

Level 2 Acting: Grade 4 Duologue

Titles in Level 2 Acting: Grade 4 Duologue

Time and the Conways
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Autumn of '39

Time and the Conways

CAROL and HAZEL are at a party in their home, celebrating their sister Kay's 21st birthday. They leave the party to hunt in a dressing up box for 'charade' costumes.

CAROL: (*Gasping but triumphant*) I've found -- the box -- with all the false whiskers and things in --

HAZEL: (*Triumphantly*) I knew it hadn't been thrown away.

CAROL: Nobody'd dare to throw it away. (*Holds it out, with lid open*) Look! (*HAZEL makes a grab at it*) Don't snatch!

HAZEL: (*Not angrily*) Well, I must look, mustn't I, idiot? (*They both, like children, eagerly explore the contents of the box*) Bags I this one. (*She fishes out a large moustache*) Ooo -- and this... (*Fishes out very bulbous false nose*)

CAROL: (*Unselfishly*) All right, but don't take all the good ones Hazel. Kay and Madge will want some. I think Kay ought to have first choice. After all, it's her birthday -- and you know how she adores charades. Mother won't want any of these because she'd rather look grand, wouldn't she? Spanish or Russian or something. What are you doing?

(*HAZEL has turned aside to fasten on the nose and moustache, and now has managed it, though they are not very secure. She now turns around*)

HAZEL: (*In a deep voice*) 'Good morning, good morning.'

CAROL: (*With a scream of delight*) Mr Pennyman! You know, Hazel, at the paper shop? The one who hates Lloyd George and wags his head very slowly all the time he tells you Lloyd George is no good. Do Mr Pennyman, Hazel. Go on.

HAZEL: (*In her ordinary voice, incongruous*) I couldn't, Carol. I've only seen him about twice. I never go to the paper shop.

(*Alan, their brother, enters the room*)

(*In a fantastic deep voice*) 'I hate Lloyd George.'

(*Alan says that Lloyd George doesn't sound like that and CAROL agrees*)

CAROL: Not the least little bit. He says... *(In an educated voice)* 'I'll tell you what it is – Mish Conway – that there Lloyd George – they're going to be shorry they ever put 'im where they did – shree?' I think I ought to be an actress. They said at school I was the best Shylock they'd ever had!

HAZEL: *(Taking off the nose and moustache)* You can have these if you like Carol.

CAROL: *(Taking them)* Are you sure you don't want them? I don't think you ought to dress up as a silly man because you're so pretty. Perhaps I could wear these and do Mr Pennyman. Couldn't we bring him into the third syllable somehow? Instead of a general. I think we've had enough generals!

(Alan suggests that Kay should play Mr Pennyman and returns to the Party)

HAZEL: Kay ought to be here now, planning everything. And just wait till Mother starts dressing up. She makes more mess than anybody. Look at these! Could you believe people ever wore such ridiculous things!

CAROL: I can just remember Mother in that, can't you?

HAZEL: Of course I can, infant!

CAROL: *(More soberly, looking at a man's old-fashioned coat)* That was Daddy's, wasn't it?

HAZEL: Yes. I believe he wore it – that very holiday.

CAROL: Perhaps we ought to put it away.

HAZEL: I don't think Mother would mind – now.

CAROL: Yes she would. And I know I would. I don't want anybody to dress up and be funny in the coat father wore just before he was drowned. *(She has now folded the coat, and puts it on the window-seat. Then, as she returns)* I wonder if it's very horrible being drowned.

HAZEL: *(Impatiently)* Oh, don't start that all over again, Carol. Don't you remember how you used to go on asking that – until Mother was furious. You're not a kid any longer, just stop it.

CAROL: Yes – but I was only a kid then.

HAZEL: Well, now that you think you aren't a kid any longer, just stop it.

CAROL: It was the coat that made me remember. You see, Hazel, to be talking and laughing and all jolly, just the same as usual – and then, only half an hour afterwards – to be drowned – it's so horrible. It seemed awfully quick to us – but perhaps to him, there in the water, it may have taken ages –

HAZEL: Oh stop it, Carol. Just when we're having some fun. Why do you do this? I'm not listening. I'm not listening...

By J. B. Priestley