

Mrs Worthington's Daughters

A 1-act play for youth groups

Written by Mark Rees

Spotlight Publications

Mrs Worthington's Daughters

CAST (in order of appearance)

Melanie

Tracy

The Chorus:

Voice 1

Voice 2

The Paparazzi:

Voice 1

Voice 2

Voice 3

Voice 4

Voice 5

Voice 6

Voice 7

Voice 8

Pandora

The Agent

Jake

Time - the present

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Scene 1: The Premiere

Music 1

(Noel Coward's "Don't Put Your Daughter On The Stage, Mrs Worthington")

The play opens with the Paparazzi photographing and trying to get interviews with 'imaginary' celebrities. They are in a line across the front of the stage and aim the dialogue at the audience. Some should be photographers with cameras that flash and some should be reporters with notebooks and pens

The opening is very stylised and should create a picture of the Paparazzi at work! The noise of the Paparazzi builds to a crescendo and it becomes distorted

At the end of the dialogue the Paparazzi retreat to their rostrum UC, which is cordoned off with red rope suspended from small poles with bases

There is a large 'Greek style' pillar behind the rostrum and three more either side L and R

The Paparazzi wear white 'Greek style' masks as do the Chorus. The Chorus take their masks off when they are being other characters i.e., the Agent and Jake. They could also be in the Paparazzi but they don't have to be. They are ever-present watching the action. The Chorus are standing at the back, either side of the rostrum. They are both dressed in dinner suits, black ties etc.

Voice 1 Over this way, look over here!

Voice 2 Show us your best side! Just a quick photo!

Voice 3 Come on, don't be like that, we only want an interview!

Voice 4 Yeah, tell us what you think.

Voice 5 Is that your new girlfriend?

Voice 6 Is that your new boyfriend?

Voice 7 Just a few photos! The readers will want to know!

Voice 8 Looking good! Had a new face-lift?

Voice 1 Just for a minute, stop and talk!

Voice 2 Tell us about your love life! Marriage on the rocks!

Voice 3 Having an affair? Or is she just your niece?

Voice 4 Tell us everything the readers will want to know!

Voice 5 Who does your hair? Who makes your clothes?

Voice 6 Did you sleep with that film star? Is it true about the love child?

Voice 7 You may as well tell us, otherwise we'll just make it up!

Voice 8 It's in the public interest, we have a right to know.

Voice 1 Right to know!

Voice 2 Right to know!

Voice 3 Right to know!

Voice 4 Right to know!

Voice 5 Right to know!

Voice 6 Right to know!

Voice 7 Right to know!

Voice 8 Right to know!

All Right to know!

Spot up Melanie's room. Melanie and Tracy enter. Melanie is preening herself in an imaginary mirror and Tracy is sitting on a stool reading "Lady Chatterley's Lover". At the same time a spot comes up on the Chorus on the other side of the stage

Chorus (two voices) What you are about to see is true, and untrue. (Voice 1) It has the qualities of a fairy story. (Voice 2) Grimm. (Two voices) It's about ambition, wish-fulfilment and a striving need for recognition (Voice 1) At any cost. (Two voices) The road to fame is littered with shattered talent and

damaged egos, bruised reputations and those who never made it. Were never going to make it! Teenage wannabees, wannabees, wannabees. Teenage wannabees (*Voice 2*) who never let talent get in the way of ambition. (*Two voices*) An army is on the march! An army of hopefuls hell-bent on achieving some sort of fame. How they do that doesn't seem to matter. (*Voice 1*) Hell! Who cares? They just want their (*two voices*) fifteen minutes! They're everywhere, talentless locusts that swarm in the fields of ambition. Dip their toes in the river of celebrity and aren't heart-broken when they miss the boat of real talent. Warhol was wrong! He opened up the floodgates, gushing exploitation. Watering down celebrity so now it hardly means a thing! (*Voice 1*) This is the truth! (*Voice 2*) The truth is out there!

Scene 2: Melanie explains herself

Tracy is sitting on a stool. During this speech Melanie brushes Tracy's hair and puts it in a bad ponytail on the side of her head. Halfway through they swap over and Tracy brushes Melanie's hair

Melanie Somebody said that fame was a four-letter word, it isn't to me. I want it so much it hurts. I feel that all my life I've been in the audience, but now it's my turn, my time, my fifteen minutes. (*Pause*) I want to be an actress, to be on the stage, or in TV, or in films, or maybe a dancer. I'll do anything. I can, I'm an all-rounder! Aren't I, Tracy?

Tracy (*engrossed in her book*) Yeah.

Melanie I'm sixteen, for goodness sake. I'm not some silly kid with her head in the clouds. My time's coming and I intend to grab it with both hands. This time next year I'll be famous! Won't I, Tracy?

Tracy Yeah.

Melanie I go to singing classes on Monday and Wednesday nights. Tuesday it's dancing, Saturday it's my drama class. A good voice is so important, don't you think? I'm toying with doing a yoga class on Thursdays, I'm not really sure though. It might help me find my inner self. As Stanislavski says, "One can't create the character of someone else, until you know yourself." It might help to tone up my body as well. A good body is so important, don't you think? And for that reason I go to the gym on Sundays for a really good workout. On Friday evenings I go to Miss Cratchet for my elocution class. But I'm not neglecting my studies. You can still be an actress or singer or dancer or model and still have a brain. A good education is so important, don't you think? (*Pause, while she looks in the mirror and straightens her clothes*) I told Mummy that I might have to do some 'glamour' modelling to get started, you know Page Three stuff, purely as a means to an end. Lots of actresses have done it and it hasn't affected their careers. She was quite cool about it, but then she went and told Daddy and he went mad! I said to him that I was a woman now. You can be over the hill in the modelling game, for example, by the time you're twenty-one, if you're not careful! Daddy just doesn't understand, he still thinks I'm his "little girl". It's my body and I'll do what I like with it! He is such a control freak!

It's like last week, Justin came round to my place, he's my 'significant other', and we were in my room getting on with some serious kissing when Daddy burst in. Well that was embarrassing enough, but then he asked if I could lend him some money to save him going to the bank. I didn't have any, but Justin said he had ten pounds in his wallet Daddy could have. So he opened his wallet to give him the money and a condom fell out and landed at Daddy's feet. There was a silence for a few seconds. And Daddy just stood there with his mouth opening and closing but no words coming out. Justin grabbed the 'thingy' and ran downstairs and out of the front door. It was so embarrassing. We haven't, you know, 'done' anything, Justin and me, but I'm glad he was prepared. I think a good boyfriend is so important, don't you?

This is my best friend Tracy, she's going to help me to be famous, aren't you Tracy?

Tracy Yeah.

Melanie I think it's really good to have a best friend who is plain, don't you? There are fewer arguments then about boys and things. You're not competing with each other. Tracy's going to be my PA, aren't you, Tracy?

Tracy Yeah. What's a PA?

Melanie It's a personal assistant. They sort out a person's diary, take bookings and get them to the venue and stuff. They do all the menial things, it's a very responsible job.

Tracy Okay then. When do I start?

Melanie Now. Here's my phone, my hairbrush and my diary, but no reading the personal stuff! This is it, Tracy, the first step on the ladder to fame.

Mrs Worthington's Daughters

Mark Rees' prize-winning satire on fame and modern society's obsession with it.

Melanie is a 16 year old teenager determined to succeed in show business at all costs. With her mate Tracy she enters the sleazy world of celebrity, talent shows and agents. When she fails and Tracy succeeds (at a price), Melanie tries to withdraw from the rat-race but cannot, with tragic consequences.

With four main parts and ten choral parts, the play is ideal for a teenage cast.