

# The Surprise

A Comedy By Tanis Galik

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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?