



**Heather Lynn**

Adapted from the play J. M. Barrie

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**THE ADMIRABLE CRICHTON**

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**THE ADMIRABLE CRICHTON** was produced by Charles Frohman and opened at the Duke of York's Theatre in London on Nov. 4 1902.

**LADY MARY LASENBY:** Irene Vanbrugh

**CRICHTON:** H.B. Irving

**EARL OF LOAM:** Henry Kemble

**LADY CATHERINE LASENBY:** Sybil Carlisle

**LADY AGATHA LASENBY:** Muriel Beaumont

**ERNEST WOOLLEY:** Gerald du Maurier

**TWEENY:** Pattie Brown

**NAVAL OFFICER:** J.C. Buckstone

## THE ADMIRABLE CRICHTON

**CLASSIC.** Adapted from the play by J.M. Barrie. Witty, smart, and hilarious, the laughs never end in this side-splitting comedy! Lord Loam arranges tea parties where he forces his servants to mingle as equals much to their embarrassment and to the dismay of his family and friends. However, when Lord Loam and his family are shipwrecked on a deserted island, these class divisions are turned upside down, and they soon discover that there is as little equality on this island than there is in England. Crichton, the butler, is the only one with any practical knowledge, and it doesn't take long before he becomes the leader and is referred to as "the Gov." Lord Loam, on the other hand, assumes the role of a jolly laborer and is called "Daddy." But when the group is finally rescued, the class divisions are upset once again, and Crichton assumes his position of butler on the other island...England.

**Performance Time:** Approximately 100-120 minutes.



(Crichton, left, and Lord Loam, center. From left to right: Mary, Agatha, Catherine.)

## ABOUT THE STORY

Sir James Matthew Barrie (1860-1937) was born in Scotland and later moved to London, where he wrote numerous plays and novels. Barrie was the ninth of ten children and his father worked as a weaver. Barrie married actress, Mary Ansell, in 1894, and the couple had a Saint Bernard dog named Porthos, but no children. The couple later divorced in 1909. In 1902, Barrie wrote *The Admirable Crichton*, a comedy that humorously explores the controversial issue of English class divisions. The character of the cheerful, egotistical Ernest Woolley, is thought to be a caricature of the main character in Oscar Wilde's play, *The Importance of Being Earnest*. Today, Barrie is best known for his 1928 play *Peter Pan*.

**(CHARACTERS)****(11 M, 11 F, 2 flexible, opt. extras)**

**CRICHTON:** The son of a butler and a lady's maid, a quintessential butler who is devoted to his master, Lord Loam, and who considers his position to be the realization of his proudest ambitions; believes in the British class system and doesn't approve of Lord Loam's views of equality; becomes the leader on the island where he is known as "Gov"; wears butler attire; male.

**LORD LOAM:** Master of Loam House; widower, philanthropist, and "intellectual" who believes British class divisions are artificial and arranges for tea parties where servants mingle as equals; on the island, becomes a jolly laborer called "Daddy"; wears fine clothing; male.

**LADY MARY LASENBY:** 22, Lord Loam's beautiful, haughty daughter who has a tendency to make others feel insignificant and is the fury and the envy of her sisters Catherine and Agatha; engaged to Lord Brocklehurst; known for her excellent hunting skills on the island and goes by "Polly"; wears a fine gown; female.

**LADY CATHERINE LASENBY:** 20, Lord Loam's lazy, fashionable daughter; has a crush on Crichton and goes by "Kitty" on the island; wears a fine gown; female.

**LADY AGATHA LASENBY:** 18, Lord Loam's lazy, fashionable youngest daughter; has a crush on Crichton and goes by "Aggy" on the island; wears a fine gown; female.

**ERNEST WOOLLEY:** Lord Loam's cheerful, egotistical nephew, a bachelor and man-about-town who is fond of gossip and "clever" witticisms; dresses like a dandy in expensive, fashionable clothing; male.

**TWEENY:** Humble, frightened kitchen maid at Loam House who is known as a "between maid," a maid that assists the vegetable maid by transferring dishes from one end of the

kitchen table to the other end; has a crush on Crichton; wears maid's attire; female.

**MR. TREHERNE:** Athletic, pleasant, young clergyman; wears clerical attire; male.

**LADY BROCKLEHURST:** A suspicious, formidable old lady who looks at people through her eyeglass; female.

**LORD BROCKLEHURST:** Lady Brocklehurst's son who is engaged to Lady Mary but has a fling with Mary's maid, Miss Fisher, while Mary is shipwrecked on the island; male.

**MRS. PERKINS:** Housekeeper at Loam House; female.

**FLEURY:** Chef at Loam House; flexible.

**MR. ROLLESTON:** Valet at Loam House; male.

**MR. TOMPSETT:** Coachman at Loam House; male.

**MISS FISHER:** Lady Mary's beautiful maid; female.

**MISS SIMMONS:** Lady Catherine's maid; female.

**MADMOISELLE JEANNE:** Lady Agatha's maid; female.

**THOMAS:** First footman at Loam House; male.

**JOHN:** Doorman at Loam House; male.

**JANE:** Kitchen maid at Loam House; wears an apron; female.

**GLADYS:** Kitchen maid at Loam House; wears an apron; female.

**PAGE:** Page at Loam House; flexible.

**STABLE BOY:** Stable boy at Loam **NAVAL OFFICER:** Rescues Lord Loam; male.

**EXTRAS (opt.):** As Sailors.

## SETTING

Late 1800s, Loam House in London, England, and a desert island in the Pacific.

## SETS

**Loam House.** A comfortable reception room with several chairs, settees, and at least one footstool. The chairs and settees have many cushions/pillows on them. There are several famous paintings on the walls and miniatures displayed in glass cases. There are several bouquets of roses and a great array of tea things. There are several library novels, and a row of newspapers lying against each other.

**Desert island.** There is a sea of bamboo, which obscures a view of the sea. Only the foliage of palm trees and some giant rocks are seen. Floating wreckage of the ill-fated yacht is scattered about. The beginnings of a hut is seen. There is a clearing leading to the shore and a rock large enough to sit or huddle against. Note: By and by, owing to Crichton and Treherne's efforts, an unrestricted view of the sea will be revealed and the boat's mast can be seen standing out of the water.

**Island home.** The castaways' sturdy log home is not an extension of the hut in ACT II, but its walls and roof are made of stout logs. The hall serves as the living room of the house. Along the joists supporting the roof are many homemade implements including weapons, spades, saws, fishing rods, etc. Hanging from hooks in the joists are assorted cured foods like ham and other meats. Deep recesses half way up the walls contain various provisions stored in barrels and sacks. The floor is bare except for some animal skins. The chairs and tables have been hewn out of

wood. Various pieces of wreckage from the yacht have been turned to novel uses. The steering wheel hangs from the centre of the roof with electric lights attached to it. A lifebuoy has become the back of a chair. Two barrels have been halved and turned into a settee. The farther end of the room serves as the kitchen, which can be shut off from the hall by folding doors. There is a large open "fire" in the kitchen. The chimney is half of one of the boats of the yacht. On the walls of the kitchen are many plate racks containing large shells. There are rows of shells, which serve as dinner plates or bowls. Other shells serve as tureens. The outer door into the hall is covered with animal skins and is in four leaves, like the swing doors of restaurants. Another door leads to the sleeping rooms of the house and to Crichton's workroom, which are all on the ground floor. There is a large window that can be shuttered, and through the window can be seen cattle sheds, chicken coops, and a field of grain. The window is large enough for Lord Loam to crawl through. A mysterious electrical apparatus fills a corner. There is a placard that reads "silence" and hangs above the door.

**Loam House (ACT IV):** The room is the same as it was in ACT I but has new decorations. On the walls, many interesting trophies from the island are exhibited including animal skins, stuffed birds and animals, and handmade weapons. Artifacts are labeled with "Shot by Lord Loam," "Hon. Ernest Woolley's Blowpipe," etc. There are also two glass cases containing other island artifacts, including the bucket in which Ernest was first dipped.

## SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

**ACT I:** Loam House, London, England. The residence of Lord Loam.

**ACT II:** Desert island in the Pacific, two months later.

### **Intermission**

**ACT III:** Desert island home, two years later.

**ACT IV:** Loam House, several months later.

## PROPS

Hat, for Ernest	Crude dinner setting for island
Cane, for Ernest	Apron, for Lord Loam
Tea set	2 Pails suspended from a pole of bamboo or a stick
Engagement ring, for Agatha	Handmade bellows
Apron, for Jane	Small box
Book	Handmade bow and arrows
Bamboo	Handmade blowpipe
Axe	Deer carcass (hide)
Hatchets	Handmade ladder
Small logs	2 Handmade fishing rods
Large fake rocks	Handmade creel
2 Pair bath slippers	Handmade toast rack
Bucket	Menu written on a seashell
Fly leaf torn out of a book	Stick with fishing line attached
Bottle with cork	2 Handmade soup plates
Cutlass	Platter of fish
Oilskin, for Lady Mary	Platter with roasted game bird and vegetables
Firewood	Beaker filled with "wine" (grape juice)
Coconuts	Handmade crumb brush
Dry grass	Handmade coffee cup and saucer
Lens	Handmade wine goblet
Cooking pot with lid	Newspapers
Cooking tripod for fire	Animal skins
Boots that fit Lord Loam and Ernest	Stuffed birds/animals
Sticks	Wreath of green leaves, for Lady Mary's head
Ship's lantern	Flower
Pipe	
Birds	
Bird feathers	
Sheet	
Island-made concertina	

Screen between "kitchen" and dining room on island	Blowpipe
Tom-tom	Evening gown, for Lady Mary
Fan	Rags and animal skin clothing, for Lord Loam
Book of poetry	Blue jersey and red cap, for Lady Catherine
Red shirt, for Crichton	Manly buckskin clothing, for Lady Catherine
Sailor's britches, for Crichton	Dazzling evening gown, for Lady Catherine
Wading boots, for Crichton	Dressing gown, for Ernest (Lady Agatha wears also)
Buckskin clothing for Crichton that is more carefully cut and better fitting than the buckskin clothing of the others	Manly buckskin clothing, for Lady Agatha
Doeskin dinner jacket, for Crichton	Dazzling gown, for Lady Agatha
"Regal" robe made of animal skins that resembles a king's robe, for Crichton	Animal skin clothing, for Ernest
Tarpaulin coat and hat, for Lady Mary	Skirt that has been patched and re-patched with incongruous colors, for Tweeny
Animal skin outfit, for Lady Mary	Cowboy-looking attire, for Treherne
Handmade bow and arrows	

## SPECIAL EFFECTS

Fake blood  
Surf breaking  
"Fire" that produces a red glow (lighting effect)  
Moving shadows  
Whirring sound from oiled machinery  
Loud boom of a gun  
Beacons flaring red  
Shouting



"I THINK I MAY SAY  
THERE WAS AS LITTLE EQUALITY THERE  
AS ELSEWHERE."

—CRICHTON

## ACT I

(AT RISE: *Loam House, London, England. A smiling Ernest Woolley enters. Ernest gives his hat to Thomas, the footman, and his cane to John, the doorman. Crichton, the butler, ushers Ernest into the reception room. Ernest spots the tea set but dallies a moment.*)

ERNEST: I perceive from the teacups, Crichton, that the great function is to take place here.

CRICHTON: (*Respectful sigh.*) Yes, sir.

ERNEST: (*Chuckling.*) The servants coming up to have tea in the drawing room! (*Sarcastic.*) No wonder you look happy, Crichton.

CRICHTON: No, sir.

ERNEST: Do you know, Crichton, I think that with an effort you might look even happier. (*Crichton smiles wanly.*) You don't approve of his lordship compelling his servants to be his equals...once a month?

CRICHTON: It is not for me, sir, to disapprove of his lordship's radical views.

ERNEST: Certainly not. And, after all, it is only once a month that he is affable to you.

CRICHTON: On all other days of the month, sir, his lordship's treatment of us is everything that could be desired.

ERNEST: Teacups! Life, Crichton, is like a cup of tea; the more heartily we drink, the sooner we reach the dregs.

CRICHTON: (*Obediently.*) Thank you, sir.

ERNEST: (*Confidential tone.*) Crichton, in case I should be asked to say a few words to the servants, I have strung together a little speech. I was wondering where I should stand. (*Ernest tries various places and postures and comes to rest leaning over a high-backed chair. In pantomime, he addresses a gathering. Crichton gives him a footstool to stand on and departs happily. Ernest kicks the footstool across the room. Addressing*

*imaginary audience.*) Suppose you were all little fishes at the bottom of the sea— (*Ernest is unsatisfied with his position, sure that the fault must lie with the chair for being too high, not with him for being too short. He looks at the stool, thinking Crichton's suggestion isn't bad. He lifts the stool but hastily conceals it behind him as Catherine and Agatha enter. Looking uneasy, concealing the footstool.*) And how are my little friends today?

*(Agatha heads toward the settee.)*

AGATHA: Don't be silly, Ernest. If you want to know how we are...we are dead. Even to think of entertaining the servants is so exhausting.

*(Catherine remains near the door.)*

CATHERINE: *(To Ernest.)* Besides which, we have had to decide what frocks to take with us on the yacht, and that is such a mental strain.

ERNEST: You poor, overworked things. *(Helps Agatha rest her feet on the settee.)* Rest your weary limbs.

CATHERINE: But why have you a footstool in your hand?

AGATHA: *(To Ernest.)* Yes.

ERNEST: Why? You see...as the servants are to be the guests, I must be the butler. I was practicing. *(Indicating footstool.)* This is a tray. Observe. *(Holding the footstool as a tray, he minces across the room like an accomplished footman. Lady Mary enters. He holds out the footstool to her.)* Tea, my lady?

*(Long anxious pause.)*

LADY MARY: *(Arching her brows.)* It is only you, Ernest. I thought there was someone here. *(Sits.)*

ERNEST: *(A little annoyed, deserting the footstool.)* Had a very tiring day also, Mary?

LADY MARY: (*Yawning.*) Dreadfully. Been trying on engagement rings all morning.

ERNEST: What's that? (*To Agatha.*) Is it Brocklehurst? (*Agatha nods.*) You have given your warm, young heart to Brocky? (*Lady Mary is impervious to his humor.*) I don't wish to fatigue you, Mary, by insisting on a verbal answer, but if, without straining yourself, you can signify yes or no, won't you make the effort? (*Agatha indolently flashes a ring on her ring finger. Melodramatically.*) The ring! Then I am too late, too late! (*Like a prosecutor.*) May I ask, Mary, does Brocky know? Of course, it was that terrible mother of his who pulled this through. Mother does everything for Brocky. Still, in the eyes of the law, you will be, not her wife, but his, and, therefore, I hold that Brocky ought to be informed. Now— (*Sees that their eyes have closed.*) If you girls are shamming sleep in the expectation that I shall awaken you in the manner beloved of ladies, abandon all such hopes.

(*Catherine and Agatha look up without speaking.*)

LADY MARY: (*Without looking up.*) You impertinent boy.

ERNEST: I knew that was it...though I don't know everything. Agatha, I'm not young enough to know everything.

(*Ernest looks hopefully from one to another, but though they try to grasp this, his "brilliance" baffles them.*)

AGATHA: Young enough?

ERNEST: Don't you see? I'm not young enough to know everything.

AGATHA: I'm sure it's awfully clever, but it's so puzzling.

(*Crichton ushers in Mr. Treherne, who greets the company.*)

CATHERINE: Ernest, say it to Mr. Treherne.

ERNEST: Look here, Treherne, I'm not young enough to know everything.

TREHERNE: What do you mean, Ernest?

ERNEST: I mean what I say.

LADY MARY: Say it again. Say it more slowly.

ERNEST: I'm...not...young...enough...to...know...everything.

TREHERNE: I see. What you really mean, my boy, is that you are not old enough to know everything.

ERNEST: No, I don't.

TREHERNE: I assure you, that's it.

LADY MARY: *(To Ernest.)* Of course, it is.

CATHERINE: Yes, Ernest, that's it.

ERNEST: *(In desperation.)* I am not young enough, Crichton, to know everything.

*(Anxious moment. A smile is extorted from Crichton as with a corkscrew.)*

CRICHTON: Thank you, sir. *(Exits.)*

ERNEST: *(Relieved.)* Ah, if you had that fellow's head, Treherne, you would find something better to do with it than play cricket. I hear you bowl with your head.

TREHERNE: I'm afraid cricket is all I'm good for, Ernest.

CATHERINE: *(Admiringly.)* Indeed, it isn't.

TREHERNE: Thank you, Lady Catherine.

CATHERINE: But it was the bishop who told me so. He said a clergyman who breaks both ways is sure to get on in England.

TREHERNE: I'm jolly glad.

*(The Earl of Loam, master of the house, enters accompanied by Lord Brocklehurst.)*

LORD LOAM: You are here, Ernest. Feeling fit for the voyage, Treherne?

TREHERNE: Looking forward to it enormously.

LORD LOAM: That's right. (*Chasing his children about as if they were chickens.*) Now then, Mary, up and doing, up and doing. Time we had the servants in. They enjoy it so much.

LADY MARY: They hate it.

LORD LOAM: (*Pointing to the tea table, severely.*) Mary, to your duties.

ERNEST: Congratulations, Brocky.

(*Lord Brocklehurst winces at "Brocky."*)

LORD BROCKLEHURST: Thanks.

ERNEST: Mother pleased?

LORD BROCKLEHURST: Mother is very pleased.

ERNEST: That's good. Are you going on the yacht with us?

LORD BROCKLEHURST: Sorry, I can't. And look here, Ernest, I will not be called "Brocky."

ERNEST: Mother don't like it?

LORD BROCKLEHURST: She does not.

(*Lord Brocklehurst leaves Ernest. Ernest begins to practice his speech. Crichton enters.*)

LORD LOAM: We are quite ready, Crichton.

(*Crichton looks distressed.*)

LADY MARY: (*Sarcastically.*) How Crichton enjoys it!

LORD LOAM: (*Frowning.*) He is the only one who doesn't...pitiful creature.

CRICHTON: (*Shuddering.*) I can't help being a conservative, my lord.

LORD LOAM: Be a man, Crichton. You are the same flesh and blood as myself.

CRICHTON: (*Pained.*) Oh, my lord!

LORD LOAM: (*Sharply.*) Show them in. And, by the way, they were not all here last time.

CRICHTON: All, my lord, except the merest trifles.

LORD LOAM: It must be everyone. (*Lowering voice.*)

And remember this, Crichton: For the time being, you are my equal. (*Testily.*) I shall soon show you whether you are not my equal. Do as you are told.

[END OF FREEVIEW]