

**AMUSING WILLIE**

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A Ten-Minute Play  
by  
Donald Loftus

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## AMUSING WILLE

### CHARACTERS

- WILLIE:** AGE 40: A British playwright.
- CALLIOPE:** AGE 70+: British. She is the boss Muse and the protector of heroic poems. She carries laurels and a book. She is in control.
- ERATO:** AGE 50+: Cockney. She is the horny Muse and the protector of love poetry. She wears a huge heart-shaped necklace, and carries a quiver of arrows and a bow. She is the sexiest of the three.
- THALIA:** AGE 60+: British. She is the Muse of comedy and holds a comedy mask. She is the least intelligent of the three.
- THE SETTING:** A bare stage. There is only a long gate-leg table and 4 chairs.
- AT RISE:** *THE MUSES sit at the table and listen to WILLIE who paces with a script in one hand and a quill pen in the other. HE is explaining his new play to THE MUSES.*

**AMUSING WILLE**

**WILLIE**

And then suddenly...she wakes up...

**THALIA**

She what!?!

**WILLIE**

She wakes up...

**THALIA**

She wakes up!?!

**ERATO**

Holy shit! I did not see that coming!

**CALLIOPE**

Shush Erato! And what exactly does *he* do?

**WILLIE**

What do you mean?

**CALLIOPE**

I mean...what is his reaction to her sudden resurrection from the dead? Her renaissance...as it were.

**WILLIE**

Well, Calliope, he's totally chuffed, of course.

**CALLIOPE**

He's chuffed.

**WILLIE**

Well, naturally! He's thrilled to see that she is, in fact, not dead!

**CALLIOPE**

Naturally. And then?

**WILLIE**

And then they have this bangin', kick-ass wedding... and all of the family members, who once were at each other's throats, are now getting along like besties.

**CALLIOPE**

Uh-huh. Just like that?

**WILLIE**

Yes! Everything is finally good. Everyone is finally happy. And Bob's your uncle. Just like that! The end.

**THALIA**

The end?!? What!?! That is absolute bollocks!

**CALLIOPE**

No! It's not the end. You must be having a laugh mate! Right?

**ERATO**

Yes! You have got to be shitting us! That cannot be the end!

**WILLIE**

No, I am not "shitting you" as you so gracefully put it. And yes, it is abso-bloody-lutely the end. What's wrong with it?

**CALLIOPE**

No, no, no. You are right. It is the end! It is the end of your playwriting career!

**WILLIE**

No! Why are you saying that? You ankle-biters are always so damned negative! Why can't the characters just be happy?

**THALIA**

No one wants to see these characters all happy and content. Not after what you've put us through for the last three hours.

**ERATO**

And by the way...the prologue promised the play would only "occupy the stage for two hours"... so we are already pissed.

**CALLIOPE**

Yes! We have sat there through five acts and twenty-three scenes. Something had damn-well better happen!

**WILLIE**

Something does happen. They get married!

**ERATO**

Snorrendous!

**WILLIE**

It can't always be about murder, revenge, treachery, madness and moral corruption. Oh sure, those things are terrifically entertaining, but in this case, they all live happily ever after.

**THALIA**

Yawn.

**CALLIOPE**

The critics will crucify you.

**WILLIE**

Okay, Calliope...ladies...why don't you just go ahead and tell me how I should end *my* own play! Let's just cut to the chase!

**CALLIOPE**

No, it is *your* play, Willie. We've no right to rewrite it. We can only offer our suggestions. It is entirely up to you whether or not you take them...and put them to good use.

**WILLIE**

No, out with it. You are meant to be my Muses. A-muse-me.

**CALLIOPE**

Okay, give us a minute.

*(CALLIOPE & THALIA huddle)*

**WILLIE**

Erato, why aren't you in the huddle?

**ERATO**

I don't do plot development. I'm only here to add the color.

**CALLIOPE**

Okay, here it is. In the final scene, you have him go into an insane, violent, pissy-fit rage as he breaks into her family tomb...

**WILLIE**

He breaks into the tomb? Why would he do that?

**ERATO**

Oh, I see where this is going! He's come there for one more round of "How's your father?. A little last minute mattress-dancing. The ol' "making the beast with two backs".

**WILLIE**

Ha! HA! "Making the beast with two backs!" Can I use that?

**ERATO**

Sure you can!

**CALLIOPE**

But not in this play! He doesn't break into the tomb for any flimp-flopping. He comes because he's got to see her one last time.

**THALIA**

But then his rival...what's that wanker's name...

**WILLIE**

Paris...

**CALLIOPE**

Wait! Can we pause and reflect here for a moment. Naming all of your male roles after major cities just isn't working. Rome... Paris... Constantinople. It's taking me out of the play every time I hear one of these.

**WILLIE**

I thought that was kind of fun...

**CALLIOPE**

It's not.

**WILLIE**

Okay, but Paris has to stay. I promised a buddy of mine named Paris that I'd use his name in my next play.

**CALLIOPE**

Fine, but let's change Constantinople to Tybalt.

**THALIA**

And Rome to Romney. No...Romanoff.

**WILLIE**

How about Romeo?

**ERATO**

Romeo! I like that.

**CALLIOPE**

Okay...so now Romeo gets to the tomb and...

*(To Thalia)*

What were you saying about his rival?

**THALIA**

Oh right, then his rival... Paris... thinks he has come to screw around with the bodies...

**ERATO**

I knew it!

**THALIA**

No! Not like that.

**ERATO**

Oh.

**THALIA**

He thinks he is going to...like desecrate them in some way...just to be a prick. And not just his girlfriend's body... but all of her dead aunties and uncles too who are lying about. So Paris jumps ROMANO, ...but ROMANO has got a knife... so he stabs Paris...and kills him.

**ERATO**

Then Rome-MEE-O sees her...and he is dazzled by her beauty... even though she is clearly and forever...or so he thinks...dead as Kelsey's nuts.

**WILLIE**

Ha! "Dead as Kelsey's nuts!" I like that! Can I use it?

**CALLIOPE/ERATO/THALIA**

No!!!!

**CALLIOPE**

And without hesitation, he kisses her, drinks the poison, and dies at her side.

**WILLIE**

What!?! He does himself in?

**CALLIOPE**

Exactly!

**WILLIE**

So...now Mercutio, Tybalt, Romeo and Paris are all dead?!?

**ERATO**

What a fun play!

**THALIA**

And isn't Sleeping Beauty going to be surprised when she finally wakes up!

**CALLIOPE**

Hold on! A moment later, that tosser...the Friar... arrives and discovers the dead bodies of Romeo and Paris. Corpse-girl then awakens from her death-like sleep and looks for Romeo, saying, "Where is my Romeo?"

**THALIA**

Then...upon seeing the bodies of Romeo and Paris, she freaks the fuck out...

**CALLIOPE**

And she takes Romeo's dagger and kills herself right there!

**WILLIE**

Holy shit! Now they are all dead!?!

**CALLIOPE**

I'm afraid so.

**WILLIE**

But how is the audience going to feel about that?

**ERATO**

They are going to love it!!!

**WILLIE**

Okay...ya know...while I do appreciate your help and guidance...I have to say that this time, I must put my foot down and go with my own artistic instincts.

**THALIA**

Bad idea. The last time you went with your own artistic instincts, you gave us "The Two Gentlemen of Verona".

**CALLIOPE**

Ha! That's right! And what a piece of shit that was!

**WILLIE**

Okay, that's being a little harsh...don't you think? I worked on that shit for like a fortnight.

**CALLIOPE**

Oh, don't get me wrong. There were a couple of witty lines...well, maybe just the one. But really most of the play was a steaming shit-pile. A blubbering shambles.



**THALIA**

It's true Willy. And while I'm not one to judge past works by present standards, the casual misogyny at the conclusion of that play alone was awful enough to make the whole evening a disturbingly dismal dumpster fire.

**WILLIE**

Thalia, you hate everything I do!

**THALIA**

Willie! That is simply not true. Name one other play...

**WILLIE**

Pericles???

**THALIA**

Okay, you got me there. It wasn't the rancid cesspool that "*Two Gentlemen*" was... and I actually liked Act IV...but you're right. The first three acts were so wretched I thought you were trying to write a horrific play...and if you were, then you succeeded.

**WILLIE**

Thank you!

**THALIA**

At one point, one of your dull characters discusses how poor his speaking is. I thought for sure you were being ironic.

**ERATO**

Oh, but if we are bringing up the works that are better left forgotten...let's not forget "*The Two Noble Kinsmen*".

**THALIA**

Too late. Everyone already has.

**WILLIE**

I thought you Muses were supposed to inspire me. Just so you know, right now you are only inspiring me to choose a different career.

**ERATO**

Oh come on...we just named a few of the nasty ones. Most of your other works will probably last another five...maybe six years.

**CALLIOPE**

Yes! The rest of your plays are quite good actually.

**THALIA**

Hold on. Lest we forget the charmless, plot-less, lead-character-less mess that was entitled "The Merry Wives of Windsor".

**WILLIE**

Oh come on! There were a few charming bits in that one!

**THALIA**

Not really.

**CALLIOPE**

She's right Willy. And this is why you need to heed our words. We're here to help. We've reminded you of these past second-rate excursions onto the stage not to torment to excess...as you tormented every character and most of the audience in "The Taming of the Shrew"... but instead to help you.

**THALIA**

Remember when you were working on "The Winter's Tale"...we told you that you had to make a decision? Was it to be a comedy or a tragedy? It can't be both! But did you listen?

**WILLIE**

You haven't mentioned "The Henry's?" Can I therefore assume that you liked "The Henry's"?

**THALIA**

Actually, four and six left me cold. Eight I left at the intermission. Don't get me wrong. It wasn't bad. But it was still not nearly as good as it could and should have been.

**WILLIE**

"The Comedy of Errors"?

**ERATO**

Too sweet.

**WILLIE**

Timon of Athens?

**THALIA**

Too bitter.

**WILLIE**

A Midsummer Night's Dream?

**CALLIOPE, ERATO, THALIA**

Too fluffy.

**WILLIE**

That's it! I'm turning in my quill pen for a hammer and a saw. I'll be a carpenter and I'll be done with the lot of you.

**CALLIOPE**

Nonsense. You have written and will continue to write brilliant plays. Not every play has to be life changing. Fun and smart also have their place.

**THALIA**

We are only reminding you of some of our past advices... advices that you ignored, so that you will make the right decisions about this play that you are working on.

**ERATO**

That's right Willie. We are here to inspire you. Help you. And of course it will always be your decision whether you take our advice or not...and whether you have a grand success or a pathetic failure.

**WILLIE**

Okay, I understand. And I do appreciate your help.

**CALLIOPE**

And Willie...there is just one more thing about this current project...this play that you are working on.

**WILLIE**

Yes Calliope, what is it?

**CALLIOPE**

It's the title. "Romeo and Jezebel" just doesn't fall right on the ear. Give that some thought, will you?

**WILLIE**

Okay I will.

**(BLACKOUT)**

**END OF PLAY**