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Dramatic Publishing



A Play In One Act

Victoria at 18

BY
TIM KELLY



THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY



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TIM KELLY

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(VICTORIA AT 18)

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VICTORIA AT EIGHTEEN

A Play in One Act

For Seven Women, Two Men

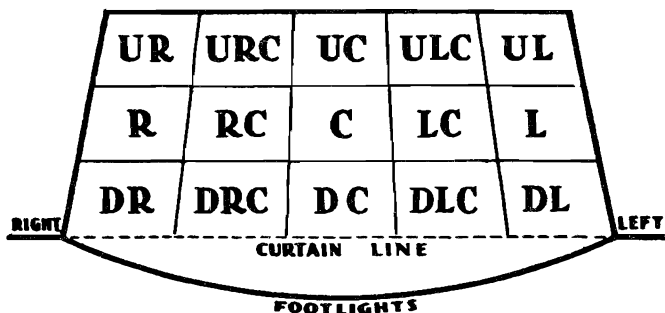
CHARACTERS

LADY CONSTANCE	Lady-In-Waiting to Victoria
ANNE	Another Lady-In-Waiting
VICTORIA	Queen of England and Ireland, age 18
BARONESS LEHZEN	Victoria's governess
DUCHESS OF KENT	Victoria's mother
FLORA	Another Lady-In-Waiting
ARCHBISHOP	Of Canterbury
LORD CHAMBERLAIN	High-ranking government official
DUCHESS OF NORTHUMBERLAND	Victoria's "supervisor"

Place: Kensington Palace, London

Time: June of 1837

CHART OF STAGE POSITIONS



STAGE POSITIONS

Upstage means away from the footlights, *downstage* means toward the footlights, and *right* and *left* are used with reference to the actor as he faces the audience. R means *right*, L means *left*, U means *up*, D means *down*, C means *center*, and these abbreviations are used in combination, as: UR for *up right*, RC for *right center*, DLC for *down left center*, etc. A territory designated on the stage refers to a general area, rather than to a given point.

NOTE: Before starting rehearsals, chalk off your stage or rehearsal space as indicated above in the *Chart of Stage Positions*. Then teach your actors the meanings and positions of these fundamental terms of stage movement by having them walk from one position to another until they are familiar with them. The use of these abbreviated terms in directing the play saves time, speeds up rehearsals, and reduces the amount of explanation the director has to give to his actors.

SCENE ONE

SETTING: A sitting room, suggested by a handsome arm chair and side table C, another chair DR; another DL. Entrance is L. Exit into other areas is R.

AT RISE: LADY CONSTANCE, one of Victoria's Ladies-of-the-Household, is at the side table, stacking small volumes which she takes from a box on the floor.

CONSTANCE (talking to herself). So many diaries! I'd never be able to fill a page! Wonder how a person starts out? (She is tempted. Picks up one, glances at the door — no one is coming — half opens the diary and then compresses her lips firmly, shuts the book and puts it down.) No. Never!

(LADY ANNE enters L. She carries an assortment of dolls. Like CONSTANCE, she's an attractive young girl in her teens. Between them there's youthful camaraderie.)

ANNE. Talking to yourself again, Lady Constance? Remember what dear Princess Vicky said. "Ladies-of-the-Household must keep their opinions to themselves."

CONSTANCE. When I talk to myself I don't expect people to eavesdrop, Lady Anne. (Excited.) Now that Princess Vicky is eighteen, she'll turn the world upside down.

ANNE. What an odd thing to say.

CONSTANCE. She's moving into her own apartments, isn't she? That's earth-shaking. Her mother, the duchess, is furious.

ANNE. We mustn't gossip.

CONSTANCE. Princess Vicky has always slept in her mother's bedchamber, side by side, mother and daughter. Today, she ordered her cot removed.

ANNE. That had to happen sooner or later, Lady Constance.

CONSTANCE. Must be wonderful for Princess Vicky to feel some independence. She's known so little of it.

ANNE (ponders). I suppose the Duchess of Kent has reason to be upset. They say she was hoping to become regent if the king died while Princess Vicky was still under age.

CONSTANCE. Oh! Look who's gossiping!

ANNE. Making an observation and gossiping are two different things.

CONSTANCE (shrugs, doesn't believe the comment). If you say so, Lady Anne. (Shift in mood.) What are you going to do with the dolls?

ANNE. I thought she might want them.

CONSTANCE. Dolls — at eighteen!

ANNE. These were her favorites.

VICTORIA'S VOICE. Lady Constance, where's my music box?

(ANNE and CONSTANCE face R. VICTORIA enters. From the instant of her appearance until the last, we are conscious of high intelligence and a strong will. At the moment, she's vivacious, warm.)

ANNE. Music box, Princess? Which one?

VICTORIA. The one Uncle Leopold sent from Antwerp. The one with the cupids.

CONSTANCE. I think your mother has it locked away.

VICTORIA. I want it in my room. It plays such a lovely melody.

CONSTANCE. I'll get the key from your mother.

VICTORIA. It mustn't be locked up. Music needs to breathe.

(They laugh, delighted with VICTORIA's lightheartedness.)

ANNE. Princess, I don't believe I've ever seen you so happy.

VICTORIA. I've never been eighteen before. That's the secret.

(BARONESS LEHZEN enters L. She carries a large lamp.)

BARONESS. I believe this lamp will prove useful, Princess.

VICTORIA. Lamps usually are useful, Baroness Lehzen.

BARONESS. For reading, I mean. It throws splendid illumination.

VICTORIA. I'm not thinking about lamps at the moment. The draperies in the bed chamber -- I don't like them.

BARONESS. Oh, dear, that presents a problem. Your budget allowance is quite small for household needs.

ANNE. If there's no money for new draperies, perhaps we can dye some old ones.

VICTORIA. Like this dress I'm wearing. It's been dyed. I must say the gentlemen who control the purse strings are inclined to be --

CONSTANCE. Conservative, Princess?

VICTORIA. No, not conservative. Stingy. (ALL laugh.)

ANNE. What about these dolls? (VICTORIA crosses, inspects one.)

VICTORIA. They were good friends. A long time ago. I'll keep one or two around for memory's sake. (Smiles.) Find a

suitable place for them please, Lady Anne. (ANNE takes the dolls and unobtrusively moves about trying placement effects.)

CONSTANCE. All your diaries are here.

VICTORIA. You didn't peek, did you? (CONSTANCE is shocked that VICTORIA would even think such a thing.)

CONSTANCE. Princess!

VICTORIA (smiles). I'm sure you didn't. Put the one I'm using by my bed, will you, Lady Constance? You must lock away the others and bring the key to me.

CONSTANCE (returning the diaries to the box.) Some day these diaries will be famous. (She bows slightly and exits with the box.)

VICTORIA. At the moment I'm more concerned with another pair of drapes. Fame will have to wait.

BARONESS. I do wish I could find your first book of German verbs. I can't imagine where I've misplaced it.

VICTORIA. If you never find it, Baroness Lehzen, I shan't be disappointed.

BARONESS. That's why I thought this lamp would be so useful. You could study your German verbs before you sleep.

VICTORIA. I shall enjoy reading in bed, but I won't be reading German verbs.

(More laughter. DUCHESS OF KENT, Victoria's mother, enters L. She's a clever, if unsubtle, woman, well-schooled in the art of palace politics and most unhappy about VICTORIA's new apartments. She has overheard the exchange about the lamp.)