

INTRODUCTION

The central character in *The Anniversary* is dear old Mum, a woman whose possessiveness is a killer. She is thoroughly evil and glories in destroying anything that is good and kind and pure; for not being able to enjoy such feelings herself she is damned if anyone else will. And yet, like the Devil, Mum has an undeniable charm. This woman would never have been drowned as a witch: she would have been crowned Queen.

She has three sons whom she has lacerated with her warped love, and it says something for man's resilience that they are as normal as they are.

Henry has long since succumbed to Mum's dominant personality and settled into a comfortable rut. He has even managed to find an ersatz love that cannot turn round and humiliate him. Terry, although married, still clings to his mother, hoping for a miracle that will never come.

Tom, the youngest son, hates Mum with such venom that he is prepared to sacrifice everyone in order to achieve his aim in life: complete victory over Mum.

Karen, Terry's wife, has fought tenaciously through the years for the body and soul of her husband; but it takes a newcomer, Tom's fiancée Shirley, to be the first to hack through the umbilical cord and free the man she loves.

Shirley and Karen prove that there is hope even where evil appears to be impregnable. There has to be, otherwise we might just as well sit on our personal bomb and blow ourselves into bits of nothing.

I have purposely used a farcical technique, not in order to make the play more palatable to an audience, but in the belief that through laughter a facet of family truth can be accepted without the loss of sanity. Perhaps I'm wrong. You're the judge.

BILL MACILWRAITH

The action takes place in the living-room of Mum's house, south of London.

ACT ONE

Six p.m. on a Friday evening in
November

ACT TWO

Three hours later

ACT THREE

Ten minutes later

CAST

TOM Steve Bentley
SHIRLEY Amanda Hill
HENRY John Merry
TERRY Dave Darby
KAREN Kim Levis
MUM Diane Wilkinson

DIRECTOR Kerry Dracott

PRODUCER Christine Jackson

STAGE MANAGER Kate Thornburrow
SOUND & LIGHTING Ella Thornburrow
Dick Wood
Mark Wilkinson
PROPS Caroline Lockett
Alan Haydock
MAKE-UP & WARDROBE Jo Caunt
Vicki Rees
SET DIRECTOR Mike Geisow
SET DECORATION Jean Preston
Molly Wood
Tony Beresford
FRONT OF HOUSE Jeff Caunt
Mike Geisow
John Preston
PROGRAMMES Kerry Dracott

AMATEUR THEATRE with Joan Appleton

ANYONE who saw Alan Bennett's brilliant monologue *A Chip in the Sugar* on television will know what I mean by maternal dictatorship.

Another play with a monstrous mum is Bill MacIlwraith's *The Anniversary*, which East Bridgford Drama Group offer next week. In this case, three sons, together with their women, attempt to break her ascendancy over them.

The crisis comes as they gather to celebrate Mum's wedding anniversary, even though Dad has long since passed on. Diane Wilkinson has the key role, with Steve Bentley, John Merry and David Darby as the boys, and Kim Levis and Amanda Hill as the girls.

their friends attempt to do, with all kinds of hilarious results.

Perhaps such post-AIDS satire loses some of its bite, but the comic invention is masterly, and the eccentricity of the characters will no doubt give the players and their audiences a great deal of fun.

Geoff Peabody produces, with Michael Geisow, Jean Starbuck, Kate Thornburrow and Mark Pilgrim as the Wicksteeds. Julie Tomlinson, Diane Wilkinson, Peter Salter, Steve Bentley, Kerry Dracott, Jean Preston and Malcolm Cope make up the rest of the acting body.

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EAST BRIDGFORD Drama Group are thrilled to be able to present the last amateur production of *Habeas Corpus* before it starts its professional tour.

Alan Bennett's satirical comedy is centred on the sex-mad Wickstead family who believes that if you have a body you should use it, and that is what they and

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Deadly Nightcap, the thriller by Francis Dur-