

Shakespeare in Time

By
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STORY OF THE PLAY

In spite of Dr. Winona Smedlap's repeated warnings to her team of lab assistants not to go near the Time Mobile until it was "totally, thoroughly, and undeniably ready," she forgot to mention that it also applied to responding to strange noises coming from inside of it. That's exactly what Bill was investigating when he mysteriously disappeared, his friend Pemberton nervously explains. As if Bill's unexpected trip into time weren't alarming enough, it seems he has managed to trade places with none other than England's most famous playwright, William Shakespeare. Can Pemberton figure out how to correct the damage before the Bard's poetic gallantry not only sweeps Bill's lady-love off her feet but makes him want to forget about returning to his own century altogether?

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(2 m, 2 w, 1 flexible)

PEMBERTON: A lab assistant. (Can be played by a male or female.)

DR. WINONA SMEDLAP: A renowned scientist.

DIANA: A lab assistant.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE: A struggling playwright.

BILL: A lab assistant.

(Note on casting: It is possible for Shakespeare to double as Bill.)

TIME: The present.

SETTING

All the action takes place in Dr. Smedlap's laboratory, a cluttered room with an assortment of electronic gadgets, scientific equipment, stacks of books and papers on every counter and shelf. One of the stacks utilizes a skull as a paperweight. Entrance to the lab is stage left. Dr. Smedlap's prized invention, the Time Mobile, (a large, refrigerator-sized box), stands stage right. The entry to a hallway is upstage center.

PROPS

Clipboard and pen; long-stemmed red rose; bud vase; fast food including French fries; handkerchief; quill and piece of parchment.

SCENE 1

(AT RISE: An agitated PEMBERTON, wearing a lab coat, bursts into the lab, followed closely by an angry DOCTOR SMEDLAP.)

PEMBERTON: It was an accident, Dr. Smedlap! There was nothing I could do to stop it! *(HE points at the machine.)*
He was standing right there when it happened!

DR. SMEDLAP: Standing next to the Time Mobile ... is that where he was?

PEMBERTON: Uh, not exactly, ma'am.

DR. SMEDLAP: And what exactly does "not exactly" mean?

PEMBERTON: He was sort of ... uh ... I'm not sure how to put this.

DR. SMEDLAP: Spit it out, Pemberton. He was either standing next to the machine or he wasn't.

PEMBERTON: To tell you the truth, ma'am, he was in the machine.

DR. SMEDLAP: Pemberton, if I've said it once, I've said it a thousand times *(PEMBERTON repeats the next line along with her.)* Absolutely no one goes into the Time Mobile until it's totally, thoroughly, and undeniably ready!

PEMBERTON: Yes, ma'am, I know that. And Bill knew that, too, except

DR. SMEDLAP: Well then, what was he doing in there if he knew it was against all the rules?

PEMBERTON: He was checking out a noise.

DR. SMEDLAP: A noise? What sort of noise?

PEMBERTON: It was coming from inside the machine.

DR. SMEDLAP: Impossible! The machine is completely empty!

PEMBERTON: That's what I tried to tell him but he insisted on taking a look just the same. *(SMEDLAP is crossing to the machine.)* The next thing I knew, he stepped inside and the door slammed shut behind him.

DR. SMEDLAP: So why didn't you open it and tell him to come back out on the double?

PEMBERTON: It was sealed tight. So tight that no matter how hard I pulled to get it open –

(SMEDLAP opens the door quite easily.)

PEMBERTON: *(Continued.)* Gosh! How did you do that?

(DIANA, an attractive young woman in a lab coat, ENTERS from SL.)

DIANA: What's all the shouting about? I could hear you two all the way down the hall.

DR. SMEDLAP: It appears we have a problem.

DIANA: What kind of problem? And where's Bill? He was supposed to bring me some reports an hour ago.

PEMBERTON: He's gone, Diana. But please don't ask me where.

DIANA: Oh, stop clowning around, Pemberton. If he'd left the building, he would have had to walk right past my desk and I would have seen him. Now where's he hiding? Fess up.

PEMBERTON: Uh

DR. SMEDLAP: What he's trying to tell you is that it appears Bill has gone for an unauthorized trip *(SHE points to the open door.)* in there.

DIANA: But that's ridiculous. Everyone knows the rules.

PEMBERTON: It was an accident. I tried to get him out but he was lost before I could get the door open.

DIANA: Lost? Lost where?

DR. SMEDLAP: Somewhere in time ... *(SHE closes the door.)* if the machine worked properly, that is.

PEMBERTON: I'm really sorry, Diana. I mean, especially since you had a crush on him and all ...

DIANA: I most certainly did not! Why would I have a crush on someone who always has his nose in a book?

PEMBERTON: *(With a shrug.)* I don't know, maybe 'cause opposites attract?

End of Freeview

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