

# RESTORATION DRAMA

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## The School for Scandal

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- ✚ Today, we are going to continue reading and commenting on some passages from Act II which has 3 scenes.
- ❖ Now we will read the *Dramatis Personae*, which talks about the symbolism of character's names, from the book before we start commenting on some extracts.

**P.141** **Dramatis Personae** **IMP.**

list of characters in a play:

- ❖ **Drury Lane Theatre:** a famous London theatre which first opened in 1663, though the present building dates from 1812, the theatre having been twice destroyed by fire.
- ❖ **Sir Peter Teazle:** Most of the people in the play have names that hint at their characters. 'Teazle' combines 'tease' annoy with 'teazle', a plant with a large prickly head.

❖ **Sir Oliver Surface:** The name Surface hints at superficiality or perhaps at hypocrisy, presenting a false surface to the world. This meaning would of course suit Joseph Surface best.

**Crabtree:** name of a wild apple-tree with sour fruit; hence a nickname for a sour, bad-tempered person.

❖ **Snake:** a name implying treachery.

❖ **Sir Harry... Bumper:** A bumper is a large drinking-glass, and the name therefore indicates a heavy drinker. It can also mean anything unusually large.

❖ **Lady Sneerwell:** The name speaks for itself: Lady Sneerwell knows how to treat people with mocking contempt.

❖ **Mrs. Candour:** One who speaks frankly even if her words cause pain.

**Note:** in order to understand some underlined phrases, you can go back to notes and to know the meaning of some difficult words you can turn back to glossary which is arranged according to the alphabetical order.

## Act II, Scene i

### ❖ P. 31+32

*“SIR PET Lady Teazle, Lady Teazle, I’ll not bear it!*

*LADY TEAZ Sir Peter, Sir Peter, you may bear it or not, as you please; but I ought to have my own way in everything, and what’s more, I will too. What though I was educated in the country, I know very well that women of fashion in London are accountable to nobody after they are married. **IMP.***

*SIR PET Very well, ma’am, very well; so a husband is to have no influence, no authority?*

*LADY TEAZ Authority! No, to be sure:- if you wanted authority over me, you should have adopted me, and not married me: I am sure you were old enough.*

*SIR PET Old enough!- ay, there it is! Well, well, Lady Teazle, though my life may be made unhappy by your temper, I’ll not be ruined by your extravagance!*

*LADY TEAZ My extravagance! I’m sure I’m not more extravagant than a woman of fashion ought to be.*

*SIR PET No, no, madam, you shall throw away no more sums on such unmeaning luxury. ‘Slife! to spend as much to furnish your dressing-room with flowers in winter as would suffice to turn the Pantheon into a greenhouse, and give a fete champetre at Christmas.’”*

➤ The speaker is **Sir Peter Teazle**, and the addressee is his wife, **Lady Teazle**. Here, there is a quarrel between Sir Peter Teazle and his young wife, Lady Teazle, because Lady Teazle is very much interested in her appearance, luxury and excessive spending habits. She is an extravagant woman who is from the country. When she marries Sir Peter, she starts to act as aristocratic women who are disobedient to their husbands and spend all their money in buying useless things. Therefore, she wants to be free in her behavior and in everything. Also, she does not to be under her husband's authority because she believes that the authority of men should be on children, not on wives. The main idea is satire on the aristocratic class people who spend all their money uselessly and are interested in their appearances.

- ***All the pages from 32 to 39 are not required.***

## **Act II, Scene ii**

❖ **P. 40**

*“SIR PET Ladies, your most obedient-  
Mercy on me, here is the whole set! a character dead at every word, I suppose.*

**IMP.**

*MRS. CAN I am rejoiced you are come, Sir Peter. They have been so censorious- and Lady Teazle as bad as any one.*

*SIR PET That must be very distressing to you, Mrs. Candour, I dare swear.*

*MRS. CAN Oh, they will allow good qualities to nobody; not even good nature to our friend Mrs. Pursy.*

*LADY TEAZ What, the fat dowager who was at Mrs. Quadrille's last night?*

*MRS. CAN Nay, her bulk is her misfortune;”*

- The speaker is **Sir. Peter Teazle**, and the addressees are **Lady Sneerwell's circle**. Here, Sir Peter comes to the party of Lady Sneerwell because she invites him to attend and then he accepts to come. When he enters, he meets the whole circle of Lady Sneerwell who are Mrs. Candour, Joseph, Lady Teazle, Cabree and Sir Benjamin Backbite. Sir Peter finds them gossiping about other people and laughing at others. So, he starts mocking them because they kill their time by scandalizing and talking ill about others. Then he talks to Mrs. Candour, who gossips a lot about people, mocking her. The main idea is mockery.

**- All the pages 41+42+43+44 are not required.**

## **P. 45**

*“SIR PET I'll be with them directly.*

*I'll get away*

*unperceived.*

*LADY SNEER Sir Peter, you are not going to leave us?*

*SIR PET Your ladyship must excuse me; I'm called away by particular business. But I leave my character behind me.*

**SIR BEN** *Well- certainly, Lady Teazle, that lord of yours is a strange being: I could tell you some stories of him would make you laugh heartily if he were not your husband.*

**LADY TEAZ** *Oh, pray don't mind that; come, do let's hear them."*

➤ Here, when Sir Peter goes out, they immediately start talking ill about him and laughing at him.

### ❖ P. 45+46

**JOS SURF** *Maria, I see you have no satisfaction in this society.*

**MAR** *How is it possible I should? If to raise malicious smiles at the infirmities or misfortunes of those who have never injured us be the province of wit or humour, Heaven grant me a double portion of dulness!*

**JOS SURF** *Yet they appear more ill-natured than they are; they have no malice at heart.*

**MAR** *Then is their conduct still more contemptible; for, in my opinion, nothing could excuse the intemperance of their tongues but a natural and uncontrollable bitterness of mind.*

**JOS SURF** *Undoubtedly, madam; and it has always been a sentiment of mine, that to propagate a malicious truth wantonly is more despicable than to falsify from revenge. But can you, Maria, feel thus for others, and be unkind to me alone? Is hope to be denied the tenderest passion?*

**MAR** *Why will you distress me by renewing this subject?*

**JOS SURF** *Ah, Maria! you would not treat me thus, and oppose your guardian, Sir Peter's will, but that I see that profligate Charles is still a favoured rival.*

**MAR** *Ungenerously urged! But, whatever my sentiments are for that*

*unfortunate young man, be assured I shall not feel more bound to give him up, because his distresses have lost him the regard even of a brother.*

***JOS SURF** Nay, but, Maria, do not leave me with a frown: by all that's honest, I swear-”*

- The speaker is **Joseph**, and the addressee is **Maria**. Here, we can see that Maria is not interested in gossiping and scandals of all; she hates the gossipy circle of Lady Sneerwell. So, Joseph pretend before Maria to be a good person and starts attacking these gossipers even though he is one of them. Then he starts to flirt with Maria and proposes to her, but she refuses him once again. In fact, he wants to marry her for the seek of money, not for love. Joseph notices that Maria still loves and prefers Charles, so he gets angry. Maria's speech shows that Charles is her preferable person. The main idea is hypocrisy of Joseph.

### ❖ P. 46+47

*“**JOS SURF** Nay, but, Maria, do not leave me with a frown: by all that's honest, I swear-*

*[Kneels. -*

*Re-enter LADY TEAZLE behind. -*

*[Aside.] Gad's life, here's Lady Teazle.*

*[Aloud to MARIA.] You must not- no, you shall not- for, though I have the greatest regard for Lady Teazle-*

**MAR** *Lady Teazle!*

**JOS SURF** *Yet were Sir Peter to suspect*

**LADY TEAZ**

*[Coming forward.]*

*What is this, pray? Do you take her for me?- Child, you are wanted in the next room.*

*[Exit MARIA.]*

*What is all this, pray?*

**JOS SURF** *Oh, the most unlucky circumstance in nature! Maria has somehow suspected the tender concern I have for your happiness, and threatened to acquaint Sir Peter with her suspicions, and I was just endeavouring to reason with her when you came in. **IMP.***

**LADY TEAZ** *Indeed! but you seemed to adopt a very tender mode of reasoning- do you usually argue on your knees?*

**JOS SURF** *Oh, she's a child, and I thought a little bombast- but, Lady Teazle, when are you to give me your judgment on my library, as you promised?*

**LADY TEAZ** *No, no; I begin to think it would be imprudent, and you know I admit you as a lover no farther than fashion sanctions."*

- The speaker is **Maria**, and the addressees are both of **Joseph and Lady Teazle**. Here, when Joseph kneels in front of Maria trying to seduce her, Lady Teazle enters suddenly. Then Joseph immediately turns his sense upside down trying to convince Lady Teazle that he is talking to Maria for Lady Teazle's benefits and part. Lady Teazle seems to be surprised because of Joseph's kneeling before Maria, and she starts to



wonder what is the matter that makes him kneel. Then he tries to justify his situation. These lines show how Joseph can change and manipulate his subject and his words. He has the capacity in shifting his words directly. Then main idea is the hypocrisy and manipulation of Joseph.

## Act II, Scene iii

### ❖ P. 48+49

*“SIR OLIV Ha! ha! ha! so my old friend is married, hey?- a young wife out of the country. Ha! ha! ha! that he should have stood bluff to old bachelor so long, and sink into a husband at last!*

*ROW But you must not rally him on the subject, Sir Oliver; 'tis a tender point, I assure you, though he has been married only seven months.*

*SIR OLIV Then he has been just half a year on the stool of repentance!- Poor Peter! But you say he has entirely given up Charles- never sees him, hey?*

*ROW His prejudice against him is astonishing, and I am sure greatly increased by a jealousy of him with Lady Teazle, which he has industriously been led into by a scandalous society in the neighbourhood, who have contributed not a little to Charles's ill name. Whereas the truth is, I believe, if the lady is partial to either of them, his brother is the favourite. **IMP.***

*SIR OLIV Ay, I know there are a set of malicious, prating, prudent gossips, both male and female, who murder characters to kill time, and will rob a young fellow of his good name before he has years to know the value of it. But I am not to be prejudiced against my nephew by such, I promise you! No, no; if Charles has done nothing false or mean, I shall compound for his extravagance.”*

➤ The speaker is **Sir Oliver Surface**, and the addressee is **Mr. Rowley**. Here, it is the first meeting between Sir Oliver who returned back from the East Indies and his friend, Mr. Rowley,

after 15 years old. We see Sir Oliver mocks Sir Peter's marriage and shows his negative view towards marriage comparing it to a stool of repentance. Then they turn to talk about the Surface brothers and about Maria's marriage. Rowley explains that Sir Peter's prejudice against Charles is mainly shown because of rumors spread by scandal mongers that Charles and Lady Teazle are having an affair. Rowley believes that if Lady Teazle has feelings to one of these brothers, it will be Joseph, not Charles. It is clear that rumors effect on Charles' reputation. So, rumors can be deadly sometimes because they change the attitude of person by giving him bad features. The main idea is gossip and rumors and their effects.

## ❖ P. 50

*“SIR OLIV Egad, so he does! Mercy on me, he's greatly altered, and seems to have a settled married look! One may read husband in his face at this distance! - Enter SIR PETER TEAZLE. -*

*SIR PET Ha! Sir Oliver- my old friend! Welcome to England a thousand times!*

*SIR OLIV Thank you, thank you, Sir Peter! and i'faith I am glad to find you well, believe me!*

*SIR PET Oh! 'tis a long time since we met- fifteen years, I doubt, Sir Oliver, and many a cross accident in the time.*

*SIR OLIV Ay, I have had my share. But, what! I find you are married, hey, my old boy? Well, well, it can't be helped; and so- I wish you joy with all my heart!*

*SIR PET Thank you, thank you, Sir Oliver.- Yes, I have entered into- the happy state; but we'll not talk of that now.*

*SIR OLIV True, true, Sir Peter; old friends should not begin on grievances at first meeting. No, no, no [Aside to SIR OLIVER.] Take care, pray, sir.”*

➤ Here, it is the first meeting between **Sir Oliver** and **Sir Peter**. It seems that Sir Peter does not want Sir Oliver to ask to him about his marriage at the first meeting in order not to laugh at him.

إنه الاجتماع الأول بين السير أوليفر والسير بيتر. يبدو أن السير بيتر لا يريد من السير أوليفر أن يسأله عن زواجه في أول اجتماع له حتى لا يضحك عليه.

❖ **P. 18** **IMP.**

*“SIR OLIV Well, so one of my nephews is a wild rogue, hey?”*

*SIR PET Wild! Ah! my old friend, I grieve for your disappointment there; he’s a lost young man, indeed. However, his brother will make you amends; Joseph is, indeed, what a youth should be everybody in the world speaks well of him.*

**IMP.**

*SIR OLIV I am sorry to hear it; he has too good a character to be an honest fellow. Everybody speaks well of him! Psha! then he has bowed as low to knaves and fools as to the honest dignity of genius and virtue.*

*SIR PET What, Sir Oliver! do you blame him for not making enemies?*

*SIR OLIV Yes, if he has merit enough to deserve them.*

*SIR PET Well, well- you’ll be convinced when you know him. ‘Tis edification to hear him converse; he professes the noblest sentiments.*

*SIR OLIV Oh, plague of his sentiments! If he salutes me with a scrap of morality in his mouth, I shall be sick directly. But, however, don’t mistake me, Sir Peter; I don’t mean to defend Charles’s errors: but, before I form my judgment of either of them, I intend to make a trial of their hearts; and my friend Rowley and I have planned something for the purpose.*

*ROW And Sir Peter shall own for once he has been mistaken.*

*SIR PET Oh, my life on Joseph's honour!*

*SIR OLIV Well- come, give us a bottle of good wine, and we'll drink the lads' health, and tell you our scheme.*

*SIR PET Allons, then!*

*SIR OLIV And don't Sir Peter, be so severe against your old friend's son. Odds my life! I am not sorry that he has run out of the course a little: for my part, I hate to see prudence clinging to the green suckers of youth; 'tis like ivy round a sapling, and spoils the growth of the tree."*

➤ The speaker is **Sir Oliver**, and the addressee of **Sir Oliver**.

Here, Sir Peter praises Joseph in front of Sir Oliver because he thinks that Joseph is the best person who deserves his uncle's fortune. In fact, Sir Peter immediately believe what he hears from people that Joseph is a good young man. However, we see that Sir Oliver is wise and clever because he does not believe what he hears, unlike Sir Peter. Sir Oliver decider to disguise as Mr. Premium and Mr. Stanley in order to test his nephews and know their true characteristics by himself. Here, the main idea is disguise.

**- THE END -**