

# Equus

*By Peter Shaffer*

Performances February 3 at 8PM, February 4 at 8PM, and February 5 at 2PM and 8PM

Thank you for auditioning for Equus! In this packet you will find information about the show, character descriptions, and information about both the audition and rehearsal processes.

## **What is Equus?**

*At least I galloped – when did you?*

A boy, Alan Strang, has been entrusted to the care of psychiatrist Martin Dysart. The circumstances of his admission remain murky save one grave fact: the boy blinded six horses with a metal spike. As Dr. Dysart delves into Alan's mind and slowly uncovers the disturbing truths of that fateful night, the foundations of his own reality begin to crumble. Equus is a suspenseful exploration of sexuality, religion, psychology, commercialism, and what we worship in the modern world.

Equus has a riveting script that we're so excited to bring to life with our cast and crew. For this production, we're especially interested in heightening the technical elements into the fabric of storytelling. Equus has a lot to say, and we're hoping to use every aspect of theater to say it. If you want to act in a production with bold lighting choices and cinematic soundscapes, this show could be for you!

*Content Warning: Equus contains stylized depictions of violence & self-harm, as well as depictions and discussions of sexual intimacy. All depictions of violence and sex will be rehearsed under the guidance of an intimacy/fight choreographer in conditions comfortable for the actors. See the [Undergraduate Production Policy on Sexual Content](#). Characters involved in these scenes are notated below.*

## **What Roles are Available?**

[Please note: While the gender identities of the characters are stated and will be adhered to during performances, we will be considering actors of all gender identities for the roles below.]

### **Alan Strang (*this role has already been cast*)**

Alan Strang is a seventeen-year-old boy with a deep love for all things equine, though his maiming of six horses speaks otherwise. After this act of violence, he is forced into psychiatric treatment under the care of Dysart, with whom he forms a deep bond. He reflects about his intense religious beliefs and fervor for life itself throughout his treatment, and his religious passion for horses is demonstrated through his relationships with both animals and people.

### **Martin Dysart (*this role has already been cast*)**

Dysart is a psychiatrist of many years at a hospital in Southern England. He is in a loveless, sexless marriage and is discontented with his job. After being convinced to accept Alan as a patient, he becomes obsessed with Alan's reality beyond the point of professional interest. Treating Alan makes Dysart question the meaning of his profession, life, and what, if anything at all, he truly worships. Dysart is male-identifying.

### **Frank Strang**

Alan's father is a no-nonsense man with anti-religious tendencies. He is a blue collar printer, uninterested in the frivolities of religion or aristocracy. Frank is a strict and severe parent, but cares for the success of his family.

### **Dora Strang**

Alan's mother is a deeply religious and devoted mother. She encourages Alan in his desire for religious stories and watching television. The conflict between her faith and social climbing aspirations and the socialism of her husband deeply scars Alan's childhood. Dora is female-identifying.

### **Hesther Salomon**

Hesther is the judge that convinces Dysart to take on Alan as a patient, and his confidant throughout. As Dysart's obsession and confusion with Alan's life deepens, she tries to ground him however she can. She's professional but warm, a stabilizing presence in the play. Heather is female-identifying.

### **Jill Mason**

Jill is the stable employee who, in extending friendship (and eventually, romance) to Alan, shows him an alternative to his relationship to Equus. She's self-confident,

unafraid of sexuality, and fun-seeking. She unintentionally catalyzes the dramatic conclusion of the play: Alan's blinding of the horses. Jill is female-identifying.

*This character kisses and embraces Alan and partially undresses. If you have any questions, please email [sam.bezilla@yale.edu](mailto:sam.bezilla@yale.edu) or speak to us at auditions.*

### **Young Horseman/Nugget**

The young horseman is a strapping, plucky, and slightly impertinent young man who shows Alan how to ride his first horse. The same actor will play Nugget, the horse that Alan sexually communes with and rides in order to worship Equus. All horses in this play will be played by actors standing upright, subtly indicating that they are horses through understated movement—no fur involved. The young horseman is male-identifying.

*[This character, as Nugget, is sexually “ridden” by Alan. Alan rides on Nugget's shoulders or back to a field where they engage in sexual communion onstage. You can find the link to the scene [here](#). If you have any questions, please email [sam.bezilla@yale.edu](mailto:sam.bezilla@yale.edu) or speak to us at auditions.]*

### **Horses/Ensemble**

Up to six horses, including Nugget, will constitute the ensemble. All horses in this play will be played by actors standing upright, subtly indicating that they are horses through understated movement—no fur involved. They typically appear as a unit, looming over Alan's life. Several horses' actors will also double as human characters throughout the play, including Harry Dalton (the stable owner) and the Nurse. This is a great option for those looking for a lower time commitment, or to get onstage in a more physical role! The ensemble horses may not identify as any particular gender.

*[Alan stabs each horse in the eye in the final scene. This will be mimed under the direction of a fight choreographer.]*

## **How Will Auditions Work?**

**Auditions will be held September 27th-29th on the Woolsey Side of the Beinecke.** We've attached four monologues — one for the male-identifying roles, and three for the female-identifying roles. **You only need to prepare one**, even if you'd like to be considered for more than one part. Your monologue does not need to be memorized, but we would recommend practicing beforehand so that you feel comfortable during auditions.

Once you arrive for your audition, you'll fill out a quick questionnaire and be led back to the audition room. You'll be auditioning for our Director Sam, Assistant Director Abbie, Stage Manager Sarah, and Producer William. After you perform your monologue, Sam and/or Abbie will give you some direction and ask you to do it again! Then, unless you have questions for us, you're all set. Altogether, your audition should take less than ten minutes.

There will be a second round of auditions (the callbacks) on October 1st from 7-9pm.. If we ask you to come in for a callback, we will provide you with more information on that process, but it'll involve reading lines with another auditionee.

**Audition results will be released on October 3rd.**

## **Audition Workshop**

We will be holding an audition workshop on Sunday, September 26th from 1:30-2:30 pm in WLH 202 and via Zoom (<https://yale.zoom.us/j/4363741734>). This workshop is totally optional, but it will be a great way to learn more about the process, ask any questions you may have, and meet some members of our team. Hope to see you there!

## **Who Will I Be Working With?**

### *Production Team*

Director - Sam Bezilla, he/him  
Assistant Director - Abbie Thomas, she/her  
Producer - William An, he/him  
Stage Manager - Sarah Sun, she/her  
Costume Designer - Claire Donnellan, she/her  
Dramaturg - Camille Chang, she/her  
Dramaturg - Sophia Dopico, she/her  
Lighting Designer - Casey Tonnies, she/her  
Set Designer - Jack Tripp, he/him  
Composer & Music Director - Ben Kramer he/him  
Sound Designer - David Donnan, he/him  
Sound Engineer - Adam Wassilchalk, he/him

### *Existing Cast*

Martin Dysart - Adrien Rolet (he/him)  
Alan Strang - Jordi Bertrán Ramírez (he/they)

Interested in joining the production team in any capacity, big or small? Email our Producer at [william.an@yale.edu](mailto:william.an@yale.edu). We're in need of a movement director and assistant stage managers. We're also always looking for folks to join as assistants or crew members.

## **Logistics**

Equus will be performed February 3rd-5th at 8 PM, with an additional performance on February 5th at 2 PM. The performance location is TBD pending the results of the CPA application (mid-September). Any changes to these dates (which would mainly be made as a result of the CPA application) will be made with the consent of the cast & crew.

We hope to perform in-person to a live audience, but will consider live-streamed or alternative methods that still allow our performers to interact in-person. We will rehearse & perform according to the most up-to-date version of the [Yale College COVID Policy for the Performing Arts](#).

## **Anticipated Time Commitment**

For the roles auditioned above, actors should expect about 6 hours per week of rehearsal. The production itself will be rehearsing about 10-12 hours per week. In the tech week (the week of the performances) and the week before it, there will be daily rehearsals, significantly increasing the time commitment.

## Monologues (pick one)

**Jill:**

No, wait! ... I'm sorry. I know you're upset. But it's not the end of the world, is it? I mean, what was he doing? Only what we were. Watching a silly film. It's a case of like father like son, I'd say! ... I mean, when that girl was taking a shower, you were pretty interested, weren't you? We keep saying old people are square. Then when they suddenly aren't--we don't like it!

**Dora:**

I told him the biological facts. But I also told him what I believed. That sex is not *just* a biological matter, but spritual As well. That if God willed, he would fall in love one day. That his task was to prepare himself for the most important happening of his life. And after that, if he was lucky, he might come to know a higher love still .... I simply ... don't understand.

**Dora:**

Look, Doctor: you don't have to live with this. Alan is one patient to you: one out of many. He's my son. I lie awake every night thinking about it. Frank lies there beside me. I can hear him. Neither of us sleeps all night. You come to us and say Who forbids television? who does what behind whose back?-as if we're criminals. Let me tell you something. We're not criminals. We've done nothing wrong. We loved Alan. We gave him the best love we could. All right, we quarrel sometimes-all parents quarrel-we always make it up.

**Frank:**

You sit in front of that thing long enough, you'll become stupid for life-- like most of the population. The thing is, it's a *swiz*. It seems to be offering you something, but actually it's taking something away. Your intelligence and your concentration, every minute you watch it. That's a true swiz, do you see?

I don't want to sound like a spoilsport, old chum--but there really is no substitute for reading. What's the matter: don't you like it?