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ENGL 253-01

Group 28 Skit

 Featuring Characters from To the Lighthouse, and World War I Poetry

Characters:

Mr. Ramsay (played by Ben): He is obsessed with the longevity of his works. He wants them to remain influential long after his death. He is also obsessed with the pursuit of knowledge, seeing it as a progression from letters A to Z, and considers himself to be unable to progress past “Q”. He seems to take great pleasure in imagining the excitement of being involved in dangerous situations, as he is delighted to read and hear tales of fisherman fighting for their lives in stormy weather.

Augustus Carmichael (played by Kevin): He is one of the few characters in To the Lighthouse whose thoughts are unknown to us. He speaks very little. The most significant thing he says is at the dinner party, where he asks for more soup, which angers Mr. Ramsay. His poetry becomes very popular once World War I breaks out, making him famous and successful.

Charles Tansley (played by Prashant) : A young man who thinks he knows it all. Called the “little atheist” by the Ramsay children. In the first part of the novel, Tansley views himself as superior to everyone who attends the dinner party, and sees their conversations as superficial and trite. He is also openly sexist, saying that women can’t write or paint. Later, when WWI breaks out, Tansley preaches brotherly love.

Background :

Mr. Ramsay and Tansley are walking down the street, having just left a cafe, and see Carmichael hanging out on the street, smoking opium.

Skit:

Carmichael - \*always speaking slowly\* Yo! Mr. Ramsay! My dog! Got some soup my brother?

Mr. Ramsay - Hell no! I already had my soup! Wait...Carmichael??? What the hell happened to you?

Tansley - Looks and sounds like he’s high on opium. He must have become addicted, and blown off all the money he earned from his poetry.

\*Carmichael hands Tansley a folded piece of paper with writing on it\*

Tansley - What’s this? Oh, it looks like Carmichael has written a new poem. Let’s see...

 ”Hey hey hey,

 Smoke opium everyday.” \*throws paper away\*

Mr. Ramsay - But why, Carmichael? You were filthy rich, thanks to the war, and now you’re a bum on a street corner!

Carmichael - “The Bishop tells us: ‘When the boys come back

They will not be the same.’ ”

Mr. Ramsay - Huh?

Tansley: Actually, I believe that’s from a poem called “They”, by Sassoon.

Mr. Ramsay - I know that, but what is Carmichael getting at by quoting that poem now?

Tansley: Well, in that poem, Sassoon is trying to tell us that our boys are being changed in the war, but not for the better. Maybe Carmichael became depressed about the war, and turned to opium for comfort.

Mr. Ramsay - How can you say that? Remember that in the same poem, the Bishop also says:

'”They have challenged Death and dared him face to face”. This war is turning our boys into men.

Tansley: Ha! That’s clearly just Sassoon pointing out the false ideals of war. Our soldiers are losing limbs, catching horrid diseases and getting killed, when we should be working together and coexisting peacefully. Only fools and commoners want to partake in warfare. War is pointless and futile.

Carmichael: “There's some corner of a foreign field

That is for ever England. There shall be
 In that rich earth a richer dust concealed;
A dust whom England bore, shaped, made aware”

Mr. Ramsay: That’s from Rupert Brooke’s poem, “The Soldier”! You see, Tansley, war isn’t pointless! When our soldiers die, it’s not as if they died for nothing; they represent our great country, and leave a piece of it behind, to better enrich the world. It’s not in vain as you say. Why, I bet Carmichael wasn’t depressed about the war at all! He was probably celebrating the glory of the war with some opium, and got a little carried away. Isn’t that right, Carmichael?

Carmichael: I just wa-

Tansley: What nonsense! Mr. Ramsay, I’m disappointed in you! An educated man such as yourself, believing that a piece of a foreign country becomes England’s just because an English soldier died there! You’ve been reading too much fiction; perhaps you should study territorial ownership. Why, you probably believe the rest of Brooke’s poem as well; that is, the part about “an English heaven.” Only simpletons believe in an afterlife, isn’t that right, Carmichael?

Carmichael: I just wa-

Mr. Ramsay: Are you saying that my son Andrew died for nothing? That is preposterous! He was a war hero, he deserves honor!

Carmichael: “Their blind eyes see not your tears flow. Nor honour. It is easy to be dead. Say only this, ‘They are dead’. Then add thereto, ‘Yet many a better one has died before.’ ...None wears the face you knew. Great death has made all his for evermore.”

Tansley: There is your answer, Mr. Ramsay! As Charles Sorley states in his poem “When you See Millions of the Mouthless Dead”, it is pointless to glorify your son’s death. You are only giving strength to the war that killed him, so that it can consume the lives of other young men. He could have been a great scholar like yourself if he had stayed in school. Now he is simply dead. The greater man chooses life, not death.

Mr. Ramsay: Now hold on one second! If Andrew simply followed in my footsteps, how would he ever reach the letter “Z”? Clearly I missed something in my life, which is why *I* can’t get to “Z”. Maybe what I needed was to go to war; to be a soldier, so that I could obtain the ultimate knowledge! Maybe Andrew got to “Z” before he was killed.

Tansley: What are you blabbering about? You know that I thirst for knowledge as much as you, but is it really worth risking your life?

Mr. Ramsay: Isn’t it?

Tansley: You’re crazy! Tell him how crazy he is, Carmichael!

Carmichael: I just wa-

Mr. Ramsay: In case you haven’t noticed, you little atheist, Carmichael is on my side! RIGHT, CARMICHAEL?

Carmichael: I just wa-

Tansley: WHOSE SIDE ARE YOU ON, CARMICHAEL?

Carmichael: ...I just want some soup.

Mr. Ramsay: ...Fuck you, Carmichael! You *know* I hate it when people eat after I’m done eating. Let’s go, Tansley.

Tansley: \*to Carmichael\* Here’s a nickel. Brotherly love!