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No Smoking Monologue

No Smoking Monologue by Jacinto Benavente

Character:	Lady
Gender:	Female
Age (range):	?
Style:	Comedy
Length:	3 minutes

LADY: For goodness' sake, don't stop upon our account! Smoke as much as you want to--it doesn't bother me, or my daughter, either. We are used to it. Her poor father, my first husband--who is now in glory--was never without a cigar in his mouth. As he bit off one, it lit it with the butt of the other. And my second husband--who now rests in peace--they were alike as two buttons; you could scarcely tell the difference. I had a difficulty at one time myself, a suffocating feeling, all stuffed up here--terrible distress--and the doctors were telling me that it was asthma and that it wasn't asthma-- Well, I smoked then myself--aromatic cigarettes--which didn't do me any good, either, by the way, I can say that. So you see as far as we are concerned, you needn't think you are inconveniencing us. You can't annoy us by smoking. Before we changed we were travelling in the ladies' compartment, and we transferred to this one as soon as we could because there were people in it one simply couldn't travel with; they were out of the question. You would think that people who travelled first class would have manners, that they would know something. But not a bit of it! Believe me, if you want to find out what people are like, play cards with them, or watch them eat, or else go travelling. You'll find out soon enough. There was a woman in that compartment--I say she was a woman because I don't know what else to call her--with her companion--she must have

been her companion, she was with her anyway--well, I can tell you I was mortified. I shamed--such a conversation! Between the two of them! They might as well have sitting in their own parlors. As far as that goes, you know, speaking for myself, a widow twice, it was nothing to me; but before my daughter.... I had to make her sit with her head out of the window all the way. It was pretty chilly for her. You can see for yourself she has taken cold. And she's got a cinder in her eye, too--worse luck! Her eyes are the best part of her.

Credits: Reprinted from Plays: Second Series. Trans. John Garrett Underhill. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1919.

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