The Surprise

A Comedy By Tanis Galik

https://offthewallplays.com

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Cast of Characters

Dr. Stanley Kramer: A short podiatrist who wears glasses

Alice Adler: An average-looking woman

Dr. Fred Miller: A dashing heart surgeon the same age as Stanley

Helen Miller: A sophisticated woman the same age as Alice

SETTING

The stage is an average living room. One side has a bar with wine bottles and wine glasses displayed, ready for a party. The other side of the room has a couch with decorator throw pillows, an end table with a lamp on it and a coffee table in front of the couch with a cheese plate and a small knife, a large candleholder and a fancy lighter - all tastefully arranged on top. Two glasses of wine sit on the coffee table near a stack of napkins.
AT RISE: Early evening.

(DR. FRED MILLER stands at the bar pouring himself another glass of wine. DR. STANLEY KRAMER enters the room carrying an ornate silver tray filled with Cream Cheese Penguin hors d’oeuvres [recipe on page 10] perched on extremely large carrot feet.)

FRED

What are those?

STANLEY

Penguin appetizers. I made them myself.

FRED

Aren’t their feet a little large?

STANLEY

They have happy feet! You know, the movie? Podiatrist? (Pointing to himself, then to his feet)

Happy feet.

(STANLEY performs a brief “happy feet” dance.)

FRED

Ahh, clever. I hope they don’t contain gluten. Helen thinks she’s allergic to gluten. She’ll go on about it all night long.

STANLEY

No, no gluten. Just an engagement ring.

(STANLEY pulls a ring case from his pocket. He opens it and takes out a diamond engagement ring. Returning the case to his pocket, he appears to push the ring into the cream cheese middle of one of the penguins. Then he places the hors d’oeuvre on one of the tray’s
corners. The actor actually returns the ring to his pocket.)

STANLEY (Continued)
When Alice bites into it, I’ll get down on one knee, ask her to marry me and after she says yes, I’ll bring out this.

(He pulls a brochure from the inside pocket of his jacket.)

STANLEY (Continued)
Two tickets to Fiji. The honeymoon suite overlooking the ocean.

FRED
Impressive.

(Stanley returns the brochure to his inside pocket. While he puts the final touches on the penguins, Alice Adler and Helen Miller enter from the opposite side of the stage, stopping near the couch.)

ALICE
We just seem to be stuck. If this relationship isn’t going anywhere, what’s the point?

(Stanley rushes over with the tray and pushes the corner with the special penguin on it towards Alice.)

STANLEY
Have one.

ALICE
No, thanks.

(He pushes the tray at her again.)

STANLEY
These are special.

(She pushes the tray away with her hand.)
ALICE

Stanley, I’m not hungry.

(He puts the tray up to her face.)

STANLEY

I made them just for you.

(ALICE takes the tray.)

ALICE

You always make these for parties. Podiatrist. Happy feet. We all get it.

(ALICE rotates the tray as she places it on the coffee table. Dejected, STANLEY returns to FRED.)

STANLEY

Alice seems kind of distant. I hope I didn’t do anything to upset her.

FRED

I’m sure it’s Helen’s doing. I forgot our anniversary. After 25 years Margaret retired. She used to take care of those things.

(HELEN picks up the electric cord from the lamp.)

HELEN

(To Alice)

What else am I going to do? Sit home and watch the maid clean?

(HELEN makes the cord into a loop and pulls it tight as if she is strangling someone.)

STANLEY

What’s Helen doing?

FRED

She’s decided to become a mystery writer. She wanted me to show her how to kill someone with a scalpel and make it look like an accident. It’s getting a little scary.
STANLEY helps himself to a glass of wine and pours more for his guest.

ALICE
I don’t think you could get it tight enough.

HELEN
You’re probably right.

(Helen drops the cord and picks up the large candleholder. Everyone watches as she bludgeons to death an invisible person.)

FRED
I know Alice is a great lady, but are you really sure you want to get married again?

STANLEY
Alice is nothing like my ex. She’s frugal. She has her own career.

(HELEN puts down the candleholder.)

HELEN
(To Alice)
Are you sure you want to give up your freedom?

ALICE
Freedom?

(HELEN picks up the small cheese knife and examines it.)

STANLEY
Besides we’re like an old married couple already. She doesn’t make any unreasonable demands on my time or energy.

FRED
Not yet. It’ll start slowly.
HELEN
(Practicing stabbing someone with the cheese knife)
Free to do what you want, when you want. Isn’t it nice not having to watch all those sports – tennis, golf, baseball, basketball, football. The seasons just blend into each other. It’s a continuous barrage of athleticism.

ALICE
We don’t have that problem. Stanley and I like the same teams.

(HELEN drops the knife and returns to the lamp.)

FRED
Social functions you just have to attend. Her family’s weddings, anniversaries, holiday gatherings. Then there’s opening nights, galleries, symphonies and the worst – the opera. It’s never ending.

STANLEY
Alice doesn’t really go in for that kind of stuff.

HELEN
Maybe if I cut off the rubber around the electrical wires, I could electrocute him.

ALICE
I don’t think the current would be strong enough in a household appliance. Unless you put him in some water, like when he’s in the tub, you could drop in an electrical appliance. That might work.

HELEN
Hmmmm.

(HELEN drops the cord.)

STANLEY
As for Alice’s family, I like them.

FRED
For now. Wait until they suck you into their petty arguments.

HELEN
What else could I use?
(HELEN looks around the room.)

STANLEY
There was that incident with her sister.

FRED
The endless phone calls to get your opinion, which they
never listen to I might add.

STANLEY
I had to hide in the bathroom for hours every time the
subject came up.

(HELEN studies the ceiling.)

HELEN
So there’s nothing you would change about Stanley?

ALICE
Well, sometimes he does seem to spend an exorbitant amount
of time in the bathroom.

FRED
And the free medical advice.

STANLEY
Yeah, they’re already asking for a family discount.

ALICE
I do like to knit while watching TV, but Stanley just wants
me to sit next to him holding hands. It does get . . . a
little irritating.

HELEN
What about a broken pipe?

(ALICE joins her in searching the ceiling.)

ALICE
A gas leak might look like an accident.

FRED
They just refuse to recognize how hard you have to work to
earn your money.
STANLEY
Our educations, our office, our staff. It all costs big time.

ALICE
Stanley has stopped taking me out. He says it’s because my cooking is better,

(Helen picks up the lighter.)

ALICE (Continued)
But I know all he wants is another free meal.

(Alice grabs the lighter from Helen’s hand and starts flicking the flame.)

STANLEY
Alice keeps badgering me to take her out to a restaurant when all I want to do is eat dinner, put my feet up and watch my TV shows.

FRED
Those days will be long gone, my friend.

(ALICE still transfixed by the lighter.)

ALICE
After knocking him out, you could set him on fire.

HELEN
It could get rid of the evidence, but it would also burn down the house.

(HELEN wrestles the lighter from ALICE’S grip and returns it to the coffee table.)

FRED
And what about all those extra responsibilities around the house?

STANLEY
Like taking out the trash. I don’t make any more trash than she does. Why do I have to take it out?
HELEN
(Picking up her glass of wine)
I could poison him. But wine’s kind of old hat.

ALICE
A penguin hors d’oeuvre? That would be new.

STANLEY
Alice is already complaining that I don’t pick up after myself.

FRED
Thank goodness we have a maid who takes care of that.

ALICE
Did I tell you Stanley has started dropping off his dirty clothes? Like I’m running a bloody laundromat!

HELEN
Taking you for granted. What else is new?

(HELEN kneels on the couch, picks up a pillow and begins smothering someone.)

FRED
Why do plumbing and all mechanical issues suddenly come under male jurisdiction? I’ve worked for years to become a respected heart surgeon. Why is it always assumed I’m the one who has to unclog the toilet?

(At the other end of the couch ALICE also picks up a pillow and begins smothering someone.)

STANLEY
That’s true. At least you have the money to hire someone. I have to fix it all myself!

ALICE
It does feel good. Getting out all your aggressions.

STANLEY
And since when did it become my job to take care of her car? Wash, polish, vacuum it. Drop it off for service. Check the tires. For Pete’s sake I’m a feet man, not a tire man.
ALICE & STANLEY

What was I thinking!

Hey, I wanted that.

What the . . . ?

It’s beautiful!

HELEN (Continued)

Ohhh, noooo! FRED!!!

HELEN (Continued)

FRED looks surprised. HELEN shows him the ring.

HELEN (Continued)

(Putting on the ring and admiring it)
HELEN (Continued)
(To Fred)
I thought you had forgotten.

FRED
Honey, would I forget our anniversary?

(HELEN jumps up and rushes into Fred’s arms, kissing and hugging him. Fred gestures to Stanley — Sorry.)

STANLEY
Hey, that’s not all. Fred had me hold this so you wouldn’t find out.

(STANLEY pulls the brochure out of his inside pocket and hands it to HELEN. HELEN jumps up and down.)

HELEN
Fiji!!! I’ve always want to go to Fiji!

STANLEY
It’s the honeymoon suite overlooking the ocean.

(HELEN turns to Fred)

HELEN
You dear, dear man.

(Helen and Fred continue to hug and kiss.)

ALICE
Awww.
(Poking Stanley)
Why don’t you ever do something like that?
Cream Cheese Penguins

"Just imagine a cute display of penguins, made with black olives, carrots and cream cheese! You can add scarves and hats by using fresh red pepper strips, or canned pimentos cut into different shapes. Use frilly toothpicks if you can." — Valerie Lynne

Submitted By: Valerie Lynne
Photo By: mis7up

Prep Time: 30 Minutes
Ready In: 35 Minutes
Servings: 18

INGREDIENTS:
18 jumbo black olives, pitted
1 (8 ounce) package cream cheese, softened
18 small black olives
1 carrot

DIRECTIONS:

1. Cut a slit from top to bottom, lengthwise, into the side of each jumbo olive. Carefully insert about 1 teaspoon of cream cheese into each olive. Slice the carrot into eighteen 1/4 inch thick rounds; cut a small notch out of each carrot slice to form feet. Save the cut out piece and press into center of small olive to form the beak. If necessary cut a small slit into each olive before inserting the beak.

2. Set a big olive, large hole side down, onto a carrot slice. Then, set a small olive onto the large olive, adjusting so that the beak, cream cheese chest and notch in the carrot slice line up. Secure with a toothpick.

From www.allrecipes.com