

COCKROACHES
WORLD PREMIERE
By Emma Schillage Directed by Emerson Collins
April 23-May 3, 2026

I am INCREDIBLY excited to bring this brilliant, and funny, and dark Southern gothic play into the world for the first time with Revolution Stage Company. Emma Schillage won the Del Shores Foundation Writers Festival Best Play Award and has created something beautiful for us to all make together. Emma will be joining us later in the rehearsal process as well! This is going to be a fun adventure to figure out the unique journey of this piece, and we're looking for open, creative actors to bring it to life!

Emerson Collins, Director

AUDITION NOTES

Please memorize the auditions scenes. If that is not possible, be as familiar as you can with them. I may only see one scene in the initial audition. The callback scenes for each character are also attached so you can be familiar with it if I need to see more from you.

****Because it is not published, we are not posting the entire script, but if you would like to read it, email me and I will send it to you.**

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CHARACTER BREAKDOWN

JENNIFER "JENNY" - 18; the eldest child; the caretaker; she is responsible and intelligent, but she isn't sure what her purpose is outside of taking care of her family.

CHARLOTTE "CHARLIE" - 15; sturdy, the middle child, the pot-stirrer, she is intuitive, yet deeply insecure; her love and intensity can quickly turn into violence (it's a defense mechanism.)

SAVINA "SISSY" - 12; small, thin, the youngest; the crybaby/peace-keeper; she is sensitive and joyful but somewhat disturbed; she feels everything with heightened intensity.

MR. SAM (M) – 35-48; the next-door neighbor

MOMMA (F) - 40; the human parts of her are fading

NOTE ON CASTING

-Charlie and Sissy are under the age of 18, but will be played by actors who are 18+.

REHEARSAL SCHEDULE

Six days a week, tentative schedule below. **If all actors are available during some day time, we will consider some daytime rehearsals. **

WEEK ONE:

3/24-27 - Tuesday-Friday 5-10pm
3/28-29 - Sat-Sun 10-3 or 11-4 daytime only

WEEK TWO:

3/31-4/3 - Tues-Friday 5-10pm
Sat 4/4 - 10-3 or 11-4 daytime only
Sun 4/5 - EASTER OFF PROBABLY

WEEK THREE:

4/7-4/10 - Tues-Friday 5-10pm
4/11-12 - Sat/Sun - 10-3 or 11-4 (leavening evenings for other shows/events)

WEEK FOUR:

4/14-4/17 - Tuesday-Friday 5-10pm

WEEK FIVE:

SATURDAY 4/18 – DAYTIME TECH 8-5
SUNDAY 4/19 – TECH ALL DAY, TECH RUN
MONDAY 4/20 – OFF
TUESDAY 4/21 – DRESS RUN
WEDNESDAY 4/22 – FINAL INVITED DRESS
THURSDAY 4/23 – PREVIEW
FRIDAY 4/24 – OPENING
SATURDAY 4/25 – EVENING SHOW
SUNDAY 4/26 – MATINEE

WEEK SIX:

THURSDAY 4/30 – Performance
Friday 5/1 – Performance
Saturday 5/2 – Performance
Sunday 5/3 - CLOSING

CHARLIE 1/4 Sc. 1

22

CHARLIE

Are you overthinking now?

MR. SAM

(considering)

Yes.

CHARLIE

Tell me.

MR. SAM

Well, I'm wondering whether or not I should be here. Your mother is ill, and the sight of me might make her angry or sad or worse. There really isn't a protocol when it comes to visiting someone after...you know.

CHARLIE

Not you too!

STAR!

MR. SAM

What?

CHARLIE

God, look at you! You can't even say it. Ill? She isn't sick.

MR. SAM

(lightly amused)

Excuse me?

CHARLIE

I don't see the point in tip-toeing around the subject. I mean, if someone tries to kill themselves for attention, then obviously, we should talk about it. I see it as the solution to the problem. But Jenny doesn't feel that way. She's all, "Don't mention it to Momma. Be kind. Don't act like anything is different. Don't make her angry." She practically jumps out of her skin anytime I say suicide. I could make it more action-packed. I can say she tried to kill herself. I can be gentle and say she tried to take her own life, but she can't accept that Momma did this to herself! She thinks that saying the word; it'll like, give her the idea again. Whether we say it or not, she'll try, try, try again. She always does. And we never talk about it. You've heard that thing about insanity.

Mr. Sam nods.

MR. SAM

There really isn't a protocol when it comes to visiting someone after they've tried to commit suicide.

CHARLIE 2/4 Sc. 1

23

CHARLIE

How dare you say that? I'm in such a sensitive state!

MR. SAM

What...? I mean, I thought-

CHARLIE

I'm kidding. I didn't take you to be that gullible.

MR. SAM

Well...I suppose it's that overthinking thing.

CHARLIE

Are you in love with my mother?

MR. SAM

I care for her.

CHARLIE

Caring and loving isn't the same thing.

MR. SAM

Well-

CHARLIE

Why didn't you come to her birthday party? Did you break up?

MR. SAM

No. I just...couldn't come. I was out of town.

CHARLIE

...?

MR. SAM

Your mother's birthday falls on the same weekend as my wife and I's anniversary.

CHARLIE

Not like you were gonna spend it with her.

I'm sorry.

Jenny tells me I have a terrible sense of humor.

MR. SAM

You're right. But I did want to go and apologize and all that.

CHARLIE 31.4 Sc. 1

24

CHARLIE

What for?

MR. SAM

Married couple things.

CHARLIE

Momma says you are gonna marry her. Are you?

MR. SAM

I don't know. Do you want me to marry her?

CHARLIE

I don't know.
How did your wife die?

MR. SAM

Like this.

~~Mr. Sam makes the universal facial expression for "dead" with his eyes closed and his tongue sticking out of his mouth.~~

~~A snort/laugh bubbles out of Charlie's mouth, as if the laugh surprises her as well.~~

~~Mr. Sam smiles at that. He finds it endearing.~~

MR. SAM

My Dad taught me that. Once upon a time.

CHARLIE

I would've liked your dad.

MR. SAM

Oh you wouldn't've. He was a terrible man.

CHARLIE

Oh. That sucks.

MR. SAM

(smiling a little bit)

It does suck.

CHARLIE 4/4 S.L. 1

25

CHARLIE

Momma sucks. She cries a lot.

MR. SAM

About me?

CHARLIE

About everything. But yes, about you too. She's all dramatic about it. Starts speaking in poetry! "He lives just around the corner, but he acts like he lives across the country." You're probably the one to thank for this latest attempt.

MR. SAM

Charlie, I-

CHARLIE

You're so sensitive! Momma doesn't need a reason to do that. You just oughta know that she would've blamed you if she'd been successful.

END

MR. SAM

Did she leave a note?

CHARLIE

She never leaves a note. That's why I don't worry.

MR. SAM

Not everyone who does this to themselves leaves a note.

CHARLIE

Momma would. She'd set the stage perfectly for optimal dramatic effect. She'd want us to know exactly why, and in some weird way, she'd want us to know that we were the reason why. But I don't think Momma wants to die. Not really. She thinks she does, but I think she just wants in on the secret.

~~Mr. Sam notices Charlie, as if for the first time. *~~

MR. SAM

There's a secret?

CHARLIE

Of course! It's like...when I was in eighth grade, we had this retreat. All the eighth graders get one. And when they come back, they are like, changed or something. I remember when Jenny went. As soon as she got off the bus and came inside, she gave Sissy and I these huge hugs. She held us so tight.

CHARLIE 1/4 Sc. 2

62

MR. SAM

I am going to cook for you. Not just adult mac and cheese, but adult meals. The whole shebang with the perfect wine pairings and everything. Don't let anyone ever tell you that eating good food is a luxury. It isn't. It's a necessity, you hear me? Especially at your age. And you realize you live in a city that is known for it's cuisine, don't you? Best food in the country, hands down.

CHARLIE

I'll get so fat.

START

Mr. Sam steps between Charlie's legs .

MR. SAM

You listen to me, okay? You stop calling yourself that. You stop. Food is not for you to have when you are starving. You don't have to be and you shouldn't be starving to enjoy it. You don't have to earn it. I will cook for you. And you will eat it and you will not feel guilty, you hear me?

~~Charlie nods.~~

CHARLIE

Do you think my curves are luscious?

~~Mr. Sam bursts out laughing.~~

CHARLIE

Nevermind.

MR. SAM

No, no, no. Hey. I didn't-you just took me off guard, is all. You...

CHARLIE

What?

MR. SAM

Don't make me say it.

CHARLIE

You said I was beautiful. I assume you meant more than just my insides.

MR. SAM

Of course I did.

CHARLIE 2/4 Sc. 2

63

CHARLIE

So tell me. No one tells me. How am I supposed to know if no one tells me? I'm not smart like Jenny. I'm not sweet like Sissy. I'm not pretty like Momma.

MR. SAM

Who tells you that?

CHARLIE

...

MR. SAM

You know your mother is jealous of *YOU*, right? Not Jennifer and not Savina. You. You have this passion and energy and understanding of the world that no one can learn. It's just inherently in you. Your mother is intimidated by you, so she uses the only thing against you she can think of. And you are very smart. Listen to yourself.

CHARLIE

I like reading. I read a lot. To escape.

MR. SAM

That's good. That's-you're smart and...

CHARLIE

My weight.

MR. SAM

Your curves.

CHARLIE

Luscious curves.

MR. SAM

...yes.

CHARLIE

I wish you'd say it.

MR. SAM

Come on.

CHARLIE

What?

CHARLIE 314 Sc. 2

64

MR. SAM
Not like this.

CHARLIE
Then like what?

MR. SAM
...

CHARLIE
When will it be ready?

MR. SAM
Twenty minutes.

CHARLIE
I want you to touch me. You know that, don't you.

*

~~It isn't a question.~~

MR. SAM
Yes.

*

CHARLIE
Hold me.

MR. SAM
I-

CHARLIE
You think I'm disgusting.

*

*

MR. SAM
What? No! No. Of course not.

*

*

~~Charlie looks away. Mr. Sam hesitates.~~

*

MR. SAM
Your pace. It has to be at your pace, okay?

*

*

Charlie grabs Mr. Sam's hand.

*

CHARLIE
Here. Hold me here.

*

~~He holds her there.~~

CHARLIE 414 Sc. 2

65

CHARLIE

I want you to teach me more than just food. Or wine. Or how to make mac and cheese. I want you to teach me what it means to be an adult. I'm grown, aren't I? You think so.

MR. SAM

Of course you are! I'm not-! I wouldn't-

CHARLIE

So show me.

He touches her. ~~She releases a breath, surprised.~~

MR. SAM

I'm- I mean-, I-

CHARLIE

No. It's uhm, it's okay.

MR. SAM

You act so hard, but like this-You are the gentlest creature. Wouldn't hurt a fly.

He pushes her hair back.

CHARLIE

I thought you loved my fierceness.

MR. SAM

You are a contradiction, Charlotte.

CHARLIE

Don't do that!

MR. SAM

Do what?!

~~He backs off.~~

CHARLIE

Don't make me like my own name.

END

~~Mr. Sam laughs. He leans his head on her shoulder. She holds his neck against her.~~

CALLBACK #1 SAM/CHARLIE⁹³/JENNY

CHARLIE

What is he doing here?

START

~~Charlie walks in, revealing herself. Mr. Sam,
cool as a cucumber, hardly flinches.~~

1/4

MR. SAM

Charlie. Your sister invited me over. We were just talking about your mother.

JENNY

No, Charlie. Go outside, okay?

CHARLIE

No. I want to stay. You're talking about me. I should be present for it.

JENNY

Please. Please just listen to me. Just this once.

CHARLIE

What is he doing here?

JENNY

What did you hear?

CHARLIE

Does it matter? Answer the question.

JENNY

I wanted to talk to him. I wanted to tell him to stay away from you. I am trying to protect you. I don't want you to get hurt.

CHARLIE

(to Mr. Sam)

Is that true?

MR. SAM

Charlie, come on, I mean-I don't understand why your sister would be under the impression that I would hurt you-

CHARLIE

She told me you were together. Is that true?

MR. SAM

I...

CALLBACK #1 SAM/CHARLIE/JENNY

2/4

While you were with Momma?

CHARLIE

It's far more complicated than that.

MR. SAM

And Momma knew.

CHARLIE

No. No.

MR. SAM

Momma is smart. Just because I was too stupid to see it doesn't mean that Momma was. Why didn't Momma want you here? Why, all of a sudden, did you show up, huh?

CHARLIE

Charlie, I'm sorry. I have always been protective of you girls. It's beyond what you can understand.

MR. SAM

Momma loved you. She wanted to marry you. But you wanted Jenny. You always wanted her, right?

CHARLIE

Nothing is that simple, Charlotte.

MR. SAM

Please. Don't let me stand in the way. You two can have each other.

CHARLIE

WHAT? NO! That isn't what this is at all. You think I still-?

JENNY

Come on! Everyone is a liar. A stupid liar. Goddammit.

CHARLIE

Charlie, I know you don't believe me, but I don't want him for myself. I want him out of our lives, all of our lives.

JENNY

No! Because you've always played games with me. Always wanted me to know that you were capable of more than me. You complain, but you love being the golden child, Jenny. You love that you get to be our savior.

CHARLIE

CALLBACK #1 SAM/CHARLIE/JENNY

And you'll make sure we're all indebted to you by the end of it. And you just fucking left me here! With Momma. When you know how horrible she is, when you knew I would've done anything to come with you.

3/4

Mr. Sam takes a step towards Charlie.

CHARLIE

And YOU! You never cared either! You never found me beautiful or smart or interesting and I don't even know why I thought you would.

JENNY

Oh Charlie.

MR. SAM

I'm not a liar. Your sister and I have a complicated past, yes. But I am not some fake person. I am real and I see myself in you. That's what brought me here. You aren't some conquest. Sincerely, I have no intentions other than to offer help.

JENNY

STOP IT! I'm sick and tired of you manipulating everyone and everything. You don't get to talk.

CHARLIE

Oh, save it, Jenny.

JENNY

EVERYONE SHUT UP!

~~Jenny looks at Mr. Sam up and down, her own features setting themselves in a hard line. She~~ stares forward, at the sweatstains underneath Mr. Sam's armpits.

JENNY

You're really ugly. I don't think you were ever good looking. And it has nothing to do with your personality. You are just physically repulsive. In every way. I don't know why I ever let you do that to me.

MR. SAM

You always knew how to be mean, Jennifer. You've always known how to tear a person down.

CALLBACK #1 SAM/CHARLIE/JENNY

4/4

JENNY

I'm not finished. You raped me. I was a child.

~~Mr. Sam shakes his head "no."~~

JENNY

You did. You raped me. I was a child. While I wore braces. In my school uniform. You're the most disgusting creature alive and I hope you know. I hope you know that every breath you take is a breath wasted!

Mr. Sam slaps Jenny in the face.

MR. SAM

Liar!

CHARLIE

Jenny!

MR. SAM

Charlie, I'm so-I didn't mean-I don't know what-

CHARLIE

No. No no no no no. Get away from her! Get away from the both of us!

MR. SAM

Shh. Shh. Hey, hey, hey. It's okay. Alright? We're all okay.

END

Sissy appears in the doorway.

SISSY

What's going on?

CHARLIE

Get away from him, Sissy!

SISSY

What's wrong? What's wrong?

MR. SAM

It's okay. Hey. Everything is okay. We're all just worked up over your mother.

CHARLIE

Don't listen to him, Sissy.

JENNY

Sissy. He is the monster. Not Momma. It's him.

Cockroaches

CALLBACK #2 JENNY/SISSY/CHARLIE ⁷³

1/5

Momma! Stop! Let her go.

SISSY

The monster stops and turns to Sissy. Her beady eyes, unnerving.

I think you should go to bed.

SISSY

Sissy grabs the monster's hand. Momma sniffs at Sissy, burrowing her face in her hair.

I'll be right back.

SISSY

(calling to her sisters)

Sissy leads Momma back to the bedroom, leaving Charlie and Jenny absolutely stricken in the middle of the room. Jenny runs out the room, gagging.

SCENE Transition: "I cannot make you understand. I cannot make anyone understand what is happening inside me. I cannot even explain it to myself." - FK

All three sisters sit numbly in the living room.

START

So...

CHARLIE

Yeah.

JENNY

That's pretty fucked up.

CHARLIE

Yeah.

JENNY

I mean, Momma is the monster.

CHARLIE

Yeah.

JENNY

CALLBACK #2 JENNY/ISSY/CHARLIE ⁷⁴

2/5

Momma is-

CHARLIE

Yeah.

JENNY

A fucking cockroach.

CHARLIE

I mean-what do we do? She can't- I mean she can't function, right? She's not-can she last like that? What can we do?

JENNY

Nothing. There is nothing to do.

SISSY

What do you mean?

JENNY

She's dying. She has been since she came home from the hospital. It was slow at first, but now-you notice it, too.

SISSY

How do you mean she's dying?

CHARLIE

She can't eat. She can't drink. She can hardly breathe. I mean, she eats. She eats a lot, but-it's like she's starving. Like nothing will ever be enough. That's why there's no food in the fridge. That's why Max-

SISSY

No. Fuck. No. She ate-? God, Sissy, I'm sorry. I didn't-

CHARLIE

It was quick. Swallowed him whole. No blood. Never anything left. It's like she's some bottomless pit.

SISSY

Jesus Christ.

JENNY

CALLBACK # 2 JENNY / SISSY / CHARLIE⁷⁵

3/5

SISSY

She fights me, forgets who I am, tries to hurt me. It's like her body is shutting down. Everyday she becomes less and less herself and more and more that thing. Momma's a monster and she's dying, and we have no choice but to live with it until she dies.

CHARLIE

Did you try raid?

JENNY

Charlie.

CHARLIE

What? I'm serious. What are we supposed to do? Ignore it?

SISSY

You already have been. It shouldn't be that difficult for you.

JENNY

Sissy, I'm-we're sorry, okay? We didn't know.

CHARLIE

It's like a cruel joke.

Jenny and Sissy look to Charlie.

CHARLIE

It's my fault. I didn't know the stories would become...that thing.

JENNY

What stories? What?

SISSY

After you left, Momma got so much worse.

CHARLIE

It didn't matter what we did. If we were too loud, too upset, too curious, she'd-

SISSY

Hurt us.

CHARLIE

It was the normal, you know? Poking us, little smacks, the occasional spanking. Then, it was like something switched. She started using a belt. Putting hot sauce on Sissy's tongue. Hot oil on-

CALLBACK#2 JENNY/ISSY/CHARLIE⁷⁶

4/5

SISSY

We'd get welts all over. And if we said anything, talked back at all-she'd beat one of us and make the other watch before switching over.

CHARLIE

She threw Sissy across the room.

SISSY

I flew, Jenny. I swear. It was like she had this strength she'd never had before.

CHARLIE

I didn't mean anything by it, but before we'd go to bed, I'd tell these stories. About Momma. I was just trying to be funny, calling her a monster, and I'd describe her like-

SISSY

Like that.

CHARLIE

They just made us feel better. I made her that thing. I didn't mean to-

JENNY

No. There has to be some reasonable explanation, right?

CHARLIE

Nothing about this is reasonable! This isn't something you can fix, okay?

JENNY

We have to tell someone.

SISSY

You can't tell anyone. They won't believe us.

JENNY

Why the hell not? She's here. She's that thing.

CHARLIE

Sissy is right. They won't be able to see it like we can.

JENNY

What? We're all crazy? Suffering from the same delusion?

CHARLIE

Sissy, how long have you seen Momma like that?

CALLBACK #2 JENNY/SISSY/CHARLIE ⁷⁷ SIS

SISSY

Since the day after she came home.

CHARLIE

Six days ago. Jenny, how many times have you been in Momma's room to help her since then?

JENNY

...

CHARLIE

Exactly. Jenny, you're eighteen. You can't legally take care of us. And Sissy and I can't go live with our Dads. If we tell someone-anyone-we'll end up in foster care. Momma already has a couple of strikes with CPS.

JENNY

So what does that mean?

CHARLIE

It means it's our problem now. No one else's. Momma wants to die. And we should let her.

SISSY

What happens to us then?

CHARLIE

I don't know. But we'll have some time.

JENNY

No, I don't accept that. We have to do something now. We have to do something. Right?

END

SCENE transition: " They had so much to worry about at present that they had lost sight of any thought for the future." -FK

Jenny lays out blankets on the floor. Sissy helps Jenny by adding pillows. Charlie stands and watches with her arms crossed over her chest. She steals a pillow from Sissy and whacks Sissy with it, square in the face.

SISSY

OW! CHARLIE!

JENNY

What happened?

Cockroaches