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A Class Day Play for
Girls' Schools

(Female Characters)

Shakespeare Up-to-date

By

ETHELYN SEXTON

(Albert Lea College)

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CHARACTERS

- HAMLET [*who wants to buy an automobile.*]
JAQUES [*who likes to soliloquize.*]
PORTIA [*a college student, daughter of Shylock.*]
OPHELIA [*a market girl in love with Hamlet.*]
OTHELLO [*Moor of Venice, engaged to Portia.*]
TITANIA [*a fairy, first aid to Cupid.*]

SCENE

Driveway near Elsinore Castle. Shrubbery at rear; rustic seat at right. If given indoors, placards reading "Driveway," "Shrubbery," etc., may be hung on improvised material, thus suggesting the Elizabethan stage.

COSTUMES

Costumes are of the plays from which the characters are taken, with the exception of Portia, who may wear middle costume, or any conventional college dress.

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no. 1.

SYNOPSIS

Hamlet, Prince of Denmark, wishes to buy an automobile. Portia, whose father, Shylock, is agent for the Ford, asks the "melancholy Jaques" to introduce her to the Prince, that she may interest him in her father's car.

Portia is engaged to Othello, the Moor of Venice, who is in America selling gondolas; but her ardor for furthering her father's business causes her to devote too much time to Hamlet, who falls violently in love with her.

Ophelia, a pretty market girl, loves Hamlet, but her love is not returned. One day, as she is coming to market with her vegetables, Othello, who is talking with Jacques, hears of Portia's fickleness. In order to console him, Jacques suggests that Othello pretend an affection for Ophelia; thus making Portia jealous.

Othello acts upon this advice and carries on a most successful flirtation with the pretty market girl. But, meanwhile, Hamlet has made Portia forget her vows to Othello, and she promises to elope with him. The plan is overheard by Othello, who is at first shocked. He soon realizes, how-

ever, that he has a deep affection for Ophelia, and does not regret the loss of Portia.

At the place and time appointed for the elopement, Hamlet and Portia find Othello and Ophelia. Explanations ensue and everything is satisfactorily arranged. Portia returns a ring and Othello slips it on Ophelia's finger. All turn in gratitude to Jacques, who has unwittingly brought about this condition of affairs. He, however, turns away in disgust, when Titania enters. She imparts a word of warning to the lovers, and then laughingly consoles Jaques.

SEP 14 1916

Shakespeare Up-to-date

A NONSENSE PLAY FOR FEMALE CHARACTERS.
By ETHELYN SEXTON.

Particularly adapted to girls' schools

[HAMLET is discovered pacing back and forth.]

HAM. To buy or not to buy—that is the question.
Whether 'tis nobler to sit on one's own
front veranda
And watch your neighbors passing by in
autos,
Or take your money from the First
National
And buy a car;
To ride, to speed, to speed—
'Tis a consummation devoutly to be
wished.
To ride, to speed, to *speed*?
Perchance to be arrested—Aye, there's
the rub!
For if perchance I should be pulled for
speeding
Who is there that would come and bail
me out?
Yet if 'twere done when 'twere well
done,
'Twere well 'twere done quickly.

And yet, concerning tires and spark
plugs, chains and carburetors,
I know, alas! so little. Soft, who comes
here?

It is the melancholy Jaques. [*Enter*
JAQUES (R.).]

Greetings, Monsieur Melancholy.
[JAQUES *does not reply.*]

Greetings, sirrah!

[*Aside.*] Methinks he has a lean and
hungry look.

[*To* JAQUES.] I prithee tell me what is
the cause of thy sad aspect?

JAQ. [*Reciting*].

All the world's a stage,
And all the men and women merely
players.

They have their exits and their entrances,
And one man in his time plays many
parts,

His acts being seven ages—

HAM. Oh, cut it out, Jaques; go hire a hall.
I learned all that when I took English
in ————'s class. Listen. I
would a tale unfold.

JAQ. Get busy, then.

HAM. [*melodramatically*]. Jaques, I long to
whizz through space upon the wings
of the wind. I long to break all rec-
ords. [*Dropping his tragic air.*] I
am thinking of buying an automobile.

JAQ. What kind of a car?

HAM. 'Tis that which worries me. Hast thou
a word upon the subject?

JAQ. Here's an advertisement of the _____
that's just about your size. [*Hands
him a leaflet.*]

[HAMLET strolls left and peruses the
leaflet.]

[Enter PORTIA, studying. Looks up and
sees JAQUES.]

POR. Oh, Jaques, can you tell me the theme of
"Adonais"? It was written by Kelly
or Sheets. Last semester I did
learn, but I remember not. [*Sees
HAMLET.*] Who is that?

JAQ. That's Hamlet, Prince of Denmark. He's
got the auto bug.

POR. Auto, did you say? Oh, introduce me,
Jaques. Shylock, my father, is agent
for the Ford. Perhaps it will fall
out that I shall make a sale.

[JAQUES and PORTIA cross to HAMLET.
JAQUES touches HAMLET on the arm and
speaks to HAMLET.]

JAQ. Lady to meet you. This, Hamlet, is
Lady Portia, daughter of Shylock.
She would have pleasant speech with
thee.

POR. The quality of a Ford car is not strained.
 It rambleth right along, whate'er betide.
 It is twice blest.
 It blesseth him that buys and him that
 sells.
 It becomes the chauffeur better than his
 goggles.
 It is enthroned in the heart of the poor
 man.

HAM. Methinks there is much wisdom in her
 sayings.

JAQ. I thought you were talking about buying
 a *car*.

POR. [*To* JAQUES.] Who's doing this? [*To*
 HAMLET.] Shylock, my father, has
 a car even now in his garage. Come,
 I will take you for a little spin
 around the castle grounds.
 [*As they go out* JAQUES *speaks.*]

JAQ. Why not try the Castle Walk? Now for
 a little peace.
 [*He strikes an attitude.*]
 All the world's a stage,
 And all the men and women—
 [*OTHELLO enters and slaps* JAQUES *on*
the back.]

OTH. Salutations, Sir Poet. I am Othello, the
 Moor of Venice, where formerly I
 sold gondolas, but since the war I
 am forced to come to America,

where I am persuading people of refined tastes to purchase beautiful gondolas. What more pleasant on a moonlight night than to glide across the water which ripples and shines—

JAQ. Gondolas! Who wants gondolas?
[*Scornfully.*]

OTH. I have just sold a dozen to _____
School. The maidens will receive gymnasium credits for propelling the swan-like crafts upon the lake. Now, if you don't want to buy one yourself, perchance you can tell me of some one that does.

JAQ. You might get Hamlet to buy one. He was raving around here about an automobile, when along came Portia and took him out in her little old Ford.

OTH. [*Greatly agitated*]. Portia, did you say?
Why, that girl is engaged to me by a hundred and fifty dollar ring.

JAQ. She's evidently engaged to sell Fords for her father.

OTH. [*Wildly*]. And she did love me once, and not without cause. What causeth her to leave me in this manner?

JAQ. Othello, take my advice. Never trust a woman.

- OTH. But she is fair and fairer than that word.
She goeth to the college on the hill
And inside the classic walls of _____
Hall
She learneth wondrous things.
Mistress _____ hath taught her how
to cook, to broil, to sew.
She knoweth English, German, French.
- JAQ. Who taught her how to win the hearts
of men?
- OTH. Miss _____ or Miss _____, I know
not which.
- JAQ. See here, Othello, let me give you a
little advice.
Would you like to know how to make
Portia fairly dote on you?
- OTH. Speak, I am bound to hear.
- JAQ. Did you ever hear of Ophelia?
- OTH. Ophelia? In love with Hamlet, is she
not?
- JAQ. You are right. But Hamlet is a flirta-
tious fellow; he doesn't care for
Ophelia. Now see here. You carry
on a little flirtation with Ophelia.
Then Hamlet will be jealous and
Portia will be jealous, and you'll all
live happy ever after.
- OTH. Are you sure it will work?
- JAQ. Of course; it always does.

OTH. Bring forth the fair Ophelia!

JAQ. She'll be going by with vegetables to
market pretty soon. Step to one
side and listen when she comes.
There she is.

[*Both step to rear (R.) as OPHELIA
enters. She carries a basket of vegetables
on one arm. As she speaks, tears leaves
from cabbages.*]

OPH. He loves me! He loves me not! Oh,
Hamlet! Hamlet!

JAQ. Isn't she good looking?

OTH. In sooth she is passing fair.

OPH. Here's radishes; they are good with salt
on; spinach, nice with olive oil, and
all from ———— own garden.

[*JAQUES and OTHELLO step forth.*]
Good morning, sirs; what would you buy
today?

JAQ. Let me present you to the Moor of
Venice.

[*OPHELIA courtesys*].

OTH. May I perchance go walk a way with
you?

OPH. Surely, sir, and you may carry my basket.

OTH. I will on one condition.

OPH. And what is that?

OTH. That you will give me a bouquet from
out your basket.

OPH. Gladly. [*Pins onions on his coat.*]

OTH. All the perfumes of Arabia can not
sweeten this little herb.

[*He takes her basket and they go out
(L.)*]

JAQ. At last a little peace is mine. Let me
see, where was I? Oh, yes.

They have their exits and their entrances,
And one man in his time plays many
parts—

[*Voices of HAMLET and PORTIA heard
outside. They enter.*]

POR. Sir Hamlet, how likest thou the Ford?

HAM. I like it well, fair damsel, and may I
make bold to say I like the driver,
too? [*JAQUES exits.*]

POR. Let's talk business, Hamlet. What dost
thou think of the engine?

HAM. [*Perplexed*]. I do not know; I did not
see the engine. Methinks the engine
is missing.

POR. Stupid! How did it sound?

HAM. Oh, Portia, I listened not to the engine,
but to the music of your voice.

POR. Be sensible, Hamlet. Didst like the car-
buretor?

HAM. [*Puzzled*]. The carburetor? Oh, yes, the carburetor doth suit me well.

POR. And tell me of the spark plugs.

HAM. The spark plugs do work well, but not so well as I hope they will sometime.

POR. Hamlet, really you must remember that Othello, the Moor of Venice, hath given me this ring.

HAM. Yes, fair Portia, but also heed my words. Thou goest to a women's college and know not men. For over the portals all men read, "Abandon hope, all ye who enter here."

POR. Oh, yes, but the rude men do not enter; they sing beneath our windows when teachers lie asleeping.

HAM. Yet I protest you know not men, not such men as I. Now *I* would never stand outside the window. I would walk into the parlor.

POR. But the parlor throngs with maidens who dwell, you know, within the walls of the "Mansion of Aching Hearts."

HAM. I fear not girls. For your sake, dearest Portia, I would brave even these.

POR. But suppose the dean of women should come in?

HAM. I would salute her fair, and she would not say me nay.

- POR. I know, then, Hamlet, that thou art truly brave—but still there is Othello.
- HAM. We should manifest concern about Othello!
- [*They go out (R.). Enter OTHELLO and OPHELIA, talking earnestly.*]
- OTH. Oh, Ophelia, would that I could take you from this life of toil! But I am betrothed to Portia.
- OPH. [*Sighing*]. I know not why I am so sad. It wearies me; you say it makes you tired.
- OTH. Cheer up, fair one; everything will come out all right; of that I am assured. But wait, I hear voices. Let us wait until those approaching shall pass by.
[*They step behind the shrubbery. HAMLET and PORTIA enter (R.)*]
- HAM. Since thou, fair Portia, hast given me thy word that thou wilt marry me, let's flee away and seek out a justice of the peace.
- POR. But what will Shylock, my father, say?
- HAM. Shylock will be joyful. No longer will he be compelled to pay out ducats to the college. No longer will he receive accounts from soda parlors which call for ducats—ever more for ducats.

POR. But there's the ring Othello gave me.

HAM. Send it back to him by parcel post. And now go pack your suit case and we will hie to the corner of ———, there to catch the jitney which flit-teth swift as ever swallow flew. .

POR. Oh, that jitney is ever behind the hour. Come, now, I will not go unless thou buyest a Ford, and thus we will depart.

HAM. So be it, gentle maiden; thou hast me in thy horsepower. Now let us hence! I'll pay my sheckels for the Ford while thou dost pack thy suit case. Then we will meet anon at this place.

POR. Adieu, my lord.
[HAMLET kneels and kisses her hand; then goes out (L.). PORTIA goes out (R.). OTHELLO and OPHELIA come down stage.]

OTH. [*Greatly agitated*]. That was the most unkindest cut of all. Inconstancy, thy name is woman. But come, dry those tears. Sweet are the uses of adversity, for now, Ophelia, I can truly say, I love you.

OPH. Hamlet, Prince of Denmark, fare thee well.

[*They embrace, and do not see* JAQUES, *who enters (L.), speaking*].

- JAQ. Greetings, friends. [*They do not hear him.*] Greetings. I say, Othello, don't you think you are overdoing things?
- [OTHELLO *turns and seizes* JAQUES *by the hand*].
- OTH. Jaques, you have made me the happiest man in the state.
- JAQ. I don't get you. What's the Big Idea?
- OTH. Why, don't you see— [*Enter* PORTIA (R.) *and* HAMLET (L.), *clad in automobile outfit, carrying suit cases, etc. They stop, amazed.*] Well, Portia, what hast thou to say?
- POR. I hast nothing to say except here's your old ring.
- [*She crosses and stands by* HAMLET. OTHELLO *takes the ring and puts it on* OPHELIA'S *finger.*]
- JAQ. And one man in his time plays many parts.
Oh, day and night, but this is wondrous strange!
- HAM. Jaques, you are a born match-maker. I owe you more than tongue can tell.
- POR. [*Going to* JAQUES]. And I, too, for Hamlet really bought a car, you know.

OPH. [*Going to JAQUES*]. Oh, Jaques, thou
hast turned my night to day.

JAQ. All I have to say is "All the world's a
stage—"

*[All show signs of distress and turn
away. Enter TITANIA. She dances
across the stage and looks at each couple
and then at JAQUES, and laughingly says].*

TIT. What fools these mortals be.
To each a word of warning I would give.
With attention let each one heed.

[Turns to JAQUES].

Jaques, be not so amazed,
In the game of love there are no rules,
And Cupid, taking random aim
Of wise men, often maketh fools.

[Turns to PORTIA].

Portia, thou art a fickle lass,
But now you must be good and true.
Hamlet, let her not in lightsome mood
Sometime give back a ring to you.

[Turns to OPHELIA].

Ophelia, from your story let all maids a
lesson take.

OPH. I pray you, Titania, tell me what it is.

TIT. Waste not tears on hopeless love.
For love that's cold weep not nor sigh;
For every heart another beats,
True love will soon come riding by.

[To all.]

And now to the wedding
Let us all away.
Lead, Hamlet, and, Othello,
I'll follow—if I may.

[The two couples pass off the stage bowing to TITANIA as they leave. JAQUES stands alone, with his head bent. TITANIA looks at him laughing, then running, seizes his hand and drags him off.]

[CURTAIN.]

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