

# *THIRTEENTH NIGHT*

Juliet Charles

## **SYNOPSIS:**

The time is the early 1980s. At the community hall of the local parish, the cast of a theatre company are gathered to rehearse their latest endeavour.

Ages are approximate.

<b>CAST:</b>			<b>AGES</b>
<b>DONALD:</b>	Director	English or cultured Australian accent; smooth and sleazy	45
<b>KATIE:</b>	'Prima Donna'	Experienced actress; bitchy and intolerant	33
<b>GLORIA:</b>	Stage manager	Keen and stage-struck	36
<b>SIMONE:</b>	'Ingénue'	Pretty and vacuous	20
<b>CRAIG:</b>	Actor	Brilliant cartoonist and poor actor; speaks with a slight lisp	22
<b>DI:</b>	'Kitchen Queen'	Bossy, self-important	49
<b>REV. NIGEL:</b>	Vicar	Fussy and old-fashioned but with a sense of humour	53

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**Bayside U3A Writers Group, Victoria, 2019**

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First version: Play, 1990

Second version: Radio play, 2019

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SCENE: AT THE COMMUNITY HALL OF THE LOCAL PARISH.  
TIME: CONTINUOUS

\*AUDIO – MUSIC –SHAKESPEAREAN SONNET, PREFERABLY WITH LUTE:

**DONALD:** (Claps loudly) Listen up please. That was terrible! Do you people realise we've been rehearsing for four weeks? This is our thirteenth night!

**KATIE:** Yes! We go on next Friday! Don, it's been really hard rehearsing in the church hall while *our theatre's* being renovated.

**DONALD:** I know. And what's **worse** is having to use the hall for **all** of our performances!

**ALL:** (Groan, then ad lib: 'oh no', 'bad luck', 'damn', etc)

**DONALD:** But you know (theatrically) '*The Play's the Thing*'! Moving on, Sandy's ill and Gloria's replacing her as stage manager. And because Harry's got tonsillitis, I told Sam, Dave, Greg and Steve to take the night off.

**KATIE:** You've left out Doug and Barry.

**DONALD:** Thanks. We'll do all the scenes with the *boys* tomorrow night. Now, scene 5 again, from Simone's entrance. Craig, when you enter, don't creep on – be masterful! Gloria! Sit beside me and take notes. (aside to Gloria – stage whisper) Oh Gloria! I don't know if Craig's got it. He's very wooden – but keen! And he designs all the programs – a brilliant artist! (sighs) I had to elevate him to the role of Prince.

(Aloud) Katie, try to be a little more regal here.

**KATIE:** (miffed). I thought I was being regal. I was also attempting to show her sensitive side.

**DONALD:** Well I want more aloofness.

**KATIE:** (tightly) Certainly, if that's the way you see it.

- DONALD:** Right. Simone, you have to react against Katie's authority. You are young and inexperienced. You've got to show a desire to please.
- KATIE:** **(hisses an aside to Craig).** Craig! From what I hear of our little heroine that shouldn't be too difficult!
- CRAIG:** **(giggles)**
- SIMONE:** **(meekly)** Okay Don.
- DONALD:** Start from half way down the page. And Craig, don't fidget – you're a man, not a school-boy!
- CRAIG:** **(giggles nervously).** I'll try
- DI:** Don, are we breaking for coffee now? The kettle's boiled.
- DONALD:** **(Sighing)** I suppose we might as well. Thanks Di. **(aside to Gloria)** We could do without Di – she's a pain!
- DI:** **(loudly)** Who's having tea or coffee? Hands up for tea – and coffee? Right. Come and get it.

**\*AUDIO: SOUND OF CHATTER, CLINKING OF SPOONS AND CUPS, IN BACKGROUND, FADING**

- KATIE:** Hello Gloria.
- GLORIA:** Kath, how are you? Haven't seen you in ages. Are you still working for Trimble and Greech?
- KATIE:** Yes. By the way, I call myself Katie now. It's more *professional*.
- GLORIA:** Yes, I noticed Don calling you Katie. I don't think I could get used to that! At secretarial school you were always Kath.
- KATIE:** I'm sure you will. Everyone else has.

- GLORIA:** I'll try! When Don asked me last week to stage-manage, I was so thrilled – didn't realise I'd see you here.
- KATIE:** How do you know Donald?
- GLORIA:** Oh, he sold Brian and me a terrific insurance scheme. Don knew Brian from when they both worked at Humphrey Newman.
- KATIE:** Donald's doing **very well** from what I gather. He's put an extension on their house and his wife Tracey's only working part-time. She's a **lovely** girl isn't she?
- GLORIA:** **(in a bored tone)** Is she? I haven't met her yet.
- KATIE:** You'd like her. She and Donald are *devoted* to each other.
- GLORIA:** **(unenthusiastically)** Really? That's great.
- KATIE:** And what about you Gloria? Have you done any acting?
- GLORIA:** God no! I'd die! But I thought this was a good way to get involved – **(sighs)** Brian's away a lot. Didn't you marry Clive Swinden?
- KATIE:** We split up six months ago.
- GLORIA:** I'm sorry, I had no idea! Do you want your coffee?
- KATIE:** Yes, but I'll get it. **(lowers her voice).** I'll just wait for the blonde bimbo to finish stuffing her face before I go into the kitchen. What a talentless air-head!
- GLORIA:** **(giggles uncertainly).** Do you think so? I thought Simone was rather good. And she can't be *that* stupid – isn't she doing Arts at Monash?
- KATIE:** **(sarcastically)** Right. Anyway, I've seen trained seals perform better.

**GLORIA:** I haven't had the experience to judge. I've seen you in heaps of things though – you're fantastic. I don't know how you remember all those lines!

**KATIE:** I've been with this group for about ten years – I **have** done a **few** plays .

**GLORIA:** Excuse me Kath – er, Katie, I'm going over to speak to Don.

**\*AUDIO: MUSIC TO BREAK SCENE – AS BEFORE –SHAKESPEAREAN SONNET**

**GLORIA:** I'm really enjoying this Don. I've made a list of all the props. I'm getting the hang of it.

**DONALD:** You're doing fine Gloria.

**GLORIA:** **(rather coolly)** I can see how close you are to Katie. **(insincerely)** I think it's **lovely** to see people giving each other little hugs!

**DONALD:** **(flusters)** Err, well we've known each other for ages. We're very good friends!

**GLORIA:** **(slyly)** hmmmmm. Anyhooose ... Don, I'd **really like** to go over the script with you. Can you come over Saturday afternoon? – the house will be quiet. **(sighs)** Brian's away – again - and Kylie's at guide camp. **(flirtatiously)** I can even open a bottle of vino!

**DONALD:** **(warmly).** That might be a good idea. But I don't know what Tracey's planned. **(sexily)** How about I give you a bell tomorrow, 'Fair Lady' ?

**GLORIA:** **(giggles, then quietly)** Fabulous! I'll be home in the morning. **(more loudly).** I'm just going over to speak with Craig.

**\*AUDIO: MUSIC TO BREAK SCENE – AS BEFORE – SHAKESPEAREAN SONNET**

**(to Craig).** Gosh you're clever Craig! Don said you're a terrific cartoonist. Oh! Is that him? What a brilliant caricature **(laughs)** You've got his nose just right! How long have you been doing this?

**CRAIG:** Ages. I've done the programs and posters for the last six shows. This is my first real acting part though.

**GLORIA:** I think you're really good! Don's a bit hard on you though. After all, you're only 18 aren't you?

**CRAIG:** I'm 22. Anyway, Don knows what he's doing. I'm working on the voice - I'm still adjusting to having my braces off. **(hisses)** Did you see Don and Simone over in the corner? He just put his arms around her waist! Do you think? ...

**GLORIA:** **(huffily)** No of course not! Don would obviously prefer *mature* women!

**\*AUDIO: MUSIC TO BREAK SCENE – AS BEFORE – SHAKESPEAREAN SONNET**

**SIMONE:** Don I'm sorry I didn't get that scene right. I'm a bit intimidated by Katie. She's so good - I hope you'll be patient.

**DONALD:** **(smoothly)** Don't worry about Katie, love. I'm directing, not her. You're doing a fantastic job but you need to project your voice a bit more. **(more quietly and sexily)**. Listen sweetie, can you stay back a bit tonight? We might go over that scene when everyone's gone home.

**SIMONE:** Well, I've got Uni tomorrow and Dad's picking me up.

**DONALD:** **(wheedling)** Just for half an hour or so. Tell your Dad that I'll drop you off.

**SIMONE:** Ok, it's really good of you Don **(changes to a sexier voice)** As long as we stick to rehearsing – **(giggles)**

**DONALD:** **(smoothly)** Of course! **(purring):** *'If music be the food of love, play on'*

- SIMONE:** Sorry?
- DONALD:** Look out, here comes Di
- DI:** **(in a loud voice)** Excuse me everybody, could I just say a few words? Would it be at all possible for people to empty the rubbish bins when they're full? And *please* use ashtrays instead of saucers for your cigarettes. And REMEMBER – the orange spoon is for coffee and the green one is for sugar! Thank you. And it would help if EVERYONE rinsed their own coffee cups.
- KATIE:** **(aside to Craig).** Craig - who asked the stupid cow to come down in the first place! We can get our own bloody coffee.
- CRAIG:** **(confidentially)** Since her dopey husband ran off with Edwina Fairweather, she doesn't know what to do with herself. She's got no children to think about.
- KATIE:** Think? She's incapable of thought. She doesn't have a brain.
- CRAIG:** I know what she needs Katie! A jolly good sc ...
- KATIE:** **(cuts in).** Craig! Don't be disgusting. You're a grubby little school-boy! Grow up!
- CRAIG:** **(Sniggers)**
- DI:** **(loud voice).** Sorry people, if you'd just bear with me for another moment. The tickets are selling **very slowly**. Tell your friends, family, work mates. I've got some lovely posters here – our artistic Craig's creation! Take some home and by Monday, I hope you'll all have big ticket sales.
- KATIE:** Kind of you Di, but I'd just like to remind you, and everyone else, that my phone number is the one listed for ordering tickets – you can get them through me. I don't believe that situation's changed has it Di?

**DI:** (A little crushed but undaunted) No – but I just think people need to be reminded to Sell, Sell, Sell!

**DONALD:** (wearily). Thank you Di and Katie. Now, Simone, can I get you to ... (voice fading out)

**\*AUDIO: MUSIC TO BREAK SCENE – AS BEFORE – SHAKESPEAREAN SONNET**

**KATIE:** (aside to Craig). I can't stand it, Craig! Who does she think she is? I'm the bloody President!! And that damned yappy little dog she insists on bringing. It bit me on the ankle.

**CRAIG:** Katie, check this out! (laughs smuttily)

**KATIE:** Oh Craig, you're *foul*! You can't use that drawing! Get rid of it before Di sees it – you've got that mangy mongrel to a tee! (tries to control laughter). Give it to me, I'll throw it out later.

**DONALD:** (Claps) Everyone, pay attention! Katie, in this scene, remember– you're an aristocrat. Simone – more volume - not quite so squeaky. Craig – you are a PRINCE. Princes take command – they don't look furtively around and pick at their teeth. And can you try not to have your mouth open so much? Remember: (dramatically) '*Some are born great and others have greatness thrust upon them*'. (pause) Oh never mind, let's go!

**\*AUDIO: SOUND OF A DOOR OPENING AND CLOSING**

**REV. NIGEL:** Good evening everyone! Sorry for interrupting. Please go on.

**DONALD:** Hello Reverend. I've given the boys the night off so we're just concentrating on a couple of scenes.

**REV. NIGEL:** Nigel, please! May I have a few words before you resume?

**DONALD:** (resignedly) Of course, by all means.

**REV. NIGEL:** I do urge you to make sure the hall is spic and span after the Saturday night performance, so it's all set up for Sunday school. I'm sorry the boys aren't here. Joan's done an excellent job on their hats - all in different colours - and I was looking forward to seeing them on. Craig – Donald tells me you're now the prince? **(tries not to laugh, but not very successfully)**. I'm sure you'll do very well – a Prince! **(laughs again, trying to regain control)**. Oh, I'm sorry, but I did like you as ...

**DONALD:** **(interrupts)** Rev – uh, Nigel, we'll be rehearsing for a little while yet, so I'll give Simone a lift home. I'll give the boys their hats tomorrow night.

**REV. NIGEL:** Fine Donald. Good luck everyone. Don't be too late Simone.

**SIMONE:** Bye Dad, I won't.

**REV. NIGEL:** And Craig, I know you'll do well as the Prince. **(starts to laugh again)**. As I was going to say before, I did like you as **Sneezy**. I can't wait to see the boys as **dwarves**. Singing with their little coloured hats on! **Snow White** is a wonderful Christmas pantomime and the parents and kiddies are quite excited. **(starts to laugh again)** A Prince, a prince ... **(voice fading out)**

### **\*AUDIO: DOOR OPENING AND SHUTTING**

**PAUSE:**

**DONALD:** **(clears voice loudly, then in a slightly embarrassed and less confident way)** Err, um, right, - Katie and Simone – **(a bit louder and more defiantly)** Witch and **Snow White**, page 41!

**\*AUDIO: MUSIC: 'HI HO, HI HO, IT'S OFF TO WORK WE GO' FROM 'SNOW WHITE'**

**THE END**