

# *Inside*OUT

## Charley's Aunt

*Just when  
you thought  
classic comedy  
was safe...*



**BY BRANDON THOMAS | DIRECTED BY LARRY HECHT**

PRODUCING PARTNERS: ISABELLE CLARK AND DIANA & MIKE KINSEY

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# InsideOUT

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# Synopsis

## Act I

It is 1892, St. Olde's College, Oxford, England. Jack Chesney and Charley Wykeham are in love with the niece and ward (Kitty and Amy) of Stephen Spettigue. Charley's aunt, whom he has never met, is arriving from Brazil so they invite the ladies for lunch. Jack's father, Sir Francis Chesney shows up unexpectedly and stays to lunch on the prospect of wooing Charley's aunt (Donna Lucia d'Alvadorez) because he knows that she's rich. At the last minute, Charley receives a cable saying his aunt is delayed, which ruins the boys' plan unless they find a suitable replacement for her. They manage to coerce their friend Lord Fancourt Babberley to play Charley's aunt and chaperone the lunch. "Babbs" agrees and lunch is set.

## Act II

After lunch, Sir Francis proposes marriage to the disguised "Babbs", but is refused. The real Donna Lucia finally arrives with her ward. It quickly becomes apparent that someone is impersonating her and she assumes a false identity. After a series of blunders and mishaps, the boys finally propose to the girls, who accept, but Kitty must have Mr. Spettigue's consent in writing. Fearing he will not simply give it, they beg "Babbs" to continue his charade and woo the letter out of Mr. Spettigue.

## Act III

"Babbs" relents and is forced to continue pretending to be the widowed Donna Lucia in order to help his friends. He agrees to marry Spettigue if Spettigue will write the letter. When Mr. Spettigue's engagement is announced, Jack confesses the entire charade. The boys are eventually forgiven their deception and everyone except Mr. Spettigue finds love.

# The Characters

Jack Chesney; *Undergraduate at Oxford*

Brassett; *Jack's manservant*

Charley Wykeham; *Undergraduate at Oxford*

Lord Fancourt Babberley;  
*Undergraduate at Oxford*

Kitty Verdun; *Spettigue's ward*

Amy Spettigue; *Spettigue's niece*

Colonel Sir Francis Chesney, Bart; Jack's father,  
*late in service to India*

Stephen Spettigue; *a solicitor in Oxford*

Donna Lucia D'Alvadorez; *Charley's aunt  
from Brazil*

Ela Delahay; *an orphan traveling with  
Donna Lucia.*

# About the Playwright

Walter Brandon Thomas (1850 – 1914) was an English actor, playwright and song writer. He was born in Liverpool, London. The eldest of three children, he grew up in a non theatrical family. He was educated first at the Liverpool Institute and later at a private school in Lancashire. At 14, he ran away from home and enlisted in the Royal Marines but was bought out by his parents after six weeks. From there, he began apprenticing to a shipbuilder where he learned bookkeeping and became a clerk with local Liverpool timber merchants until 1875. Thomas also worked in commerce and as a journalist. His chief love, however, was for the theatre. He regularly appeared singing and reciting at amateur concerts and also performed in music halls and drawing room entertainments playing the piano and singing his own songs. He made his first professional stage appearance in the Court Theatre in London in 1879 at the age of 30. A sought after character actor, he also wrote plays, the most celebrated, *Charley's Aunt* (1892,) broke all records with its original run in London with 1466 performances plus subsequent productions.

As a playwright, he collaborated with B. C. Stephenson on a "new and critical comedy", *Comrades*, for the Court Theatre in 1882, with a cast including Arthur Cecil, D. G. Boucicault and Marion Terry. In 1885, Thomas toured the United States as the leading man with the company of Rosina Vokes, together with Weedon Grossmith. His first big London success was in *Sweet Lavender* by Arthur Wing Pinero.

In 1890, Brandon Thomas met the great British comic actor W.S. Penley on a train and was asked to write a "pretty little three act comedy with plenty of fun in it and a touch of sentiment." He and Penley agreed the central character would be a man disguised as a woman so "the fun will be to see (his) inability to play a woman, though (he) may look like one." Thomas worked hard to strike the right balance with the characters and the plot. Unlike many authors of farces, Thomas made his characters real and not the blustering fools so often written for comic effect. As shown in *Charley's Aunt*, despite misgivings, the young undergraduates must continue their machinations or risk losing their loves but they cannot be too outrageous or their girls will throw them over. As the plot becomes more and more convoluted, Thomas is careful to keep all the threads moving and believable until they can finally tie themselves together at the end.

*Charley's Aunt* opened December 21, 1892 at the Theatre Royal in Bury St. Edmunds. The first appearance of Mr. Penley as the aunt stopped the show. There were reports from all over the theatre of people helpless with laughter. The show was an unmitigated success, and for the next two years there wasn't an empty seat. It became as popular in its day as *Wicked* has in ours spawning all manner of souvenirs and playing for a then incredible four years. Although Thomas never repeated the prodigious success of *Charley's Aunt*, he maintained a career as an actor and dramatist until his death.

Thomas died in London at the age of 64 and is buried there, in Brompton Cemetery.

His daughter was the actress Amy Brandon Thomas, and his son was the actor and writer Jevan Brandon Thomas.

# Still Playing



After opening in 1892 at the Theatre Royal, *Charley's Aunt* went on to play the Globe Theatre in London from 1893 to 1896. During the original London run, seven companies toured the United Kingdom with the play. The piece was successfully staged throughout the English-speaking world and, in translation, in many other countries.

It had a major success on Broadway opening on October 2, 1893 at the Standard Theatre where it ran for 4 years.

*Charley's Aunt* was given in a German translation as *Charleys Tante* at Weimar in August 1894. The first French production (*La Marraine de Charley*) was at the Théâtre Cluny in Paris the following month.

Thomas revived the play at the Comedy Theatre in London in 1904, then again in 1905, 1908 and 1911.

Silent film adaptations were released in 1915 and 1925. The first talkie was released in 1930 with Charles Ruggles in the role of Babberley and then in 1940, Jack Benny took on the role.

Thomas' son directed the annual London revivals from 1947 to 1950.

A Broadway musical adaptation entitled *Where's Charley* was written by Frank Loesser and starred Ray Bolger. It ran from 1948-1950. This musical version was made into a 1952 film (with Ray Bolger repeating his starring role) and began a successful run in London in 1958 at the Palace Theatre.

CBS television aired a live production in 1957 on the anthology series *Playhouse 90* starring Art Carney and Orson Bean.

A Soviet musical version was made for television in 1975 entitled, *Hello, I'm Your Aunt!*.

In France, an updated version of the play was directed by Pierre Chevalier: *La Marraine de Charley*. The play's story also proved to be popular in Germany, Austria, Spain and Egypt with both film and TV adaptations.

To date *Charley's Aunt* is one of the most performed theatrical comedies.

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# A Brief History of Farce

Farce is an exaggerated form of comedy that takes its impetus from fast action, visual effects and convolutions of plot; the more complicated and illogical the better. Its heroes are clowns or become clowns in the course of the action; it is their foibles and stupidities that are the major source of humor. Farce is one of the oldest forms of comic drama. It is the predecessor of high comedy, having evolved from the primitive slapstick and folk dramas of the ancient Greeks. As early as the fifth century BCE, farcical playlets full of foolishness and bawdy humor were being performed and inspired such writers as Aristophanes (445-385 BCE) who borrowed their jokes, antics and broad hilarious style.

However, the word “farce” derives from the Latin *farcire* meaning “to stuff”—a reference apparently to the padding used to exaggerate the bellies and bosoms of the ancient actors. The Greek farces influenced the Roman writers of comedy, especially the most prominent, Plautus (c. 251- c. 184 BCE.). But they also found a rich source of inspiration in the peasant farces that were performed in the marketplaces of Southern Italy. These Atellan farces or *fabulas*, consisted of improvised skits using such stock figures as the drunk, the glutton, the fool or the coward as portrayed by a troupe of actors wearing flamboyant or obscene costumes and masks. The improvisations were strung together by comic plot devices such as mistaken identity, masquerade, female impersonation and/or intrigue.

Boisterous, farcical comedy was a popular component in the mystery and miracle plays performed in European marketplaces during the Middle-Ages. In 16th century Italy the *commedia dell' arte* revived many of the characters, techniques and traditions of the Atellan rustic farce. Traveling troupes spread this revival throughout Europe. In England, they influenced Shakespeare who included elements of *commedia farce* in some of his most serious plays. In France, Molière borrowed a great deal from *commedia* and elevated farce to the level of high art. Farce continued to be popular in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. Farcical sketches became part of vaudeville shows and often preceded a melodrama as a curtain raiser. At the same time, George Bernard Shaw and Oscar Wilde were writing full-length farces. They kept the inherited stock characters and situations, but their characters took on the manners of the Victorian period. Drawing rooms, salons and hotel bedrooms became the common setting. Sex, marriage and money were the motivating factors of the plot and the characters representing the members of the haute bourgeoisie, the upper middle class (lawyers, physicians, civil servants and others with a certain authority and position in society to uphold) were ridiculed.

In the 20<sup>th</sup> century farcical plot sided with the “little man” embodied best in the art of Charlie Chaplin, Buster Keaton, and Harold Lloyd. The little man was “alone against an unusually unkind world, who survived on his wit and agility like the tricky servants of the *commedia dell' arte*. His outwitting maneuvers were usually physical and though he got knocked down, he picked himself up, dusted himself off and started all over again.” This physical resilience was also shown in the work of the Marx brothers. Their energy was potentially aggressive and destructive as they attacked society’s sacred cows.

Later 20<sup>th</sup> century farceurs included Woody Allen, Mel Brooks and Neil Simon. Television farce is embodied in the situation comedy or sitcom. TV shows of the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s that employed farce were *M\*A\*S\*H*, *Get Smart*, *Frasier* and *3rd Rock from the Sun*. Today’s TV offerings are meager compared with that of previous decades but include *The Simpsons*, *Two and a Half Men* and *Family Guy*.

# Victorian Etiquette

In the Victorian era your mode of conduct defined who you were. It was a symbol of your education, your social status, and your level of sophistication. There were very strict rules that were associated with Victorian etiquette for both men and women. Women were to always display their best etiquette at all times. They often carried books of etiquette to guide them through every situation. To behave inappropriately opened one up to gossip and scandal. A gentleman would certainly not marry a woman that acted inappropriately.

If you were wealthy, your manners and etiquette were a sign of your higher stature in society. It was expected that you would be humble at all times. Arrogance was frowned upon. Chivalry was very much alive and well. Men were expected to open doors for ladies, carry heavy things for them and think of their needs first.

The way that you were dressed and groomed also played a large part in your Victorian manners. When you were in public, you were to be well dressed and properly groomed. Victorian etiquette was all about thinking of others and doing what was right.

## **Etiquette When Visiting**

Do not be in haste to seat yourself.

A man should always remain standing as long as there are any women standing in the room.

A man should never take any article from a woman's hands--book, cup, flower, etc.

Do not meddle with, or stare at the articles in the room. Do not walk around the room, examining things while waiting for the hostess.

Do not enter a room without first knocking and receiving an invitation to come in.

## **The Basic Rules**

Learn to govern yourself and to be gentle and patient.

Never speak or act in anger. Remember that valuable as is the gift of speech, silence is often more valuable.

Learn to say kind and pleasant things when opportunity offers.

Do not neglect little things if they can affect the comfort of others.

Learn to deny yourself and prefer others.

## **Physical Etiquette In the Presence of Company**

A lady does not cross her legs.

Do not adjust your hair.

Do not wink.

Do not laugh immoderately.

Do not tap or drum your fingers or feet.

Do not rub your face or hands.

Do not stare or look steadily at someone.

Do not touch the person with whom you are speaking.

# Courting the Victorian Woman

By Michelle J. Hoppe

Courtship was considered more a career move than a romantic interlude for young men, as all of a woman's property reverted to him upon marriage. Therefore courting was taken very seriously--by both sides. Men and women were careful not to lead the other on unnecessarily.

From the time she was a young girl, a woman was groomed for the role of dutiful wife and mother. Properly trained, she learned to sing, play piano or guitar, dance and be conversant about the light literature of the day. She also learned French and the rules of etiquette as well as the art of conversation and the art of silence.

## Coming Out – The Courtship Ritual

Coming out meant a young woman had completed her education and was officially available on the marriage mart. Financial or family circumstances might delay or move up a girl's debut, though typically, she came out when she was seventeen or eighteen. She purchased a new wardrobe for the season, in order to appear her best in public.

A girl was under her mother's wing for the first few years of her social life. She used her mother's visiting cards or that of another female relative if her mother was dead. This same person usually served as her chaperone, as a single girl was never allowed out of the house by herself, especially in mixed company. Courtship advanced by gradations, with couples first speaking, then walking out together and finally after a mutual attraction had been confirmed, keeping company. But a gentleman had to take care in the early stages of a courtship. If he was introduced to a lady at a party for the purpose of dancing, he could not automatically resume their acquaintance on the street. He had to be re-introduced by a mutual friend; and then, only upon the permission of the lady in question.

The lower classes had opportunities to socialize at Sunday Service, Church suppers and holiday balls, while upper classes held their social events throughout the season. The season ran from April to July. Some families arrived in town earlier if Parliament was in session. A typical debutante's day meant she rose around 11:00 am, ate breakfast in her dressing room, attended a concert or drove in the Park, dined at 8:00 pm, went to the opera, then to three or four parties until 5:00 am.--all under the watchful eye of her chaperone. Great care had to be taken at these public affairs, so as not to offend a possible suitor or his family.

A woman was allowed some liberties, however. She could flirt with her fan, as this behavior was within the protocol of accepted behavior. Here is what different signals meant:

Fan fast--I am independent

Fan slow--I am engaged

Fan with right hand in front of face--Come on

Fan with left hand in front of face--Leave me

Fan open and shut--Kiss me

Fan open wide--Love

Fan half open--Friendship

Fan shut--Hate



## **Negotiations**

By the end of the season many relationships would be cemented. Thus began the serious chase, with marriage the ultimate goal.

Marriage was encouraged only within one's class. To aspire higher, one was considered an upstart. To marry someone of lesser social standing was considered marrying beneath oneself.

In upper class marriages, the wife often brought with her a generous dowry--an enticement for marriage. The financial aspects of a marriage were openly discussed, much like the pre-nuptial agreements of today. Both parties disclosed their fortunes. A man had to prove his worth in keeping his wife in the level of life she was accustomed. To protect an heiress, her family could set up an estate trust for her, which would be controlled by Chancery Court. The woman would have access to this property if she applied, but her husband could not touch it.

An unmarried woman of 21 could inherit and administer her own property. Even her father had no power over it. Once she married, however, all possessions reverted to her husband. She couldn't even make a will for her personal property, while a husband could will his wife's property to his illegitimate children. Therefore, marriage, although her aim in life, had to be very carefully contemplated. Because many marriages were considered a business deal, few started with love.

## **The Engagement**

If both parties passed muster after the bank accounts had been studied, the ancestral lineages inspected and political connections explored, the next step toward marriage was the engagement.

If it had not already been done, the man was introduced to girl's parents and her peer group. Permission for asking for the daughter's hand in marriage had to be granted by the bride's father or guardian.

A short time was allowed to elapse before an engagement was announced, except to the most intimate friends and family of both parties. This was a precaution, lest the engagement be ended by either party.

The engagement was finalized with a ring. The size and stone depended upon the groom's finances.

At this time it was acceptable for the couple to become a bit more intimate. They could stroll out alone, hold hands in public, and take un-chaperoned rides. A hand around the waist, a chaste kiss, or a pressing of the hand were also allowed. However they had to be separated by nightfall, at home or at country parties. An honorable man never broke an engagement, so as not to cause the girl disgrace.

Unfortunately, some engagements did end, with resulting embarrassment. Thus, if the engagement was broken, the girl potentially suffered a ruined reputation because of her previous "behavior". Legal action might even be taken should the engagement be terminated by one party over the protest of the other. A "breach of promise" suit might result in one party paying for the other's damages, such as cost of a wedding gown and trousseau. This was one reason news of the betrothal was often kept from family and friends. It wasn't considered official, and therefore would not hold up in court. Women were even cautioned as to what they wrote in letters and journals, should the case go that far.

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# The Underbelly of Victorian Society

Contributing writer Merriella Crowell

The term "Victorian" was first used during The Great Exhibition in London (1851). *Victorian morality* describes any set of values that espouses sexual restraint, low tolerance of crime and a strict social code of conduct. The emphasis on female purity added to the stress on homemakers who tried to create a home free of the pollution and corruption of the city. The morality and values of the Victorians can be classed under Religion, Morality, Elitism, Industrialism and Improvement. However, despite all the rules and strictures of the period's "superior" morality and repression, there existed a darker, more decadent underside.

In the late 1840s, major news organizations, clergymen, and female citizens became increasingly concerned about prostitution, which came to be known as "The Great Social Evil". The theme of prostitution and the *fallen woman*, an umbrella term used to describe any women who had sexual intercourse out of wedlock, became a staple of mid-Victorian literature and politics. In the writings of Henry Mayhew, Charles Booth, and others, prostitution began to be seen as a social problem. Dickens associated prostitution with the mechanization and industrialization of modern life, portraying prostitutes as human commodities consumed and thrown away like refuse when they were used up. There were not enough volunteer prostitutes. This lent an even darker side to the Victorian era (1830-1901) because many underage girls from rural areas were frequently kidnapped and forced into this lifestyle to supply the demand. In 1885 "The Pall Mall Gazette's" editor & journalist, W. T. Stead, wrote a series of articles under the broad heading of "Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon" exposing child prostitution rings. Venereal disease was a major problem which was why there was such a demand for young virgins. In 1864, England passed the Contagious Diseases Act which allowed for prostitutes to be arrested if they were found to have VD. In 1886, this act was replaced by the Criminal Law Amendment Act protecting children, making sodomy and prostitution illegal in Britain.

Child labor was another problem. Children of the lower and middle classes were not educated, received poor nutrition and were often forced to work practically as soon as they could walk and follow instructions. As a child if you were lucky you apprenticed to a skilled laborer or worked on a farm. The truly unfortunate worked in the factories, mines or as chimney sweeps. The average work day was 14-16 hours long with only Sundays off. In 1830, there were hundreds of cotton mills in Lancashire employing about 110,000 workers of which approximately 35,000 were children (some as young as 6 yrs old). Children received 10 times less money than adults so it made sense for employers to hire children. "Scavengers", for example, were young children who crawled beneath machinery while in operation to pick up loose cotton ... many were caught in machinery & lost fingers and sometimes died ... many of those that survived were permanently stooped in adulthood.

Another Victorian social phenomenon was Aestheticism, a 19th century art movement that placed more importance on beauty than socio-political themes from about 1868 to about 1900. These views affected almost every area of life, but were particularly evident in literature, fine art and the decorative arts while it opposed or deemphasized the importance of human rationality. Part of the philosophy of aestheticism involved claim that science was inferior to intuition. Art was considered especially prestigious in itself and was not widely accepted by the general public because access and appeal was limited to the elite classes. This movement also led to an abundance of art for art's sake being created. Much of this was in reaction to the Realism movement and the conservative choke hold on society.

Our images of the darker side of Victorian London exposed an abundance of drug use and are further shaped by the descriptions of other writers of the period including Sir Arthur Conan Doyle whose Sherlock Holmes character was an opium addict. Opium dens were establishments where opium was sold and smoked; they were prevalent in many parts of the world including London and its environs during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Most kept a supply of opium and the paraphernalia needed to smoke the drug. Opium dens in London were frequented by all levels of society and their opulence or simplicity reflected the financial means of the patrons.

The most commonly used drug, however, was laudanum, a medicine often prescribed to reduce pain and help people to sleep. Victorian women were prescribed the drug for relief of menstrual cramps and to achieve the pallid complexion associated with tuberculosis (frailty and paleness were particularly prized in females at the time). Nurses also spoon-fed laudanum to infants. Laudanum contains almost all of the opium alkaloids, including morphine and codeine. Today, its use is primarily as an analgesic and cough suppressant.

Another reference to the drug addiction and sexual deviation of this period is *The Picture of Dorian Gray* by Oscar Wilde. The title character, realizing that one day his beauty will fade flippantly expresses a desire to trade his soul to ensure that his youthful portrait age rather than he. His wish is fulfilled, plunging him into a life of debauched acts. A disciple of the new *Hedonism*, he lives a life dedicated to the pursuit of pleasure and devotes himself to new experiences and sensations with no regard for others, sinking deeper into a life of sin and corruption.

[Source: *Morphine-Addicted Doctors, the English Opium-Eater, & Embattled Medical Authority* by Barry Milligan or Wright Ste University, 2005 Cambridge Journal, Cambridge University Press.  
<http://www.michaelshouse.com/opiate-addiction/famous-people-addicted-opiates/>

<http://www.wellcomecollection.org/whats-on/events/drugs-in-victorian-britain.aspx>

"[The Best Kept Secret: Sexual abuse of Children](#)" by F. Rush © 1980  
<http://victoriantruth.blogspot.com/search/label/plight%20of%20Victorian%20>

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## A List of Common Drugs in the Victorian Era

**Chloral hydrate** - a sedative and hallucinative drug first discovered in 1832.

**Laudanum** - a mixture of alcohol and opium derivatives. A common item included in the medicine kits of many proper Victorian families and doctor's medical bags.

**Alcohol** - was easily produced and distributed. Often used to alleviate a host of ailments including, epilepsy, gout, kidney stones, colic, fever, headaches

**Opium** - a bitter, yellowish-brown, strongly addictive narcotic drug prepared from the dried juice of unripe pods of the opium poppy and containing alkaloids such as morphine, codeine, and papaverine.

**Heroin** - Heroin was a brand name coined for the bonding of morphine, opium's active ingredient, with acetic anhydride, a common industrial acid. The name was supposed to refer to the heroic, fearless and painless, sensation users felt after using it. It was discovered by a British chemist in 1874 and mass produced by German pharmaceutical Bayer in 1898.

## Famous Victorian Drug Addicts

- **Dante Gabriel Rossetti** (1828-1882) poet & painter addicted to chloral hydrate.
- **Elizabeth Barrett Browning** (1806-1861) lifelong addict (started in childhood to treat spinal tuberculosis) had miscarriage because of abuse.
- **Samuel Coleridge** (1775-1835) addicted to laudanum most of his life.
- **Percy Bysshe Shelley** (1792-1822) suffered raging laudanum-induced hallucinations.
- **John Keats** (1795-1821) suffered from cocaine, heroin, and alcohol addiction.
- **Lewis Carroll** (1832-1898) some say the inspiration of Alice in Wonderland came from his substance abuse hallucinations.
- **Charles Dickens** (1812-1870) was a laudanum addict.
- **Oscar Wilde** (1854-1900) abused opium as depicted in the decadent life-style in his work *The Picture of Dorian Gray*.
- **Edgar Allan Poe** (1809-1849) suffered from opium and alcohol addiction
- **Mary Todd Lincoln** (1818-1882) prescribed laudanum for sleep problems, it caused anxiety & hallucinations and because she experienced an increase of hallucinations, she was prescribed more laudanum & chloral hydrate leading to her eventual commitment to an asylum.
- **Florence Nightingale** (1820-1910) it was discovered after her death that the most famous nurse who ever lived was an opium user.

# Activities

## **Write a Farce**

Materials: Pen or pencil; paper

1. Write a short farce about a misunderstanding that happened at school. Take a single moment in time and embellish it to create a short scene that will last no longer than five minutes.
2. Be sure to include these farcical elements.
  - a. The setting. Make sure that the setting has at least three doors and some mechanical problem.
  - b. Exaggeration. Whatever you choose for the situation, make sure that you exaggerate it.
  - c. Characters. The characters are also exaggerated and there is usually a moment of mistaken identity.
  - d. Props. Use at least three props.

### **Colorado Model Content Standards**

**Writing PG:** Effectively use content-specific language, style, tone, and text structure to compose or adapt writing for different audiences and purposes.

**Writing PG:** Stylistic and thematic elements of literary or narrative texts can be refined to engage or entertain an audience.

## **Preparing and Performing the Farce**

Materials: A short script generated from the above exercise or a previously published play.

1. From the short farce that was written in the previous exercise or working from a script, discuss what it would take to produce a short performance.
2. Brainstorm a list of duties that are required for the performance to happen. Include director, actors, stage managers, and designers (set, lighting, costume, props, and sound).
3. After about thirty minutes of planning, discuss the successes and the challenges that were faced.

## **Raising the bar**

1. The groups have discussed the creative side of a production, what else would be needed to make the play happen.
2. Explain that each group has a budget of \$50,000 for their production. List all of the jobs that you will need and how much you will be able to pay each employee. Create a balance sheet and make sure that you do not go over budget.

## **Raising the bar-Part II**

1. What happens if you increase the budget? What happens if you decrease the budget?

### **Colorado Model Content Standards**

**Drama and Theatre Arts PG:** Employ drama and theatre skills, and articulate the aesthetics of a variety of characters and roles.

**Math PG:** Use critical thinking to recognize problematic aspects of situations, create mathematical models, and present and defend solutions.

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## The Dating Game

1. Divide the class into smaller groups. Each group will focus on one character from the play *Charley's Aunt* and will create both a dating profile of the character and a list of potential questions for their suitors.
2. To create the dating profile, start with information that you know from the text or from the performance about the character. This would include how the character describes themselves or what others characters say about them. List some of the characters mannerisms and characteristics. Create some fictional facts about the character to fill in some of the blanks about likes and dislikes.
3. With your group, create a list of three or more questions that the chosen character would ask to potential suitors. What information would they like to gather about the other characters? What questions could they ask that are designed to explore, compare and contrast what the other character may have in common with them?
4. Once the profiles and questions have been created, share the information by choosing a representative from the group to play the character and have them ask the questions to the other representative and answer the questions to the best of their ability.
5. Discuss what questions and answers surprised them and which questions and answers they agree or disagree.

### Colorado Model Content Standards

Writing PG: Articulate the position of self and others using experiential and material logic.

Drama and Theatre Arts PG: Employ drama and theatre skills, and articulate the aesthetics of a variety of characters and roles.

## Status Card Game

Material needed: Deck of cards

1. Choose five students and have them stand in a line in front of the class. Without looking at the card, each student receives a card that they are to place face out on their forehead. Explain that the cards' ranking is equal to the student's status in relation to the other students. For example, a student with a queen would have high status, but a king or an ace would have more and a two would have the least amount of status.
2. Students must determine their status in relation to the other students through an improvisation game. Set the scene at a party and select one of the students to be the host. As the party-goers enter, they must not look at their cards. They must behave in the status position and react to the how the other students might treat them. Assist the students by dropping subtle clues about their status without divulging their card.
3. After the exploration, have the student's line-up in the order where they think their card would place them.
4. Discuss the activity: How does it feel to be treated well or poorly by your peers? What are some of the ways that you were treated to indicate what your status was? How could you tell if it was a high card or low card? What about a middle card?
5. Discuss the play: Who are the characters in *Heartbreak House* that have more status than others? How do the characters interact and display that they have more or less status than the other characters? Which characters use status for their personal gain?

### Colorado Model Content Standards

History PG: Analyze key historical periods and patterns of change over time within and across nations and cultures.