

## Considering the characters

Below are the stage directions which introduce each of the adult characters. Firstly remind yourself which description belongs to which character. Do these descriptions suggest what is to come in the play? Think about what we learn about each character through the play and decide whether or not you think these directions 'add' anything to our understanding or if they are just practical information for a director.

Go through the play and find relevant quotations for each character which seem to you to illustrate the characteristics mentioned here. You could also add other stage directions for the characters which build on these descriptions.

1. *\_\_\_ is twenty-six, gentle but despite herself capable of holding fast to what she knows.*

2. *\_\_\_ is nearing forty. A wry self-controlled man, an easy talker, but with a wisp of sadness that clings even to his self-effacing humour.*

3. *\_\_\_ is thirty-two but balding. A pleasant, opinionated man, uncertain of himself, with a tendency toward peevishness when crossed, but always wanting it pleasant and neighbourly. He rather saunters in, leisurely, nothing to do.*

4. *\_\_\_ is nearing sixty. A heavy man of stolid mind and build, a business man these many years, but with the imprint of the machine worker and boss still upon him. When he reads, when he speaks, when he listens, it is with the terrible concentration of the uneducated man for whom there is still wonder in many commonly known things, a man whose judgements must be dredged out of experience and a peasant-like common sense. A man among men.*

5. *She is rounding forty, an overweight woman who fears it.*

6. *He is thirty-two; ... solidly built, a listener. A man capable of immense affection and loyalty. He has a cup of coffee in one hand, part of a doughnut in the other.*

7. *She is a robust, laughing girl of twenty-seven.*

8. *\_\_\_ is ... a paler man, now on the edge of his self-restraint. He speaks quietly, as though afraid to find himself screaming.*

9. *She is in her early fifties, a woman of uncontrolled inspirations, and an overwhelming capacity for love.*

**The answers**

1. ANN is twenty-six, gentle but despite herself capable of holding fast to what she knows.

2. DOCTOR BAYLISS is nearing forty. A wry self-controlled man, an easy talker, but with a wisp of sadness that clings even to his self-effacing humour.

3. FRANK is thirty-two but balding. A pleasant, opinionated man, uncertain of himself, with a tendency toward peevishness when crossed, but always wanting it pleasant and neighbourly. He rather saunters in, leisurely, nothing to do.

4. KELLER is nearing sixty. A heavy man of stolid mind and build, a business man these many years, but with the imprint of the machine worker and boss still upon him. When he reads, when he speaks, when he listens, it is with the terrible concentration of the uneducated man for whom there is still wonder in many commonly known things, a man whose judgements must be dredged out of experience and a peasant-like common sense. A man among men.

5. She (SUE BAYLISS) is rounding forty, an overweight woman who fears it.

6. He (CHRIS) is thirty-two; ... solidly built, a listener. A man capable of immense affection and loyalty. He has a cup of coffee in one hand, part of a doughnut in the other.

7. She (LYDIA LUBEY) is a robust, laughing girl of twenty-seven.

8. GEORGE is ... a paler man, now on the edge of his self-restraint. He speaks quietly, as though afraid to find himself screaming.

9. She (KATE) is in her early fifties, a woman of uncontrolled inspirations, and an overwhelming capacity for love.