

STAGE PLAY SUBMITTED FOR LICENCE.

Title : A TASTE OF HONEY
No. of Scenes or Acts : Two Acts
Place of Production : Theatre Royal, Stratford, London E.15
Date of Production : 20.5.58
Author : Shelagh Delaney
Submitted by :

LORD CHAMBERLAIN'S OFFICE,
ST. JAMES'S PALACE, S.W.1.

READERS' REPORT.

5.5.58



Helen is a free-lance tart and Josephine is her teen-age daughter. Between the two of them exists a very real bond, though it expresses itself in mutual recrimination. Helen is half-Irish and was born in the Catholic faith. She has a gypsy-like reluctance to tie herself down and wanders from lodging to lodging, always with her half-educated daughter along with her. Now the latter is due to leave school and get a job - it is clear that she despises her mother's way of life without openly criticising it. To them appears Peter, a wealthy man ten years younger than Helen, a constant swain who proposes marriage. Helen agrees and then discovers that Jo has fallen for a ~~nixxy~~ nice young coloured merchant seaman. She shrugs off her responsibility and goes off with her new husband, leaving Jo to fend for herself. The seaman goes off and what we thought was the real thing turns out to be the old story. Jo is pregnant with no immediate hope (or desire) of a husband. Then she finds and brings home Geoff. Geoff has the reputation of being a pervert - and he confesses that there is a little flame to the immense amount of smoke; but he explains that he is really quite a normal young man, only not very strongly sexed, and with a very real desire to marry and settle down and have a family. He remains with Jo, taking a far more intense interest in her pregnancy than Jo herself - who loathes the idea of having a baby, especially as Helen has told her that her father was 'mentally retarded'. Helen and Peter reappear and offer a home for Jo and her child. Peter, too, is fond of children and would be glad to adopt his step-daughter's child. Reluctantly and defiantly Jo more or less accepts the offer. Her pains come on and she is whisked off to hospital. Helen remains to tell Geoff what has happened and what is going to happen. His dreams

of marrying Jo and being, even by proxy, a father, crash about his ears. The curtain falls and we are left with the slightest hint that this is the end for him and that he will never get another chance to prove himself normal.

~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ This is a surprisingly good play - though God knows it is not to my personal taste. But the people are strangely real and the problem of Geoff is delicately conveyed.

PP. 31, 32 I have marked the scene where he explains his position in society to Jo.

PP. 55, 65 I have also marked places where Helen calls him a pervert and a castrated little clown. These can easily come out.

The point I wish to make is that this play is balanced on a knife-edge: it is the perfect border-line case, since it ~~is~~ is concerned with the forbidden subject in a way that no one, I believe, could take exception to.

In my opinion, therefore, it is

RECOMMENDED FOR LICENCE

but I think that the Comptroller and the Lord Chamberlain should both read the play carefully themselves.

me:
I've read it and I think it's nothing, quite apart from the homosexual bits. To me it has no saving grace whatsoever. If we have much less than it does give our critics something to say *me*

C.D. Heriot
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P. 32. Alter the passage marked X - X so as to eliminate the suggestion of homosexuality.
P. 55. Cut 'castrated'.

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6.6.58

This play is now running at Stratford and the present manuscript is, we are to assume, what it has become during rehearsal. The original license is 1017/58. The plot remains unchanged: the character of Geoff has been toned down in accordance with the Lord Chamberlain's instructions and the lover, Peter has been given a silly drunken scene to indicate that his life with Helen is not all it should be. This is, in my opinion, a mistake and coarsens the play. *is this possible?*

P.37 A phrase here that should come out. *Not very nice. Cut?* *Cut*

The manuscript is incomplete. If the management want another license they must submit the remainder. *Yes*

Otherwise

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