



# AUDITION/PLAY INFORMATION

## “Leaving Iowa” by Tim Clue & Spike Manton Directed by Bill Gasper

### ABOUT THE SHOW

The spark behind Leaving Iowa comes from being children of parents from the now dubbed “greatest generation.”

The story is a toast to their idealism and character and a little roast of their undying dedication to the classic family road trip.

More specifically, it is the story of Don Browning, a middle-aged writer, who returns home and decides to finally take his father’s ashes to his childhood home, as requested.

But when Don discovers Grandma’s house is now a grocery store, he begins traveling across Iowa searching for a proper resting place for his father. This father-and-son road trip shifts smoothly from the present to Don’s memories of the annual, torturous vacations of his childhood.

Don’s existential journey leads him to reconcile his past and present at the center of the United States. Leaving Iowa is a postcard to anyone who has ever found himself or herself driving alone on a road, revisiting fond memories of his or her youth.



### PERFORMANCE DATES

Friday, Feb. 21-Sunday, Feb. 23  
Hays Community Theater

### AUDITION DATES & LOCATION

7 p.m., Wed. & Thur., Dec. 18 & 19  
Callback if needed: Friday, Dec. 20  
Hays Community Theater

### AUDITION INFORMATION

Auditions will take place from 7-9 p.m. on Dec. 18 & 19 at Hays Community Theater. Auditions will consist of each person reading a monologue (included below) specific to their gender. Monologues will be followed by several reads from the script (also included below). Selected reads from the script will be dependent upon the number of people present at audition.

### ABOUT THE DIRECTOR

Bill Gasper is a former newspaper owner and journalism instructor at Hays High School, a position from which he retired in 2019. He continues to serve as the school’s spring play director. During his tenure at HHS, he has directed three musicals and has just completed his 21st non-musical production. In addition, he has directed a play at Ellis High School and several at Hoxie High School. He was also an active member in the Neighborhood Entertainment Company in Hoxie and appeared in and/or helped direct several productions.

### FROM THE DIRECTOR

“Leaving Iowa” is a fun show that has a number of touching moments, but it also contains a lot of “over-the-top” scenes that will be enjoyable for both the actors and audience.

Principal characters will be challenged in playing old and young versions of themselves, while the multi-role characters will be asked to create multiple distinct characters. The cast make-up provides considerable flexibility as it allows any particular actor to assume one or several of the “multiple character” roles.

Staging of the play will take place down the center of the theater with audience members seated on both sides. I saw this done in a production of the show and felt it would be perfect for this show and for this venue.

### CAST SIZE

**Principal Characters 2-3 men\*, 2 women**

\*Character of Don could be split to old Don and young Don

### Multiple Character Roles

Script calls for one man and one woman to play up to 22 characters. Additional actors could be added to play one or more of the characters.

### CHARACTER BREAKDOWN

- **DON BROWNING:** Adult writer, young boy in flashbacks. Don is at the center of this story and rarely, if ever, leaves the stage. Actors considering auditioning for this role should be comfortable memorizing a large amount of dialogue and be able to convey an adult and teenage version of Don. NOTE: Some productions have split this into two roles - Don and young Don - to alleviate the amount of memorization.
- **DAD:** Don’s father. A man who loves his family, life, and adventure. A constant presence throughout the play. While he may not always be talking, he’s always there.
- **MOM:** Don’s mother, past and present. A woman of saintly patience and strong love for her family. Must be able to play an adult and “older adult” version of her character.
- **SIS:** Don’s sister, past and present. That annoying sister you know and mostly love. Must be able to play an adult and teenage version of her character.
- **MULTIPLE CHARACTER GUY (12 roles total, may be split among several people depending on audition interest):** Plays a hog farmer, Don’s uncle, man with vegetable stand, Don’s grandfather, grocery store employee, farmer with hoe, Don’s childhood friend turned professor, Amish peddler at flea market, Civil War performer, mechanic, unhappy old man, and stoic waiter
- **MULTIPLE CHARACTER GIRL (10 roles total, may be split among several people, depending on audition interest):** hog farmer Bob’s wife, Don’s aunt, woman with fruit cart, Don’s grandmother, woman in grocery store parking lot, Amish peddler at flea market, assistant to Civil War guy, auto repair shop worker, patron in hotel, nightmare waitress

### REHEARSAL SCHEDULE

Rehearsals will take place from 7-9 p.m., Sunday-Thursday starting on Jan. 5. Days, time and length may change based on cast preferences and availability. **This is an ensemble show, so many rehearsals will require the entire cast.**



# “Leaving Iowa” Audition Form

*Please Print Legibly & Return Night of Audition*

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Secondary \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

**CIRCLE ALL THE PART(S) YOU ARE WILLING TO ACCEPT:**

*ANY PART    DON    YOUNG DON (IF CAST)    DAD    MOM    SIS    MULTI-CHARACTER*

What part(s) are you most interested in: \_\_\_\_\_

Would you be interested in getting involved with the production crew if not cast?    Yes    No

**REHEARSAL CONFLICTS:** Plans are to rehearse Sunday-Thursday, Jan 5 through opening night (Feb. 21). Known absentee dates are imperative for scheduling rehearsal time that is productive for everyone. **Everyone cast must be available for the entire week prior to opening night.**

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**THEATRICAL EXPERIENCE:** I realize many of you have been involved in multiple theater productions. Please list a few of your most recent, which would include acting, technical or other aspects of the production crew.

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**ADDITIONAL NOTES:** Please feel free to share other information that think might be pertinent.

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### **Female Monologue: Jessie the Nightmare Waitress**

*(While getting his car repaired, DON visits the local diner and experiences JESSIE, who the playwright describes as a “nightmare waitress.”)*

**JESSIE** *(in almost one breath)*. Hi, welcome to Gabby’s, my name is Jessie, although most people think I’m gabby, too. As in gabby Jessie, not THE Gabby, although she’s never here and that’s not my problem. You look like you’ve had a tough day, Mr. Tuckered-Out. You know what I’m gonna call you, Mr. Tuckered-Out? I’m calling you Mr. Down-In-The Dumps, Mr. Tuckered Out.

Now, is there anything else? Extra sugar? Sweet’N Low, cream, a clean spoon? Ha, I was fooling. Just fooling. That’s what I do, I’m a fooler. So, let me know what you want, and Jessie’ll get it for you because that’s what I do. I highly recommend our meatloaf cutlet. It’s got Wayne’s three-part gravy. That’s one part gravy, two parts Wayne— ha! Joke. Now if you’re looking for something light, I’d go with the hog butcher’s omelette. Ham, bacon, sausage, three kinds of cheese and Egg Beaters. That’s what keeps it light. So what’s it gonna be?

A plain burger? Hey Wayne! Kill it, grill it and give it to him simple. So...what do we have here? *(Picks up one of brochures DON has brought into the diner.)* What’s this? “Wax the day away at Candle Gardens?” Now that sounds fun. Though I’ll tell ya, last Christmas my sister bought me a scented rabbit candle and I told her I thought she could find a better way to say Merry Christmas than a lilac bunny with a wick in his butt. Rude maybe, but that’s Jessie, honest to a fault.

### **Male Monologue: Fascinating Vacations**

*(DON reflects on one of his Dad’s many less-than-thrilling vacation ideas.)*

Every year dad managed to find places less interesting than Winterset, Iowa! Which was pretty hard to do. So when he suggested Hannibal, Missouri, Sis and I were less than thrilled. I can still hear his voice as he tried to convince us: “Now kids, your father’s well aware of the disappointment with last year’s log cabin tour of the Ozarks. So, lesson learned. But not to worry, even with this year’s budget, I’ve found a place that’s not too far away and should be a lot of fun and looks fascinating.”

Fascinating...that was our family vacation f-word. So what did I think? *(Beat.)* What did I think? *(Laughing.)* I think Mark Twain would have rather played putt-putt or rode go-karts than dine at the Becky Thatcher Cafe or stay at the Huck Finn Hotel. That was it, wasn’t it? Huck Finn Hotel? Now there’s a tribute for you. Take a great literary character, who was, mind you, homeless, and name a hotel after him. The Huck Finn Hotel. It’s insulting, but catchy.

*(Reflects.)* Hey. Maybe I should pull over and—nope, got it. *(Imitating his sister’s previous warning before he left the house.)* “If you’re late for dinner, you’re dead!” *(Looks at watch.)* On the other hand, in your honor Dad, I should probably make at least one completely random, meaningless stop—mile marker, the random rest stop—oh wait, what about some roadside vegetable stand and the promise of a new friend eager to debate directions and detours? Yep, we have a winner.

**“Leaving Iowa” Audition Side #1 – “Damn RVs”**

*(Dad, Mom, Don, Sis)*

**DAD.** It’s not fair, it’s not fair. Damn RVs! *(SFX: DAD honks.)* Those RVs are nothing but big hazards on wheels. Dammit, make a turn. *(SFX: DAD honks.)*

**MOM.** Honey, please, no honking. It only makes matters worse.

**DAD.** We have a home. Do we feel the need to slap wheels on it and cart it all over the country? No! Bunch of waste. Bunch of big fat hazards and a big fat waste. What the heck is he doing?!

**MOM.** Honey, just relax.

**DAD.** Sweetheart, this is ridiculous. I can’t get around him.

**MOM.** Sweetheart, remember what Pastor John says, practice patience, dear. He’ll turn soon.

**DAD.** He’s not turning, and Pastor John doesn’t have a driver’s license, that’s why he can talk like that. Honey, they don’t belong on these roads. *(Out the window.)* Move your double-wide ass over, ya wide load! *(SIS and DON laughing with disbelief.)*

**SIS.** Mom, Dad said ass.

**MOM** *(to SIS).* Language! *(To DAD.)* Sweetheart, language.

**DAD.** I’m not going to sit here all day. We need to try and get around him. *(Determined.)* Honey, I’m making my move.

**MOM.** Sweetheart?

**DAD.** That’s OK, I got ’im.

*(DAD leans out the window, repeating “I got ’im.” DON and SIS stand and are moving over DAD’s shoulder. MOM is grabbing DAD’s shoulder, continuously yelling also.)*

**DON & SIS.** *(yelling and leaning in rhythm).* **DAD. DAD. DAD. DAD. DAD. DAD. DAD.**

**MOM.** *(joins in, yelling).* Sweetheart, honey, sweetheart! Are you sure? Honey! Wait!

**DAD.** I think we got ’im—we got ’im—we got ’im—

**DON & SIS.** **DAD DAD DAD DAD D-A-A-A-A-A-A-D—**

*(The FAMILY and sound freezes.)*

**DON.** More than once I felt my life flash before my eyes as we faced off in a death match with an oncoming semi. While the RV may have tormented you, I must admit, these moments made our trips truly, well, I have to say, fascinating.

*(DON pops back into position and the FAMILY continues yelling, physically swaying with the swerving car. SFX: Loud horn blast and a truck passing. DAD is now in front of the RV, narrowly missing the semi. SIS and MOM are breathless and almost unable to speak. DON is excited and proud.)*

**DAD.** Ha ha! That’ll show him. Had him by a mile. *Adiós, amigos!*

**DON.** *Adiós, amigos!*

**MOM.** Sweetheart, that was close. A little close.

**DAD.** Had him by a mile.

**DON.** Had him by a mile. By a mile, Dad, a mile.

**SIS.** Mom, I think I’m going to be sick.

**MOM.** Breathe a little, you’ll be fine, sweetheart. Deep breaths.

**DAD.** Had ’im by a mile.

**DON.** He had ’im by a mile, mom.

## **“Leaving Iowa” Audition Side #2 – Jack Singer**

*(Don, Jack Singer – after Don discovers Grandma’s house is a grocery store)*

**DON.** That’s right, the house is green, the car won’t start, and I love Uncle Phil’s beer batter baked beans. Lies! All of ’em. But I need some time to think. Time to stop, think, drink, and get some advice. You remember Jack Singer, Dad? Sure you do. Jack Singer was the first friend I can ever remember having opinions. Opinions that made you think about life and what you were doing with it. He’d say things like, “This place is killing me. I can’t wait to get out of this Godforsaken hell hole.” That was in third grade. Jack’s a professor at Iowa now. Very bitter, cynical, angry. God, I hope he hasn’t changed.

*(DAD leaves as JACK SINGER enters with a couple beers, ranting.)*

**JACK SINGER.** Don, I hate ’em. My students. All of ’em. I hate ’em, I hate ’em. They say it’s college, but it feels like kindergarten to me. Bunch of self-entitled, good-for-nothing, do-nothing pretentious little boneheads. All of ’em! It’s how they were raised, Don, too many damn head-pats and trophies and for what? For nothing. Doesn’t matter if you can throw the ball, catch the ball, hit the ball, just give ’em a damn ribbon. You played ball, right?

**DON.** Yep.

**JACK SINGER.** And you were horrible, right? God-awful.

**DON.** Yep.

**JACK SINGER.** And did you ever start a game or bat clean up?

**DON.** Nope.

**JACK SINGER.** Hell no, you rode the bench and became a writer.

**DON.** *(smiling and revived)*. Man, it’s good to see you, Jack.

**JACK SINGER.** Boy, a grocery store, that’s a tough one.

**DON.** Yeah.

**JACK SINGER.** I try to like these kids. I try. But it’s this look—this look they give me—that makes me want—want to hurt them. It’s wrong, isn’t it? Tell me.

**DON.** I don’t think so.

**JACK SINGER.** I swear, Don, I swear, you know my dog will sit and stare into the fan for hours on end. Just sit and stare for hours, and I’m telling you the look I see in his eyes is twice as interested as the one I’m getting back from my students. Am I boring, Don? Do I bore you? Is this boring?

**DON.** Feeling better already, Jack.

**JACK SINGER.** We were not this shallow, Don, we were not this shallow. We were stupid, but we were not this shallow. Right?

**DON.** I guess so.

**JACK SINGER** *(beat)*. Boy, a grocery store, that’s a tough one. Any ideas where you’re gonna ...

**DON.** No, not yet. I was thinking about turning around, but that doesn’t feel right, at least not yet.

**JACK SINGER.** Yeah, that’s a tough one.

**DON.** My dad was a lot of things, but he wasn’t a quitter. Is your dad still alive?

**JACK SINGER.** Yeah. Kinda. *(Beat.)* Boy, Don, don’t beat yourself up over this. That there guilt’s a tricky thing, my friend, a tricky, tricky thing. Driven some men to drink, even worse, others to quit.

**DON.** You’re probably right.

**JACK SINGER.** Yeah, well, who knows, Don? Maybe you’re on some kind of damned adventure.

**DON.** What?

**JACK SINGER.** Don, this is Iowa we’re talking about—adventures here are like steep hills, skyscrapers and good sushi...

**DON.** Hard to come by.

**JACK SINGER.** Damn hard, too hard. Another one?

*(DON nods, JACK SINGER grabs his beer and exits.)*

**DON.** Maybe Jack was right, maybe he’s wrong, but time to buck up and make a choice— something I was never particularly good at.

**“Leaving Iowa” Audition Side #3 – Mr. Hoefingers**

*(Mom, Don, Sis)*

**DON.** Mom, who’s that creepy man Dad’s talking to?

**SIS.** She doesn’t know.

**DON.** Shut up! *(Shove.)*

**SIS.** You shut up. *(Shove.)* Mom, he is freaky-looking.

**MOM.** Now, stop it.

**DON.** That’s right, stop it. Just stop and watch Dad talk to the scary farmer on the hottest day in July because you know the old saying, if the heat doesn’t kill you, the scary man with the hoe surely will.

**SIS.** Mom? What’s that thing he’s holding?

**DON.** Yeah, what’s that?

**MOM.** It looks like a hoe. Now be still.

*(DAD and JOE HOEFINGERS disappear.)*

**SIS.** Mom, he’s going inside. Mom, he’ll stay in there and talk forever. Go get him.

**DON.** No! Bad idea.

**SIS.** Please *go get* him.

**DON** *(intensely)*. No-o-o-o, think about it, Mom MAY BE ALL WE HAVE LEFT!

**MOM.** He won’t be long.

**SIS.** Mom, why can’t you just go get him?

**DON.** YEAH, GREAT IDEA. And when she’s gone, we’re slave children to the crazy hoe-murdering farmer, did ya ever think of that?

*(DAD reappears with JOE HOEFINGERS.)*

**MOM.** See kids, here he comes. Now that wasn’t long, was it?

**DON. MOM.** *(Pause.)* Are you sure that’s a hoe?

**MOM.** I don’t know, sweetheart.

*(SIS notices DON is a little scared.)*

**SIS.** Yeah, with an extra sharp edge for cutting.

**DON.** What?

**MOM.** Cut it out.

*(DAD and JOE HOEFINGERS take a step towards the car and stop to talk again.)*

**SIS.** Don, look, he’s coming over.

**DON.** Mom?

**SIS.** Oh no, he’s bringing the hoe.

**MOM.** Stop scaring your brother.

**DON.** I’m not scared.

**SIS.** Don, I think he’s missing fingers!!!!!!! Mom, he’s missing fngers!? *(Build.)* HE’S MISSING FINGERS! MOM, NO FINGERS! All of them. No fngers! Don, and he wants to kill us all. Roll up the windows, Mom! *(Build.)* Mom, lock the doors, lock the doors! He wants to kill us all and he’s missing fngers!

*(SIS has climbed on top of DON and the three climax the yelling in a dramatic clinch as MOM shouts over them. DAD and JOE HOEFINGERS arrive at the car.)*

**MOM.** NOBODY IS MISSING ANY FINGERS!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

**“Leaving Iowa” Audition Side #4 – Finding Dad**  
*(Older Mom, Don, Older Sis)*

**OLDER MOM.** Donald, we thought you were coming home for the dinner and for Joey’s birthday, not this, not now. Well, I hope you’re happy, but— *(Sets the box down.)* I have a dinner to prepare.

*(OLDER SIS goes to the box and blows off dust as OLDER MOM begins to exit.)*

**DON.** Mom—

**OLDER SIS.** Wait— *(OLDER MOM stops as OLDER SIS takes an urn out of the box.)* You found him?  
*(They move in, then are still.)*

**DON.** *(To Audience)* My father passed away three years ago, and, well, we’d yet to honor a fairly simple request.

**OLDER MOM.** Good heavens.

**DON.** *(To Audience)* But not without good reason. See, Dad left us the week after Joey was born. Four days to be exact.

**OLDER MOM.** This is all my fault, all my fault.

**DON.** *(To Audience)* So Joey came in when Dad went out, and, well, *(Beat.)* we left him in the basement.

**OLDER MOM.** I just left him down there.

**DON.** Mom, we all did.

**OLDER SIS.** No, Mom, you were helping with Joey.

**OLDER MOM.** No, no, I know, but 8or three years! I could be arrested 8or something like this.

**OLDER SIS.** Mom, you cannot be arrested.

**OLDER MOM.** Well, then humiliated, which is worse. Oh my goodness, why he wanted to be in this thing in that way I’ll never know. *(Upset near tears.)*

**OLDER SIS & DON.** It was cheaper.

*(They start to laugh.)*

**OLDER MOM.** Oh, for heaven’s sake.

**DON.** Or at least unpredictable.

**OLDER MOM.** Now stop it.

*(Laughter.)*

**DON.** So, where was he?

**OLDER MOM.** Oh well, I’d rather ...

**DON.** Oh c’mon.

**OLDER SIS.** It’s fine, just tell us.

**OLDER MOM.** On top of the fuse box.

**OLDER SIS.** Really?

**DON.** Perfect.

**OLDER MOM.** Well, behind the peaches, on a shelf, on top of the fuse box.

**DON.** He spent most of his time down there anyway.

**OLDER SIS.** He loved your peaches.

**OLDER MOM.** OK, that’s it.

*(Light laughter again.)*

**“Leaving Iowa” Audition Side #5 – Aunt Phyllis & Uncle Phil**

*(Aunt Phyllis, Uncle Phil, Older Sis)*

*(OLDER SIS attempts to respond but is steamrolled by UNCLE PHIL and AUNT PHYLLIS. She opens her mouth to talk, but UNCLE PHIL and AUNT PHYLLIS cannot be stopped. AUNT PHYLLIS repeatedly reveals her bursitis pain as she talks: “Bam,” “Oh boy,” etc.)*

**UNCLE PHIL.** Don't worry, not staying, dropping by.

**AUNT PHYLLIS.** Coming in, going out. Need to pick up a compress.

**UNCLE PHIL.** Say, where's Donny?

**AUNT PHYLLIS.** *(imitating).* Where's Donny? Where's Donny? Where's Donny? Like a broken record, drive me to the coo-coo hut. *(Winces and waves hand.)* Bam. OK, ignore that, I'm good, I'm good, damn bursitis. So where's Donny?

**UNCLE PHIL.** Nope, nope, nope, not staying, don't worry, here you go, you know what to do with 'em. *(Hands the dish over.)*

**AUNT PHYLLIS.** They're beans, for Pete's sake, she oughta know.

**UNCLE PHIL.** They're beer battered.

**AUNT PHYLLIS.** She knows they're beans, for crying out loud. *(Winces.)* Bam, oh boy, long day. I'm good.

**UNCLE PHIL.** So, where's our birthday boy? *(Calling out.)* OK, READY OR NOT, HERE WE COME! Wait till you see! Where is he?

**AUNT PHYLLIS.** Where do you think? School, Ding Ding.

**OLDER SIS.** Well, it's Saturday.

**UNCLE PHIL.** OK, let's do this.

**OLDER SIS.** He's 3.

**UNCLE PHIL.** Close your eyes. Close 'em. Close 'em.

**AUNT PHYLLIS.** Do it. Close 'em. You are lucky your Aunt P was there or little Joey would have had a pellet gun. What's a 5-year-old going to do with a pellet gun?

**OLDER SIS.** He's 3.

**UNCLE PHIL.** Hey, I had one. OK, open up! One, two, three.

**OLDER SIS.** Oh my ... A unicycle.

**AUNT PHYLLIS.** Now, this he can have fun with, Uncle Ding Ding.

**UNCLE PHIL.** She's the captain, I'm the cook. Where should we put it?

**AUNT PHYLLIS.** This will keep him going. How old?

**UNCLE PHIL.** Four, Ding Ding, but who's counting?

**OLDER SIS.** Nobody.

**UNCLE PHIL.** I cannot wait to see him on this.

**OLDER SIS.** Me, too.

*(AUNT PHYLLIS tries to move the unicycle.)*

**AUNT PHYLLIS.** Where should we put it? *(Winces at bursitis pain.)* OK, bang, *(Winces.)* there it is. Phil, take it, take it, take it, take it, take it.

**UNCLE PHIL.** Got it, got it, got it. Guess who needs a compress?

**OLDER SIS.** I think we have one.

**AUNT PHYLLIS.** Nope, nope, nope, not staying. I'm fine. Phil, get me a drink.

**UNCLE PHIL.** Got it—guess we're staying. Say, where's Donny?