

**THE GENTILE WIFE;
A PLAY IN
FOUR ACTS**

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The Gentle Wife; A Play in Four Acts by Rita Wellman

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RITA WELLMAN

**THE GENTILE WIFE;
A PLAY IN
FOUR ACTS**

THE GENTILE WIFE

BY
RITA WELLMAN

A Play in Four Acts

NEW YORK
MOFFAT, YARD & COMPANY
1919

CAST OF CHARACTERS

Staged by ARTHUR HOPKINS. Settings by ROBERT EDMUND JONES

"There's but one gift that all our dead desire,
One gift that men can give, and that's a dream,
Un'less we too can burn with that same fire
Of sacrifice; die to the things that seem;

Die to the little hatreds; die to greed;
Die to the old ignob'le selves we knew;
Die to the base contempts of sect and creed,
And rise again, like these, with souls as true."

CHARACTERS

DAVID DAVIS.....	DAVID POWELL
MRS. DAVIS, his mother.....	VERA GORDON
JACOB DAVIS, his father.....	W. H. THOMPSON
CHRISTINA, his aunt.....	MRS. A. ASHEROFF
RUBY, his sister.....	AMY DENNIS
EVA GOLDSCHMIDT, his sister.....	LITTA MABIE
HERMAN GOLDSCHMIDT, her husband.....	STANLEY JESSUP
NAIDA, David's wife.....	EMILY STEVENS
JANE ALLEN.....	ELEANOR MONTELL
DR. MACKENZIE.....	FRANK CONROY
DR. HOTCHKISS.....	CHARLES HAMMOND
CAROLINE.....	VIRGINIA CURTIS

ACT I.—Room in a fashionable hotel in New York, in March.

ACT II.—Room at "Roselands," Long Island, in September.

ACT III.—Breakfast porch at "Roselands." The following morning.

ACT IV.—Same as Act II. September of the following year.

PRODUCED IN DECEMBER, ONE THOUSAND NINE HUNDRED AND EIGHTEEN, AT THE VANDERBILT THEATRE, NEW YORK

DEDICATION

To the managers who have rejected my plays,

To the friends who have given me advice,

To the American Public,

To all those, in fact, who make the doing of a good thing so difficult—and therefore impossible not to try.

THE GENTILE WIFE

ACT I

SCENE: *The drawing room of a hotel apartment.*

Elaborate. Door a little left at back. A recessed window on left wall. A large door at right angles (right) leads into bed room which is partly visible. The entrance door left leads into a private passage way which has, of course, a door beyond which communicates with the public corridor. NAIDA is opening the private door. She is an attractive woman of about twenty-seven. JANE ALLEN comes into the passage and greets NAIDA. She is quite pretty and overdressed.

NAIDA

Why, it's little Jane Allen.

JANE

How are you? Oh, I am so glad to see you Naida. You haven't changed a bit.

NAIDA

How did you find me? Whatever made you think of coming to see me?

JANE

Curiosity.

NAIDA

Janel

JANE

Of course not, darling. I wanted to see you again after

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all these months . . . naturally. You know I always adored you if you can't sing High E without standing on your tip toes. It's a nice hotel, isn't it? What a lovely little room! How many have you?

NAIDA

Only this . . . and the other.

But sit down. Come over here. . . . You get such a wonderful view of Fifth Avenue from here. I never get tired of sitting here and watching all the things going by way down there below me.

JANE

Isn't it dreadful to think how much you have to pay in New York for the privilege of seeing other people look like ants?

But tell me something about your marriage. No one dreamed of your doing such a thing. It's positively thrilling. We were all talking about you the other night. You were so determined. You were the most ambitious one of our crowd. Why you were set on grand opera—no less. Are you going on with your music, Naida?

NAIDA

Of course. Why not? I don't intend to give up my career just because I happen to be married.

JANE

Happen to be married is good. What is your husband like? Where did you meet him?

NAIDA

You were supposed to come that night. It was the supper Alice gave after her recital. Don't you remember?

JANE

Of course. I had tonsillitis. Will I ever forget it? I was going to give a recital the next day myself. My dear, would you believe it . . . I was up at Hoffenders just Monday and they didn't have a thing for me. What are singers to do? All people want is to go to moving pictures

and listen to free lectures. Not even a vaudeville house would take me. But you were going to tell me something about your husband. What is his name? Alice was telling me . . . Paul, . . .

NAIDA

No . . . David.

JANE

Oh, yes, how stupid of me. I knew it was one of the prophets or something. Well, don't stop . . .

NAIDA

There is really nothing to tell. We had a wonderful little supper. Oh, I can't remember who was there. Celebrities . . .

JANE

Oh, yes, Alice always has celebrities.

NAIDA

Henrietta Walden sang.

JANE

Agony, I suppose?

NAIDA

Pretty bad.

JANE

Who else?

NAIDA

Reggie Woods sat on one side of me.

NAIDA

Reggie of all people in the world! Did he make you feel his diaphragm?

NAIDA

Yes, now that I think of it. We all three got to talking about diaphragms.

JANE

Who . . . David?

NAIDA

Yes . . . David. Then every one around our table began to talk about diaphragms. Then everybody had to punch and pound every one's else diaphragm.

JANE

So that's how you got acquainted.

NAIDA

There's no romance really. How is everybody? I haven't heard from a soul.

JANE

Everybody is just the same. Going to be famous some day. What does your husband do? Alice said he was a professor or something.

NAIDA

He is a biologist.

JANE

A bi-what?

NAIDA

A biologist. Don't you know what a biologist is?

JANE

No . . . do you?

NAIDA

Of course. They . . . dissect things, you know. Pick animals to pieces . . . all that . . .