

RESTORATION DRAMA

The School for Scandal

✚ Today, we are going to read and comment on some passages from Act III, scene i.

Note for comments

- ❖ When you want to comment on any passage (extract), you have to mention the dramatic significance which is an analysis of the incidents that lead to this situation with mentioning the previous event, which is mentioned before the extract you are commenting on, in a very brief way.

- ❖ In order to know the dramatic significance of the passage and then mention it in your comment, you have to study the:
 - 1- the language used in the passage.
 - 2- The characters of the passage.
 - 3- The characters' behavior and actions in the passage.

4- The dominated theme (the main idea) of the passage.

Then you have to connect these ideas in a smooth way.

Act III, Scene i

❖ P. 52

“SIR PET Well, then, we will see this fellow first, and have our wine afterwards. But how is this, Master Rowley? I don't see the jet of your scheme.

ROW Why, sir, this Mr. Stanley, whom I was speaking of, is nearly related to them by their mother. He was once a merchant in Dublin, but has been ruined by a series of undeserved misfortunes. He has applied, by letter, since his confinement, both to Mr. Surface and Charles: from the former he has received nothing but evasive promises of future service, while Charles has done all that his extravagance has left him power to do; and he is, at this time, endeavouring to raise a sum of money, part of which, in the midst of his own distresses, I know he intends for the service of poor Stanley.”

- Here, this speech said by **Mr. Rowley** who talks about the real characteristics of the Surface brothers, Charles and Joseph. He says that Mr. Stanley is a real person who does not appear or meet Joseph and Charles. In fact, Sir Oliver disguises as Mr. Stanley in order to test his nephew, Joseph

and to judge his real nature. This means that Mr. Stanley is impersonated by Sir Oliver; he does not personally appear.

❖ **P. 52+53+54**

“ROW Why, sir, I will inform Charles and his brother that Stanley has obtained permission to apply personally to his friends; and, as they have neither of them ever seen him, let Sir Oliver assume his character, and he will have a fair opportunity of judging, at least, of the benevolence of their dispositions: and believe me, sir, you will find in the youngest brother one who, in the midst of folly and dissipation, has still, as our immortal bard expresses it, a heart to pity, and a hand Open as day, for melting charity.” **IMP.**

SIR PET Psha! What signifies his having an open hand or purse either, when he has nothing left to give? Well, well, make the trial, if you please. But where is the fellow whom you brought for Sir Oliver to examine, relative to Charles’s affairs?”

*“SIR PET But, pray, why should you suppose he will speak the truth?
ROW Oh, I have convinced him that he has no chance of recovering certain sums advanced to Charles but through the bounty of Sir Oliver, who he knows is arrived; so that you may depend on his fidelity to his own interests. I have also another evidence in my power, one Snake, whom I have detected in a matter little short of forgery, and shall shortly produce to remove some of your prejudices.”*

- The speaker is **Mr. Rowley**, and the addressee is **Sir Peter Teazle**. Here, they talk about the plan of disguise and how Sir Oliver will discover the real nature of his nephews. Rowley tells Sir Peter that Sir Oliver will disguise as Mr. Stanley to test Joseph and as Mr. Premium to test Charles. We see that Sir Peter starts to talk about Charles badly and how he spends a lot of his money extravagantly. He mocks Charles and is prejudiced against him. However, He defends Charles and prefers him to Joseph. The main idea, here, is disguise.

❖ P. 55

“SIR PET Now then, Sir Oliver, you may have a better opportunity of satisfying yourself than by an old romancing tale of a poor relation: go with my friend Moses, and represent Premium, and then, I’ll answer for it, you’ll see your nephew in all his glory.”

- Here, **Sir Peter Teazle** speaks with **Sir Oliver Surface**. He talks about Charles ironically. He wants to tell Sir Oliver that Charles is a malicious, bad and lost young man.
- ❖ All the pages (56+57+58) have the same idea. They talk about the conversation between Sir Oliver and Mr. Moses. Here, Sir Oliver asks Mr. Moses, who is a Jewish money lender, to teach him how to disguise as a money lender.

Then Mr. Moses gives him some tips and instructions about a money lender.

❖ **P. 56+57**

“MOS Not in the least.

SIR OLIV Well, but how must I talk? there’s certainly some cant of usury and mode of treating that I ought to know.

SIR PET Oh, there’s not much to learn. The great point, as I take it, is to be exorbitant enough in your demands. Hey, Moses?

MOS Yes, that’s a very great point.

SIR OLIV I’ll answer for’t I’ll not be wanting in that. I’ll ask him eight or ten per cent. on the loan, at least.

MOS If you ask him no more than that, you’ll be discovered immediately.

SIR OLIV Hey! what, the plague! how much then?

MOS That depends upon the circumstances. If he appears not very anxious for the supply, you should require only forty or fifty per cent.; but if you find him in great distress, and want the moneys very bad, you may ask double.

SIR PET A good honest trade you’re learning, Sir Oliver!

SIR OLIV Truly I think so- and not unprofitable.

MOS Then, you know, you haven’t the moneys yourself, but are forced to borrow them for him of a friend.

SIR OLIV Oh! I borrow it of a friend, do I?

MOS And your friend is an unconscionable dog: but you can’t help it.”

- There is a conversation between **Mr. Moses**, **Sir Oliver** and **Sir Peter Teazle**. Here, Sir Oliver asks Mr. Moses to educate him some instructions in order to disguise as a Mr. Premium,

a money lender, before Charles. Then Moses starts teaching him how to behave as money lenders because they have their own language and behavior. He says to Sir Oliver that he should be unconscious and greedy for money in front of Charles. He tells him if Charles is in need of some money, the sum of benefit may increase. However, if Charles doesn't need any money, the sum of benefit will be only 40 or 50 percent. In fact, Sir Oliver wants to disguise as Mr. Premium in order to know the real nature of Charles.

❖ **P. 58+59**

“So, child, has Mr. Surface returned with you?”

MAR *No, sir; he was engaged.*

SIR PET *Well, Maria, do you not reflect, the more you converse with that amiable young man, what return his partiality for you deserves?*

MAR *Indeed, Sir Peter, your frequent importunity on this subject distresses me extremely- you compel me to declare, that I know no man who has ever paid me a particular attention whom I would not prefer to Mr. Surface.*

SIR PET *So- here's perverseness! No, no, Maria, 'tis Charles only whom you would prefer. 'Tis evident his vices and follies have won your heart.*

MAR *This is unkind, sir. You know I have obeyed you in neither seeing nor corresponding with him: I have heard enough to convince me that he is unworthy my regard. Yet I cannot think it culpable, if, while my understanding severely condemns his vices, my heart suggests pity for his distresses.*

***SIR PET** Well, well, pity him as much as you please; but give your heart and hand to a worthier object.*

***MAR** Never to his brother!*

***SIR PET** Go, perverse and obstinate! But take care, madam; you have never yet known what the authority of a guardian is: don't compel me to inform you of it. ▮*

***MAR** I can only say, you shall not have just reason. 'Tis true, by my father's will, I am for a short period bound to regard you as his substitute; but must cease to think you so, when you would compel me to be miserable.*

***SIR PET** Was ever man so crossed as I am, everything conspiring to fret me! I had not been involved in matrimony a fortnight, before her father, a hale and hearty man, died, on purpose, I believe, for the pleasure of plaguing me with the care of his daughter. But here comes my helpmate! She appears in great good humour. How happy I should be if I could tease her into loving me, though but a little!" ▮*

- Here, there is a quarrel between **Maria** and her guardian, **Sir Peter Teazle**. Sir Peter still convinces Maria to marry Joseph. Maria refuses to marry him telling Sir Peter that his insisting on marrying Joseph annoys and teases her very much. That is why Sir Peter gets angry with her because she is still in love with Charles. Then he starts to describe Charles as a vicious, bad and dissipated man. He is prejudiced against him. Although Maria changes her mind a little when

she hears rumors about the relationship between Charles and Lady Teazle, she still prefers Charles to Joseph. So, Sir Peter starts to scold and frighten her in order to follow his order and to leave Charles. After that, we can see another face or character of Maria which is her challenge against Sir Peter for the seek of her happiness. Here, we can notice that Sir Peter has no authority over his ward, Maria. The main idea is the lack of authority of parents over their daughter.

- ❖ All the pages from 60 till 63 talks about a quarrel between Sir Peter and his wife. Here, we will see the lack of authority of men over their wives at that times.

❖ P. 60

“LADY TEAZ Lud! Sir Peter, I hope you haven’t been quarrelling with Maria? It is not using me well to be ill humoured when I am not by.

SIR PET Ah, Lady Teazle, you might have the power to make me good humoured at all times.

LADY TEAZ I am sure I wish I had; for I want you to be in a charming sweet temper at this moment. Do be good humoured now, and let me have two hundred pounds, will you?

SIR PET Two hundred pounds; what, an’t I to be in a good humour without paying for it! But speak to me thus, and i’faith there’s nothing I could refuse you. You shall have it; but seal me a bond for the repayment.

LADY TEAZ Oh, no- there- my note of hand will do as well.

SIR PET And you shall no longer reproach me with not giving you an independent settlement. I mean shortly to surprise you: but shall we always live thus, hey?

LADY TEAZ If you please, I'm sure I don't care how soon we leave off quarrelling, provided you'll own you were tired first."

- Here, while **Sir Peter** was fighting with **Maria**, his wife, **Lady Teazle**, enters. Then he also starts to quarrel with his wife. Here, we see that he has no authority over his wife.

❖ P. 63

"SIR PET I have done with you, madam! You are an unfeeling, ungrateful- but there's an end of everything. I believe you capable of everything that is bad. Yes, madam, I now believe the reports relative to you and Charles, madam. Yes, madam, you and Charles are, not without grounds-

LADY TEAZ Take care, Sir Peter! you had better not insinuate any such thing! I'll not be suspected without cause, I promise you.

SIR PET Very well, madam! very well! a separate maintenance as soon as you please. Yes, madam, or a divorce! I'll make an example of myself for the benefit of all old bachelors. Let us separate, madam.

LADY TEAZ Agreed! agreed! And now, my dear Sir Peter, we are of a mind once more, we may be the happiest couple, and never differ again, you know: ha! ha! ha! Well, you are going to be in a passion, I see, and I shall only interrupt you- so, bye! bye! [Exit.

SIR PET

Plagues and tortures! can't I make her angry either! Oh, I am the most miserable fellow! But I'll not bear her presuming, to keep her temper: no! she may break my heart, but she shan't keep her temper." **IMP.**

- Here, it is a quarrel between **Sir Peter Teazle** and **Lady Teazle**. We see that he cannot endure his wife's behavior anymore. He is very annoyed because his wife is not obedient to him. She is extravagant woman. He accuses her of having an affair with Charles Surface because he hears that from other people. Then Lady Teazle asks him to give her an evidence in order to prove this. Here we see that he has no authority upon his wife. He wasn't able to tease her at all. The main idea is the lack of men's authority upon wives.

- THE END -