

THE SECRET LIFE OF WANDA 'N' MATTY

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CAST: Wanda - a spunky punky high school student  
 Matty - another spunky punky high school student  
 (who wears pink high-top running shoes)  
 Teacher 1 and 3  
 Teacher 2 and 4

SET: "Society, Challenge, and Change"/"English" classroom  
 -two desks pushed together side by side  
 -blackboard and/or billboard appropriately decorated  
 -any etc.

"Art"/"World Religions" classroom  
 -two long art tables and chairs  
 -a surface for slide projection  
 -slide projector and Rubens' slides  
 -any etc.

Note: Just as "I am Eve" has some special extra (the soundtrack), I'd like "Kate" or "Portia" to have some special extra as well. I could compose another soundtrack but perhaps to counter/balance Eve's audio, a special visual could be considered. Unfortunately, the best I can come up with at this point is to have a single slide gradually come into focus--that of a battered woman; but I think this is too heavy, so I'm very open to suggestions. If "Portia" is used instead, perhaps silent clips of "L.A.Law" or some such in the background?

SCENE 1: "Society, Challenge, and Change" classroom

Wanda and Matty are sitting in desks furtively passing notes back and forth as Teacher 1 (upstage) speaks.

TEACHER 1:

I WANT YOU TO START THINKING OF TOPICS FOR YOUR MAJOR ESSAY TODAY. IT'S DUE IN THREE WEEKS AND MUST BE A MINIMUM OF TEN PAGES IN LENGTH, DOUBLE-SPACED. DON'T FORGET TO INCLUDE YOUR BIBLIOGRAPHY. YOU'LL HAVE TWO LIBRARY PERIODS, ONE NEXT WEEK AND ONE THE WEEK AFTER, BUT OF COURSE YOU'LL HAVE TO SPEND SOME THERE ON YOUR OWN TOO. AS YOU KNOW, THIS ESSAY IS VERY IMPORTANT, YOU WON'T GET YOUR CREDIT IN "SOCIETY, CHALLENGE, AND CHANGE" WITHOUT IT.

Sudden blackout and perhaps a distinctive sound effect--perhaps a distorted school bell or buzzer--while Teacher 1 exits and Wanda and Matty don sheets as togas and fasten beards (Matty, as Lasthenia, crookedly).

## SCENE 2:

Axiothea/Wanda and Lasthenia/Matty are seated at their desks: Axiothea, rather furtively, trying to be inconspicuous; Lasthenia, parodying the macho swagger-strut style. They exchange looks of recognition: Axiothea secretive, Lasthenia more open.

Axiothea immediately writes a brief note and passes it carefully to Lasthenia. Lasthenia reads it<sup>1</sup>:

AXIOTHEA: (tersely)

LASTHENIA, YOUR BEARD IS SLIPPING.

Lasthenia rummages in her toga and finally takes out a primer sized pencil with an oversized Mickey Mouse tip on it (or some other such silly thing). Then she looks foolishly, apologetically at Axiothea--who then gives her some paper. (This is not the first time.) She writes a note and passes it back. Axiothea reads

LASTHENIA: (delightfully flippant)

WHY THANK YOU.

Lasthenia straightens her beard, looks at Axiothea for an approving nod.

Axiothea writes another note and passes it to Lasthenia who reads

AXIOTHEA:

DID YOU GET THE MATHEMATICS DONE?

Lasthenia grimaces, clenches her fist, and begins to write the response. She smiles for a moment (thinking of Axiothea being with her last night) but mostly shows frustration. She passes the note to Axiothea, looking at her like a lost puppy, her feet pigeon-toed. Axiothea reads

LASTHENIA:

NO. AND I TRIED SO HARD, AXIO, AFTER YOU LEFT LAST NIGHT. I WORKED AT IT FOR ANOTHER TWO HOURS. IT'S JUST NOT CLEAR AT ALL. CAN YOU HELP ME AGAIN TONIGHT?

Axiothea pauses, thinking of her evening commitments, then writes. She passes the note to Lasthenia who reads

AXIOTHEA: (happily)

ALRIGHT--I SHOULD BE ABLE TO GET AWAY.

Lasthenia kicks up her feet as she writes this one and passes it with a flourish.

LASTHENIA: (exuberantly)  
WONDERFUL!!

Axiothea looks around nervously, perhaps moves away a bit, after reading the note. She writes and passes; Lasthenia reads

AXIOTHEA: (again tersely)  
LASTHENIA, PLEASE BE MORE DISCREET HERE AT THE  
ACADEMY. PEOPLE WILL BEGIN TO NOTICE US.

Lasthenia writes back immediately; Axiothea reads

LASTHENIA:  
WELL MAYBE IT'S TIME THEY DID. I GET SO ANGRY--NONE OF  
THE OTHER STUDENTS HAVE TO PASS NOTES, THEY SPEAK  
FREELY TO EACH OTHER WHENEVER THEY HAVE SOMETHING  
TO SAY.

While Axiothea is reading, she is writing a postscript which she passes right away:

LASTHENIA:  
WHICH IS ALL THE TIME.

Axiothea counters with this note:

AXIOTHEA:  
NONE OF THE OTHER STUDENTS HAVE SOPRANO VOICES.

and this postscript:

AXIOTHEA:  
OR PINK RUNNING SHOES.

Lasthenia peeps over the desk edge to look endearingly at her pink shoes (she holds her feet in turned out ballet first position in the air); she sighs then writes, then writes some more. She passes the note to Axiothea who reads

LASTHENIA:  
NONE THAT WE KNOW OF. HAVEN'T YOU WONDERED ABOUT  
THAT NEW STUDENT?

(Lasthenia jerks her head to the back as Axiothea reads.)  
THE ONE WHO SITS IN THE BACK--NEVER SAYS A WORD--  
ALSO HAS A BEARD.

Lasthenia strokes her beard and it almost comes off--she fixes it quickly, her face saying a goofy 'oops'.

Axiothea turns discreetly to look at the back corner, then quickly turns back to face the audience again. She writes a note; Lasthenia reads

AXIOTHEA:

STOP NOW, PLATO HAS COME IN.

They stop writing notes for a while, and look (as if) to follow Plato as he walks to the front of the room (back of the audience); they also 'look at' a few others come in and sit down, Lasthenia nudging Axiothea with querying eyebrows to take a good look at a few... Eventually Lasthenia, a bit more sober, writes (and passes to A who reads)

LASTHENIA:

SEE THAT'S THE PROBLEM WITH THIS DISGUISE. NOT ONLY DOES IT CUT US OFF FROM THE MEN, IT CUTS US OFF FROM EACH OTHER TOO.

AXIOTHEA: (a bit bored, as if she's been over this again and again--but with herself as well as with Lasthenia, also feeling the frustration Lasthenia feels)

BUT OTHERWISE WE COULDN'T BE HERE, AND WE'D BE EVEN MORE CUT OFF. (getting angry) NOW PLEASE! IF PLATO SEES US, HE'LL THINK WE AREN'T PAYING ATTENTION, AND I'D HATE TO OFFEND HIM!

Lasthenia sits still then, almost pouting. Then she remembers an exciting thought and writes (and passes to Axiothea who reads)

LASTHENIA:

DO YOU THINK HE'S GOING TO CONTINUE WITH THE CONCEPT OF JUSTICE? I WAS THINKING ABOUT THAT ON MY WAY HERE THIS MORNING. AND I THINK THE PROBLEM IS THAT WE ASSOCIATE JUSTICE WITH GOODNESS. LOOK WHAT HAPPENS IF WE DON'T DO THAT: SOMETHING CAN BE JUST WITHOUT NECESSARILY BEING GOOD.

This section, on the concept of justice, is sometimes done quickly, with spurts of an idea, and sometimes done with deceptive languidity, as they 'pay attention' to the class proceedings, occasionally 'taking notes' (Axiothea more than Lasthenia) (Lasthenia doodles), while simultaneously ruminating over their discussion. Axiothea, in fact, isn't terribly involved in the discussion--her mind wants to pay attention but manners forbid it--until the end--she's really

gripped by the conclusion she reaches. And Lasthenia doesn't quite grasp the importance, the value, of it--she doesn't take it, or herself, quite as seriously as Axiothea does--it's fun but that's about it.

AXIOTHEA: (anger disappearing)

THAT'S AN INTERESTING IDEA. SO THE PERSON TO WHOM THE GUNS WERE ENTRUSTED GIVES THEM BACK WHEN THE OWNER, THOUGH NO LONGER IN HIS RIGHT MIND, REQUESTS THEM--THE ACTION CAN INDEED BE JUST, BUT NOT GOOD.

LASTHENIA:

AND, FOR EXAMPLE, IT CAN BE JUST TO CHARGE EVERYONE THE SAME AMOUNT FOR MEDICAL SERVICES, BUT NOT GOOD.

AXIOTHEA:

BUT THAT DOESN'T GET US ANY CLOSER TO DEFINING JUSTICE, TO DECIDING WHAT IS AND IS NOT JUST.

LASTHENIA:

WELL TO ME, IT'S A LOT LIKE MATHEMATICS.

AXIOTHEA: (smiling at Lasthenia)

MEANING YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND IT?

LASTHENIA: (smiling back)

VERY FUNNY. NO, MEANING IT'S A MATTER OF EQUATIONS, OF STRICT EQUIVALENCES.

AXIOTHEA:

GO ON.

LASTHENIA:

WELL STRICT EQUIVALENCE IS ALL VERY FINE WITH NUMERICAL RELATIONS, BUT IT'S IMPOSSIBLE IN HUMAN RELATIONS--UNLESS WE TREAT PEOPLE LIKE NUMBERS. BUT WHERE FOR ONE CHILD, TAKING AWAY A TOY IS PUNISHMENT, FOR ANOTHER, THE MERE SUGGESTIONS OF IT IS ENOUGH.

AXIOTHEA: (following and continuing)

BECAUSE THE CHILDREN ARE DIFFERENT EMOTIONALLY, THE IMPACT WILL BE THE SAME EVEN THOUGH THE ACTION NEEDS TO BE DIFFERENT.

LASTHENIA:

RIGHT, SEE NUMBERS JUST HAVE QUANTITY, BUT PEOPLE HAVE QUALITY AS WELL--EMOTIONAL QUALITY, PHYSIOLOGICAL QUALITY, SITUATIONAL QUALITY.

There is a bit of a pause here as Axiothea works to a conclusion.

AXIOTHEA:

SO ARE WE SAYING JUSTICE HAS NO PLACE IN HUMAN RELATIONS?

Unfortunately at this point both of their wandering gazes are caught by point A (in audience, right), as if something of interest has just been said by a class member there. Then they simultaneously look to point B (in audience, left) as another student has countered, then they look back to point A, then to B (following the discussion), then to point C (beside them), then to B. Then Lasthenia looks at point D (behind them), then scribbles a note to Axiothea who reads

LASTHENIA: (angrily)

OH SHIT, ARISTOTLE'S GETTING UP TO SPEAK. IF HE RANTS AND RAVES ABOUT WOMEN AGAIN LIKE HE DID YESTERDAY, I SWEAR I WON'T BE SILENT THIS TIME!

Alarmed, jarred out of her focus on points A, B, and C, A twists to point D, while Lasthenia folds a sheet of paper into an airplane, then writes quickly and definitely passes this note so it's right in front of Lasthenia (at some point during their discussion on justice, they may have evolved from writing and passing then reading notes to reading the other's notes as they're written on a sheet between them); Lasthenia reads

AXIOTHEA:

NO, LASTHENIA, YOU MUSTN'T! IF YOU SPEAK OUT-- ESPECIALLY NOW--ALL WILL BE LOST!

LASTHENIA:

IF I DON'T, ALL WILL BE LOST. HE CAN'T BE ALLOWED TO CONTINUE UNCONTESTED-- YOU KNOW HOW HE CAN TALK.

They listen--Lasthenia reacts with disgust and sends the plane in his direction. She then passes a second note.

LASTHENIA

AND HIS DADDY'S RICH.

AXIOTHEA:

SO?



Axiothea reads this one as Lasthenia writes it. Lasthenia pauses here and there as if hearing Aristotle say a particularly distasteful thing. She looks to where he's 'standing' (point D) from time to time.

LASTHENIA:

WELL, DON'T YOU SEE? PLATO IS GETTING OLD--UNLESS HE NAMES A SUCCESSOR, THE ACADEMY WILL CLOSE, THEN ARISTOTLE WILL OPEN HIS OWN SCHOOL. HE KNOWS PLATO WILL NEVER NAME HIM SUCCESSOR TO CARRY ON THE ACADEMY, HIS IDEAS ARE TOO DIFFERENT. AND AS FAR AS I KNOW, HE HASN'T NAMED ANYONE--HAS HE SENT ANY WORD TO YOU ABOUT IT?

AXIOTHEA: (surprised)  
TO ME?

LASTHENIA: (with admiration and real pride)  
WELL WHY NOT? ACCORDING TO SPEUSIPPUS<sup>2</sup> PLATO SAID "AXIOTHEA ALONE HAS THE MIND BRIGHT ENOUGH TO GRASP MY IDEAS".

AXIOTHEA: (pleased)  
YES BUT THAT DOESN'T MEAN HE'S GOING TO NAME ME HIS SUCCESSOR. SOMETIMES I THINK HE KNOWS I'M REALLY AXIOTHEA--AND HE KNOWS AS WELL AS I THAT IF THE NEXT DIRECTOR WERE A WOMAN, THE STATE WOULD STOP ITS FUNDING. AND UNLIKE ARISTOTLE, MY FATHER IS NOT PHYSICIAN TO THE KING--I HAVE NO PRIVATE BACKING TO KEEP A SCHOOL GOING.

There is a pause of concession on Lasthenia's part; she thinks a bit, then writes and passes the next note with triumph.

LASTHENIA:

WHAT ABOUT SAMOTHEA? SHE WAS HEAD OF THE HYPERBOREAN UNIVERSITY IN CORNWALL, YOU KNOW, WHERE PYTHAGORAS GOT HIS DEGREE.

AXIOTHEA:

TRUE ENOUGH--I DON'T KNOW HOW SHE MANAGED--I WOULD THINK ENROLMENT AS WELL AS FUNDING WOULD DECREASE--BUT SHE'S A BRITON, THINGS MUST BE DIFFERENT THERE.

(discouraged) NO, PLATO WOULD BE WISE TO NAME LYCURGUS OR DEMOSTHENES.

LASTHENIA: (appalled at her suggestion as well as at her discouragement)  
THOSE AIRHEADS! MAYBE THEY SPEAK WELL, BUT THEY SAY NOTHING!

AXIOTHEA:  
HOW WOULD YOU KNOW? YOU NEVER LISTEN--YOU'RE ALWAYS TOO BUSY DISTRACTING ME WITH THESE NOTES!

LASTHENIA:  
YOU KNOW, THEY SAY SAMOTHEA INVENTED LETTERS. FIGURES. ANYWAY, I LISTEN WHEN THERE'S SOMETHING WORTH LISTENING TO--

She looks with disbelief in Aristotle's direction.

AND ARISTOTLE IS NOT WORTH LISTENING TO!

She shoots an elastic at him.

AXIOTHEA: (aghast)  
LASTHENIA! WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

LASTHENIA:  
SETTING HIM FREE, DRAGGING HIM UP OUT OF THE CAVE--DID YOU HEAR WHAT HE JUST SAID?

She fires off another elastic.

AXIO, I HAVE TO SPEAK OUT!

She fidgets restlessly.

Axiothea puts one hand on Lasthenia's arm (as if to hold her down gently, and stop her from shooting yet another elastic), and writes with her other:

AXIOTHEA:  
NO, LASTHENIA, BE CAREFUL OF WINNING A BATTLE ONLY TO LOSE A WAR--THE TIME ISN'T RIGHT!

LASTHENIA: (angrily)  
THE TIME IS NEVER RIGHT!

AXIOTHEA:  
THAT'S NOT TRUE. WAIT UNTIL THIS MESS WITH THE MACEDONIANS HAS PASSED. EVERYTHING'S AT LOOSE ENDS NOW, OUR VOICE WILL GET LOST.

Lasthenia practically rips the paper writing this next note:

LASTHENIA:

BUT WHEN EVERYTHING'S TIGHT, THERE'S NO ROOM FOR OUR VOICE!

She looks anxiously back at Aristotle.

AXIOTHEA:

NO, LISTEN, WE HAVE TO WAIT UNTIL THE MEN FEEL SECURE. IF WE RISE NOW, WE'RE JUST ONE MORE THREAT--THEIR RESPONSE WILL BE IRRATIONAL, FLUNG OUT OF FEAR. WHEN THINGS ARE SETTLED, WHEN THEY ARE SURE OF THEIR OWN POSITION, THEN THEY CAN LISTEN TO THE ARGUMENTS ABOUT OURS.

LASTHENIA:

NO! THEY WERE 'SECURE' LAST CENTURY. AND LOOK WHAT HAPPENED. ALREADY ASPASIA AND DIOTIMA ARE UNACKNOWLEDGED, FORGOTTEN. WE HEAR ONLY OF SOCRATES, NOT OF THE WOMEN WHO TAUGHT HIM. ASPASIA CAN TALK CIRCLES AROUND HIM--THAT'S WHERE HE LEARNED THE ART OF RHETORIC. AND DIOTIMA'S SOCIAL PHILOSOPHY AND HER THEORIES ON NATURE HAVE NEVER BEEN SURPASSED. AND WHAT ABOUT ELIPINICE AND AGLAONICE--WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO THEM, TO THEIR WORKS?

She tears off the sheet to continue on the next page.

THE SURER THE MEN GET OF THEIR 'POSITION', THE SURER THEY ARE TO 'PUT US IN OURS'! PERICTYONE ALONE IS REMEMBERED, HER PAPERS ARE STILL READ--BUT ONLY BECAUSE SHE'S PLATO'S MOTHER; YOU WATCH, AS SOON AS HE'S DEAD, SHE'LL BE BURIED TOO!

AXIOTHEA: (now she is beginning to get angry)

NO, THAT WON'T HAPPEN, I DON'T BELIEVE IT!

LASTHENIA:

IT WILL! AXIO, IT HAS! WHO IS CREDITED WITH THE GOLDEN MEAN CONCEPT? PYTHAGORAS, NOT THEANO! HER HUSBAND FOR GOD'S SAKE! SHE WAS THE BRILLIANT ONE!

MATHEMATICS, MEDICINE, PHYSICS, PSYCHOLOGY--SHE WAS NAMED SUCCESSOR TO HIS INSTITUTE AT CROTON--BUT IS HER NAME EVER MENTIONED? AND DAMO, THEOCLEA, AND MYIA, ARIGNOTE--AXIO, IT'S GONE ON LONG ENOUGH! WE HAVE TO DO SOMETHING (she pounds her fist on the desk)  
--WE HAVE TO SPEAK OUT!

Axiothea looks around hoping no one is noticing them/Lasthenia. She seems to wait a bit for Lasthenia to calm down, follows the class discussion perhaps, then writes

AXIOTHEA:

WE?

Lasthenia pauses and thinks. Her tension and anger subside, and she writes a note which she passes to Axiothea. As Axiothea reads it, she jerks about in the desk (until now she has been physically calm, a contrast to Lasthenia's movement.

LASTHENIA:

NO--YOU'RE QUITE RIGHT--YOU!

Then she writes (in bigger letters than previously--no neat little note this time

AXIOTHEA:

ME?! YOU'RE CRAZY! WHY ME?

LASTHENIA: (pauses and looks as if she can't believe Axiothea doesn't get it)

BECAUSE I AM THE ALTERNATIVE! BUT YOU--IF AXIOTHEQ STANDS UP AS AXIOTHEA--YOU'RE HIS FAVOURITE, PLATO WILL HAVE TO ACKNOWLEDGE YOU, HE'LL HAVE TO SUPPORT YOU! AND SO WILL ALL THE OTHER STUDENTS WHO HAVE HELD AXIO IN ESTEEM--EITHER THAT OR RETRACT THEIR PAST JUDGEMENTS, ADMIT ERROR--YOU KNOW HOW UNLIKELY THAT IS.

AXIOTHEA:

YES--THAT IS UNLIKELY. BUT YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE ASKING. AS I SAID, I THINK PLATO KNOWS. AND IF I EXPOSE MYSELF, I EXPOSE HIM. I'D BE PUTTING HIM IN A VERY AWKWARD POSITION. YOU'RE RIGHT, HE IS OLD, AND WHAT WITH THE WAY THINGS ARE NOW, HE MAY LOSE THE ACADEMY ALTOGETHER IF I--NO--I OWE HIM, HE'S LET ME ATTEND HIS CLASSES, EVEN THOUGH I AM A WOMAN.

Lasthenia is really upset by Axiothea's answer and for a minute she can't even put her thoughts/feelings into words. Axiothea doesn't understand and encourages anxiously a response (while looking around nervously). Lasthenia eventually writes

LASTHENIA:

YOU'D BE PUTTING HIM IN AN AWKWARD POSITION?

(As Axiothea reads this line, Lasthenia gestures to themselves as if to say 'we look ridiculous'.)

DO YOU HEAR WHAT YOU'RE SAYING? WOULD YOU THANK A MAN FOR WHIPPING YOU, BECAUSE HE COULD'VE KILLED YOU? (sarcastically)

BUT DIDN'T, EVEN THOUGH YOU ARE A WOMAN--

YOU OWE PLATO NOTHING! HE HAS GIVEN YOU LESS THAN YOU DESERVE--THAT IS NO CAUSE FOR GRATITUDE! DON'T YOU SEE THAT?

AXIOTHEA: (angry at Lasthenia for making her admit what she's been denying, she seems not to focus directly on Lasthenia's comments)

BUT YOU'RE EXAGGERATING ABOUT ARISTOTLE. HIS SYSTEM OF FORMAL LOGIC, REMEMBER HIS SEMINAR LAST WEEK? YOU MUST ADMIT THAT WHAT HE PROPOSES IS AN EXCELLENT WAY OF THINKING!

For the next five to six notes, Lasthenia practically writes over Axiothea, 'interrupting', while Axiothea persists, almost desperately.

LASTHENIA:

DOES HE THINK WE'RE CAPABLE OF IT?

Lasthenia now has a pea shooter and punctuates each of her statements with a shot--#1 now)

AXIOTHEA:

BUT WHAT ABOUT HIS THREE TYPES OF SOUL--VEGETATIVE, SENSITIVE, RATIONAL--

LASTHENIA:

ASK HIM WHICH TYPE WOMEN HAVE! (pea shot #2)

AXIOTHEA:

HAPPINESS AS THE AIM OF ALL HUMAN ACTION--

LASTHENIA:

WHOSE HAPPINESS? (pea shot #3)

AXIOTHEA:

LASTHENIA, HE'S NOT THAT BAD!  
(Now it's her turn to pound a fist!)

LASTHENIA:

AXIO LISTEN TO HIM! "FOR THE FEMALE IS, AS IT WERE, A  
MUTILATED MALE." --NOT THAT BAD?

She whips the bag of remaining peas at Aristotle and with goes her Mickey Mouse pencil.

They take a much needed pause, each seeming to follow the class proceedings for a bit. Their tension subsides a little.

Lasthenia is less angry, more pleading now--when she realizes she hasn't got anything to write with, Axiothea hands her her stylus (they grin in spite of themselves at this 'comic relief'); Axiothea reads as Lasthenia writes

LASTHENIA:

AXIO, I BEG YOU--THINK OF ARETE. SHE'S ELEVEN NOW, IN A FEW YEARS, SHE'LL BE READY TO COME TO THE ACADEMY, SHE CAN'T LEARN EVERYTHING FROM HER FATHER--SHE'S VERY BRIGHT, YOU KNOW THAT. I GAVE HER PERICTYONE'S PAPER ON WISDOM TO READ A WHILE AGO--DO YOU KNOW, SHE UNDERSTOOD IT? AND QUESTIONED VERY WELL! DO YOU WANT HER TO BIND HER BREASTS TOO, AND LEARN TO SWAGGER--DO YOU CONDEMN HER AS WELL TO SILENCE IN SCHOOL?

There is another pause. Axiothea considers. Then she takes her stylus back from Lasthenia to write

AXIOTHEA:

(to Lasthenia) ENOUGH!  
(to herself, in recognition) ENOUGH.  
BUT LASTHENIA, I CAN'T STAND UP TO ARISTOTLE!

Lasthenia grabs the stylus from Axiothea's hand and writes

LASTHENIA:

WHAT DO YOU MEAN YOU CAN'T STAND UP TO ARISTOTLE!  
HIS LOGIC IS SO WEAK, EVEN I COULD MAKE IT COLLAPSE.  
AND FOR A MAN INTERESTED IN EMPIRICAL DATA, HE SEEMS  
POSITIVELY BLIND TO THE REALITY OF WOMEN—

JUST TELL HIM THE FACTS, TELL HIM WHAT WE CAN DO,  
WHAT WE ARE.

Axiothea seems almost ready, Lasthenia continues to write

LASTHENIA:

AXIO, I'VE HEARD YOU SPEAK. YOU'RE INTELLIGENT, YOU'RE  
ARTICULATE-- (There is love in Lasthenia's eyes now as she continues  
to write) JUST PRETEND YOU'RE SPEAKING TO ME, AS YOU DO  
EVERY EVENING--GO ON, YOU CAN DO IT!

Axiothea reaches for her stylus, but Lasthenia keeps it and urges Axiothea again to stand up and speak.

The lights go out then as Axiothea raises her hand and stands--simultaneously--not as if she'll wait for permission to speak; Lasthenia stands up beside her a split second later.

Sound effect while Teacher 2 enters and Wanda and Matty take off their togas and beards.

## SCENE 3: English classroom

While Wanda is standing with her hand up (Matty has reacted more quickly to the change and has sat down), Teacher 2 acknowledges her.

TEACHER 2:

YES, A VOLUNTEER, THANK YOU WANDA.

Teacher 2 waits expectantly; Wanda has no idea what she's doing standing with her hand up; she looks to Matty for help but she is as confused and perhaps looks around for clues.

Teacher 2:

YOUR SOLILOQUY, FROM "THE MERCHANT OF VENICE", WE'RE WAITING WANDA.

Wanda looks again helplessly at Matty.

MATTY: (whispering, grasping at straws)

UH--MERCHANT OF VENICE--THREE CASKETS--AND A  
CRACKER JACK BOX PRIZE--AND PORTIA--SHE DRESSES UP AS  
A LAWYER--

Black out with sound effect while Teacher 2 exits and Wanda dons a lawyer's gown; spotlight then appears on Wanda standing upstage.



SCENE 4:

PORTIA/WANDA:

IF I'M THE ONE WITH THE PROPERTY  
 YOU'D THINK I'D BE THE BUYER  
 NOT THE BOUGHT;  
 A LOT OF FAITH MY FATHER HAS IN ME:  
 HE DISTRUSTS MY ABILITY TO JUDGE, TO DISCRIMINATE--  
 A DECISION MADE BY CHANCE,  
 A DECISION INEVITABLY AND ULTIMATELY IRRATIONAL,  
 IS PREFERABLE TO A DECISION MADE BY ME.  
       BUT NO, YOU SAY,  
 THE DECISION WAS NOT TO BE BY CHANCE  
 BUT CHOICE, AND THUS REVEAL THE SUITOR'S CHARACTER--  
 THAT IS, HE WHO CHOSE LEAD WOULD BE WISE,  
 TO FORSAKE APPEARANCE, AND REALIZE ITS IRRELEVANCE;  
 TRUE, BUT YOU FORGET THE INSCRIPTION:  
 TO CHOOSE LEAD, TO CHOOSE 'TO GIVE AND HAZARD ALL'  
 IS TO MY MIND *NOT* WISE,  
 FOR ITS FOOLISH RISK (ALL!);  
 IS IT NOT BETTER TO CHOOSE SILVER,  
                   AND 'GET WHAT ONE DESERVES'?  
 IT SEEMS TO ME A MATURE PERSPECTIVE;  
 SO, TO JUDGE BY APPEARANCE  
 (AND THUS FORSAKE APPEARANCE)  
 OR TO JUDGE BY WORDS  
 --THAT IS THE CHOICE.  
 WORDS HAVE MEANING,  
 AND UNLESS THE WORDS BE FALSE OR DECEIVING,  
 IS IT NOT BETTER TO JUDGE ACCORDING TO CONTENT,  
 THAN TO JUDGE ACCORDING TO FORM  
 TO SUBSTANCE, RATHER THAN PRETENCE?  
 SO IF IT WAS TO BE A TEST OF CHARACTER,  
 'T WAS THUS A POOR TEST,  
 FOR WHO WAS TO GUESS WHAT MY FATHER INTENDED:  
 THE FORM DID CONTRADICT THE CONTENT;  
 AND SO CHOICE BECOMES CHANCE, AFTER ALL.

THAT *I* AM NOT ALLOWED TO CHOOSE  
 IS IN PRINCIPLE, INTOLERABLE,  
 BUT IN PRACTICE, JUST AS WELL--  
 FOR THERE IS REALLY NOT A ONE WORTH CHOOSING:

A PRINCE WHO BOASTS OF HIS PRECIOUS PORSCHE  
 AND CAN FIX IT HIMSELF;  
 THE COUNTY PALATINE, WHO BELIEVES  
 A REAL MAN NEVER SMILES;  
 FALCONBRIDGE, A PIN-UP BOY  
 WITH A MIND AS TWO-DIMENSIONAL;  
 A SCOTTISH LORD INTERESTED IN NOTHING  
 BUT A GOOD FIGHT;  
 AN ALCOHOLIC (THE DUKE'S NEPHEW, YES);  
 THE PRINCE OF MOROCCO, A BLOOD-THIRSTY RAMBO;  
 AND BASSANIO, ATTRACTED BY WEALTH AND BEAUTY,  
 WILLING IN A MOMENT TO SACRIFICE HIS WIFE  
 FOR HIS FRIEND.  
 THERE IS NOT ONE.

IF I SO DESPISE MEN,  
 WHY DID I DISGUISE AS ONE?  
 'T WAS NOT MY CHOICE:  
 SHAKESPEARE (A MAN) CREATED MY COSTUME  
 (AND THAT OF VIOLA AND ROSALIND),  
 AND IN HIS COWARDICE, HE REFUSED TO  
 CHALLENGE THE REALITY  
 THAT TO BE ABLE TO INTERACT  
 WITHOUT HAVING TO DEFEND AGAINST  
 SEXUAL OR ROMANTIC INTENTIONS,  
 ONE MUST BE MALE;  
 THAT TO BE TAKEN SERIOUSLY,  
 AND TO BE EXEMPT FROM COMPLIMENTS THAT  
 ESSENTIALLY TRIVIALIZE  
 ONE MUST BE MALE;  
 THAT TO BE EFFECTIVE AT AN ENDEAVOUR  
 OF THE INTELLECTUAL ARTS,  
 ONE MUST BE MALE;  
 THAT TO BE DOMINANT, INFLUENTIAL, POWERFUL,  
 ONE MUST BE MALE  
 IN PATTERNS OF APPEARANCE, BEHAVIOUR,  
 SPEECH, AND THOUGHT  
 --PATTERNS OF THOUGHT?  
 BUT DIDN'T I PUT FORWARD  
 THE FEMININE CONCEPT OF MERCY OVER JUSTICE?  
 DIDN'T CARE AND COMPASSION WIN OVER FAIRNESS?  
 NO, LOOK AGAIN:  
 THE DUKE FIRST PLEADED FOR MERCY, NOT I;

MY CASE WAS WON ON A TECHNICALITY,  
 ON THE LETTER OF THE LAW.  
 (THOUGH IT IS WORTH MENTION  
 THAT RECOURSE TO SUCH A LEGAL LOOPHOLE  
 WAS MY LAST RESORT.)  
 THE MASCULIST MODE WON OUT;  
 BUT THIS IS NOT SURPRISING IN A MASCULIST COURT.  
 WHERE THERE IS NO CHALLENGE,

THERE CAN BE NO CHANGE.  
 FOR WHEN THE DISGUISE IS FINALLY REVEALED  
 IT IS NOT RECOGNIZED  
 THAT TO BE WHAT I WAS (WHAT I AM)  
 ONE CAN BE FEMALE--  
 IT IS RECOGNIZED ONLY THAT I AM FEMALE.  
 AND THEIR RESPONSE CONCERNS ONLY THEMSELVES--  
 RELIEF, THAT THEY WON'T BE CUCKOLDS.

Black out with sound effect while Teacher 2 re-enters and Wanda gets rid of the lawyer's gown.

MATTY: (stunned and looking at Wanda)  
 WOW!

WANDA: (confused)  
 WOW WHAT?

A bell (undistorted) rings and they gather up their books to move to their next class (lunch).

MATTY:  
 I'M IMPRESSED!

TEACHER 2:  
 VERY GOOD JOB WANDA, YOU SHOULD BE PROUD.

Teacher 2 exits.

WANDA:  
 WHAT--WHAT HAPPENED--WHAT DID I DO?

MATTY:  
 YOU MEAN YOU DON'T KNOW?

WANDA:  
NO.

MATTY:  
REALLY?

WANDA:  
YES REALLY--WHAT? TELL ME!

MATTY:  
WELL YOU JUST ACED THE SOLILOQUY ASSIGNMENT.

WANDA:  
YEAH RIGHT.

MATTY:  
YEAH, YOU JUST DELIVERED THIS FANTASTIC  
SHAKESPEAREAN SOLILOQUY ABOUT PORTIA.

WANDA:  
HOW COULD I--I DON'T EVEN SPEAK SHAKESPEAREAN.

They exit.

Quick set change in subdued light.

SCENE 5: Art classroom

Teacher 3, Wanda and Matty enter.

TEACHER 3:

OKAY CLASS SETTLE DOWN--NO WE DON'T NEED OUR PORTFOLIOS TODAY JOHN, TODAY'S ART HISTORY DAY, REMEMBER? CATHY YOU DON'T NEED TO GET THE PAINTS, EVERYONE BE SEATED PLEASE. OKAY, ARE WE READY? OKAY TODAY (shows slide of a Rubens piece) WE'RE GOING TO FIND OUT ABOUT ONE OF THE WORLD'S GREATEST ARTISTS, RUBENS. TAKE A LOOK AT THESE (shows a few more, all featuring the same model type)--CONSIDER THE COLOUR, THE LIGHT, THE DESIGN--WHAT DO YOU NOTICE?

Blackout with sound effect as Teacher 3 exits and Wanda and Matty arrange themselves on the art tables, draped with sheets as if to model.

SCENE 6:

HELEN/MATTY: (enviously)

YOU'RE SO LUSCIOUS! LOOK AT YOU! (admiringly) YOU'VE BEEN GAINING WEIGHT, HAVEN'T YOU?

SUZANNE/WANDA: (brushing it off)

A FEW POUNDS--

HELEN:

A FEW POUNDS--LOOKS MORE LIKE TEN OR TWENTY, HOW'D YOU DO IT?

SUZANNE:

WHY?

HELEN:

WHAT DO YOU MEAN--

SUZANNE:

I MEAN WHY DO YOU WANT TO KNOW HOW I GAINED WEIGHT, WHY DO YOU WANT TO GAIN WEIGHT?

HELEN:

BUT LOOK AT YOU, YOU'RE--BEAUTIFUL! YOU'RE SO LUCKY, YOU HAVE SUCH A SLOW METABOLISM, EVERYTHING YOU EAT GOES STRAIGHT--EVERYWHERE--AND STAYS THERE! I'D GIVE ANYTHING TO HAVE A BODY LIKE YOURS. (idolizing) YOUR FLESH HANGS LIKE SUCCULENT FRUIT, PLUM, AND HEAVY WITH PROMISE--

SUZANNE:

STOP IT! (pauses for Helen's shock at the passion then follows with an explanation) IT'S JUST BODY.

HELEN:

YEAH, YOU CAN SAY THAT, BUT LOOK AT ME, I'M SO THIN! MY THIGHS DON'T EVEN TOUCH WHEN I STAND UP, YOU CAN EVEN SEE MY MUSCLES! I LOOK SO SICK!

SUZANNE:

YOU ARE SICK. SICK TO THINK THIS IS AN IDEAL, SICK TO TRY TO IMITATE ME--YOU CAN'T!

HELEN:

YOU SHOULD BE FLATTERED! AND I CAN! I MEAN IF YOU CAN, I CAN! I'LL BET ALL IT WOULD TAKE IS A COUPLE EXTRA MEALS EACH DAY.

SUZANNE:

A COUPLE EXTRA MEALS TODAY, TOMORROW UNCONTROLLABLE BINGEING: YOU'LL STUFF YOURSELF THEN TAKE ANTI-NAUSEA TABLETS SO YOU DON'T THROW UP, THEN TWO GALLONS OF WATER A DAY WITH PILLS TO FLUID RETENTION--

HELEN:

WHAT?

SUZANNE:

--TO GET THAT SOFT JUICY LOOK. SOON YOU'LL BE INTO ARTIFICIAL CONTRAPTIONS TO SUPPORT ALL THAT NEWLY ACQUIRED EXCESS, NOT ALL WOMEN HAVE FRAMES ABLE TO SUPPORT THIS MASS--I HAVE SEEN WOMEN STRAP THEMSELVES INTO BRACES TO--

HELEN:

WOMEN WOULDN'T BE THAT STUPID, WOULD THEY?

SUZANNE:

(she looks at Helen for a moment in answer, then speaks) WITH EVERY MAGAZINE, EVERY PAINTER, EVERY MODEL TELLING THEM THAT'S HOW THEY SHOULD LOOK, IT'D BE HARD NOT TO BE.

HELEN:

BUT I'M SO ASHAMED OF MY BODY--LOOK!

SUZANNE:

HOW CAN I MAKE YOU SEE?! DO YOU KNOW WHAT MY NEIGHBOUR'S EIGHT-YEAR-OLD DAUGHTER SAID SHE WANTED FOR HER BIRTHDAY? TO GAIN TEN POUNDS. EIGHT YEARS OLD! (pauses) I SUPPOSE YOU'VE EVEN CONSIDERED SURGERY.

HELEN:

WELL--

SUZANNE:

A LITTLE LIPO-INSERTION HERE, A LITTLE LIPO-INSERTION THERE--

HELEN:

WELL WHY NOT, IF BEAUTY CAN BE BOUGHT--

SUZANNE:

BEAUTY! YOU THINK I'M BEAUTIFUL?

HELEN:

WELL--YES! OF COURSE! DON'T YOU?

SUZANNE:

NO--I DON'T! I'M NOT--I'M NEVER--NEVER RIPE ENOUGH--  
DON'T YOU SEE--I ALWAYS NEED THAT EXTRA--THAT EXTRA  
PIECE OF CHEESECAKE TO MAKE ME WHAT I--TO MAKE ME--

HELEN:

BEAUTIFUL.

Pause.

SUZANNE:

RUBENS MAKES ME LOOK BEAUTIFUL. (points to a painting of herself) BUT NO ONE LOOKS LIKE THAT--NOT EVEN ME. MY SKIN DOESN'T LOOK LIKE THAT, THAT'S SO TRANSLUCENT--HE DOES IT WITH LIGHTING, WITH PAINTS. AND I'M SURE HE'S ADDED A FEW EXTRA POUNDS--DON'T YOU SEE--IT'S AN IMPOSSIBLE IDEAL--AN ADDICTIVE IMPOSSIBLE IDEAL!

Blackout with sound effect as Teacher 4 enters and Wanda and Matty toss off sheets and resume their seats.



SCENE 7: World Religions classroom

WANDA: (looking around in semi-confusion)  
PERIOD FOUR RIGHT?

MATTY: (also looking around)  
LOOKS LIKE IT.

WANDA:  
WHAT'S PERIOD FOUR--WORLD RELIGIONS--WHAT CAN  
POSSIBLY HAPPEN IN WORLD RELIGIONS?

MATTY:  
WE BECOME ALL-POWERFUL AND ALL-KNOWING?

WANDA:  
YEAH. THEN WE GET CRUCIFIED.

TEACHER 3:  
GOOD AFTERNOON, CLASS. WE'RE GOING TO TAKE A LOOK  
AT CREATION MYTHS TODAY. I HAVE RUN OFF THREE OR  
FOUR STORIES (hands out sheets of paper to Wanda and Matty) AND  
I'D LIKE TO READ AND DISCUSS THEIR SIMILARITIES AND  
DIFFERENCES WITH YOU. THE FIRST ONE IS THE STORY OF  
ADAM AND EVE, AS HANDED DOWN THROUGH GENERATIONS  
AND GENERATIONS, BASED ON THE BIBLE.

Blackout with sound effect as Teacher 4 exits and Matty dons a short robe/tunic and takes an  
apple out of a sports bag by her desk; spotlight on her as she stands upstage.

## SCENE 8:

As the soundtrack begins, Matty acknowledges it with a chuckle and the word 'cool!'.

MATTY/EVE<sup>3</sup>:

I AM EVE, THE BAD GIRL, THE EVIL WOMAN.

I STAND ACCUSED, AND SENTENCED, WITHOUT A TRIAL. FOR LIFE.

BECAUSE OF MY SINGLE ACTION, MILLIONS OF INDIVIDUALS HAVE BEEN BORN WITH 'ORIGINAL SIN', HAVE BEEN GUILTY EVEN BEFORE THEY ACTED, DOOMED BEFORE THEY STARTED. I ALONE HAVE BEEN HELD RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS SAD PATHETIC FALLEN RACE. THEREFORE, LET ME BEGIN BY CORRECTING THIS. IF I WERE FREE NOT TO FALL IN THE FIRST PLACE, THEY WERE FREE NOT TO FALL AFTER ME. AND IF I WERE NOT FREE, THEN I CAN'T BE HELD RESPONSIBLE--FOR MY FALL OR THEIRS.

NOW, LET US FURTHER EXAMINE THE CHARGES, LET US CORRECTLY DEFINE THAT ACTION.

I HAVE BEEN CONDEMNED FOR CHOOSING KNOWLEDGE OVER IGNORANCE--THE FRUIT I ATE CAME FROM THE TREE OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOOD AND EVIL. IN A SOCIETY THAT PRAISES PURSUIT OF KNOWLEDGE AND HONOURS MEN OF WISDOM, WHY HAVE I BEEN VIEWED WITH DISFAVOUR? HAD ADAM REACHED OUT FIRST, WOULD HE HAVE BEEN SO REBUKED? --OR IS THE STATE OF IGNORANCE REQUISITE FOR WOMEN ONLY?

IN THE SAME VEIN, I CHOSE EXPERIENCE OVER INNOCENCE. IN A CONTEXT OF ATTITUDES THAT VALUE EXPERIENCE, THE DISAPPROVAL OF MY ACTION CAN ONLY IMPLY THE DESIRE THAT WOMEN, LIKE CHILDREN, LIVE IN A STATE OF INNOCENCE.

I HAVE ALSO BEEN CONDEMNED FOR DISOBEDIENCE. IF THAT WERE THE ISSUE THEN WHY WASN'T THE TREE SO NAMED-- 'THE TREE OF OBEDIENCE AND DISOBEDIENCE' OR 'THE TREE OF TEMPTATION'. BY NAMING IT WHAT IT WAS NOT, GOD EITHER DELIBERATELY TEMPTED ME, OR DELIBERATELY

DECEIVED ME. AND HE SHOULD BE JUDGED, NOT I.

PERHAPS THOUGH, THE TREE REALLY WAS A TREE OF KNOWLEDGE OF GOOD AND EVIL. IN THAT CASE, ONE SHOULD WONDER WHAT INSECURITIES LED GOD TO PREFER OBEDIENCE OVER KNOWLEDGE. INDEED, ONE SHOULD WONDER WHY HE WENT SO FAR AS TO FORBID KNOWLEDGE. THE REASON IS EVIDENT IN GENESIS III:22-23--HE DIDN'T WANT US TO EQUAL HIM. HE SENT US OUT OF EDEN TO PREVENT OUR EATING FROM THE TREE OF LIFE, BECAUSE ALREADY WE WERE AS WISE AS HE FOR HAVING EATEN FROM THE TREE OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOOD AND EVIL, AND IF WE HAD MADE IT TO THE TREE OF LIFE BEFORE HE FOUND US, WE WOULD'VE BEEN IMMORTAL AS WELL--WE WOULD'VE BEEN AS GODLY AS HE.

AND THAT TAKES US ONWARD, FOR COUNTED AMONG MY SINS IS THAT OF PRIDE. CONSIDERING THAT LATER, THROUGH HIS SON, GOD COMMANDS US TO 'FOLLOW IN HIS FOOTSTEPS', I FIND THE LABEL OF 'PRIDE' ODD FOR THE ACTION THAT WOULD DO JUST THAT, MAKE ME LIKE GOD. FURTHERMORE, I FIND IT ODD TO BE CONDEMNED FOR BEING LIKE GOD, WHEN AFTER ALL, HE CREATED US IN HIS IMAGE. AND GOD CERTAINLY IS PROUD: TO CREATE US IN HIS IMAGE CAN BE CALLED NARCISSISTIC, AND TO PREFER US TO SPEND OUR TIME ADMIRING HIM RATHER THAN LEARNING ABOUT HIM IS EQUALLY EVIDENTIAL OF PRIDE. (AS AN ASIDE, I WOULD THINK THAT MY KNOWLEDGE WOULD INCREASE MY ADMIRATION; THAT WAS NOT WHY I ATE THE FRUIT, BUT IF IT WAS, WOULD IT HAVE MATTERED? DID GOD EVER ASK MY INTENT?)

I HAVE ALSO BEEN CHARGED WITH A LACK OF FAITH. YET, I TOOK IT ON FAITH IN THE FIRST PLACE THAT GOD TOLD US NOT TOE AT FROM THE TREE: REMEMBER HE GAVE THE COMMAND TO ADAM BEFORE I EVEN EXISTED. FURTHER, I HAD FAITH IN THE SERPENT, I TRUSTED THE SERPENT TO BE TELLING THE TRUTH. IS IT DISHONOURABLE TO TRUST?

AND IS IT REPREHENSIBLE TO ACT ON THAT TRUST, AS I DID THEN IN OFFERING THE FRUIT TO ANOTHER, TO ADAM? GOD COMMANDED INNOCENCE THEN HELD ME RESPONSIBLE FOR AN ACT OF INNOCENT INTENT. FOR HOW COULD I KNOW MY

FAITH WAS MISPLACED? HOW COULD I KNOW THE SERPENT WAS EVIL UNTIL I ATE OF THE TREE OF KNOWLEDGE OF GOOD AND EVIL? BY TELLING US NOT TOE AT OF THE TREE, HE INSISTED ON IGNORANCE--BUT THEN HELD US RESPONSIBLE, FOR AN ACT OF IGNORANCE.

LASTLY, I HAVE BEEN CONDEMNED FOR USING MY REASON, FOR IT IS THROUGH THE EXERCISE OF REASON THAT I DECIDED TO EAT THE FRUIT. THE SERPENT'S EXPLANATION OF GOD'S MOTIVES (GENESIS III:5) SEEMED VERY REASONABLE TO ME. GOD'S COMMAND ON THE OTHER HAND, NOT TOE AT OF THE TREE OF KNOWLEDGE OF GOOD AND EVIL BECAUSE THEN I'D DIE, SEEMED A TOUCH UNREASONABLE. WHERE IS THE FAULTY IN USING THAT FACULTY GIVEN TO ME BY GOD? THE FAULTY IS NOT MINE, BUT GOD'S--HE MADE REASON GUIDE OUR WILL AND LEFT OUR REASON PREY TO DECEIT.

OR DID HE? HISTORY HAS IT THAT THE SERPENT'S WORDS WERE FALSE, THAT I WAS DECEIVED. BUT GOD'S EXPLANATION (GENESIS, III:22) IS IDENTICAL TO THE SERPENT'S (GENESIS, III:5): THE SERPENT WAS TELLING THE TRUTH. AND SO I STAND CONDEMNED, TOO, FOR LISTENING TO TRUTH. AND FOR OFFERING TRUTH TO OTHERS.

Blackout with sound effect as Teacher 4 re-enters and Matty gets rid of the tunic.

SCENE 8:

TEACHER 4:

MATTY, IS THAT FOR ME?

Matty doesn't respond; she and Wanda are again dazed and looking around.

TEACHER 4:

MATTY?

MATTY:

YES?

TEACHER 4:

I SAID, IS THAT FOR ME. YOU HAVE AN APPLE IN YOUR HAND.  
LUNCH HAPPENED A WHILE AGO SO I ASKED IS THAT FOR ME.

MATTY: (suddenly she remembers)

NO. (she chomps into it quickly then as if to most definitely establish ownership but also to get rid of incriminating evidence) IT'S FOR ME.

In the meantime, Wanda is rummaging around, mumbling about an assignment and asking Matty if she's seen it. Wanda then opens the sports bag to look inside for it. She is flabbergasted, takes out an apple in confusion, and then quickly closes the bag.

TEACHER 4: (to Wanda, nodding at the apple now in her hand)

DO YOU GIRLS HAVE ENOUGH TO GO AROUND? YOU KNOW  
OUR RULE ABOUT FOOD IN THE CLASSROOM.

Wanda doesn't respond.

TEACHER 4:

WELL? DO YOU HAVE ENOUGH TO GO AROUND?

WANDA: (opens the bag again, knowing what she'll see but half-hoping not to see it)

APPARENTLY SO. (The bag is full of apples.)

HERE YOU GO, SIR. (She tosses one at him.)

AND WOULD YOU LIKE ONE? (She asks an audience member, then  
tosses one out to him/her.)

AND HERE'S ONE FOR YOU--AND YOU--

Matty, with semi-incomprehension but at this point feeling 'what the hell, go with it', joins in and they toss apples out to the audience--gently and making eye contact first to avoid injuries!

<sup>1</sup> This entire scene consists of notes being passed back and forth, the two characters Axiothea and Lasthenia alternately writing and reading them. Perhaps they can initially 'whisper' the notes as they write them, gradually making a transition to speaking at a normal on-stage volume and discarding the note-writing almost altogether (except for occasional returns to the gesture as reminders). This however doesn't capture the full impact of their being 'silenced' in class. Another possibility is using a second set of actors, off-stage, to speak the lines, while the on-stage pair act them. Or, pre-recorded voice-overs could be used at the beginning transitioning from voice-over to voice-on-stage; returns to voice-over could happen when their being silenced is particularly significant.

<sup>2</sup> she pronounces it 'Sissypuss'

<sup>3</sup> refer to tape for timing of text delivery in correspondence with soundtrack

## Notes/Study Guide

### SCENE 2:

I wrote this scene to take place in Plato's Academy at about 359 B.C.--Plato would be around sixty-eight years of age, Aristotle twenty-five, and Arete eleven. Also, some kind of upheaval involving Macedonia was imminent at this time.

There seems to be some controversy over the status of women in fourth century Athens. French (p.144), footnoting Chicago (p.123), describes women on a par with slaves, a state of affairs which required women to disguise themselves as men in order to attend school. An item in Lefkowitz, "two of Plato's women disciples were said to have worn men's clothing" (Diog.Laert.3.46), seems to support this, and many other fragments in Lefkowitz seem to me to reveal an attitude of misogyny and a reality of women as second class citizens. But Davis (p.186-194) and Boulding (p.258-265) say this view is inaccurate, and they describe classical Greece as a free state: women could and did hold property, have the right to unilateral divorce, contest and succeed in courts, carry on a business, and attend schools (undisguised).

The opening discussion between Axiothea and Lasthenia concerning justice stems from Book I of Plato's *Republic* in which he posits the following situation: "Suppose that a friend when in his right mind has deposited arms with me and he asks for them when he is not in his right mind, ought I to give them back to him?"

After I read the piece, I read that Axiothea had become a teacher of philosophy, and that "her reputation has suffered from the association of her name with that of Lasthenia" (Carroll, p.312) who, he goes on to suggest, became 'promiscuous' with the male students (including Speusippus), but nevertheless "possessed some reputation as a philosopher" (p.312)...promiscuous? nevertheless?

Axiothea (4th c. B.C.)--a Philasian; student of Plato; Plato did indeed praise Axiothea as described (French p.144 footnoting Chicago p.123), but as indicated above, it's unclear whether or not he knew she was a woman (even if she was disguised, he might've known)

Lasthenia (4th c. B.C.)--a Mantinean from Arcadia; student of Plato

Aglaonice (5th c.B.C.)--astronomer; astrologer

Arete (370-340 B.C.)--head of a school in Cyrene with many distinguished students; a prolific writer (forty works attributed to her include pieces on philosophy, agriculture, an history); daughter and disciple of Aristippus of Cyrene

Arignote (6th-5th c. B.C.)--daughter of Theano and Pythagoras

Aristoclea aka Theoclea aka Themistoclea (6th c. B.C.)--head of a priesthood at Delphi; Pythagoras' sister; teacher of Pythagoras

Aristotle (384-322 B.C.)--studied at Plato's Academy from 367 to its closing (Plato's death) in 347; in 334 he opened his own school, the Lyceum; the line ascribed to Aristotle in this scene ("the female is, as it were, a mutilated male") is from "De Generatione Animalium"; I have since read "a woman is, as it were, an infertile man" (my emphasis)--assuming that to be a translation of the same line, I cannot judge Aristotle as harshly; however, his overall misogyny seems to survive various translations; the other ideas ascribed to him (formal logic, the three types of soul, happiness as the aim of all human action, the emphasis on empirical data) are indeed his

Aspasia (470-410 B.C.)--taught Socrates rhetoric and philosophy

Damo (6th-5th c. B.C.)--daughter of Pythagoras

Demosthenes (4th c. B.C.)--student of Plato; orator

Diotima (5th c. B.C.)--taught Socrates social philosophy and philosophy of love

Elpinice (5th c. B.C.)--intellectual

Lycurgus (4th c. B.C.)--student of Plato; orator; I chose to have Axiothea suggest Lycurgus as Plato's success only because I was sure he was one of Plato's students at the time, but my choice became ironic as I later read that Lycurgus "wanted to bring the women under his laws"--they resisted and he gave up (Lefkowitz); however, another item (in Lefkowitz) placed Lycurgus in the 7th c. B.C., so, as there was probably more than one person by that name, the one quoted above may not be Plato's student; after I finished the piece, I read in Carroll (p.311) that Speusippus was his successor

Myia (6th-5th c. B.C.)--daughter of Theano and Pythagoras

Perictyone (5th c. B.C.)--philosopher; writer (works include *On the Harmony of Women*—dealing with the relationship between body and spirit, thought, and action--and *On Wisdom*); mother or sister of Plato

Plato (427-347 B.C.)--ran a school called The Academy, in Athens, Greece (opened in 387 B.C.); philosophy, physics, mathematics, and natural sciences were studied there

Pythagoras (582-500 B.C.)--philosopher; known for the 'golden mean' concept; ran a school in Croton (around 530 B.C.)

Samothea--a Briton; invented letters; studied astronomy and science; head of the Hyperborean University at Cornwall where Pythagoras is supposed to have studied

Socrates (470-399 B.C.)--Plato's predecessor; immortalized in Plato's *Dialogues*

Speusippus (4th c. B.C.)--student of Plato

Theano (540-510 B.C.)--brilliant mathematician; expert in early psychology, physics, and medicine; Pythagoras' successor as head of the Institute; supposed originator of the 'golden mean' concept; wife of Pythagoras

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#### SCENE 4:

Portia is from Shakespeare's play *The Merchant of Venice*.

Portia's father, now deceased, left explicit instructions in his will regarding her marriage. Only a suitor who passed the test of choosing 'correctly' among three caskets (of gold, silver, and lead) was to be accepted by Portia as her husband. Fortunately, the ones Portia would reject fail the test (my list is fairly true to Shakespeare's), and the one she would choose, Bassanio, succeeds.

However, before the test and marriage, Bassanio had asked a friend of his, Antonio, to sign a loan for him, from Shylock--Antonio's own flesh would be collateral (the loan was needed to woo and impress Portia, who, Bassanio was well aware, was "richly left"--I:ii, 1.161). Antonio generously agrees to do so, but unfortunately, all of his vessels are shipwrecked and he is unable to repay the loan--Shylock demands his flesh. Portia (now wife of Bassanio) offers to pay the loan, but Shylock remains firm in his claim. Bassanio leaves Portia to see what he can do for Antonio.

Believing Antonio to be as good a man as Bassanio (for they are friends), Portia disguises herself as a lawyer and appears at the court to plead for Antonio. Her lady, Nerissa (recently married to Gratiano, Bassanio's man) accompanies her, disguised as a clerk. The trial proceeds, Portia speaking for Bassanio's friend (in spite of Bassanio's claim that he would give up his wife to save Antonio--IV:i, 1.282-287), and delivering the famous speech about mercy ("The quality of mercy is not strained..."--V:i, 1.184...). The Duke judges in Antonio's favour. Portia begins to leave, but Bassanio insists the lawyer name some payment. She names the wedding ring he wears (given to him by her with the words "when you part from, lose, or give away, let it presage the ruin of your love"--III:ii, 1.174-175), he gives it. Nerissa, as clerk, also acquires the ring she gave to Gratiano. They part.

When all have returned, Portia presents the ring to Bassanio, telling him that she obtained it when she slept with the lawyer. Nerissa claims to have slept with the clerk, and she too presents her ring. For a moment, there is concern about being cuckolded, but Portia quickly tells the whole story, thus relieving the men.

Viola (*Twelfth Night*) and Rosalind (*As You Like It*) are two other characters who temporarily disguise themselves as men in order to more freely, more effectively, interact in the world.

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**SCENE 6:**

Helen and Suzanne are the Fourment sisters.

Helen married Rubens in 1630 when she was 16 (Rubens was then 53). She modelled for him throughout their marriage: overtly for "Helen Fourment and two of her children" and for "The Little Fur", but as one author said, "she could be found in one guise or another in virtually every major painting" (Avermaete); indeed, Edwards states that "in the romantic "Garden of Love", all ten of the young women in the painting were based on the artist's wife and her many sisters" (p.196, my emphasis).

Suzanne, it is speculated, had a brief affair with Rubens some time in 1627. She was the model for his painting "Le Chapeau de paille" which was done in 1620, and apparently 'sat' for him on several other occasions.

Rubens (1577-1640) is a Flemish painter, perhaps known most for his portraits and his nudes.

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**SCENE 8:**

There are two versions in the *Bible* of Eve's origin. One (chapter one) describes her creation contemporaneously with Adam, and the other (chapter two) describes that Adam was created first and Eve later. In any case, God (the creator of everything) commanded them/him not to eat from a certain tree (called 'the tree of the knowledge of good and evil'); if they did, they would die. Eve, encouraged/tempted by a serpent, does eat the forbidden fruit; she offers some to Adam, which he accepts. God then throws them out of the garden of Eden (paradise), cursing them with a life of labour.

The curse extends to all of their progeny, which gives rise to the concept of 'original sin': certain Christian sects believe that everyone (being descendent from Adam and Eve) is born with that original sin, and only baptism (a special rite) can erase it; people who are not baptised, who remain in a state of original sin, will go to Hell (a place of eternal pain/punishment) when they

die, or at least to Limbo (a place of permanent 'suspension')--the others have a chance of going to Heaven (a place of eternal happiness/reward).

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