

# HERE'S A PLAY PARABLE ON IMPORTANCE OF BEING FRANK

Presenting Two Sides of the Problem Set for Society by the Advanced Young Woman Who Refuses to Obey the World Old Mandate to "Hush" When Speaking of Vital Things



Estelle Winwood as the young mother Lucilla.



The eugenic bride cannot bear the burden of shoes and stockings. From left to right—Louise Emery, Cecilia Radcliffe and Cecil Yapp as the vicar's household, and Estelle Winwood and Cecil Fletcher as the young couple.



Cathleen Nesbitt as Julie, the Daughter of Revelation, and Winifred Fraser as her mother-in-law, the Victorian gentlewoman.

An advanced young woman presents her ideas in "Hush" at the Little Theatre. This she does in the play itself—every day. Lucilla is the heroine. Lucilla seeks in her play to show the evil of making a mystery of birth. The author of "Hush" is Violet Fern. Some of the striking passages are given below.

### The New and the Old.

JIM (introducing his mother). Mother, this is Miss Julie Laxton. Mrs. Greville holding out both hands—My dear, I'm delighted to see you. It's so very good of you to come and see two old people! Julie trying to meet her, trips over the corner of the rug—Oh, damn! Watching the effect, she adds: I'm sorry I can't apologize. I believe in the same freedom of speech for women as for men. I'm afraid I've shocked you. Mrs. G. (with sweet politeness)—Oh, do not at all. (To Jim) Jim, dear, this really must get a new rug. This one is (clank)—is damnish. (Closes her eyes and looks at Julie) Will you let an old woman tell you what a becoming frock you're wearing? So cool and simple! Julie—The Daughters of Revelation are pledged to wear this dress somewhere in public every day. Mrs. G. (with a glance that is a compliment)—I'm sure I don't wonder. If I were as young as you are I should ask for the pattern. I had quite a pretty figure too when I was a girl. Julie—Oh, but we wear it as a protest. Mrs. G. (gaily)—A most becoming protest. Reenter Mrs. Greville. Mrs. G.—Here is my husband. (To Mr. G.) James, dear, this is Miss Laxton. (Smiling to Julie) I wonder if she will let me hope that one day we may welcome her as a daughter? Mr. G.—Perhaps Miss Laxton will allow us to hope. Julie—I glance at Jim, who does not respond. I'm hardly in a position to make a statement on the subject at present. Mrs. G.—So wise! Just like a member of the Government. Julie—Before I let you think of me in any relation to your son I want to make my position quite clear. That is why I came here to-night. Mrs. G.—So very good of you, my dear! Mr. G.—We're so much interested! Julie—I believe in the same sex work for men as for women. Mrs. G.—All women do, dear. Julie—The marriage tie is not sacred in my eyes. Mrs. G. (snobs)—Just a matter of convenience. Julie—I force myself to look the least of nature in the face. Mrs. G.—But is there any avoiding that? Julie—But—oh, I must make you realize the principle of Revelation. (Lowers her eyes) Where other women say "Look!" (With a sudden change of voice) What's that? Mrs. G.—Are you expecting some thing? Julie—Oh, no, no! What was I saying? Oh, I was just trying to explain my views. Mrs. G.—We're quite ready to take you on trust. Mrs. G.—A charming woman needs no explanation. I'm a great believer in the sex. Miss Laxton, you see (with his little bow to his wife), I've had fully confirmation for nearly forty years. Jim—I say, pater, Julie—well, Julie's a modern woman. She isn't used to that sort of thing. Mrs. G.—With his little bow directed this time to Julie—Then I'm sorry for the men of her acquaintance. They lose so much by not knowing how to appreciate. Julie (to Jim)—It's all right, Jim. We don't expect to be understood at all. But I must be more concrete. (Turns to Mrs. G.) It's like this.

When your son first came to me and told me he—loved me— Mrs. G. (sweetly)—Yes, dear, I know! Julie—I explained to him it was a physical state of the blood produced by certain organisms. Mrs. G.—That wouldn't make a bit of difference to Jimmie. Julie—I made him promise that if I entered into a relation with him our children should be brought up in full knowledge of the facts of life. Mrs. G.—Every girl ought to tell of her children before she marries. I did. Julie—No concealment, no mysteries, no whippers. They will know all about what people call "forbidden subjects" from the first. Our society publishes a Child's First Book on Sex. Do let me send it to you. Mrs. G. (putting her knitting on her knee and looking up)—Thank you very much. A Child's First Book on Sex, you said. I hope you won't think me a rude old woman, but do you know, I'm not very much interested in sex. Julie—Ah, of course. In the Victorian age people weren't— Mrs. G.—Now, there you're mistaken, my dear. We were immensely interested. You see, we knew so little. We thought it a thrilling subject. We used to whisper. Try to find out, but now—well, in these days we know all about it. It's become commonplace. Do you know, I think people are beginning to get a tiny bit bored with sex. I don't think you need trouble to lend me that book, dear. Julie—Of course it might shock you, but— Mrs. G.—I said bored, my dear, not shocked. Julie—Oh, I simply can't make you realize. Mrs. G.—I've had six babies myself. Do you know, I can just see you with your children at your knee and you teaching them out of that book. Dear little things, longing for the moment when they can run out and play. I suppose all children have to take their turn at wondering why mamma is so old-fashioned— Julie—Old-fashioned: The principle of revelation can never be old-fashioned. Drag it out! Out into the light! Mrs. G.—But after it is out? If one keeps on dragging— Lucilla—Oh, please! You'll crush my pretty frillies! (Looking up at

Miss Allison.) You are fond of covering things up, aren't you? Is it an English habit? Miss A. (dryly)—I hope so, Lucilla. Lucilla (opening another parcel)—I don't think I like it much. It makes it seem as if there were something nasty underneath. My legs are rather nice. (Puts one out to prove it.) And the cradle's lovely. (Holds up a tiny shirt.) Isn't that a darling little shirt? The worst thing! For those little woolies. (She puts them against Aunt Ellen's averted cheek.) Soft as thistle-down. Oh! (Drops her hands in her lap and gazes at them all, smiling radiantly.) I do hope my baby will be a boy. Just like Keith. Even to the little brown mole just here. (Taps her waist.) The darling! Miss A.—Oh, Lucilla, how can you! Mrs. A.—Lucilla, this must stop at once and for all. (She speaks with great sternness. Lucilla springs to her feet and takes refuge with Keith—Oh, what have I done? No one has ever spoken to me like that before. Keith—Darling! Mrs. A.—I must speak, painful though it is to me. (Turns to Lucilla.) Lucilla! I do not know what is the custom of the Channel Islands, or what your father may permit, but in this country it is not permissible for a young married woman to dowers her voice—to mention her condition. Lucilla (greatly surprised, and in a clear voice)—I mustn't say I'm going to have a baby! Mrs. A.—Hush! Hush! Mrs. A.—Hush! Hush! Lucilla—But I thought every woman was always proud of her baby? Mrs. A.—After it is born. Lucilla—What difference does that make? Mrs. A.—Lucilla! Mrs. A.—I will try to make things clear to you, Lucilla, before you commit any more indiscretions. Lucilla (kneeling in the midst of her purchases—piteously)—But I haven't committed any indiscretion. I'm only going to have a baby. It's natural to have a baby! It's right to have a baby. Father always says everything natural is quite simple and beautiful. Keith—Look here! I don't understand about these things—being at sea and all that. But Lucilla is as natural as a bird. She's been brought up that way, and I'm sure she's right. I never did like all this hushing up business. Silly, I call it. (To Lucilla) Look here, Mrs. A.—If you are working at—er—little garments, you must always hide them when any one comes in. Mrs. A.—And look unconscious.

Lucilla (drawing a long breath of relief. Goes to cradle and bends over it.—So fast asleep, my darling! Haven't you got one smile for mother in your sleep? No, no, don't wake my precious! Whatever should I do if all those mothers were to come in? I couldn't show them my precious secret! Oh, I couldn't. And if I took you upstairs Lizzie might bring you down. (Looks behind curtain. Comes back to baby.) Oh, baby, you won't think I'm not happy to have you? I am, I am! Oh, why did they make me ashamed of you before you came? Oh, baby darling, I love you from the dawn on your darling head past the brown mole just like father's to the curly toes of your feet. (Sound in hall. Lucilla springs up from her adoring attitude.) Oh, baby, I do beg your pardon, but to save mother such great hot blushes you won't mind going in here? (She hides the cradle behind the curtain, slides a rattle under a pile of fannelette garments on a sofa, hides

an Indian rubber lamb under the cushion of a chair. Enter the mothers.) Mrs. A.—You must never forget you have something that must be hidden. Miss A.—A precious secret! Keith—They used to tell me the little dears were found in the gooseberry bushes, darling (pause). I don't believe 'em. Sure you'd rather stay, Lucie? Lucilla—Oh, yes. I want my baby to be (breaks off). Oh, it's so difficult to remember to be ashamed! (To Mrs. A.) But I will do it, indeed I will. I'll make myself feel it. Then there won't be any danger of my forgetting. I'll say to myself every morning, "You've got something that must be hidden. You've got a precious secret!" Mrs. A.—An excellent plan! Lucilla—Yes, isn't it? Only— Mrs. A.—Of course not, Lucilla. After—er—the event. Miss A. (gesture to the window)—Hush! A man! Lucilla (stopping off each instruction on her fingers)—One—Choose a delicate way of expressing yourself! Two—Lower your voice! Three—Be sure there are no gentlemen about! Four—Look unconscious! Five—Never forget you have something that must be hidden. The Baby. Lucilla (draws a long breath of relief. Goes to cradle and bends over it.—So fast asleep, my darling! Haven't you got one smile for mother in your sleep? No, no, don't wake my precious! Whatever should I do if all those mothers were to come in? I couldn't show them my precious secret! Oh, I couldn't. And if I took you upstairs Lizzie might bring you down. (Looks behind curtain. Comes back to baby.) Oh, baby, you won't think I'm not happy to have you? I am, I am! Oh, why did they make me ashamed of you before you came? Oh, baby darling, I love you from the dawn on your darling head past the brown mole just like father's to the curly toes of your feet. (Sound in hall. Lucilla springs up from her adoring attitude.) Oh, baby, I do beg your pardon, but to save mother such great hot blushes you won't mind going in here? (She hides the cradle behind the curtain, slides a rattle under a pile of fannelette garments on a sofa, hides

Lucilla (to Miss Cording)—He isn't! He's just as much mine as he was before. (Backs to window) Oh, I can't bear you all staring at me! You make me so hot. You make me so ashamed. I—oh, it isn't my fault! I've tried to look unconscious and to remember I have something that must be hidden. Oh, don't stare at me so! I didn't mean to have him! If I had known it would be like this I wouldn't have had him for anything in the world. (She has backed before the mothers until she reaches the window, which is open. She now jumps up on window box, so is seen above crowd of mothers.) Oh, I can't have you all staring at me—I can't! Mrs. Stevens—Who ever heard of a mother that had got a right to be a mother who wasn't proud to talk about her baby and show him off too? (Turns to Lucilla.) If we might just have a look at 'im, mum? Mrs. War—Just what I was going to ask, myself. Mrs. Blath—An' me longing to see the blessed infant! Mrs. Clatt—Most gratifying a peep at 'im would be, I'm sure, ma'am. Mrs. Ship (rising)—I'll go and fetch 'im, mum. I know my way. Lucilla (clasping and unclasping hands in great agitation)—Oh, please, please, oh, don't! You mustn't—I didn't you can't—you can't see! I mean there isn't anything to see. I don't know anything about it, oh, please! (Mothers are much astonished.) Mrs. Brockett—Well, I never! Mrs. Blath—Who ever saw the like? Mrs. Ship—Upon my word! (To Lucilla.) One would think you'd never had a baby, mum! Lucilla (wildly)—I didn't! I never had! I wouldn't for the world! Mrs. Blath (from behind curtain)—La, la, la! Lucilla (to baby)—Mother's coming, darling. (Starts off toward baby, realizes and turns to mothers.) Oh! Mrs. C. (sweeps back curtain and exposes cradle)—There. Now, I thought he was behind here all the time. Quite a little joke you've been playing with us, Mrs. Keith Allison! Now, I'll just take him up and show him to the mothers, and— (She is about to take the baby.) Lucilla (forestalling her with a little rush)—Don't you touch my baby! Baby—La-la-la! (Cries.) Lucilla (catching him up)—There, then, sweetheart, there! (Mothers crowd round eagerly.) Mrs. Blath—Just let me 'ave a look, mum! Mrs. Steph—Let me 'old it for you, mum. Lucilla (catching up the sofa rug with her free hand and covering the baby with it)—Oh, you might have pretended not to notice! Every one always use to, even—even when they must have known quite well. Mrs. C.—But that was before. Now he's public property, as you might say. (The mothers are crowding round, peering with curiosity and having the time of their lives.)

Lucilla's Defiance. Lucilla—No more I won't hush, begins your pardon, ma'am! They're saying in the village and everywhere you're ashamed of your baby, Mrs. Keith. Lucilla—So I was dreadfully ashamed of him. Mrs. A.—But why—? Mrs. A.—What could—? Lucilla—You did! All of you! Mrs. A.—Lucilla! Lucilla—You told me that I had "a precious secret!" "Look unconscious!" You made me act as if I were ashamed of him before he was born, so I grew ashamed of him. And after he was born, I stayed ashamed of him. Lucilla—They're saying, Mrs. Keith, seeing you were ashamed of the baby longer than usual, that you had reason to be ashamed of him, my dear. Lucilla—Reason? I don't understand! Lucilla—They're saying he isn't Mr. Keith's baby. That's what them nasty backbiting, slimy evil thinkers are saying of my dear. Lucilla—Oh, Lizzie, go and tell Mr. Keith I want him here. At once. Lizzie (approving)—That's talking, Mrs. Keith. (Exit.) Rector (timidly)—Lucilla, don't get rash! Mrs. A.—Wait, Lucilla. I've got a little plan. (Lucilla marches to the door with her head in the air. She flings it open and calls in a clear voice.) Lucilla—Mothers! Rector, Mrs. and Miss A.—Lucilla! Lucilla—Mrs. Shipley, Mrs. Stevens,

Clutterbuck, mothers! Come here! (Enter mothers from hall.) Lucilla (with gesture of command).—Mothers, sit there! (Mothers prepare to obey. Lucilla, holding the baby in one arm, sits facing the mother.) Lucilla—Now watch! (She begins to undress the baby hastily. Baby cries.) There, there, darling. Rector—Oh, please, please, don't be rash! Lucilla—Just hold that for me, please. (Puts a little shirt into his hands.) Mothers—Well, I never! Laws! Save me! Mrs. Ship—It's a demonstration same as the cooking classes! Lucilla (giving under to Miss C.)—And this. (To baby.) Then, then! All his nasty clothes off! Kick his little legs! (Keith enters, followed by Lizzie.) Keith—Lucilla! What the blazes! Lucilla—I want you. Come out and stand here. (Keith takes the place she indicates close by her chair.) Lucilla (holding the baby in the shawl, to Lizzie)—Take baby, Lizzie. Make all the mothers look at him. See they look well! Lizzie—And proud they should be, (Keys, holding the baby before each mother in turn.) Mrs. Blath—Bless his little heart! Mrs. Stevens—A fine grown child, to be sure! Mrs. Trus—Pretty lamb, then, so he is! Mrs. S.—Wouldn't um laugh at me? Mrs. Ship—Can't say he favors his father—oh, laws! (puts hand over mouth.) Lucilla (while the mothers look at the baby, to Keith)—Take off your coat. Keith—My darling—what the deuce—? Rector (almost a wail)—Lucilla! Lucilla! don't be rash! Lucilla (to Keith)—Take off your coat. (Keith obeys.) Keith—Now I'm ready for anything, dear. Lucilla—Mothers! (The mothers all sit up at attention.) You have all seen my baby. You have seen that he has a brown mole—just here. (Taps her waist.) Lucilla—Now look! (With a swift movement she tears Keith's shirt open to the waist. She points to a spot on his skin.) There! Mothers—The split image! So 'tis. A family mark, you might say! Like father, like son! Miss C. (with a last attempt at a sneer)—To think I never knew why those marks are said to be fortunate till this day! (Miss Allison advances with the sofa rug, which she is about to put over Keith's shoulders like a shawl.) Lucilla (preventing her)—No, I won't have any more covering up. It is covering things up that makes people think there's something nasty underneath. (Turns to mothers.) Mothers! You have seen that Mr. Keith and the baby both have the same birthmark in the same place. Don't you ever dare to say that my baby isn't our baby again! Mothers—I'm sure I never would wouldn't for— Mrs. Ship looks at Miss C. (The mothers now who could a put such things into our heads— Mrs. C.—Don't you dare to insist! Mrs. and Miss A. and Rector following directly on Lucilla's heels— Oh, hush! Keith—Did they? Damn! Others—"Shush!" Lucilla—Never! Never! I'll never hush again for anything in the world! My baby shan't ever hear the bad, horrid, wicked, mischief-making word. Give him to me, Lizzie. (She takes the baby and stands centre.) Keith (coming close to her)—It's about time I had a look at the little chap. (Fingers shawl.) So this was what he was found in! (To Lizzie) I seem to have seen this before! Lizzie (finger to lip)—Hush!

## THE NEWS OF THE WEEK IN RHYME

THE submarine activity Is painfully progressing; The Kaiser gave his son and heir An army, with his blessing.



The Colonel took a talking trip To aid the Grand Old Party; A German trench was captured by A private named McCarty. Too many novels spoil the brain, According to a jurist; But some, we find, Improve the mind— And isn't Hughes a tourist?



The framework of a dinosaur Was found in Minnesota; The French are driving William back Iota by iota.



The British, too, are quite intent Upon the winter's gunning— The price of paint Is very quaint— And all our dyes are running.



The British pound has lost its place To Bro. Sam's dollar; An heiress bought her poodle dog A diamond studded collar. One hundred million stamps were made In Washington this season— To be quite fair, We do not care— And guinea pigs can reason.



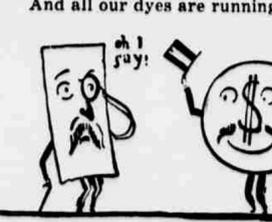
A U-boat called at Newport just To post a business letter— The atmosphere Is quite austere— And Greece is feeling better.



The football teams are struggling for That precious jewel, knowledge, Which may be had in capsule form At any modern college.



Five ships were sunk just off the coast, Where peace is all-prevailing— The neutral's lot Is really not A matter of plain sailing.



To dwell in Kultur's capital Must be a joyless service— 'Tis rather smart To study art— And Daniels makes us nervous.



By Dana Burnet