARDEN 'may well be the finest artificial comedy to have flowed from an English (as opposed to Irish) pen since the death of Congreve.' By using the term 'artificial comedy', Tynan was probably referring to the contrived nature of the dialogue from which the comedy springs. A more widely used term would be 'comedy of manners', a style of writing for which William Congreve (1670 – 1729) was famed. Wit and detachment are at the core of comedies of manners, as they are in THE CHALK GARDEN.

The 'garden-trug' play v the kitchen sink drama

Although categorised by Tynan as a 'modern drama' it could be said that THE CHALK GARDEN was not modern enough for the social and cultural 'sea-change' happening in the British theatre at this time. THE CHALK GARDEN was staged in London the same year as John Osborne's *Look Back in Anger*. Through its central character, Jimmy Porter, this play represented a new intellectualism that questioned the very heart and existence of the old establishment: both Enid's class and generation were vilified in the play. Osborne came to epitomise a new wave of writers made up of young, self-taught intellectuals who attracted new, like-minded audiences for what became termed 'kitchen sink drama.' Subsequently, any new writing that did not confirm to this new genre was maligned. As the newly appointed theatre critic for *The Observer* in 1964, John Osborne's then wife, Penelope Gilliatt, wrote a series of articles eschewing plays such as THE CHALK GARDEN, which she termed, 'the garden-trug kind of play', and challenged what many saw as the monopoly of the monied classes over British theatre, and in particular West End theatre. In one article she proclaimed that 'the reason why the protagonists of Enid Bagnold's plays are not declared to be grim and mandarin bags' was because of 'the unflattering calculation that the audience is full of people with characters like hers, married to men who have put the theatre tickets against tax and who would like to hang their business symbol, worked in diamonds, around someone else's neck.'⁷

As a playwright, it could be said Enid's profile was undermined by her privileged status and the shifting social, cultural and political attitudes of the time. Enid was aware that there were shifts occurring in post-war Britain, and this is evident in THE CHALK GARDEN. The dying offstage butler, Pinkbell, can be seen as a metaphor for these changes; Olivia says to her mother 'You had for me the standards of another age! The standards of ...Pinkbell; when Laurel calls the Judge 'old-fashioned', he responds 'You will be old-fashioned one day. It's more shocking than getting old.'

Language, structure and meaning

Enid Bagnold had the most extraordinary ability to write what she termed herself as 'strange and intricate' language. There is no better introduction to her style of playwriting than reading her work. Printed below is a quintessential example of 'Bagnoldesque' dialogue. Read the extract and savour the content and structure of the language before working through this section of the Study Guide.

LAUREL *rushes in up R and stands by the door, looking out*

MRS ST MAUGHAM Laurel!

LAUREL *(without turning)* One moment, Grandloo. One moment, darling – I'm watching the bonfire – I must see it die. *(She moves to L of Mrs St Maugham)* I put salt on it to turn the flame blue. *Blocks* of it.

MRS ST MAUGHAM *(taking Laurel's hand)* Who told you to put salt on it?

LAUREL The old bastard – Mr Pinkbell.

MRS ST MAUGHAM Not now, my darling. Superlatives only between ourselves.

LAUREL *(looking at the chairs L)* Where are the others?

MRS ST MAUGHAM *This* is Miss Madrigal.

LAUREL *(eager)* Have you settled everything? *(She turns to Madrigal)* Do you understand all about me?

MADRIGAL Not yet.

LAUREL Oh, can't we have the interview together? Shall I get the book that explains me?

MRS ST MAUGHAM Not so fast. Externalize! Externalize, my darling! She has quaint self-delusions. You mustn't mind them *(she sips her drink and puts the glass on the table L of her chair.)* –

(MAITLAND enters up R with his jacket over his arm. He gives Laurel a black look and exits to the pantry)

LAUREL But you mustn't cross them. *(She looks over her shoulder at the departing Maitland)*

MADRIGAL Are you an only child?

LAUREL I am Delilah's daughter.

MRS ST MAUGHAM Laurel has a poltergeist! Stones fall in the bedrooms, and words leap and change colour in her mouth like fishes! I, too, at her age...

LAUREL Wit often skips a generation.

MRS ST MAUGHAM She is my parchment sheet on which I write. I hope she will remember my life and times. There seems no-one else to do it.

LAUREL *I* am your little immortality!

MRS ST MAUGHAM *(to herself; with reality)* Those who eat too big a meal of life – get no monument. *(She holds Laurel at arm's length L of her chair)* You see how light my finger lies upon her. The child's a flower. She grows at liberty!

MADRIGAL Weeds grow as easily.

MRS ST MAUGHAM As I was saying –

LAUREL (*moving above the couch*) – before the interruption.

MRS ST MAUGHAM Freedom is Captain here! Calm is its Lieutenant!

(*The NURSE rushes in down R, leaving the door open*)

NURSE The Madonna lilies have blown over!

MRS ST MAUGHAM (*rising*) Oh – great heavens – (*she moves up C*) This mule of a garden!
Maitland (*She turns to the Nurse*) He was to order the bamboos and he forgot them.. Are they all down?

NURSE (*with triumph*) All. And not for want of warnings!

(*The Nurse exits down R, closing the door behind her*)

MRS ST MAUGHAM Oh, my lilies! My lilies! One waits a year for them...

(*MRS ST MAUGHAM exits hurriedly up C*)



Discussion Point

In his review for the London premiere of THE CHALK GARDEN in 1956, Kenneth Tynan talks of the characters as 'building ornamental bridges of metaphor' and 'tiptoeing across frail causeways of simile.' Can you identify the metaphors and similes used in the extract printed above?

'One does not forget the plums in one's speeches.'

Madrigal, THE CHALK GARDEN, Act II

The merits of THE CHALK GARDEN were first recognised by the producer Irene Selznick, who staged the play's premiere in America. Irene worked at length with Enid on clarifying the text of THE CHALK GARDEN, what we would term today as 'workshopping' the text, although in this instance Irene and Enid worked alone, without actors. Enid had the habit of littering her scripts with words that she adored, yet were superfluous to the flow of the action. Irene disciplined Enid out of this self-indulgence with words by forcing her to think about what she was trying to say and then say it in a way the audience understood. Irene told her she had to make every single line work if she was to have a successful play. Her biographer, Anne Sebba, describes how Enid had basketfuls of these bon mots, i.e. good words, which she called her 'plums' and of which she was very proud. She would string these words up on a washing-line across the room. Irene took it upon herself to remove some of these plums from the diet, as they were making many of the play's speeches 'indigestible'.⁸

‘My mother uses words in her special fashion. For a phrase – she would make capital of anything.’

Olivia on Mrs St Maugham, THE CHALK GARDEN, ACT III.

In her biography, Enid describes the process of working on the script with Irene:

As I write forwards I have flashes backwards, afterthoughts and enrichers, on what’s written two pages behind. Irene marked in red pencil the misplaced passages. These had to be unhooked and put where they belonged. Hooks, in plays, are little aids that turn the corner of thought. They won’t serve twice. How to undo them? How to make new ones? A desperate difficulty. I had no reserve of hooks⁹

Irene didn’t write one word of Enid’s play, she just ‘pushed and poked’ Enid into making changes. It was Irene who insisted that there had to be a scene between the Judge and Miss Madrigal in Act Three; she wanted the scene to be the heart of the play.¹⁰

 **Observation point**

Encouraging Enid to write the scene between Madrigal and the Judge in Act Three, Irene argued that ‘there’ll be nobody in the audience that won’t want it.’¹¹ When you see the Donmar’s production of THE CHALK GARDEN, to what extent do you support Irene’s view?



Enid was very clear about her intentions for THE CHALK GARDEN, as she was for all of her plays. To get the best out of them, she believed the 'complications' had to be understood and 'the words heard':

*'The intended 'fun' depends on a sly awareness on two levels, the matter of fact, and what floats underneath: on juxtapositions of meaning, a polite, small battle, an implied watchfulness between the characters. They know more than they say.'*¹²

'When you get language that well acted, it inhabits the play'

Michael Grandage offering notes to the actors during rehearsal

Enid Bagnold said that the way to direct her play was:

*To use the strange and intricate language as though it was the everyday language of actors. Never to seem as though one was saying something extraordinary. Emphasis ruins it. The language has to be tipped out as though one were saying 'please fetch the coal.' This language (my language) is their native air.*¹³



In 1959, writing in the *Turlane Drama Review*, Professor Gerald Weales commented that Bagnold's dialogue could be compared with Chekhov's:

The characters speak first to themselves and out of themselves. If occasionally they communicate, if their speeches sometimes land on a listening ear, the effect is a lucky accident.¹⁴

Symbolism and allegory

Enid consistently denied that she consciously imbued THE CHALK GARDEN with any symbolism or allegory:

'The equation of The Chalk Garden with dryness of the heart, which has been made by many critics did not occur to me while engaged on the play. I see now that it is a reasonable interpretation but I was not consciously working out a parallel as I wrote. I had simply conceived Mrs St Maugham as making a muddle of everything, her garden and her grand-daughter.'

Enid Bagnold¹⁵

In the play, it is Miss Madrigal who makes the connection with the allegorical significance of the garden during the final act of the play, when she challenges Mrs St Maugham to return Laurel to her mother:

MRS ST MAUGHAM This girl of special soil! Transplant her?

MADRIGAL You have not a green thumb, Mrs St Maugham, with a plant or a girl. This is a house where nothing good can be made of her.

MRS ST MAUGHAM My house!

MADRIGAL Your house. Why, even the garden is demented. By the mercy of God you do not keep an animal.

Enid also denied any significance in the names of her characters. For example, Mrs St Maugham's daughter was originally named Laura, a very similar name to Enid's own daughter, Laurian. Sebba cites an American study of the play which highlights a connection between the name Madrigal and the medieval Latin word, *Matricale*, meaning womb, and the Italian word for feverfew, *Madregal*, a perennial herb known for its fever inducing qualities.¹⁶

Observation point

When working on the play, Irene wanted Enid to identify a main theme and 'pull a straight thread'¹⁷ in the writing to accentuate this. When you see THE CHALK GARDEN in performance, what do you see as the production's main theme, and how is this communicated in performance?

A discussion with Jamie Glover (Maitland), Felicity Jones (Laurel) and Margaret Tyzack (Mrs St Maugham)

What clues in the text have been most useful to you in creating your character?

Jamie: I have to say, I don't think I've ever gone into a rehearsal process knowing so little about my character, which is not to say it's not there, but I couldn't see him, and I'm still trying to find Maitland. He's really illusive. He's very highly strung - I think I found the reference to Luminol – the sedative - enlightening, it shows he needs calming. So it's all there in the text, but, as with all the characters – not just Maitland - it's just really illusive, really slippery. I said to Felicity earlier, if it wasn't for Michael being so brilliant, I would really be panicking by now – but I trust him completely. He's there to steer me right. It is a big leap of faith for me, this part; it's really, really unlike anything I've ever done before.

Felicity: It's really difficult reading a play where you go through everything that is said about your character. When Laurel is described as 'outlandish' and 'unhinged', you know that you've got to start at quite an intensity. But it's strange. The characters – you think you know them – they all seem, apart from Maitland, weirdly, to be of certain stereotypes. The great thing about the play is that they are not. Ultimately they are like real people rammed full of idiosyncrasies and madness and hypocrisy, which you find out the more and more you do it. You can't under-estimate them at any point.

Can I ask you about the genre of the play? In his review of the London production, Kenneth Tynan said that the play 'may well be the finest artificial comedy to have flowed from an English (as opposed to an Irish) pen since the death of Congreve'. From your experience of working on the play, what are the components that make up an 'artificial comedy'?

Jamie: I think it's a really interesting expression – to call it that.

Felicity: It's quite an old fashioned term

Jamie: I haven't come across that term before. But I can see what it means in terms of this play.

Felicity: It's quite contrived.

Jamie: There is a sense of it being 'naturalistic' as measured by the norms of the day, and yet it's so precise in terms of its rhythms. The linguistics of it are so precise, it kind of hovers somewhere between surrealism and reality. The more you get to know it, the more you begin to feel that the characters are not quite 'normal'.

Felicity: They are not communicating naturalistically in any way.

Jamie: In THE MAN WHO HAD ALL THE LUCK, a play that the Donmar has just done, its author Arthur Miller describes it as taking place hovering a foot above its setting in Iowa, which is a brilliant description. And that's rather like this play – it hovers above reality somewhere. We see life from a slightly skewed angle, which makes it such an extraordinary play.



In terms of the play being ‘contrived’, as you describe it, Felicity, if you look at the structure of the play, for example the number of entrances and exits made by Maitland, the timing of these are quite precise.

Jamie: Yes, and all the business, such as the laying of the table, and the serving of the lunch – it can’t be out by a second. It’s like dominoes – the whole pack can come down if it’s not correct – and that’s quite terrifying. You also need to place your movements to the language, to where you are in the text. It’s like farce in that respect. Although the play is not a farce, there is a precision and accuracy required, otherwise it rocks – it wobbles. It makes quite rigorous demands on you.

Felicity: You can’t be lazy with anything you are saying or any of the intentions of what you are saying.

Jamie: In some plays you can get away with sitting back and letting the emotional temperature sort of tell the story of your character. But you can’t do that here: you have to be right on the line all the time, otherwise it doesn’t make sense; it doesn’t read.

Felicity: It can only have air where it should, otherwise it deflates.

We have already begun to touch on this next question: how would you describe the style of the play's language, and how has this style impacted on the creation of your production of THE CHALK GARDEN?

Felicity: Well, I suppose it's a two way thing, because part of the comedy comes from the level of artifice of language: it's not the way people communicate in everyday life. There's a level of contrivance in the communication. We're giving the language all of its rhythms which means it can work. Also, we're trying to communicate this to the audiences, so that they don't feel alienated by it. It's sort of a dual thing; it's going with the rhythms but at the same time keeping a level of realism, I guess. Where as it could be played in a hugely melodramatic way.

Jamie: And it wouldn't work like that! It seems to me to be almost like a Tennessee Williams's play. The first play I did of his was THE ROSE TATTOO with Sir Peter Hall, and after about ten days of rehearsal he said 'stop trying to play it like Brando.' Because it is not naturalistic writing - it is poetry. Williams is the greatest poet that the American theatre ever produced, so obey his punctuation, obey his complex rhythms and suddenly the whole thing lifts. And this play has very similar demands. The similarities extend further than that I think: in Tennessee Williams you get the real feel of the heat in the jungle; dripping, sexy. Here, it's the English equivalent - which is the chalk garden, which is absolutely another character; it is arid. And if you obey her (Bagnold's) rhythms and language it takes you, the writing takes you, and you start to be in control of it.

Felicity: That's so true. I found that today in rehearsals. To play the characters takes enormous energy, and if there is anything less, it just doesn't work. It's exhausting, but in another way exhilarating when you're on top of it.

You mention the chalk garden as being the English equivalent of Tennessee Williams's 'jungle.' The garden almost feels like a character in itself. What connection does each of your characters have with the garden, and how integral is its presence to the production?

Felicity: I like the garden being seen as a character, like the city is in "Sex and the City." The garden is vital to the production.

Jamie: Personally, Maitland is terrified of it. He calls it 'a mule of a garden.'

Felicity: It's almost as if it's a jungle out there, that's the idea. A sort of madness which is then seeping into the house. It's an uncontrollable, mad space where Laurel and Maitland dance around bonfires. It's got to be intense that space.

Jamie: To stretch the metaphor, Madrigal comes in and makes some order of the garden, and sorts it out.

Felicity: Which, again, seeps into the house.

Talking about her play in an interview, Enid Bagnold said of THE CHALK GARDEN 'It is a funny play. But it's frivolity is like a fan, from behind which truth glances.' What are the 'truths' that you have glimpsed at during the rehearsal process?

Felicity: Well, human relationships. How people damage each other. Especially in this house. As Madrigal says, 'Let's get rid of this sham made of affection.' Which says something about the artificiality of it. Everyone is pretending to be very nice to each other but underneath there is this violence of human interaction. Especially familial relationships.

Jamie: It's incredibly violent this play. People are brutal with each other.

Felicity: There is no sentimentality or softness.

Jamie: Violence behind the artifice of English manners.

Felicity: That's what makes it interesting.

Jamie: If you look at the behaviour we see between Olivia and Mrs St Maugham. It's a text book example of passive aggression, where Mrs St Maugham - when she feels slightly under threat from Olivia says 'How can you wear beige with your skin that colour'.

You raise the issue of Mrs St Maugham and her daughter Olivia. And of course, the other mother/daughter relationship in the play is Olivia/Laurel. In the past, when Enid was asked if THE CHALK GARDEN was a mother/daughter play, she denied it, saying it definitely wasn't that.

Felicity: She denies a lot of things!

What do think the play is really about?

Felicity: I think it is about familial relationships. I think that is what so much of drama should be about. That's the crux: how you can grow up with so much damage, given to you by your grandparents, or your parents. I suppose it is unusual in this sense that the grandparent/grandchild relationship is completely disturbed at the end.

Jamie: It's a wonderful dramatic device, having a grandmother and a daughter, and a grandmother and granddaughter, because it encapsulates the way that behaviour – and violent behaviour – is handed down through the generations.

Felicity: It doesn't disappear, does it?

Jamie: Laurel says 'wit skips a generation'. But it's not just wit; there is a whole load of stuff handed down; casual brutality in relationships. It's a brilliant device, apart from anything else. Personally, I do think it is an extraordinary play. The more I work on it, the more I think this. There is nothing in it that is extraneous.

Felicity: It's very lean.

Jamie: As tight as a drum.

One issue I know the students will be interested in Felicity, is how, as an actress in her 20s, you have approached playing a character who is 16?

Felicity: Well, it seems to be something I do quite a lot. I've had quite a few years experience! I suppose, physically, it's all in the words – in everything she says and how she behaves. But it's also about- before you play someone else, you have to deal with yourself, and, in terms of playing Laurel, it's trying to free yourself of all politeness and carefulness you learn as you get older. Those layers and filters, and how you become much more socially acceptable. I think Laurel is on the cusp: she doesn't know what those rules are.

What effect does the idea of her Grandmother encouraging eccentricity in Laurel have on her?

Felicity: Her Grandmother has partly got this thing of being really childish and childlike. But, ultimately, she is old, and Laurel has been bought up by this person who is much older – and this strange concoction produces quite a mad person in Laurel, a mad character.

What have you discovered about the status of Maitland in the household during the rehearsal process? One thing I found very interesting observing rehearsals was the ambiguity of the mistress/servant relationship, which seems to be exploded at times in the play?

Jamie: It is, but there's absolutely no doubt she is the governor, and that he is terrified of her. The way for him to claim back some kind of authority is to be insubordinate, and occasionally she doesn't mind it – in fact she likes it. She encourages eccentricity and she encourages the scenes that he makes. Her approval very much fuels his paranoid explosions, and she rather likes that. He can be a bit subversive with her, but there is no doubt that she's in charge!

At this point, Margaret Tyzack (Mrs St. Maugham) joins us.

There is a lot of Enid Bagnold in Mrs St Maugham. What have you discovered about both of these women during the rehearsal process?

Maggie: I think there are great similarities, but I have a strong feeling that Enid would not have wanted some of the similarities of Mrs St Maugham to be brought to her door step. I may be wrong! Enid Bagnold is a woman I would love to have met. I would love to have met Mrs St Maugham, too, but not to have been in her power, in any way, shape or form. I suppose there is a whole flavour of the period that they share: a snobbery, the wonderfully non politically correct thing about 'now there are no subject races one must be served by the sick, the mad, or those who can't take their place in the outside world.' Mrs St. Maugham will happily employ someone who has been in prison. The play is very much of its period. And this could be something very difficult for younger generations to understand: what different periods in history were actually like. It's difficult to comprehend, for example, the stigma of pregnancy outside marriage. That is why history is so important. You lose it and forget it at your peril.

What advice would you give to young people who wanted to understand - and immerse themselves - in this period of history?

Maggie: I would say read a lot of the plays that were written around this time (1956). This play was written at the same time as *Look Back in Anger*, by someone from a different period. I bring another period with me - the Edwardian period, because I'm a woman of well over seventy - so I bring the standards, the morals, the outlook of the Edwardians. And after the Second World War, in particular, the servant system was pretty much dying out, until along came Footballers' wives who would employ people from other countries.

In terms of history, Enid Bagnold was a woman who lived through two world wars, how do you think this informed her writing?

Maggie: She would have known that something she knew was dying, like the Empire. And how it informed her writing? Well, the trouble with Enid is that she would never own to anything. Even when Binkie Beaumont (the West End Producer) said 'I don't want this play that has an analogy about chalk garden meaning dry heart', she said, 'What is he talking about? I never meant that!' I get the feeling that she was as contradictory as my character is. People mustn't be puzzled about that when they see the play. Being contradictory is about being wilful, and not caring, and having your own way; not giving a damn and having no one to ever answer to. Arrogant. Very, very, arrogant. Frightful!

Observation point

Irene Selznick said of Enid Bagnold that she had the whole range of emotional cards in her pack. She could be **loving** and **grateful, resentful** or **guilty**. She could **flatter, woo** or **charm**, or she could **blackmail** on account of her age. (Enid was 64 when she started working with Irene on THE CHALK GARDEN.)¹⁸ When you see Margaret Tyzack's interpretation of Mrs St. Maugham, can you identify the range of emotional cards that she plays as she journeys through the play?



section
6

A practical exploration of the play's opening scene

Printed below is the opening scene from Act One of THE CHALK GARDEN. The action takes place in the sitting room of Mrs St Maugham's manor house in Sussex, a morning in June. Read through the extract and then work through the practical exercises that follow it.

When the curtain rises, the four upright chairs are set diagonally in a row LC, facing down R. MISS MADRIGAL is seated on the upstage chair.

MISS MADRIGAL is an enigmatical, contained woman, neat and non-committal in dress, with fine eyes and a high aquiline look. She has the still look of an eagle upon a rock. Her Macintosh is over the back of her chair, her handbag is on the chair immediately below her and her zip-bag is on the floor beside the chair on which she is seated. On the chair with her handbag is a feather boa. Almost immediately the LITTLE LADY appears outside the front door L and rings the bell. She is a little, bird like woman. MAITLAND, the manservant, wearing a white jacket, enters from the pantry, crosses the hall to the front door and opens it. The LITTLE LADY comes in rapidly, like a bird over a lawn, stops quickly, then moves on quickly below the line of chairs to C.

LITTLE LADY (a-flutter) Good morning. May one sit?

(There is no answer. MAITLAND nods and exits up R to the garden)

(She sits on the chair next but one to Miss Madrigal, removes her gloves and places them with her handbag beside Madrigal's bag on the vacant chair between them. She hides her hands, looks at them and hides them again. It is a trick of hers) Lovely blowy weather.

(There is no answer)

Are you too here for the interview?

(MISS MADRIGAL looks towards the Little Lady)

As I came in – I saw a lady going out – *(confidentially)* in a temper.

(The 3RD LADY, whose beauty is decayed, sails in by the front door. She wears a chiffon scarf on her head. MAITLAND enters up R.)

MAITLAND *(to the 3rd Lady)* Who let you in?

3RD LADY The front door stood wide open – so humane. *(She moves down LC. To the others)* Good morning. How do you do?

MAITLAND *(moving in front of the couch)* Have you a letter?

3RD LADY *(taking a letter from her handbag and facing Maitland)* I wouldn't have come, dear, if I hadn't had a letter. *(She waves it at him)* Are you the butler?

MAITLAND I am the manservant.

3RD LADY A world of difference! *(She replaces the letter in her bag and removes her scarf)* In my days it was thought common to wear a white coat. A relic of our occupation of India. Now over. *(She turns to the others)* In those days, only worn in Cheltenham. *(She moves above the table L of the armchair and waves a coy finger)* In those days – in the Hill Stations – I was thought to have extraordinary charm. *(She turns suddenly to Maitland)* Is this a house where there are gentlemen?

MAITLAND *(Stiffly)* I am not to give information.

3RD LADY (*putting her scarf on the back of the armchair*) But you have only to nod. (*She moves to the table up C and fingers the things on it*) Gardening gloves – nicotine for wood lice... Is your lady going up in the world? Or coming down? (*She moves down L of the armchair. To the Little Lady*) One has to be so careful.

MAITLAND (*outraged*) Mrs St Maugham has a house in Belgrave Square!

3RD LADY But you are left in the country, I suppose, when she goes up for the Season?

MAITLAND (*shortly*) Madam is past the season. Take a chair please.

3RD LADY Where are the entertaining rooms?

MAITLAND They are under dust sheets.

3RD LADY (*picking up her scarf and turning to the others*) Not that I am applying for the post, you know – not *really*!

LITTLE LADY (*gasping*) Not applying?

3RD LADY I came – (*she crosses above the chairs to the hall*) I came to have a peep. (*Improvising*) So nostalgic...

MAITLAND (*crossing to the 3rd Lady*) Where are you off to?

3RD LADY (*tying the scarf round her hair; mockingly*) Such a wind out! So rough and rude in Summer.

MAITLAND But you're not *going*?

3RD LADY (*teasing him; but it is the truth*) I could not think of staying in this house – where there is not even a nephew. (*She moves towards the front door*)

MAITLAND (*following the 3rd Lady into the hall*) But what shall I tell her?

3RD LADY (*with ancient mischief*) That people who advertise – are never quite of one's world. (*The 3rd Lady exits by the front door.*)

Practical exercises

As a group, read through the scene, including the introductory stage directions.

- What are your first impressions of the scene?
- What do we learn about the world of the play from the extract?
- What clues does the playwright offer the director and actors as to how this scene should be played?

Experiment with establishing the setting for the scene, i.e. placing the exits and entrances, positioning the chairs and other items on the acting area. **Note:** do not feel bound by the stage directions. These were originally written for a proscenium arch setting. Feel free to make your own creative choices as to how your scene could be set.

Before you begin staging the scene in its entirety, trace its **physical shape** by walking it through using the abbreviated version printed below. This abbreviated version contains the exits and entrances, stage directions relating to the

characters, and any lines of dialogue relating to these stage directions. During the exercise, observe the following rule:

- each character reads the stage directions which relate to them out loud, prefixed by the name of their character, so that they are reading each line of text exactly as it is written down.

MISS MADRIGAL *is seated on the upstage chair.*

The LITTLE LADY appears outside the front door L and rings the bell.

MAITLAND, *enters from the pantry, crosses the hall to the front door and opens it.*

The LITTLE LADY comes in rapidly, stops quickly, then moves on quickly below the line of chairs to C.

LITTLE LADY *(a-flutter)* Good morning. May one sit?

MAITLAND *nods and exits up R to the garden.*

LITTLE LADY *sits on the chair next but one to Miss Madrigal, removes her gloves and places them with her handbag beside Madrigal's bag on the vacant chair between them. She hides her hands, looks at them and hides them again.*

MISS MADRIGAL *looks towards the Little Lady.*

The 3RD LADY sails in by the front door

MAITLAND *enters up R.*

MAITLAND *(to the 3rd Lady)* Who let you in?

3RD LADY *moves down LC.*

MAITLAND *(moving in front of the couch)* Have you a letter?

3RD LADY *(taking a letter from her handbag and facing Maitland. She waves it at him. She replaces the letter in her bag and removes her scarf. She turns to the others. She turns suddenly to Maitland)* Is this a house where there are gentlemen?

MAITLAND *(Stiffly)* I am not to give information.

3RD LADY *(putting her scarf on the back of the armchair)* But you have only to nod. *(She moves to the table up C and fingers the things on it. She moves down L of the armchair. To the Little Lady)* One has to be so careful.

MAITLAND *(outraged)* Mrs St Maugham has a house in Belgrave Square!

3RD LADY *(picking up her scarf and turning to the others)* Not that I am applying for the post, you know – not really!

LITTLE LADY *(gasping)* Not applying?

3RD LADY *(she crosses above the chairs to the hall. Improvising)* So nostalgic...

MAITLAND *(crossing to the 3rd Lady)* Where are you off to?

3RD LADY *(tying the scarf round her hair; mockingly)* Such a wind out! *(teasing him; but it is the truth)* I could not think of staying in this house *(She moves towards the front door)*

MAITLAND *(following the 3rd Lady into the hall)* But what shall I tell her?

3RD LADY *(with ancient mischief)* That people who advertise – are never quite of one's world.

The 3rd Lady exits by the front door.



- Directors/observers, what does this exercise tell you about the shape of the scene? Actors, what did it feel like to play the scene in this way?
- What are the energy levels required for each character in the scene? How do they shift and alter as the scene progresses?
- How does each character's behaviour determine the physical shape of the scene?
- What is the importance of Maitland's exits and entrances during the scene?

Take key moments and discoveries made during this exercise and experiment with staging the scene in its entirety.

Remember, actors approaching this scene for the first time will not discover all the answers during the first rehearsal; they are on a gradual journey.

Afterword

This is a celebratory, life-affirming play. It is about embracing truth and leading the most exciting life.

Abbey Wright, Assistant Director on THE CHALK GARDEN,

After seeing the Donmar's production of THE CHALK GARDEN, consider the elements of the production that corroborate Abbey's view.

Bibliography and footnotes

Footnotes

(Endnotes)

- 1 *Enid Bagnold's Autobiography (from 1889)*, Heinemann (London, 1969). p.1
- 2 The dates and contents of this timeline are based on, *The Chalk Garden*, an article written by Eleanor Lang on the life of Enid Bagnold published in *The Donmar Magazine*, issue 18, 2008.
- 3 Anne Sebba, *A Thoroughbred Mind*, programme note, THE CHALK GARDEN, Donmar, 2008.
- 4 Michael Grandage addressing the cast and Donmar staff at the production's 'Meet and Greet, Old Vic rehearsal room, Monday 28th April, 2008.
- 5 *Enid Bagnold*, Anne Sebba, (Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1986), p. 188.
- 6 Bagnold quoted in *ibid*, p. 188.
- 7 Penelope Gilliatt quoted in Sebba, p. 243.
- 8 Sebba, p. 183.
- 9 Bagnold, p.220.
- 10 *Ibid*, p.225.
- 11 *Ibid*, p.225.
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- 13 Bagnold quoted in Sebba, p. 198.
- 14 Professor Gerald Weales quoted in Sebba, p. 198.
- 15 Sebba, p. 197.
- 16 Sebba, p. 198.
- 17 Bagnold, p.220.
- 18 Sebba, p. 182.

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About the Donmar Warehouse

The Donmar Warehouse is an intimate not for profit 251 seat theatre located in the heart of London's West End. The theatre attracts almost 100,000 people to its productions a year. Since 1992, under the Artistic Direction of Michael Grandage and his predecessor, Sam Mendes, the theatre has presented some of London's most memorable theatrical experiences as well as garnered critical acclaim at home and abroad. With a diverse artistic policy that includes new writing, contemporary reappraising of European classics, British and American drama and music theatre, the Donmar has created a reputation for artistic excellence over the last 12 years and has won 26 Olivier Awards, 12 Critics' Circle Awards, 10 Evening Standard Awards and 10 Tony Awards for Broadway transfers.

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